



RAYSN: The Music of Jewish Belarus.

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Litvakus called by some critics an “acoustic Gogol Bordello” is a unique klezmer collective, and the first to focus exclusively on the music and culture of Belarus. The Litvakus repertoire is a mix of traditional Belarusian and Litvak (Belarusian Jewish) folk music, as well as contemporary pieces written in the spirit of roots music.

The new (2014) Litvakus album, RAYSN, the Music of Jewish Belarus, explores a previously unknown side of Jewish and klezmer music. The album tells a powerful story about a place where Jews and Litwins (the Belarusians’ pre-colonial ethnonym) coexisted for more than seven centuries, creating the unique Belarusian culture, separately and together. RAYSN (pronounced rye-sin) presents rarely heard music from two endangered cultures, Yiddish/ Litvak and Belarusian/ Litwin.

For a contemporary klezmer record, the sounds of RAYSN may be unexpected. It does take by surprise, but it also overpowers by the warmth of the deeply rooted tradition. Bagpipe-like drones, drones on the fiddle and bass, shtetl disco feel, authentic and vibrant, come to life as this music had existed before being washed away by urbanization, Soviet and Nazi genocide, the decimation of the non-majority culture, emigration, assimilation, and a slew of other atrocities. Seven centuries of existence preserve this music its rightful place in the future, and Litvakus gives it a voice.

The album’s cover art is designed by Ilusha Tsinadze and illustrated with a rustic landscape, a 2006 painting by the acclaimed artist Boris Zaborov, the only living artist whose paintings have been acquired by the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, Italy.

Web-site: Litvakus.com

RAYSN downloads are available on iTunes, Amazon, CDBaby. CDs and downloads are available on bandcamp.com

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