

Mp3 Michael Levy - Lyre Of The Levites

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Restoring the healing, meditative, mystical sounds of the ancient Hebrew Temple Lyre, after almost 2000 years of silence. 12 MP3 Songs in this album (35:04) ! Related styles: WORLD: Klezmer, SPIRITUAL: Jewish Folk People who are interested in Itzhak Perlman The Klezmer Conservatory Band The Klezmatics should consider this download. Details: INTRODUCTION "Lyre of the Levites" is my second album of mystical, ancient lyre music, following my debut album, "King David's Lyre; Echoes of Ancient Israel"... Both of my albums are dedicated to restoring again, for the first time in almost 2000 years, the mystical, ancient sounds of the "Kinnor"; the Hebrew Temple Lyre, once played by my very own, very ancient Levite ancestors in the Courtyard of the Temple of Jerusalem, to accompany the legendary singing of the Levitical Choir (II Chronicles 5:12). The truly ancient Jewish Kinnor, was the very first lyre to be mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, where it is now commonly mistranslated as "harp" - Jubal was the son of Lamech and Adah, a brother of Jabal, a descendant of Cain, and according to the Bible, "he was the ancestor of all who played the lyre and pipe" (Genesis 4:21). The Biblical Kinnor Lyre was the actual "Harp of David", once played by King David himself, 3000 years ago, as he danced before the very Ark of the Covenant (II Samuel 6:5) After almost 2000 years of empty, desolate silence, after the tragic destruction of the Jewish Temple by the Roman Legions under Titus in 70 C.E, the haunting strains of the ancient Jewish Kinnor can now finally be heard, once again! The Kinnor on which I am playing, is of the Second Temple Era design; from the actual time of Jesus. The design of my replica instrument is based illustrations of the Kinnor depicted on ancient Jewish coins minted at the time of the Simon Bar Kochba Revolt against the Roman occupation in Israel (photographs of such coins can be seen on my Myspace site). The design of the Jewish Temple Lyre in the time of Jesus is remarkably similar to the ancient Greek Kithara; the large wooden lyre played by the professional musicians of ancient Greece. This could possibly demonstrate the Hellenistic influence on Jewish culture at this time? Indeed, it is know that Herod often imported Greek musicians for the various festivals in Jerusalem. THE CHOICE OF REPERTOIRE FOR THE ALBUM "Lyre of the Levites" uniquely features arrangements of primarily traditional melodies from the Jewish Klezmer repertoire arranged for solo Levitical Lyre - the concept of

the musical performances on this album, are meant to be evocations, not reconstructions, of the sounds playing techniques that were possible on the ten-stringed Kinnor of the Bible; there are sadly too few unambiguously notated melodies from antiquity to make an album of "note for note" reconstructions of ancient instrumental solo lyre music a feasible reality. However, as we shall discover, the traditional Jewish scales/modes in which these pieces are actually written, may well have roots which stretch deeply back to these distant, mystically remote Biblical times!

THE ANCIENT ORIGINS OF TRADITIONAL JEWISH MUSICAL SCALES?

As I mentioned above, regarding the tuning of the Kinnor, I have undertaken a great deal of research and "experimental musical archaeology", in my extensive efforts to find an "authentic" tuning; I have found that the ancient Jewish Chazanut Modes (i.e. the modes used in cantorial singing in the synagogue) fit the 10 strings of the Kinnor perfectly! All the instrumental Klezmer modes found in Jewish music are in turn derived mainly from these Chazanut modes, which are used in the cantorial singing in the synagogue. It seems reasonable, therefore, to assume, that the ultimate origins of the modes used in singing in the synagogue, must in turn, have been influenced, to at least some extent, by the ancestral, aural memory of the singing of the Levitical Choir in the Temple of Jerusalem. Since it was primarily the Kinnor Lyres which accompanied these Levitical singers, I find it logical to infer, that a tuning derived from either the Chazanut modes or the instrumental Klezmer modes found in all traditional Jewish music to the present day, would be a fairly "authentic" inference as to what some of the original tunings of the Biblical Kinnor might have sounded like. There are traditional Jewish Klezmer Modes used in the album. These are the the "Ahava Raba" Mode: EFG#ABCDE (tracks 1,2,4,5,7,8,10 11), the "Misheberakh" Mode: EF#GA#BC#DE (track 3), the "Melodic Minor" Mode: EF#GABCDE (tracks 6,9 12). The diverse range of lyre-playing techniques I have used in the creation of this album, are all authentically based upon ancient lyre playing techniques which have amazingly survived to the present day, and which can still be heard in parts Egypt and East Africa. These techniques includes alternating between guitar-like, plectrum-plucked tones in the right hand and harp-like, finger-plucked tones in the left hand; which also sometimes includes providing basic harmony below the melodic line. The ancient Greek Kithara lyre may well have been played in a similar fashion, as can be inferred from ancient illustrations of Kithara players, wh hold a plectrum in the right hand, whilst their left hand appears to pluck the strings with the fingers. This can be seen in this unique video clip of a performance of ancient Greek music, by Michael Atherton Melimos:

uk.youtube.com/watch?v=piYpvpBgwRs I also ornament the melodic lines with plentiful tremolo accompaniments; a style which has also survived to the present day, as can be heard in the lyre-playing techniques of the traditional "Simsimiyya" lyre players of Port Said, in Egypt:

uk.youtube.com/watch?v=A1d2vmAWqyw THE 12 TRACKS There are 12 tracks to the album - corresponding to the 12 Gems which once adorned the Breastplate of the Levitical Priests of the Temple of Jerusalem. These 12 Gems represented the 12 Tribes of Israel... These 12 tracks consist of my arrangements for solo Levitical Lyre, of many "Musical Gems" from the traditional Klezmer repertoire, the famous traditional Jewish Wedding song "Chusen Kalah Mazeltov" ("Congratulations, Bride Groom", track 3) which also includes several beautiful Jewish folk songs, such as "Artza Alinu" ("We Ascended to the Land", track 6) Naomi Shemer's "Yerushalayim Shel Zahav" ("Jerusalem of Gold", track 12), made forever immortal, by the legendary singing of it by the late great Ofra Haza. This song has since become known as Israel's "Second National Anthem". ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS Special thanks is due to Biblical Musicologist, John Wheeler, for all the fascinating information on ancient lyre-playing techniques, and for invaluable information on the historical background to the creation of this album:

rakkav.com/biblemusic/index2.htm Above all, special thanks to all the many loyal subscribers to both my Youtube Myspace Musicians Channels; it is thanks to all your support, comments, constructive criticism and encouragement over the last 18 months, which has finally transformed my dream of creating my two albums, dedicated to restoring the sound of the ancient Jewish Kinnor Lyre of my Levite ancestors, a reality! I am, always will be, grateful to you all, each every one of you... Shalom! Michael Levy

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