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# D U S H T E T L À N E W Y O R K

A thrilling explosion of music blending folk and musical theatre. A journey back to the roots of American music by way of brilliant musicians, strong emotions and dancing shoes.

*"After working with music from my shtetl for A Yiddishe Mame, I started to explore American-Jewish music alongside Isabelle Georges. Combining our knowledge and experience, we devised a concert programme which, thanks to Isabelle's touch, became a real show. Isabelle Georges embodies the immigrant girl setting out in search of the American Dream while the Sirba Octet stay firmly in the shtetl safeguarding the old ways. From Fiddle to Over the Rainbow, from A Yiddishe Mame to My funny Valentine, the show sways from one continent to the other..."*

**Richard Schmoucler**, artistic director (translated from the original French).

## THE ESSENCE OF THE YIDDISH SPIRIT AND AMERICAN MUSICAL COMEDY

In 2007, as part of the Festival d'Île-de-France, the Sirba Octet worked with Isabelle Georges, the multi-talented singer, dancer and actress known to anglophone audiences as a 'triple threat', to produce Du Shtetl à New York. The show charts the journey made by millions of Eastern Europeans from their shtetls, or villages, to New York – melting pot of musical influences from all over the world. The show was inspired by Fabienne Roussio-Lenoir's documentary *Du Shtetl à Broadway* and celebrates heredity and inheritance, an important foundation of the Yiddish community.

## PARADISE IN AMERICA

From the end of the 19th century to the Second World War more than two millions Eastern European Jews left their shtetls and emigrated to the USA to escape antisemitism and find happiness in America. They fled poverty only to find misery and social isolation in America. In the face of such disappointment, however, they did not look back. The Jewish people integrated through their art. Their music became a unifying outlet for their creativity. Musical forms became entwined and the path to integration lay open. Even their names took on an American twang – Gershowitz became Gershwin, Rogazinsky became Rodgers, Asa Yoelson became Al Jolson.

And so were born some of the greatest jazz standards and stars of musical theatre. Du Shtetl à New York reunites the heroes of that epic venture, such as Irving Berlin, Harold Arlen, Jerry Bloch and Sophie Tucker, and explores their music from shtetl folk to well-loved standards of musical theatre's golden age. The show sweeps through traditional tunes, lullabies, jazz and ragtime – from *Bessarabye* to *Over the Rainbow*, from *Rozhinkes mit Mandlen* to *My Funny Valentine* – delving into the roots of American music with astonishing artistry, heartfelt emotion and a flourish of tap shoes. Ameriké!

Du Shtetl à New York was produced for the 2007 Festival d'Île-de-France and has since been performed at many festivals and in prestigious concert halls in France and abroad.

# D U S H T E T L À N E W Y O R K

## PROGRAM

**Besarabye**, Yiddish traditional  
repertory / arrangements  
Cyrille Lehn

**Rozhinkes mit mandlen**,  
Abraham Goldfaden /  
arrangements Yann Ollivo

**Ukrainian Memory**, Yiddish  
traditional repertory repertoire  
/ arrangements Yann Ollivo

**Medley** : Happy as the day is  
long, Harold Arlen, lyrics Ted  
Koehler / **If I Only had a brain**,  
Harold Arlen, lyrics Edgar  
Yipsel Harburg / **S'wonderful**,  
George Gershwin, lyrics Ira  
Gershwin / **The man I love**,  
George Gershwin, lyrics Ira  
Gershwin / **Get happy**, Harold  
Arlen, Lyrics Ted Koehler /  
**Stormy weather** Harold Arlen,  
lyrics Ted Koehler/  
arrangements Cyrille Lehn

**My Funny Valentine**, Richard  
Rodgers, lyrics Lorenz Hart

**Tanz : Hassidic Dance /**  
**Sunrise, Sunset/ Bublitchki**,  
Jerry Bloch / arrangements  
Cyrille Lehn

**Alexander's Ragtime band**,  
Irving Berlin

**Fiddle**, Yiddish traditional  
repertory / arrangements  
Cyrille Lehn

**A Yiddishe Mame**, Lew Pollack  
/ arrangements Yann Ollivo

**Rhapsody in blue / I got**  
**rhythm**, George Gershwin,  
lyrics Ira Gershwin

**Over the rainbow**, Harold Arlen,  
lyrics Edgar Yipsel Harburg /  
arrangements Yann Ollivo

**Roumania Roumania**,  
traditional repertory /  
arrangements Yann Ollivo

**Bey Mir Bist du Sheyn**, Sholom  
Secunda / arrangements Cyrille  
Lehn

## THE MUSICIANS

**Isabelle Georges** singing & tapes

### The Sirba Octet

**Richard Schmoucler** violin 1

**Christian Brière** violin 2

**David Gaillard** viola

**Claude Giron** cello

**Bernard Cazauran** bass

**Philippe Berrod** clarinet

**Iurie Morar** cymbalum

**Christophe Henry** piano

**Arrangements** : Cyrille Lehn &  
Yann Ollivo

**Duration** : 1h30 (Without  
intermission)

# THE EN SEMBLE

When violinist Richard Schmoucler founded the Sirba Octet in 2003, he created an entirely new sound. With arrangers Cyrille Lehn and Yann Ollivo, five fellow musicians from the Orchestre de Paris, a pianist and a cimbalom player, he formed a unique ensemble with a fresh perspective on klezmer, Yiddish and gypsy music.

In collaboration with the Orchestre de Paris, the Sirba Octet performed *Un violon sur les toits de Paris*, (*A fiddler on the rooves of Paris*), at the Théâtre Mogador, a concert which they developed into their first acoustic album, *A Yiddish Mame*, released in 2005 under the label Ambroisie (Naïve). With Slavic and Yiddish nuances, this anthology of Eastern European melodies is drawn from Schmoucler's own memories of happy family gatherings.

## SIGNIFICANT ARTISTIC PARTNERSHIPS

In 2007, as part of the Festival d'Île-de-France, the Sirba Octet worked with Isabelle Georges, the multi-talented singer, dancer and actress known as a 'triple threat', to produce *Du Shtetl à New York*. An array of music from the shtetl and standards from the golden age of American musical theatre, via jazz, ragtime and lullabies composed by second generation immigrants, the show charts the journey made by millions of Eastern Europeans from their shtetls, or villages, to New York, melting pot of musical influences from all over the world. The show was inspired by Fabienne Rousso-Lenoir's documentary *Du Shtetl à Broadway* and celebrates heredity and inheritance, an important foundation of the Yiddish community.

The Sirba Octet continued to work with Isabelle Georges on *Yiddish Rhapsody*, a show based on traditional Yiddish music but accented with elements of jazz, salsa, musicals, rock and samba. Commissioned by the Orchestre de Pau Pays de Béarn, conducted by Fayçal Karoui, *Yiddish Rhapsody* was unique in its staging of the octet alongside a 50-piece orchestra and was therefore able to perform orchestral as well as chamber music. The show became their third album with Naïve, and was performed with the Orchestre Lamoureux at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Orchestre de Trier in Germany, the Liège Royal Philharmonic, the Tonkustler Orchester at Festspielhaus and at Musikverein in Vienna.

Their albums have received critical acclaim in the press, winning notably a '10 de Répertoire-Classica' for *Du Shtetl à New York*, the European Association for Jewish Culture prize and a Choc de Classica for *Tantz!* The group was also the subject of a documentary by Alain Duault for France 3 entitled *A day with the Sirba Octet and Isabelle Georges*. In 2011 the Sirba Octet and Isabelle Georges were selected by the Victoires de la Musique Classique to appear alongside the Orchestre des Pays de la Loire conducted by John Axelrod.

Appearing regularly at leading festivals in France and abroad, the Sirba Octet have performed at many prestigious venues including the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam and Musikverein in Vienna with longer runs at Théâtre Mogador, l'Européen, La Cigale et à l'Espace Pierre Cardin à Paris. In 2012, they took part in the Festival Radio Classique at the Olympia with Isabelle Georges and, in 2013, they appeared at Musiques en fête aux Chorégies d'Orange which was broadcast live on France 3.

# THE EN SEM BL E

Thanks to their talented arranger Cyrille Lehn, the Sirba Octet are constantly enriching their repertoire, adding pieces that range from the most famous to the lesser known. Lehn worked with the group on a project for which they were joined for the first time by Catherine Lara. This new adventure led to the album *Au cœur de l'âme Yiddish (The Spirit of the Yiddish)*, released on Sony in November 2012. Captivated by their world, Catherine Lara chose eight of her most acclaimed pieces to record with the Sirba Octet. In April 2013, they performed the album live for two concerts at l'Alhambra in Paris.

Sirba Octet's orchestral show was one of the highlights of their 2015 season. For Sirba Orchestra! they once again worked with the Orchestre de Pau Pays de Béarn conducted by Fayçal Karoui with a guest appearance from Nicolas Kedroff, the talented balalaika player. The show comprised a series of performances at the Palais Beaumont in Pau in June 2015 that were broadcast live on Radio Classique. Focussing on Yiddish and Slavic music, the show is a window on the lively and moving musical traditions of Eastern Europe. The group will take the show to the Orchestre de Bretagne and the Orchestre Royal Philharmonique de Liège in 2017.

## LATEST RELEASE – TANTZ !

In October 2015, the Sirba Octet released their fifth album *Tantz!* on La Dolce Volta record label. In November 2015, following the album release, the group gave five concerts at l'Espace Pierre Cardin. *Tantz!* is a journey into music you can dance to, led by the masterly musicians of the Sirba Octet and their exceptional rendition. This remarkable ensemble, midway between classical and klezmer music, has revived the traditional music of Eastern Europe, creating new arrangements based on the principals of more scholarly music.

This musical masterpiece lets you wander through doina, hora, sirba and other klezmer and gypsy style dances. Linking Romania, Moldova, Russia and Hungary, *Tantz!* makes an expressive journey, flitting across borders and expanding horizons. The great, iconic violinist Ivry Gitlis wrote a foreword for the album and endorses the project.

## CLASSICAL WORLD MUSIC

The vigour, intensity and originality of the Sirba Octet's arrangements bring to life the familiar tunes of Eastern Europe – a body of music characterized by the wanderings of a whole population, in which sentiment and creative flair are bound together. Unparalleled outside of the conventional circuit, the group skilfully unite genres and combine both orchestral and chamber music. Sirba Octet's unique vision puts them in their own league as they pioneer a new genre – Classical World.



# THE MUSICIAN'S DICTIONARY

## ISABELLE GEORGES

Singing & tapes



Isabelle grew up in Paris listening to her mother's vocal exercises, her grandmother's scales and the marvellous stories that her father told her. She took to the stage for the first time with the Victor Cuno company in *From Harlem to Broadway*, and then performed in *Marilyn de Montreuil*, *Chère Daisy*, *Happy Feet*, *Phi Phi* and *La Crise est Finie*, thus becoming a "triple threat:" a singer, dancer and actress.

Isabelle played a string of lead roles, in *Barnum* (J. P. Lucet/Les Célestins, Lyon), *Le Passe Muraille* (M. Legrand/Les Bouffes Parisiens, Paris), *Nymph Errant* (R. Redfarn/Chichester Festival UK), *Singin' In the Rain* (J. L. Grinda/ORW Belgium & Théâtre de la Porte Saint Martin, Paris), *La Périchole* (J. Savary/Théâtre National de Chaillot, Paris), *L'Air de Paris* opposite Patrick Dupond (T. Harcourt/Théâtre Le Comédia, Paris), *Et Si On Chantait* (D.Bréval/Espace Pierre Cardin, Paris) and *Titanic the Musical* (J. L. Grinda/ORW, Belgium), where she met Maury Yeston and Frederik Steenbrink. Together with Frederik Steenbrink, she wrote and performed *Une Étoile et Moi* (a tribute to Judy Garland), in Paris, at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2005 (where she won The Fringe Award for best singer), on tour in England, in Holland, at the Adelaide Cabaret Festival 2007 (Australia) and at the Théâtre Antoine in 2011, directed by Eric Métayer. She produced and performed the French version of *December Songs* by Maury Yeston (with French lyrics by Boris Bergman), at the Théâtre du Renard in Paris and at the Avignon Festival. She recorded the album at Nola Studio, and performed it at Tower Records, New York, for its launch by PS Classics.

Back in France, Isabelle recorded *Something to Live For*, with acclaimed French jazz pianist René Utreger, and played opposite Jean-Claude Dreyfus in Gerald Garutti's adaptation of *Petit Traité de Manipulation*. She wrote and performed *La French Touche* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, and *Du Shtetl à New York* with Sirba Octet at the Île-de-France Festival, at Théâtre de l'Européen in Paris, La Cigale in Paris, at the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival (Germany) and at the Amsterdam's Concertgebouw. With Josette Milgram, Isabelle crafted and directed *Cabaret Terezin*, based on cabaret songs written in the Theresienstadt ghetto (with French lyrics by Boris Bergman), at the Théâtre Marigny in Paris.

With Richard Schmoucler, she conceived *Yiddish Rhapsody* which she performed with Sirba Octet and the Pau Symphonic Orchestra, first at the Palais Beaumont in Pau and La Cigale in Paris, at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées then at the Liège Salle Philharmonie in Belgium in 2015.

Inspired by Daniel Klajner, she considered Norbert Glanzberg's biography, and with Jean-Luc Tardieu's help, wrote *Padam Padam*, one of the biggest successes in Paris in 2010-2011 (Théâtre La Bruyère, Théâtre des Mathurins and Théâtre de La Gaîté Montparnasse.) Isabelle was the special guest of *Victoires de la Musique Classique*, special guest of the celebration of the 40th anniversary of *Chorégies d'Orange*, and special guest of the *Radio Classique Festival* in Olympia. Isabelle won the *Charles Oulmont Foundation* prize 2011.

## RICHARD SCHMOUCLER

Violin & artistic director



Member of the Orchestre de Paris since 1998, Richard Schmoucler trained at the Conservatoire de Paris under Gérard Poulet, Maurice Moulin, Devy Erlih and Alexis Galpérine for violin and Bruno Pasquier and David Walter for chamber music. In 1990 he was awarded first prize diplomas both in violin and chamber music. He continued to study under Ivry Gitlis and also with Maya Glézarova at the Moscow Conservatory, Tibor Varga and Myriam Solovief. Schmoucler has been awarded prizes by the Fondation Bleustein-Blanchet and the Fondation de France and is a regular soloist for the Auvergne and Toulouse Chamber Orchestras, the Pasdeloup Orchestra and the Orchestre Lamoureux. From 2010 to 2014 he was first violin for the ensemble Musique Oblique. In 2003, Schmoucler formed the Sirba Octet and has been the driving force behind the group's progression and the production of their five albums. He has given various masterclasses and performances, notably at the Académie Festival des Arcs, PESM de Bourgogne and the Academy of Music in Bydgoszcz in Poland. At his request, Kaija Saariaho composed *Frises* for violin and electronics and November 2012 saw the world premiere of the piece, which was dedicated to Schmoucler, at the Borusan Art Centre in Istanbul. In 2011 he became the director of studies at the Orchestre Atelier Ostinato. In 2016 he began teaching competition preparation at the Conservatoire à Rayonnement Régional in Paris.

## CHRISTIAN BRIERE Violin



Christian Brière was awarded a Premier Prix in violin and chamber music at the CNSM in Paris. He then went on to study the Romantic repertoire with Christian Ferras and Gérard Jarry, and worked with Jean Hubeau on neglected works by French composers. He joined the Orchestre de Paris in 1983 and was soon promoted to a first-desk position. He has appeared in concert as guest leader with the Philharmonia Orchestra, Erwartung, the Orchestre de Chambre Jean-François Paillard, and the Orchestre Française de Musique Légère, with which he participated in 1992 in a production of Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du Soldat* directed and performed by the actor Jean Rochefort. With Simon Schembri he forms a violin-guitar duo that explores the repertoire for that combination, from Jacques Ibert to Astor Piazzolla. He was formerly leader of the Orchestre Lamoureux, and also appears with the tango ensemble Carrasco 'H' Quartet.



# THE MUSICIAN S

## DAVID GAILLARD Viola



The son of a rock guitarist and a storyteller, David Gaillard came to music through oral transmission and improvisation. He was named top musician of his year in Jean Sulem's viola class at the CNSM in Paris, winning the Premier Prix by unanimous decision with the congratulations of the jury, as well as the Premier Prix in harmony by unanimous decision and Second Prix in counterpoint, then entered the postgraduate course where he was taught by Hatto Beyerle, Veronika Hagen, and Bruno Pasquier. He was appointed professor at the CNSM de Paris in 2009. He is principal viola of the Orchestre de Paris, and also appears in chamber music with such artists as Christoph Eschenbach, Menahem Pressler, Olivier Charlier, and Marc Coppey, and is a member of the Les Dissonances quartet with David Grimal, Hans-Peter Hofmann, and Xavier Phillips. He still retains a keen interest in improvisation that has led him to join the quartet of Jean-Philippe Viret, which has appeared at the Paris Jazz Festival, among other venues.

## CLAUDE GIRON Cello



After receiving Premiers Prix from the CNSM of Paris in cello and chamber music in the classes of Roland Pidoux and Michel Strauss respectively, Claude Giron set out at the age of twenty-one for further study with Aldo Parisot at Yale University, where she was awarded a Master of Music and an Artist Diploma. In 1994 she joined the Orchestre philharmonique de Radio France, moving to the Orchestre de Paris in 1998. Claude Giron also plays in quartet and chamber orchestra repertory (with the European Camerata and the Octuor de Paris among others), and has recorded a CD with the jazz pianist Ahmad Jamal. She frequently toured Europe and the United States between 2000 and 2007 as a member of the American group Pink Martini.

## BERNARD CAZAURAN Bass



Bernard Cazauran has been a member of the Orchestre de Paris since it was formed in 1967, and was principal double bass from 1979 to 2012. He was a prize winner at the Geneva Competition. He has often appeared in chamber music, notably with Daniel Barenboim, but also in the field of jazz with Basse Fusion and tango with the Carrasco 'H' Quartet. He taught for 15 years at the CNSM in Lyon.

## PHILIPPE BERROD Clarinet



First clarinet for the Orchestre de Paris since 1995, Philippe Berrod also plays regularly with other ensembles as a guest soloist. His repertoire ranges from Mozart's clarinet concerto to Dialogue de l'ombre double by P. Boulez. He was awarded a first prize diploma from the Conservatoire de Paris where he was tutored by Guy Deplus. He has also won a number of international competitions. He became a clarinet tutor at the Conservatoire de Paris in 2011. Berrod has released a number of recordings including Les Vents français on Sony Classical – Indésens and the album Art of Clarinet as well as two complete collections of chamber music for woodwind by Saint-Saëns and Poulenc respectively. These were well received in the press and nominated for Victoires de la Musique awards in 2011. Since 2010, Berrod has been artistic advisor for the French woodwind instrument manufacturer Henri Selmer-Paris.

# THE MUSICIAN SAYS

## CHRISTOPHE HENRY Piano



After training at the Conservatoire de Paris with a series of first prize diplomas under Alain Planès for piano, Michel Chapuis for organ, Bruno Pasquier for chamber music and Jean Koerner for accompaniment, Christophe Henry honed his skills alongside Menahem Pressler at the Banff Arts Festival in Canada. As both a pianist and organist he has performed with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio-France, Orchestre National de France, Orchestre de Paris, Orchestre de Lyon and the Radio-France Choir at some of the greatest concert halls in Beijing, Tokyo, Seoul, Paris and Vienna and at the Roman Theatre of Orange. In 2009, he was recorded playing Charles-Valentin Alkan's pedal piano, a one-of-a-kind instrument displayed at the Musée de la Musique in Paris. In 2011 he played with the Quatuor Ludwig and in 2012 he appeared as a soloist with the chamber choir Accentus at the Mozarteum as part of the Salzburg Festival. A multitasking keyboardist and passionate jazz fan, he plays with and learns from pianist Emil Spanyi, vibraphonist Philippe Macé and drummer Georges Paczinski.

## CYRILLE LEHN Arranger



Trained as a pianist and composer at the Strasbourg Conservatoire and the CNSM de Paris, Cyrille Lehn soon found himself attracted to improvisation, which he practises in very varied forms: recitals, accompanying silent films, concerts, and musical shows. His compositions have been featured on the programme of such notable venues as the Théâtre du Châtelet, the Festival de Radio France et de Montpellier, and the Festival de l'Emperi. He is fascinated by folk music and jazz, and has collaborated with the Sirba Octet since it was founded. Cyrille Lehn is professor of harmony at the CNSM de Paris and teaches improvisation at the Conservatoire du 14e Arrondissement.

## YANN OLLIVO Arranger



Born in 1972, Yann Ollivo began learning the piano at the age of eight. In 1984 he entered the CNSM de Paris, initially in the harmony and counterpoint class, and obtained Premiers Prix in harmony, counterpoint, fugue and forms, accompaniment, and conducting vocal music. His activity as an accompanist enables him to collaborate regularly with formations and institutions including the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France, the Ensemble Intercontemporain, the Théâtre du Châtelet, the Prades Festival and Academy, and the Long-Thibaud Competition, and to work with such musicians as Armin Jordan, Pierre Boulez, Lawrence Foster, Scott Sandmeier, Arto Noras, Frans Helmerson, András Adorján, and David Grimal. His talents as a pianist and arranger led him to join the groups Sorties d'Artistes in 1998 and Sirba Octet in 2003. After teaching sight-reading and accompaniment at the Conservatoire du Centre de Paris for five years, Yann Ollivo has taught sight-reading to pianists at the CNSM de Paris since 2001.

## IURIE MORAR Cymbalum



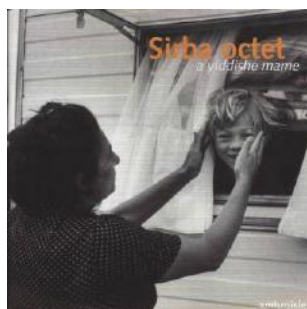
Iurie Morar trained at the National Conservatoire of Moldova in Chisinau (USSR) and won the Stefan Neaga competition there before continuing his training in France at the Conservatoire de Strasbourg under Detlef Kieffer.

Performing with various ensembles he has appeared with popular groups as well as symphony and chamber orchestras alongside artists such as Laurent Korcia, Sarah Nemtanu (with whom he has released a CD) and Gilles Apap (with whom he released the album Transilvanian Lointain Boys). In 2010 he made a guest appearance with the Orchestre de Paris to perform Stèle, György Kurtag's Opus 33, conducted by Pierre Boulez. Morar is also an arranger and conductor and in 2012 formed Le Grand Orchestre for whom he has composed and directed two shows – Tzars, which is centered around Caucasian and Eastern European music and dance, and Atmosphère, which focuses on film music from Chaplin's silent era to the Hollywood greats. He plays a cymbalom made by the Hungarian manufacturer Bohak.

# DISCOGRAPHY

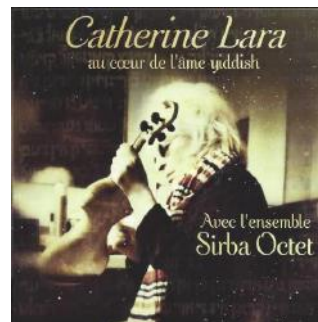
## A YIDDISHE MAME

Label : Naïve Ambroisie  
Production : Sirba Octet  
Release date : 2005  
Duration : 74 min



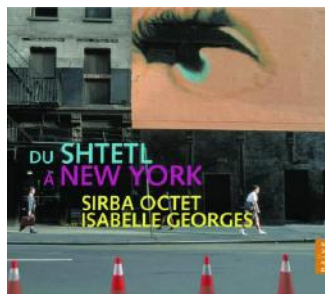
## CATHERINE LARA AU CŒUR DE L'ÂME YIDDISH

Label : Sony Music  
Production : Sony Music  
Release date : 2012  
Duration : 35 min



## DU SHTETL A NEW YORK

Label : Naïve Ambroisie  
Production : Sirba Octet  
Release date : 2008  
Duration : 63 min



## TANTZ !

Label : Dolce Volta  
Production : Dolce Volta  
Release date : 2015  
Duration : 66 min



## YIDDISH RHAPSODY

Label : Naïve Ambroisie  
Production : Sirba Octet  
Release date : 2009  
Duration : 71 min

