

For Immediate Release

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Jews on Vinyl **Audio Gems Tell the Story of Jews in America** Retro-Fabulous, Mid-Century Show Has NYC Premiere at YU Museum



New York, NY (July 21, 2011) – Born of dingy attics, roadside yard sales and dusty archives is an extraordinary array of Jewish recorded music from the 1940s through the 1980s, brought to stereophonic life in the ***Jews on Vinyl*** exhibition at Yeshiva University Museum (YUM) from July 24, 2011 – January 8, 2012.

The introduction of traditional standards like *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Eli, Eli* into the American mainstream are due to some unexpected interpreters like The Temptations, Johnny Mathis, Louis Prima, Eartha Kitt, and Herbie Mann. In this experiential exhibition, visitors are transported to the days of turntables by relaxing in authentically recreated mid-20th Century living rooms while listening to the sounds of the time.

Jews on Vinyl is based on the book *And You Shall Know Us by the Trail of Our Vinyl: The Jewish Past as Told by the Records We Have Loved and Lost* (Crown Press, 2008) by Roger Bennett and Josh Kun, and marks the New York premiere of this highly acclaimed exhibition organized by the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco.

What started out as a mutual affinity for kitschy Jewish album covers (think Neil Diamond baring his chest hair on the cover of *Hot August Night* or Barbara Streisand in hot pants on the cover of *Streisand Superman*) became a quest for identity, history and customs in the sleeves of LPs. To this end, Bennett and Kun embarked on an intriguing journey, scouring the world to collect thousands of albums, and pieced together these scratched, once-loved and now-forgotten audio gems to tell a vibrant tale: How Jewish culture became mainstream American culture.

“For the Boomer and older generations, many of these album covers will evoke instantaneous recognition and a whole host of memories; here is the soundtrack of their past,” reflects Dr. Jacob Wisse, director of YUM. “For younger visitors, the music and LP covers present a fascinating, enjoyable and enlightening glimpse into the recent American Jewish past. *Jews on Vinyl* has great artistic, historical and sociological value, and appeal for all audiences.

Featuring music, comedy, storytelling, and other hybrid sounds, *Jews on Vinyl* reflects a rich heritage and raises important questions about the evolution of tradition and cultural assimilation in America's melting pot. Much of the music is no longer available in any format and, through this exhibition, audiences will have the unprecedented opportunity to experience forgotten moments in Jewish-American pop history.

At the heart of the exhibition are four 1950's style suburban living room vignettes where visitors can sit comfortably and hear MP3 sound clips from listening stations in the era of their surroundings. A wall-size installation features facsimiles of the records in the exhibition and album covers corresponding to a soundtrack of highlights played throughout the space are projected on an adjacent wall.

Throughout the show, YUM will offer a series of programs designed to delve deeper into the various genres represented in the exhibition and to provide historical and cultural context to the listening experience. For more information, visit www.yumuseum.org.

Location:

Yeshiva University Museum
15 West 16th Street
New York, NY 10011
212-294-8330
<http://www.yumuseum.org>

Hours:

Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday: 11 am – 5 pm; Monday: 5 pm – 8 pm (FREE); Wednesday: 11 am – 8 pm (FREE 5 – 8 pm); Friday: 11 am – 2:30 pm (FREE)

Admission:

Adults: \$8; Seniors and Students: \$6; Members and Children under 5: Free; Yeshiva University Faculty, Administration and Students: Free (with valid ID)

Images from L: Irving Fields Trio, *Bagels and Bongos*. Decca, 1959; The Barry Sisters, *Shalom*. Roulette, 1962; Harvey Jacobs, D.J. Martin, Victor Goldring, *Mrs. Portnoy's Retort*. United Artists, 1969; Marty Allen and Steve Rossi, *Batman and Rubin*. Mercury, 1967. All images courtesy of Josh Kun and Roger Bennett.

Jews on Vinyl is organized by the Contemporary Jewish Museum with guest curators Roger Bennett and Josh Kun and made possible by the generous support of Kenneth and Anna Zankel. Additional support is provided by Howard Rice Nemerovski Canady Falk & Rabkin, a professional corporation. In New York, the exhibition is sponsored in part by The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies and by the Richard H. Holzer Memorial Foundation.

ABOUT YESHIVA UNIVERSITY MUSEUM

For more than 35 years, the Yeshiva University Museum has provided culturally diverse exhibitions and programming for the greater metropolitan area and beyond, as well as Yeshiva University students, faculty, and alumni. Its permanent collection includes more than 9,000 objects spanning over 3,000 years of Jewish history. The Museum also emphasizes teaching schoolchildren and adults of diverse backgrounds about Jewish culture through many varieties of interdisciplinary programs. Located at the Center for Jewish History, the Museum occupies four spacious galleries, a children's workshop center, and an outdoor sculpture garden.

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For further information about ***Jews on Vinyl***, to request an interview or a guided tour, please contact Valerie Peters at vlpcommunications@gmail.com or 917-328-6787.