

Merkin Concert Hall at Kaufman Center Presents

ISRAEL AT 60!  
Dialects: Israeli Jazz & Klezmer  
Frank London's Klezmer Brass All Stars & Pianist Omer Klein

Thursday, September 18, 2008 at 8:00pm

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"The mystical high priest of New Wave Avant-Klez jazz, Frank London...defies phony political barriers and exposes solid musical commonalities among Gypsy, Jewish and Arabic music."

– *All About Jazz*

"...at 25, Klein has the potential to achieve something much rarer for a jazz musician: popularity. What he plays is exotic yet accessible and makes you feel fully alive."

– *JazzTimes*

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August 5, 2008 – In the first of three concerts in celebration of Israel's 60th birthday, Merkin Concert Hall presents two of the best examples of the new face of American/Israeli music. Trumpeter **Frank London** recovers the lost sounds of klezmer, taking the music back to its 19th-century roots with the Klezmer Brass All Stars. Pianist **Omer Klein**, a rising star in the Israeli/New York jazz movement, will offer a program of his deeply melodic, utterly original compositions, tinged with the sounds of the Middle East. Joining Klein will be bassist **Omer Avital** and **Ziv Ravitz** on drums, and a special piece with string quartet commissioned specifically for this performance.

**About Frank London's Klezmer Brass All Stars**

In the early 19th century, before the transformation of Israel, the deterioration of the old traditions of Yiddish and East European Jews, and the migration to the new world in search of new beginnings, there was a notorious band known as "Di Shikere Kapelye"— "The Inebriated Orchestra" (also known as the "Band of Drunks"). This group of musicians gave birth to the soul of Klezmer and gave Klezmerim their enduring bad reputation. They were often asked to perform but never invited to stay, perhaps due to the spontaneous musical collaborations in the main plazas of various towns after all the bars and pubs had closed. As the group became better known for its rebellious behavior than its musical talents, many members separated from the original band and formed new groups that mixed dizzy sounds and undefined dances. Their far-reaching repertoire strongly influenced the future of klezmerim.

The original styles of klezmerim did not surface until a number of extraordinary brass musicians were brought together by Frank London. The group met at New York City's Knitting Factory to combine their knowledge, history and talents and create magical sounds together. They threw back several

cocktails in memory of the old traditions and uncovered secrets and tales of the incredible lost sounds, creating Frank London's Klezmer Brass All Stars.

### About Omer Klein

Pianist and composer Omer Klein is gaining international recognition for his performances and recordings, as a bandleader and a sideman. At 25, he is the newest force in the Israeli-New York City Jazz movement. The *Village Voice* praised his originality: "on the new 'Introducing Omer Klein', he indicates that he's arrived without echoing any of the masters—an accomplishment these days." *All About Jazz* noted his "tumultuous lyricism," and *Jazz Times* described his compositions as "folk songs for the melting pot of the new millennium, with strong Middle Eastern and African elements." Klein is performing extensively worldwide. Aside from leading his own group, he has worked with jazz artists such as Omer Avital, Joel Frahm, Avishai Cohen, Jason Lindner and Meshell Ndegeocello, and collaborated with Israeli music icons like Yehudit Ravitz and Alon Oleartchik.

Hailed by *Downbeat* magazine as "...a mouthwatering glimpse of burgeoning talent," Klein's record releases, "Introducing Omer Klein," (Smalls, 2008) and "Duet" (Fresh Sound, 2007), have been critically acclaimed. Klein has performed at the Getxo, Winter Jazz, Duke Ellington, Red Sea, Jazz Masters, Zsambek, Veviers, Plaza de Las Artes CNA, and Israel Festivals and prestigious NY venues such as Carnegie Hall, Iridium, Jazz Standard, Smalls, Joe's Pub, The Jazz Gallery and Knitting Factory among others.

Klein is an original musical thinker who combines the analytical with the intuitive. As an educator, he instructed ensembles at the New England Conservatory of music and the Thelma Yellin High School and gave master classes at the Maastricht Conservatory in Holland, the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance and the Rimon School of Jazz and Contemporary Music. Klein's awards include first prize at the Jazz Hoilaart Contest in Belgium, first prize at the International Chamber Music Competition of New England, Ascaplus award, Downbeat student music award and second prize at the Heinrich Heine Composition Contest in Tel Aviv. His live performances were broadcast by National Public Radio's Sound Check, KALW's West Coast Live, Israel's Voice of Music and GLZ Radio among others.

Born in Netanya, Israel in 1982, Klein graduated from the prestigious Thelma Yellin High School of the Arts and was acknowledged by Israel's Ministry of Culture as an "Outstanding Musician." He studied at the New England Conservatory in Boston with Danilo Perez, Ran Blake, Alexander Korsantie, George Garzone and Jerry Bergonzi. He currently studies composition with David Rosenmeyer and classical piano with Benjamin Hochman, through the generous support of the America Israel Cultural Foundation.

Merkin Concert Hall's ISRAEL AT 60 series celebrates the 60th anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel with Israeli and Jewish music of all kinds—cantorial, contemporary classical and jazz. Upcoming concerts this season include: Prologue & Epilogues: Israel Moves On, October 28, including clarinetist Charles Neidich; and on May 4th, 2009, Shir Artistry: The Modern Cantor with cantors Richard Botton (host), David Lefkowitz, Mo Glazman and Jill Abramson exploring the many faces of Jewish music and the modern cantor.



This concert is partially underwritten by the America-Israel Cultural Foundation in celebration of Israel's 60th birthday.

The America-Israel Cultural Foundation supports and develops artistic life in Israel by awarding scholarships and grants to young artists and cultural institutions. AICF is the largest private supporter of artistic study in Israel, having awarded more than 11,000 scholarships since 1939. AICF has been a vital partner in the development of the Israel Museum, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, Habima Theatre, Sam Spiegel Film School, and the Jerusalem Music Centre. Renowned artists nurtured at a young age by AICF include Itzhak Perlman, Pinchas Zukerman, Menashe Kadishman, Michal Rovner, Ohad Naharin, Rina Yerushalami, and Daniel Libeskind. AICF also promotes Israeli culture through events and literature, helping shape Israel's image throughout the world.

Listings Information:  
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ISRAEL AT 60!  
Dialects: Israeli Jazz & Klezmer  
Frank London's Klezmer Brass All-Stars  
Pianist Omer Klein  
Thursday, September 18, 2008 at 8:00pm  
129 West 67th Street (between Broadway and Amsterdam)  
Tickets at 212 501 3330 or [www.kaufman-center.org](http://www.kaufman-center.org)  
Single tickets are \$30 (members \$20)  
EDITORS: Please refer to the series by its name, ISRAEL AT 60!,  
and its location, Merkin Concert Hall at Kaufman Center  
Press Only: Hi-res photos for download at <http://kaufman-center.org/press/image-library>

#### About Merkin Concert Hall

Renowned for its acoustics, accessibility and innovative programming, the recently renovated Merkin Concert Hall is the recipient of multiple awards for adventurous programming, most recently from ASCAP/Chamber Music America in 2002–03. The Hall is a division of Kaufman Center, which also includes Lucy Moses School (a community arts school) and Special Music School (a New York City public school for musically gifted children). A not-for-profit organization founded in 1952, Kaufman Center occupies its own facility, the award-winning Goodman House, located in Manhattan's Lincoln Square arts district. The Center is an unsurpassed cultural resource where people of all ages can experience the joy of artistic creation, expression and appreciation.

Kaufman Center's presentations in Merkin Concert Hall are made possible in part by institutional support from the Amphion Foundation, BMI Foundation, Inc., Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, Edward T. Cone Foundation, Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Barbara Bell Cumming Foundation, The Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, Fink Foundation, Inc., Ann & Gordon Getty Foundation, Harkness Foundation for Dance, Herman Goldman Foundation, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, The Florence Gould Foundation, The Edith Meiser Foundation, Rodgers and Hammerstein Foundation, Fan Fox and Leslie R. Samuels Foundation, Adolph and Ruth Schnurmacher Foundation, Starr Foundation, Phyllis Fox and George Sternlieb Foundation, and with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, a State Agency and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

