Metropolitan KLEZMER

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PHOTO: ANGELA JIMENEZ

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"With influences that range from old school Arabic music to Latin Jazz to Motown, Metropolitan Klezmer interprets aged Yiddish favorites with a mixture of tradition and irreverence. Don't worry if you've never heard of the accordion-rich, Eastern European genre of Klezmer. Led by percussionist Eve Sicular, the NYC-based eight-piece produces a sound that is not only exuberantly eclectic but also very danceable. Expect an eccentric cultural lesson from these modern-day purveyors of time-honored traditions."

–*Jen Bachman,* Flavorpill

"Fantastic players... excellent vocals... strength and diversity." **–*Scott Atkinson,* RootsWorld**

"Metropolitan Klezmer is anything but stereotypical, and nothing but terrific... One of the best klezmer bands in the world today." **–*Shaun Dale,* Cosmik Debris**

"One of the best traditional klezmer bands around... wildy variegated flavors... Clever, spirited and smart musicianship... Formidable."

–*George Robinson,* Jewish Week

"Delightfully rambunctious... hard-swinging... an outstanding group." **–Village Voice**

"As befits New York's best klezmer band, the music is breathtakingly good." **–Lucid Culture**

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Hailed as "one of the finest American klezmer bands" (*Songlines Magazine*), **METROPOLITAN KLEZMER** performs a vibrant range of musical treasure with astonishing agility and refreshing depth. Formed in 1994, this NYC-based octet has won two Outmusic Awards, embracing panoramic traditions as they play against stereotype. Combining the best of downtown and world music scenes, the band shifts effortlessly from rollicking to ethereal to swingingly cosmopolitan, delighting audiences worldwide. Lesser-known folk gems and dance frolics, alluring vintage tango, transcendent songs of love, lullaby and protest, entrancing original repertoire, and big band-styled Second Avenue classics join surprisingly far-flung standards. The eight-piece band features a panoply of instrumentation and vocals in Yiddish and English, all gorgeously arranged: soaring solos and shout choruses meet haunting melodies and irresistible beats. *The Essential Klezmer* cites their "topnotch" sound as "just plain great, versatile ensemble playing," hailing the band's "exuberant spirit and wit." The UK's *Phat Planet* lauds the "humour and style" of **METROPOLITAN KLEZMER**'s "brilliant and breathless" music: "serious, melancholy, exhilarating and funny by turns... mixing levity amongst the gravity." Band specialties include innovative re-takes on archival film soundtracks, and unexpected approaches to musical hits from Moscow's Soviet Yiddish theater and beyond.

Among **METROPOLITAN KLEZMER**'s stellar bandmate credits are genres from Albanian to Zydeco, spanning jazz, funk, reggae, swing, R&B, Latin, Greek, Balkan, Turkish, Arabic, punk, classical, baroque, and Sephardic as well as Ashkenazic Jewish styles. Individually, MK members have toured, performed and recorded with such artists as Bonnie Raitt, Bill Frisell, Burning Spear, Mark Morris, Rufus Wainwright, David Krakauer, Indigo Girls, Microscopic Septet, Alhambra, Jimmy Scott, Toshi Reagon, Marshall Crenshaw, Natalie Merchant, Natalie Cole, The Klezmatics, Robin Holcomb, Charming Hostess, Smyrneiki Kompania, Bobby Previte, Sounds of Taraab, Andy Statman, David Del Tredici, Toots & the Maytals, Los Mas Valientes, Opera Omnia, and Hazmat Modine.

METROPOLITAN KLEZMER has played repeat engagements at Caramoor Center, World Financial Center, Riverspace Arts, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, The Jewish Museum, Mason Gross School of the Arts, The Knitting Factory, National Yiddish Book Center, and The 92nd Street Y. Other recent venues of note include Joe's Pub, Cape May Music Festival, East Hampton Guild Hall, Museum of Jewish Heritage, Usdan Center, and the legendary Bottom Line. The group has broadcast live on CNN *WorldBeat* (with sister sextet Isle of Klezbos), ARD German TV's *Rhythms of NY*, WFUV's *CityFolk Live,* WVBR's *Bound For Glory*, and WFMU's *TransPacific Sound Paradise*. MK recordings have been featured by London's Royal Ballet (*First Drafts* at Covent Garden), SITI Theatre Co. (*Score:* NY Theatre Workshop & national tour), Tzadik's *Music from the Winery*, and the film *Surviving Memory*. In 2009, MK tracks travel with the exhibition *Chagall and the Artists of the Russian Jewish Theater* to San Francisco's Contemporary Jewish Museum.

METROPOLITAN KLEZMER's four CD releases have aired on well over 200 stations, including PRI's *Sound+Spirit*, CBC's *Roots & Wings*, WDR's *Funkhaus Europa/Mondo Cannibale*, Australia's *Hot Club*, Polish *Radio Lublin*, UK's *Folkswagon*, and Argentina's *Radio Jai*. Bandleader Eve Sicular was honored with a 2008 grant from NYC's Department of Cultural Affairs for her new musical documentary theater piece with band, ***J. Edgar Klezmer: Songs from My Grandmother's FBI Files*** (*Time Out NY* Critic's Pick). Other multi-media/live band shows include ***The Yiddish Celluloid Closet*** and ***Music From Yiddish Cinema***. The group's many facets have been profiled in American Music Center's *New Music Box*, arts features by *NYTimes.com*, *The Forward*, *Jewish Week*, *Bergen Record*, and Belgium's *RootsTown*: "Whoever listens to **METROPOLITAN KLEZMER** opens the encyclopedia of klezmer... the absolute top of the genre."

DISCOGRAPHY: CD's ON RHYTHM MEDIA RECORDS (distributed worldwide by Stern's Music, Ltd.)

- **Traveling Show,** 2007: Best CDs of the Year, *Jewish Week* & *LA Jewish Journal* – 5 stars!
- **Surprising Finds,** 2003: Worldbeat Top 30, *The Phat Planet* (UK); *Outmusic* Award
- **Mosaic Persuasion,** 2001 (with Isle of Klezbos): *Outmusic* Award; Top Ten, *Jewish Week*
- **Yiddish for Travelers,** 1998: Top Ten lists, *Moment Magazine* and *KlezmerShack*; selected for The Essential Klezmer Library Top 20

Drummer/bandleader Eve Sicular, a Harvard graduate in Russian History & Literature and former curator of the YIVO Institute Film and Photo Archives, is also available for lectures and workshops on Music & Yiddish Cinema and The Celluloid Closet of Yiddish Film.

"Excellent klezmer... impeccable yet electrifying"
–*Richard Gehr,* Village Voice

"Metropolitan Klezmer takes a scholarly approach to the genre's history, yet never skimps on the exuberance at its core."
– Time Out NY

"Originality, expert musicianship and a keen world music sensibility" **– All About Jazz**

LIVE AT joe's pub

ISMAIL BUTERA – accordion
PAM FLEMING – trumpet & flugelhorn
MELISSA FOGARTY – vocals
MICHAEL HESS – violin, ney flute, qanun
DAVE HOFSTRA – bass and tuba
DEBRA KREISBERG – clarinet & alto sax
REUT REGEV – trombone
EVE SICULAR – drums/leader

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