TECH SHEET

binding attachment to contract:
Stage plot (=U=)-shaped layout)
bass amp
2 drum mics direct line (chair)
(folding chair) (guitar amp)
2 drum mics direct line
(folding chair) (guitar amp)
2 drum mics
(folding chair) horn mic
vocal mic+direct/vocal mic+direct

Stage Front/Audience
P/A SUMMARY: six drum mics, one horn mic,
two vocal mics, four direct+; all mics on boom stands.
two guitar amps (Fender acoustonic preferred)
one bass amp (GK 800 head or equivalent)
8 chairs, 3 orchestral music stands
mains, monitors,
sound technician on duty at all times during
sound check and performance.

Addenda:
--sound check: two hours needed, ending not later than one hour before performance.
--VENUE: vegetarian snacks, drinks backstage for ten players.
“Green room” backstage; adequate rest rooms.
--CD ETC SALES: presenter will provide at least one table, approximately 1x2 meters,
for merchandise. 100% of sales revenue will go to the ensemble. We are flexible about
these arrangements, should presenter have a sales policy.
TRAVEL AND LODGING: The following two paragraphs are to be applied according to
the nature of the engagement and distance issues.
-AIRFARES: negotiable.
-OVERLAND TRANSPORTATION BETWEEN CITIES: negotiable.
-LODGING: nine hotel rooms per night; to be provided by the presenter.
-TRANSPORTATION: all transportation to and from the airport or train station and
hotel, to and from hotel or train station to performance venue shall be provided by the
presenter.
WEATHER STIPULATIONS:
Musicians will not play, at no diminution of the presenter’s obligation to pay all fees,
under the following circumstances:
1) in the rain
2) under 15 degrees centigrade.
3) in the sun in over 25 degrees centigrade.
QUESTIONS: contact Jack Kessler thru any of the media on this letterhead.
Atzilut Concerts for Peace... Player Bios

Hazzan Jack Kessler, music director, Hebrew vocals, composer/arranger, is one of the premier living practitioners of Hazzanut, the traditional improvisational art of Jewish spiritual song. He has a twenty year career in traditional synagogues, and in addition to his performance activities (he also directs KLINGON KLEZ, which does Jewish music from other planets) he teaches many cantorial students.

Maurice Chedd, Arabic Vocals, Oud, is a graduate of the Lebanon Conservatory in Beirut. He has toured the world with the Lebanese Folkloric Group as singer, Arabic classical composer and Oud player. In the United States, Maurice has since been featured in many New York area events including music festivals and recordings. In addition to his brilliance as a performer, Maurice has to his credit a number of innovative compositions in the Arabic classical style.

Stan Slotter, trumpet and flute has played with Cecil Taylor, Groover Washington, Philly Jo Jones, Reverie, Minas, Seamus Eagan and many others. His favorite styles are jazz, Latin, dixieland and klezmer. In addition to his virtuosity on two very different instruments, Stan is known for his passionate, heartfelt approach, which brings a unique warmth to his playing.

Josef Kessler, electric violin, is one of the most sought-after ethnic violinists in the Northeast. Equally comfortable with traditional acoustic styles and cutting-edge electronics, he plays middle eastern, klezmer, Irish, Balkan and rock. He has played with Led Zeppelin, Morphine, Boiled In Lead, Wooden Leg, Sunday's Well, Atzilut and Klingon Klez. Roger Mgrdichian, 'oud, is a second-generation Armenian-American musician. He learned traditional Armenian and Middle Eastern music from members of his family, particularly 'oud technique from his uncle the great George Mgrdichian. He interprets a variety of music styles, performing Middle Eastern popular and classical music as well as flamenco.

Bruce Kaminsky, bass, is a respected jazz bassist known for his mastery of Middle Eastern bass technique. He has been the bassist for Atzilut twelve years. He holds a Masters of Music from The Combs College of Music, studied Jewish liturgical music at Gratz College with Dr. Irving Cohen, and is on the faculty of Drexel University in Philadelphia. Bruce is president of the musical instrument company, Kydd Basses, which markets instruments he has designed, used by professional players around the world.

ATZILUT PERCUSSION GROUP

Yusef Tayoun: Scion of the famous Lebanese musical family and one of the few true dunduk virtuosi based in the U.S. He is known for his ability to fluidly shift through the entire range of classical Arab rhythm patterns with heart-stopping speed and precision. As the drummer of choice for a number of noteworthy musicians including Ferhat Alpar, Zakir Hussain, and Simon Shaheen, he has played in a wide range of concert stages, including Dag Hammerskjold Hall at the United Nations.

Jim Babb, middle eastern percussion, has a Western classical background, which he has augmented with studies in Arab classical and Indian music. He has been a regular with several Philadelphia area ensembles, including the E-tribe percussion band, Klingon Klezmer, and Atzilut.

Joseph Ruscitto, djembe and incidental percussion, is a multitalented artist who is active both as a musician and a videographer. In addition to his work with ATZILUT, he founded the jazz trio Triception, in which he arranges and performs on drum kit. As a hand percussionist, he performs Brazilian music with Samba Nosso and Al Brasil. Mr. Ruscitto has performed with tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussain, and Arabic oud master Simon Shaheen.

Lenny Seidman, tabla, is co-director of Spoken Hand Percussion Orchestra, which blends a spectrum of traditions into a new global rhythm language, director of the Lenny Seidman Tabla Choir, and is an original member of Atzilut. He has performed throughout the Americas and abroad with numerous artists including Zakir Hussain, Kenny Endo, Simon Shaheen, Michael Daugherty, Dewa Puta Berata, Butch Morris, Yair Dalal, Philip Hamilton & Kenny Muhmmer, and is on tour with hip hop choreographer Rennie Harris PureMovement's new piece, "Facing Mekka". He has been guest artist and tabla instructor at Swarthmore College since 1998. Lenny is World Music and Jazz curator at the Painted Bride Art Center in Philadelphia.
EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS/RESIDENCIES

ATZILUT: CONCERTS FOR PEACE conducts a wide range of educational events: informational sessions, training workshops, and community residencies for groups of all ages. An educational program includes the historical background of our shared music in its development with demographic changes, accompanied by appropriate examples. Participation is encouraged! In addition to singing some basic melodic patterns, everyone is encouraged to bring a hand drum or other percussion instrument; if needed we can bring some extra drums.

Fees: $1500 per workshop. Residencies to be worked out per event. For more information and to develop a program that would fit your curatorial vision, please contact Jack Kessler, director, at any of the above media.
Dear Jack:

I wanted to take a moment to express my appreciation for the wonderful performance of Atzilut at Chautauqua. The musical talent of the players is on a very high level, and certainly added to the richness of the presentation. The sharing of Arab and Jewish musical traditions enhanced our theme of the greater Middle East. It was fun, quality, and entertaining. You definitely earned that standing ovation!

Many thanks for a great presentation and all the best in your future artistic endeavors.

Cordially,

Marty Merkley
Vice President & Director of Programming

MWM/ams
Mr. Jack Kessler  
Atzilut – Concert for Peace  
228 West Hortter St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19119

Dear Mr. Kessler:

On behalf of the City of El Paso Arts Resources Department, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the wonderful performance Atzilut gave at the Music Under the Stars World Festival. Attendance for the performance far exceeded our expectations with an estimated 8,000 people.

The lecture/demonstration for the students at the El Paso Jewish Community Center was one of the best our department has ever sponsored. Both the children and faculty thoroughly enjoyed the event.

We are delighted that the City of El Paso had the opportunity to present such an interesting, high-quality and entertaining ensemble, and look forward to working with you again in the future.

Sincerely,

Alejandrina Drew

AD/lg

Two Civic Center Plaza • El Paso, Texas 79901-1124 • (915) 541-4481, voice • (915) 541-4902, FAX • (915) 541-4356, TDD • Visit us at www.artsresources.org
Jack Kessler
Director
Atzilut
228 West Hortter St.
Philadelphia, PA 19119

Dear Jack,

On behalf of Jubilee Community Arts, The Arnstein Jewish Community Center, The Ramallah Palestine Club and The Local Alliance for MidEast Peace, let me extend my most heartfelt thanks for your two-day residency here in Knoxville with our "Concert for Peace in the Middle East" project April 23-24.

We appreciate your steadfastness through more than a year of negotiating and waiting as plans took final shape. We especially appreciate that you so fully recognized the importance and value of the complex process of building relationships among the many communities involved in this project. This was perhaps best typified by your informal performance on the day following the concert at the restaurant owned by a prominent member of the Palestinian community here--such a gesture can only come from those in tune with the source of their artistry and its meaning in daily life.

I know that it must have been a risk to travel so far to perform for a new audience and to rely upon strangers for food and lodging. How wonderful it was, given that context, to witness the building of such powerful mutual feelings between yourselves and your audience. As one audience member put it, "it was like a gulf one thousand years wide had been bridged." Truly, music was the soul's language that night.

The sponsoring organizations unanimously agree that this project successfully met our goals of bringing Arab, Jewish, Palestinian and Israeli communities together in a deeply spiritual, cultural celebration.

With much gratitude for your fine artistry,

Melody Reeves
Executive Director
Jubilee Community Arts
Dear Hazzan Kessler:

It was a pleasure welcoming your performance in our International Festival and we hope that all the concerts will be as successful as yours in Portimão and Tavira. In fact we have heard the best critics about your performances.

We appreciate and thank you for your wonderful music and the high level of the artists. You expressed our philosophy of international cooperation, and we hope to have you join us again in the future.

Again, many thanks.
Best regards,

Elisabete Maximo
Coordinator
Atzilut klezmershack review

Philadelphia cantor Jack Kessler is involved in music that ranges from nusakh to Yiddish folk music to the Middle Eastern modes of Atzilut. On this latest group project, he has enlisted Maurice Chedid on Arabic vocals and oud, taking a fusion of Jewish and Arabic music that dates back over 1000 years and updating it in a modern American context.

Chedid’s warm voice starts things off very well with the CD opener, "Fo Rusnic". Although the ensemble is perhaps more percussion-heavy and lacks the massed violins of classic Arabic music, the result is still interesting and well-done. Kessler’s powerful sonorities provide an interesting, more trance-ish counter to Chedid’s warmth. It is especially interesting is that this is not traditional North African Jewish nusakh, but rather (to my inexpert ears) very Indian subcontinent-influenced melody. So we have the fascinating, and very pleasant (if anachronistic?) listening of traditional Arabic music fused with Jewish Indian chant. Thus, "Shira" starts off with a gentle, Arabic sounding melody, and then as Kessler’s voice gains strength, moves into a more repetitive, strongly sung meditation mode, punctuated by deliciously gentle oud solo. The joining together of both men’s voices on the final "Hinei Mah Tov/Ma Achla’a" is so good that I only wish they did it more often on the CD.

Atzilut might best be thought of as a Jewish spiritual jam band. The fusion with more traditional Arabic singing is quite invigorating and (of course!) fits perfectly and sends a message very worth pondering at a time when we are once again more hopeful about the prospect for peace in the Middle East. As we listen to Kessler’s deep baritone intone "G-d is in this place and I did not know" (Yesh Adonai ba-makom ha-zeh/v’anokhi lo yadati) that seems especially poignant. As the instrumentals take their breaks jamming with his voice, both peace and G-d’s presence seems especially credible and beautiful a notion.
Student comments for Atzilut Concerts for Peace

---Whether Christian, Jewish, Muslim or even pagan-this music lifts the soul!

---On a scale of 1 to Awesome, this rocked my world. I am not worthy of such earthy sensuous music that seems to resonate with the very essence of joy and happiness. Hallelujah!

---You find a word better than EXCELLENT I will tell you what the music felt like to me!

---This was the best ever. It was amazingly powerful in its message and the music was indescribable. I had so much fun listening and watching this high energy and highly impacting performance. They need to return & people in the crowd need rhythm.

---Awesome! This style of music was completely new to me & I loved it! The show was very entertaining & allowed me to expand my horizons. Bring them back!

---Excellent! The group's enthusiasm for their music, sharing it, and for teaching others about it made this one of the most enjoyable convos of the year!

---Wow. What amazing musical talent. It is truly something great to experience music from other cultures! I also am pleased to see a musical ensemble with such a great message-when we put our differences aside and come together beautiful things are created. It is a message that transcends time, race, ethnicity, religion and ideology. Thanks for a wonderful experience!

---This is what concerts are about, rockin' music that you'd never hear anywhere else. Shame on western culture for not allowing people to even bob their heads to such great music with an important message. Or shame on people for not appreciating anything but 4/4 time.
Atzilut, a Arab-Jewish folk music group

You might say Jack Kessler and his band mates in Atzilut, [Atzee-loo] an Arab-Jewish folk music group from Philadelphia, are on a mission. If we look at history, Kessler, a freelance cantor from Mount Airy, contends we find long stretches of time when Arab and Jews lived peacefully together and even collaborated together. Atzilut was formed in 1991 at the Middle East Restaurant in Philadelphia where Arab and Jewish musicians gathered together. They will perform on Saturday, April 24, at 12:30 p.m. at the New Jersey Folk Festival at Woodlawn on the Douglass College campus. "We're doing it for fun," Kessler says in a phone interview from Philadelphia, "but it's very important for our time, because of all the horrible things that have happened in the Middle East in the last 100 years. What we're doing as musicians is, we've done this before, we can do it again, and we're doing it now." In Europe his group is known as the Middle East Peace Orchestra and has toured several times in Scandinavia, Germany, France, and Denmark.

In southern Spain, from about 900 A.D. to 1492, says Kessler, "there was a very large Jewish community that was part of the Arab high culture of southern Spain, and there was tremendous cross-fertilization and cross-culturalization. Musicians from both cultures performed together all the time, and Jewish artists often used Arabic characters to write poetry. This all came to an end with the wars of the Catholic monarchs of the north, and in 1492, with the complete defeat of the Arab armies and the eventual expulsion of all the Arabs and Jews from Spain."

In concert, Kessler says, you won't find any members of Atzilut making speeches about how nice co-existence can be, but rather, "what we try to do is talk and just do the thing itself, which is musicians working together, creating something beautiful." M唐山, a member of Atzilut, says the band's focus on traditional Jewish and Arabic music has helped the group "create an amalgam of that style with Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Jewish music."

In 1990 and 1991 at the Middle East Restaurant, "We were performing Jewish music with a Middle Eastern ensemble and we did that for a few years. We heard a lot of similarity with the music, because Jewish Middle Eastern music and Arabic music have a lot in common. We tried out a few concerts and it was pretty successful for a number of years," he says. Initially, it was one band of Arabs and one band of Jews, with both performing together on stage at the end of the show, Kessler says.

"It dawned on us one night, and it felt silly," he says. "Let's all stay on stage together, all the time." And that was the beginning of Atzilut, as a concert for peace, as a brotherhood of Jewish and Arabic music and musicians," says Kessler.

"One day in 2004, I got a call from Henny Goldschmidt in Copenhagen," Kessler says. "He describes Goldschmidt as a phenomenal oboe player who started an ensemble that combined Arab and Jewish musicians in Denmark.

"But Europe is different, and some of the Arab musicians were afraid for their livelihoods if they were known to play with Jewish musicians," Kessler explains. "So he made a trip to Philadelphia, followed by a film crew, and we had him sit in with us." As a result of the band's ongoing friendship with Goldschmidt, "We've had a few Scandinavian tours, a tour of Germany and of France last summer," Kessler says.

"As for the music itself, it makes use of ancient drums like the tabla and dundie, old guitar-like instruments, the oud, and both Kessler's Hebrew singing and Credid's Arabic singing. "Our material is strongly based on traditional Arabic and Jewish folk music," he says. "Some of our stuff is original material but it's all written in that style." The band has an original piece, "Yasch-ad-Sawaya," that will perform at folk festival. The title means 'together.' In Hebrew and Arabic, and the song is sung in Hebrew and Arabic, although it is sung in Hebrew.

Kessler introduces each piece and provides some background, since none of the singing is in English. "Basically the text of the piece is: we all work the fields together, we have to work the fields together, and in God's fields, there's room for everybody."

"Not surprisingly for Atzilut, as an act, there's a jazzy, improvisational edge to what we do," says Kessler, "though there might be less of that at the folk festival, where time constraints are always a concern. 'There will be some material where people can just get up and dance, and then there is some material where audience participation is encouraged and invited. My job is to give some background on the pieces we play, and Maurice just stands there being cool while I do all the talking."

"If you know Arabic or Hebrew, you're not going to understand the language very much, which is why we do need to give a little bit of an introduction as to what each piece is about," he says. "You are going to hear an ensemble that is a bunch of strong personalities who are there to play, so everybody should get caught up in the good vibrations and infectious spirit that we put out."