



Gjertruds Gypsy Orchestra

Gjertrud's Gypsy Orchestra (GSO) has specialised in eastern European Gypsy music, namely from Russia, Romania and Hungary. The group has acquired the music through the aural tradition from Gypsy musicians in Budapest, including collaboration with the late László Rácz, the celebrated cimbalist, who was a mentor and co-musician from the group's inception in 1989. The ensemble has also worked on Yiddish music with Bente Kahan and Norwegian Traveller music with Elias Akselsen.

In recent years, the group collaborated with the composer and pianist Nils Henrik Asheim on a cycle of re-interpretations of Chopin Mazurkas. The CD "Mazurka - Remaking Chopin" (2010) was awarded the "Norwegian Grammy Award". Gjertrud's Gypsy Orchestra has toured extensively in Norway, attended many festivals at home and abroad and released several CDs. The group receives financial support from Arts council Norway.

Eastern European Gypsy music suddenly shifts from delicate melancholy to passionate dance rhythms. Elements from art music, 19th century popular music and not least folk music has melded together to create a unique form of music, in which the tonal language of folk music takes on virtuoso performance technique and the timbral ideals of the classical/romantic tradition.

The musicians in Gjertrud's Gypsy Orchestra have a widespread background. All are professional musicians and have extensive education and experience within various fields of music.

Gjertrud Økland (violin) is the driving force and *primás* (Hungarian for leader) of Gjertrud's Gypsy Orchestra. In addition to being a violinist in the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, she has a florid freelance career.

Georg reiss (clarinet, tárogató) is a freelance musician based in Oslo, probably best known as a jazz clarinetist (in Magnolia Jazz Band and Ophelia Ragtime Orchestra). He has also specialised increasingly in folk music and plays in the group *Streif*.

Tom Karlsrud (accordion) lives in Aurland and works as a freelance musician, arts school principal and manager of a music production company. He has collaborated with numerous folk musicians.

Pål Thorstensen (double bass) is a freelance musician based in Tromsø, with a solid grounding in jazz (including Moose Loose) and folk music (including Oslo Tango Society and the Balkan Ensemble). He is currently a member of the northern Norwegian group *Boknakaran*.

Trond Villa (viola) is probably best known as a violinist in folk rock and Balkan rock from his time as a freelance musician (including Folque, Folk og rackare and the Balkan Ensemble). He lives in Telemark, where he works as an arts school principal alongside his freelance career.

Helene Waage (cello, vocal, Celtic harp) is a freelance musician. She lives in Telemark, where she is a member of the folk music trio Glima. She has collaborated with many Norwegian folk musicians.

Ernest Bangó (cimbalom) lives in Budapest and has played with many of the best Gypsy ensembles in Hungary. He has toured worldwide with the Gypsy orchestra of one of Hungary's most celebrated primásés, Roby Lakatos. He has also been a soloist with international symphony orchestras.



Since 2010 GSO has performed eastern European Gypsy music with one of the world's foremost violin soloists in the genre, **Ernö Kallai Kiss jr** in several concerts and in the CD «Nordisk sigøyner» (2012).

More info:

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