

crazy freilach

Five musicians, who have been dedicated to klezmer continually for now two decades. With great enthusiasm they commit themselves to contemporary klezmer music and Yiddish song, with the purpose of keeping this fantastic Yerushe (Yiddish for heritage) of eastern European Jews alive.

The term klezmer consists of the ancient biblical Hebrew words *kli* (tool, instrument) and *zemer* (melody, song), which literally translates into instrument of singing. Musicians playing this folk music, called *klezmerim*, are challenged with expressing the whole spectrum of human emotion through their instruments, from deepest sorrow to greatest ecstasy.

What we now know as klezmer, has its origins in the eastern European Shtetln. These are provincial towns with a high share of Jewish population, which developed in the late middle ages, when the Ashkenazim fled east from pogroms and displacement from the communities of central Europe. Not only did they bring their possessions, but also their traditions: making music at weddings and festivities, spiritual song in the synagogues and the typical Yiddish language. From 1884 to 1924, many eastern European Jews emigrated to America and especially to New York. In this melting pot, a new klezmer scene emerged, which was initially characterised by personalities such as the clarinettist Naftule Brandwein and the King of Klezmer, Dave Tarras. Through the cultural assimilation of the following generation, klezmer music slowly became somewhat forgotten. In the 50s it gained new traction through the newly arriving eastern European Hasidim. During the mid 80s, Giora Feidmann transformed klezmer into a kind of world music, which gained it renewed European awareness. Klezmer became “in” again.

Several concert tours to Israel, regular performances at the Leverkusener Jazztage (a jazzfestival in Leverkusen, Germany) as well as cooperations with the WDR and the Kölner Philharmonie have made the quintet famous, far beyond the city limits, and let their listeners take part in the colourful variety of this wonderful music. Hardly any other klezmer ensemble is so fascinated and passionate about searching for new sounds and musical ways. Through virtuoso elements, improvisations, Mediterranean melodies and casual beats and grooves, the traditional klezmer music is given its own particular charm. Combinations with other styles of music enable the band to create unexpected encounters and experiences. The musical maturity paired

with fascinating arrangements and the virtuosity of the individual musicians elevates the klezmer music to a new level and takes the listener into a mysterious world.

The ensemble has its origins in a thirty year old tradition of klezmer musicians from the Leverkusen City Music School, initiated by its director Jürgen Ohrem. For now ten years, the band has been going on its own way and most recently visited Israel in 2016 for a concert tour, with the help of the Leverkusener Freundeskreis Nazareth-Ilit (sister city organization Nazareth-Ilit).

masa (journey) - takes the audience on a journey through very different parts of the klezmer world: from Arabian rhythms, to jazzy sounds, from traditional arrangements to pop melodies, but also from the deep mourning of the Holocaust, to dances of joy.

Members :

Jeannine Engelen – Vocals

Simon Boos - Clarinet

Emma Fridman - Violin

Daniel Hessel - Bass

Julian Hilgert - Guitar