



**YALE STROM**

---

**PRESS KIT**

## BIOGRAPHY

**YALE STROM** is a pioneer among revivalists in conducting extensive field research in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans among the Jewish and Roma communities. Initially, his work focused primarily on the use and performance of klezmer music among these two groups. Gradually, his focus increased to examining all aspects of their culture, from post-World War II to the present. From more than 3 decades and 75 such research expeditions, Strom has become the world's leading ethnographer-artist of klezmer music and history.

His klezmer research was instrumental in helping form the repertoires of his klezmer band, Hot Pstromi in New York and San Diego. Since Strom's first band began in 1982, he has been composing his own New Jewish music, which combines klezmer with Khasidic nigunim, Romani, jazz, classical, Balkan and Sephardic motifs. These compositions range from quartets to a symphony, which premiered with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra.

He composed original music for the Denver Center production of Tony Kushner's *The Dybbuk*. He composed all the New Jewish music for the National Public Radio series *Fiddlers, Philosophers & Fools: Jewish Short Stories from the Old World to the New*, hosted by Leonard Nimoy, he composed all the music for the audio drama





## BIOGRAPHY

The Witches of Lublin starring Tovah Feldshuh, the documentary film Shared Legacies as well as other film and dance scores. Some of his Jewish "classical" pieces he has composed are his string quartet In "The Memory Of..." based upon lost cantorial music Strom found in an abandoned synagogue in Carei, Romania and his solo violin piece Bessarabia Suite he composed for violin virtuoso Rachel Barton Pine and his choral cantata Uncle Albert and Brother Franz where he also wrote the lyrics. In spring 2023 Strom's newest commission for jazz violinist Sara Caswell will premier with the ensemble Art of Elan. Strom is also one of the only top composers of Jewish music to carry on the tradition of writing original songs, with Yiddish lyrics, about humanitarian and social issues. His fifteen CDs run the gamut from traditional klezmer to "new" Jewish music. Some of his CDs are Borsht with Bread Brothers (Arc Music), Absolute Klezmer Vol. 2 (Transcontinental Music) and his new CD that was recorded in the "Shakh" Synagogue (15th c.) in Halseov, Czech Republic called Live from the Shakh (2023). Here Strom has taken traditional folk melodies of different minorities (Roma, Livonians, Wallachians, etc.) that lived amongst the Jews in Central and Eastern Europe and added improvisation. Strom has performed with many world-renowned musicians including Andy Statman, Mark Dresser, Marty Ehrlich, Mark O'Connor, Lulo Reinhardt, Alicia Svigals, Mike Block, Salman Ahmad, Samir Chatterjee, Rachel Barton Pine, Sarah Caswell, Greg Wall, David Wallace, Amos Hoffman, David Buchbinder, Jeremy Kittel, et al.

Yale Strom was the first klezmer musician to perform at the United Nations General Assembly. Strom's research has also resulted in photo documentary books, documentary films, as well as CD recordings. He is the author of "The Book of Klezmer: The History, The Music, The Folklore" (2002) is a 400-page history with original photos and sheet music gathered by Strom during his sixty-plus ethnographic trips to Central and Eastern Europe. "A Wandering Feast: A Journey through the Jewish Culture of Eastern Europe" (2005) written in collaboration with his

## BIOGRAPHY

Elizabeth Schwartz, is part cookbook, part travelogue. He is also the author of "The Absolutely Complete Klezmer Songbook" (2006). His photo-documentary books for middle-grade and young readers have received rave reviews and his first children's book based upon a true klezmer story "The Wedding That Saved A Town" was published in September 2008 and was chosen as "Best Children's Illustrated Book" by the San Diego Book Association 2009. He wrote the first biography on the "Benny Goodman of klezmer clarinet "Dave Tarras: The King of Klezmer" (2011) and his instructional book "SHPIL! The Art of Playing Klezmer" (2014). Strom's second children's illustrated book came out in 2020 called in English/Yiddish and is called "Shloyml Boyml and His Lucky Dreydl" the next in the series out in 2023 is called "Shloyml Boyml and His Purim Adventure".

He has co-written two award-winning audio dramas The Witches of Lublin (2011) and Debs in Canton (2020) that have been aired on many NPR stations and is distributed by Blackstone Publishing. He has directed nine award-winning documentary films "At the Crossroads", "The Last Klezmer, and Carpati: 50 miles, 50 Years. L'Chaim Comrade Stalin!", "Klezmer on Fish Street", "A Man From Munkacs: Gypsy Klezmer", "A Great Day on Eldridge Street", "A Letter to Wedgwood: The Life of Gabriella Hartstein Auspitz", "American Socialist: The Life and Times of Eugene Victor Debs" (2018) and his most recent film is "Recordially Yours: Lou Curtiss" (2023). He was the first documentary filmmaker in history to be given his own run at Lincoln Center's prestigious Walter Reade Theatre, where "The Last Klezmer" broke previous box office records; this record was only exceeded by Carpati's run there. The Last Klezmer was short-listed for an Academy Award nomination, "Klezmer on Fish Street" won the 2003 Palm Beach International Film festival's Special Jury Selection award, American Socialist won the 2017 Audience Choice Best Film award at the Workers United Film Festival in NYC, and the Best Film Soundtrack from the California Music and Video Film Festival for "Recordially Yours: Lou Curtiss."

## BIOGRAPHY

His solo photo exhibit *The Rom of Ridgewood*, about Gypsy communities in Queens, New York, was mounted at the Queens Museum of Art; *Fragments: Jewish Life in Eastern Europe 1981-2007* opened at the Anne Frank Center in NYC (fall 2014) and traveled to UCLA, San Diego, Prague and Brno. He has had numerous solo and group photo exhibits (depicting Jewish and Romani life) throughout the U.S. and Europe. His photos are part of many collections including Beth Hatefusoht, The Skirball Museum, The Jewish Museum of NYC, The Frankfurt Jewish Museum, Jewish Museum of Prague and Brno, and The Museum of Photographic Arts in San Diego.

Strom was the guest curator for the Eldridge Street Project's *A Great Day on Eldridge Street*-- a musical and photographic celebration of the newly restored Eldridge Street Synagogue that took place on October 12-14, 2007. *A Great Day on Eldridge Street* is now an iconic photo of capturing some of the greatest Yiddish singers and klezmer musicians ever gathered in one spot.

Strom's original stage play "*From Man, to Beast, to Crawling Thing*", was given a fully-staged workshop in June of 2001 by the Streisand Festival (La Jolla, California). His play *The Education of Hershl Grynszpan* has been workshopped in theatres in San Diego Rep, Palm Beach, Los Angeles and in New York City. Strom was featured in the May 31, 2004 issue of *Time Magazine* for this play, and the scholarship behind it. Strom's newest theatrical project (with playwright/director Todd Salovey) is a musical about the life of the artists Marc and Bella Chagall.

Strom has lectured extensively throughout the United States and Europe, Hong Kong, and taught at NYU for 4 years, where he created the course "*Artist-Ethnographer Expeditions*". Strom was appointed Artist-in-Residence and professor in the Jewish Studies Program at San Diego State University (2006-2020) and is currently teaching in the Music Dept.





# HEADSHOTS



# HEADSHOTS





