FACULTY AND GUEST ARTIST

LECTURE-RECITAL

“Moonlight on the Ganges: Interpreting the Exotic in Early American Popular Song”

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Wednesday, October 24, 2001
8:00 p.m.
Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall
PROGRAM

I. The Xenophobic Songbook: An Introduction

**Queen Of Sheba** (1921)  
Lyrics: Frank Ross  
Music: Ted Lewis  
Amy Krivohlavek

**Moonlight On The Ganges** (1926)  
(an oriental foxtrot)  
Lyrics: Chester Wallace  
Music: Sherman Myers  
Amy Krivohlavek, Dennis Arrowsmith

II. I Dream of Djinni

**Dardanella** (1919)  
Lyrics: Fred Fisher  
Music: Felix Bernard and Johnny Black  
Benjamin Westbrook

**Hindustan** (1918)  
Lyrics and Music:  
Oliver G. Wallace and Harold Weeks  
Jonathan Morales

III. Land of the Rhyming Pun

**Ching-Chow-Chung** (1873)  
Lyrics and Music: C. Schultz  
Jonathan Morales

**I Want To Go To Tokio** (1914)  
Lyrics: Fred Fischer  
Music: Joe McCarthy  
Jonathan Morales

**Buddha** (1919)  
Lyrics: Ed Rose  
Music: Lew Pollack  
Amy Krivohlavek

**Ching-a Ling’s Jazz Bazaar** (1920)  
Lyrics: Howard Johnson  
Music: Ethel Bridges  
Benjamin Westbrook
Chong: He Come From Hong Kong (1919)  
Dennis Arrowsmith  

Lyrics and Music:  
Harold Weeks

INTERMISSION

IV. Fantasy Island

My Little Bimbo Down On  
The Bamboo Isle (1920)  
Benjamin Westbrook  
Lyrics: Grant Clarke  
Music: Walter Donaldson

Hawaiian Twilight (1920)  
Lyrics: Ray Sherwood  
Music: Carl D. Vandersloot  
Benjamin Westbrook, Jonathan Morales

Far Away In Honolulu  
(They’ve Got That Tango Craze) (1917)  
Dennis Arrowsmith, Amy Krivohlavek  
Lyrics and Music:  
“The Leightons” (Burt and Frank)

V. From the New World

Aurora Borie Alice (1909)  
Dennis Arrowsmith  
Lyrics: Walter Peirson, Jr.  
Music: Samuel K. Stinger, Jr.

Ma Afro-Mexican Queen (1903)  
Jonathan Morales  
Lyrics and Music: Sidney L. Perrin

Indian Dawn (1919)  
Amy Krivohlavek, Dereth Phillips, Benjamin Westbrook  
Lyrics: Charles O. Roos  
Music: J. S. Zamecnik

By The Bayou (2001)  
Thomas E. Jenkins, Karim Al-Zand  
Lyrics: Thomas E. Jenkins  
Music: Karim Al-Zand

Andrew Einhorn is pianist for all selections except the last.
This enterprise began some three years ago with a large, heavy package mailed by a long-time family friend. Karim Al-Zand and his roommate Tom Jenkins were pleasantly surprised to receive a large stack of historic sheet music in the mail and, over the next several weeks, spent many hours reading through the eclectic mix of pieces. As might be expected, a good bit of it consisted of eminently forgettable foxtrots, ballads, intermezzos, and dance numbers. But there were occasional classics in the bunch as well, tunes like Kern’s All The Things You Are and Berlin’s White Christmas. But just as prized (and just as interesting) were those few discoveries which were monumentally bad, songs that were remarkable principally for their staggering lack of taste. These musical creations proved fascinating. Ragtime numbers like Who Played Poker With Pocahontas (While John Smith Was Away?), and love songs like Please Tell Her I Stutter were, in their own way, revelatory. These songs were truly unforgettable — only not in the good way. Soon Al-Zand and Jenkins were hooked on the horrible strains and, with the help of Dereth Phillips, they searched archives, libraries, and antique stores, craving the next bad music fix. An innocent whimsy became an almost embarrassing addiction. Their bent for the bad culminated in a 1998 Boston recital entitled “Moonlight On The Ganges: An Evening Of The Worst Music Imaginable.” A year and a half later, the inevitable relapse resulted in the follow-up concert “Break The News Gently To Mother: A Musical Abomination.”

Eventually, Al-Zand and Jenkins noticed that this music — particularly the so-called “exotic” songs — was not only tasteless, but systematically so; there were subtler, more profound forces at work than the ignorance of individual tune-smiths. These Tin Pan Alley songs embodied the spirit of their age and were as much a product of historical circumstance as artistic impulse — perhaps even more so. The first three decades of the 20th century witnessed an unparalleled influx of immigrants into the United States; as the world grew smaller, Tin Pan Alley’s purview grew wider, as it tackled in song an ever-increasing jumble of places and rivers and peoples and wars. Now, almost a century later, this repertoire seems to us unenlightened, a product of a more sheltered nation. Though we poke fun at these songs, we also understand their cultural context. That understanding not only gives a sense of how far we have come as a nation, but also makes us all the more cognizant of cultural stereotyping which persists today — and which may very well be featured in a Moonlight On The Ganges concert in the year 2101.

Two important on-line music databases were the source for some of the sheet music presented this evening: the collection of Historic American Sheet Music at Duke University (http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/sheetmusic) and the Lester S. Levy Collection of Sheet Music at The Johns Hopkins University (http://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu). We would like to acknowledge both organizations and thank them for their dedication to preserving these priceless treasures of American culture (without regard to quality).