

Biography

With their talented musicians, the Amsterdam Klezmer Band (AKB) is an energetic and poetic stage act that charms international audiences. Their refreshing approach to Klezmer and Balkan music transcends the traditional aspects of this music and results in a very lively mix of Eastern-European sound. Their strength lies in their ability to appeal to a remarkably broad audience across all age groups; they play clubs or theatres, festivals, parties, weddings or formal functions. AKB can both fire up a crowd and create pure listening pleasure with the vibrancy of their playing. Their instrumental skills are complemented by the vocals of Alec Kopyt from Odessa and Job Chajes (also on saxophone).

Since its foundation in 1996 by saxophone player Job Chajes, the band has evolved rapidly. In no time the band became world-famous in Amsterdam for its many vibrant performances on the streets, in the parks and in the pubs. Soon the rest of The Netherlands followed: the band performed at the Oerol Festival in 1999, 2000 and 2001 to great acclaim and was invited to the Noorderslagfestival in January 2001 (the media describing their performance as 'the great surprise of the festival'), followed by the Lowlands Festival in August 2001. During that period the band toured in Slovenia, Switzerland and Italy and completed three successful tours of Turkey. The third CD of the Amsterdam Klezmer Band, *Limonchiki*, was released on the New York label Knitting Factory label and the band had a grand tour of the Dutch club scene in the autumn of 2001, with as its highpoint the presentation of *Limonchiki* at the Paradiso, Amsterdam. In September 2003 the CD *Katakofti* was released. It's the result of a collaborative effort of the Amsterdam Klezmer Band and the Galata Gypsy Band from Turkey. The CD was released on Turkish label Kalan Records. In January 2005 *SON* (Russian for 'dream') was released, containing a veritable treasure-trove of new Amsterdam Klezmer and Balkan music. The album received an enthusiastic reaction from the (international) press and led to a year of heavy touring and playing gigs in clubs and theatres including world famous Concertgebouw Amsterdam and venues in New York, Moscow, Paris and Hamburg.

Nowadays only part of the Amsterdam Klezmer Band repertory consists of traditionals of Balkan or Klezmer origin. Most of the AKB repertory has been created by the band members themselves, who all without exception contribute musically to an ever-growing melting-pot of infectious Balkan/Gypsy/Klezmer cross-over grooves. In this manner the band endeavours to breathe new life into the Eastern-European Balkan, Klezmer and Gypsy music tradition. Passionate performances, spectacular live shows and a good dose of street credibility form the ingredients of their cocktail.