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# CONCERTS AT THE UNIVERSITY

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Spring - Summer 2019

Tuesday 5 February 2019

1.10pm

Reid Concert Hall

She'Koyokh

Çiğdem Aslan · vocals

Susi Evans · clarinet and gaida

Meg Hamilton · violin

Živorad Nikolić · accordion and vocals

Matt Bacon · guitar and kaval

Paul Moylan · double bass

Christina Borgenstierna · percussion

Programme of Jewish, Gypsy, Bulgarian, Armenian,  
Albanian, Greek and Serbian music.



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH  
*Edinburgh College of Art*



## She’Koyokh

She’Koyokh is an international, prize-winning band comprising seven expert musicians playing klezmer and traditional music from the Balkans and Turkey.

Klezmer is Eastern European Jewish folk music traditionally played to accompany wedding ceremonies and dances. She’Koyokh is a Yiddish congratulatory expression meaning “nice one”. In Hebrew Yasher Koach literally means ‘may you have strength’. In 19th century Eastern Europe, Jewish musicians travelled from town to town performing at weddings and other celebrations, meeting and playing with local musicians and sharing repertoire. In the same vein, She’Koyokh has spent over seventeen years exploring the soulful Ashkenazi melodies from the villages in Poland, Romania and the Ukraine in the context of the rich musical cultures of Eastern European, Balkan and Turkish folk music. The band is continuously inspired by the confluence of these cultures. Committed to performing the music in a traditional way with a fresh approach and innovative arrangements, their programme reflects the diversity of these heritages, the history of migration, and the musical contact that has taken place across social and political boundaries over hundreds of years.

She’Koyokh has toured the world with highlights at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and festivals in Germany, Hungary, Poland, Cyprus, Spain, the Canary Islands and Norway; WOMAD UK, WOMAD Fuerteventura, Sziget and Pannonica Festivals; Fundación Juan March Madrid, London’s Southbank Centre, Aldeburgh’s Snape Proms and live sessions on BBC Radio. Four globally acclaimed albums have earned She’Koyokh the reputation as “one of London’s musical treasures playing the best klezmer and Balkan music in Britain” (The Evening Standard). *First Dance on Second Avenue* was released in 2017 on World Music Network’s Riverboat Records to critical acclaim, receiving a 5 star review in the Evening Standard, 5 stars and *Album Choice* in fROOTS, 4 stars in the Guardian, 4 stars and *Top of the World* in Songlines and 4 stars in BBC Music Magazine. She’Koyokh’s previous albums are *Wild Goats and Unmarried Women* (2014 Riverboat), *Buskers’ Ballroom* (2011 ARC) and *Sandanski’s Chicken* (2007 ARC).

The band formed in 2001 with the support of a Millennium Award from the Jewish Music Institute. In 2008 they were awarded first prize in the International Jewish Music Festival in Amsterdam and have been shortlisted twice for *Best Group* in the Songlines World Music Awards. In 2012 She’koyokh contributed the material for and led performances with the Aurora Orchestra at LSO St Luke’s, St George’s Bristol and the Brighton Dome. This week they will collaborate with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in Glasgow, Aberdeen and at the Usher hall on 10<sup>th</sup> February, and are currently also developing a show with the acclaimed South Indian violinist, Jyotsna Srikanth.

The musicians will announce the programme from the stage.

**Çiğdem Aslan** is an Istanbul-born singer who sings in many languages and regional styles, including Turkish, Kurdish, Greek, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Roma, and Ladino. Her musical journey started within the family. Coming from Kurdish Alevi background, in which music is one of the pivotal elements of the culture, she grew up with the rich sounds of her culture and then gradually met with the other sounds of Istanbul and beyond. Her debut solo album, ‘Mortissa’ won the prestigious “Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik” German Record Critics Award and remained in the top ten of the World Music Charts in Europe for several months. It was chosen as one of the best albums of 2013 by fROOTS and was shortlisted for ‘Best Artist’ in the Songlines Music Awards 2014. Her second album, ‘A Thousand Cranes’ was released in October 2016.

**Susi Evans’s** performances have inspired press reviews remarking on her “nimble solo features and excellent tone control” (The Scottish Herald). Susi is a founder member of She’Koyokh and also co-founded the London Klezmer Quartet who have toured in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Brazil and released four studio albums. She appeared regularly on the West End stage in the National Theatre’s smash-hit production of *War Horse* and has collaborated with the Aurora Orchestra, composer Jocelyn Pook, Mahogany Opera Group and Limbik Theatre. In 2016 she led the UK London Klezmer All-stars with Lorin Sklamberg (Klezomatics) at Klezmer in the Park. She sings with the Veda Slovena Bulgarian Choir and performs with Angelina Kasabova (Pazardjik, Bulgaria) and the Bucimis Trio.

Susi graduated from the Royal Academy of Music with a first class degree in 2004 and has studied in Istanbul with Selim Sesler, at the Plovdiv Music Academy with Nikola Iliev and with leaders of the klezmer revival. She is now in demand as a teacher herself and has been on the faculty for Klezfest London, KlezNorth and Yiddish Summer Weimar. In 2017 Susi received an ARAM (Associate of the Royal Academy of Music), awarded to former students who have made a significant contribution to the music profession.

Millennium Award winning, classically trained violinist and violist, **Meg Hamilton** has played with She’Koyokh since meeting the band at Klezfest in 2002. She has studied Lautareasca music with Romanian and Moldovan Gypsies, traditional Bulgarian music and the Gadulka in Gabrovo, and Ottoman Art Music in Istanbul. As a violist, she co-founded and plays Mediterranean, tango and other world and classical music with the Kosmos Ensemble. She played the fiddler’s music for the *Fiddler On The Roof* production which was chosen for a West End run. She has performed and recorded Yiddish song with Hilda Bronstein, Jewish pop with Oi Va Voi, Greek and Turkish songs with Cigdem Aslan, Arabic vocal music with Abdul Salam Khier and Merit Ariane Stephanos, Romanian folk and Gypsy music with Monooka’s Caravan, Turkish Tango with Eylem Korkmaz, and also performed with La Tipica Contemporary Flamenco Company, Nitin Sawney and Talvin Singh, as well as Greek, Armenian, Kurdish, Alevi and Persian traditional music in various groups including the Nihavent Classical Turkish Ensemble. Meg’s fiddle is like her second passport.



**Živorad Nikolić** studied accordion in Kragujevac, Serbia before coming to London and graduating at Royal Academy of Music in 2009. Being from Serbia, the Balkan traditional music has always been present in his life: In Serbia if you play accordion and you can't play a traditional piece of music they don't take you seriously. His recent musical experiences include performing in Prophet & Loss Community Opera written by Julian Grant as well as live performance for the BBC Radio 2 programme Friday Night Is Music Night. He is a member of Fugata Quintet, Accordduo and Paprika with whom Živorad has toured extensively across Europe, Australia and New Zealand, performing regularly at the WOMAD Festivals in UK, Spain, Canary Islands, Abu Dhabi and WOMADelaide.

Guitarist and multi-instrumentalist, **Matt Bacon** has been a working musician since the age of twenty, playing practically all jazz and pop styles and performing all over the UK and Europe. Since completing a music degree at Goldsmiths University where he focussed on composition and arrangement, Matt turned to acoustic music and joined She'Koyokh in 2002. He has travelled extensively in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Greece, Turkey and India researching the variety of musical cultures.

**Paul Moylan** is a double bass virtuoso most commonly found trying not to play too many notes while trying to provide subtle but firm underpinning to many different styles of music. He has performed on the Klezmer/Balkan circuit since 2000, including playing with Szapora, Gregori Schechter's Wondering Few and Monooka's Caravan. He was a friend and irregular member of She'Koyokh for many years, finally joining the band in 2015. Paul also performs jazz and musicals across London, the UK, Europe and the World. He appears on the upcoming album by Taeko Kunishima on 33 Records. Paul is a composer and arranger in many styles of music as well and is proud to be an educator teaching young and old musicians.

Initially drawn towards Eastern European music during her degree at Goldsmiths University (BMus in Composition and Studio Composition, 2002), **Christina Borgenstierna** took up studies in Bulgarian percussion at the Plovdiv Music Academy with Mitko Popov, arranger and drummer of the world-famous Trakia Ensemble, in 2014. Exploring the realms of Middle Eastern percussion with Sohar Fresco, Hadi Alizadeh, Adam Warne and Guy Schalom, Christina now incorporates frame drums, riqq and darabuka into her percussion palette.

Christina is also a committed member of Veda Slovena Bulgarian Choir since its formation in 2013, having performed at the Purcell room amongst other venues, and as part of collaborative projects such as Voices Now and Choir of the Year 2015.

As a composer, Christina records and produces her own songs, which include modern arrangements of traditional tunes. She also plays flutes in Tinkers Bubble Ceilidh Band.