

The Klezmatics - Biography (Short Version)

The Klezmatics are globally-renowned world music superstars — and the only klezmer band to win a Grammy award. The Klezmatics emerged out of the vibrant cultural scene of New York City's East Village in 1986 with klezmer steeped in Eastern European Jewish tradition and spirituality, while incorporating contemporary themes such as human rights and anti-fundamentalism and eclectic musical influences including Arab, African, Latin and Balkan rhythms, jazz and punk. In the course of over twenty years and nine albums they have stubbornly continued making music that is wild, mystical, provocative, reflective and ecstatically danceable.

Over the years the Klezmatics have had the privilege of working with many musical luminaries, including visionary American folksingers **Pete Seeger**, **Arlo Guthrie**, **Theodore Bikel** and **Odetta**, classical virtuoso **Itzhak Perlman**, Israeli pop icons **Chava Alberstein** and **Ehud Banai**, singer-songwriters **Ben Folds** and **Natalie Merchant**, Beat poet legend **Allen Ginsberg**, avant-garde experimentalist **John Zorn**, Morocco's **Master Musicians of Jajouka**, Nubian Egyptian percussionist **Mahmoud Fadl** and Kosher Gospel belter **Joshua Nelson**.

Their collaborations have extended to numerous theatrical, film, dance and television projects, including Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Tony Kushner's *A Dybbuk* and *It's An Undoing World*. The Klezmatics have reached millions through performances and features on Late Night with David Letterman, PBS' Great Performances, BBC's Rhythms of the World, BBC's John Peel Show, various NPR programs (A Prairie Home Companion with Garrison Keillor, New Sounds Live and Soundcheck), CBS Nightwatch, FOX After Breakfast, MTV News and HBO's Sex in the City. Additionally, their "NY Psycho Freylekhs" was chosen as a theme song for Air America Radio's Al Franken Show. They have performed in over twenty countries at some of the most storied venues and festivals worldwide, including Central Park Summerstage, Carnegie Hall, Pirineos Sur (Spain), Colours of Ostrava (Czech Republic), Pohoda Festival (Slovakia), Jazzsomer Graz (Austria), Heimatklänge Festival (Germany), London's Queen Elizabeth Hall and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw.

The Klezmatics have topped the Billboard world music charts on numerous occasions and have garnered numerous awards and accolades throughout their career, including a GLAMA (Gay and Lesbian American Music Award) and the German Critics Prize (twice). They were the recipients of the 2006 Grammy Award for Best Contemporary World Music Album for their cd *Wonder Wheel*: Lyrics by Woody Guthrie.