

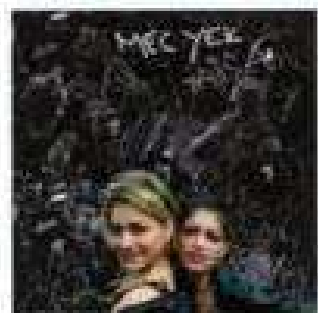
Mec Yek

Taisa

Choux de Bruxelles (34 mins)



Roma-Belgian bangers



Mec Yek is the meeting of Slovakian Roma sisters, Katia and Milka Pohlodkova, with the Belgian

'Euro-roots outfit' Jaune Toujours.

Singing in Romani, Russian and Dutch they cover themes of money, love, and domestic violence with a feisty swagger; backed by the eclectic sounds of the band led by accordionist Piet Maris. Maris is joined by trumpet, sax and clarinet, percussion and double bass, yet – strangely for a band playing Gypsy music – no fiddle. They manage perfectly well without, however, and introduce touches of *ska*, *tarantella* and blues into the songs, many of which seem to have been penned by a relative of the sisters. One of the most notable influences is jazz: the sax and trumpet solos interweave in very satisfying counterpoint underpinned by the rhythm section of percussion, bass and accordion.

Despite its dark subject, the groove of 'Sako Ratshi' is infectious, as are the slinky counter-melodies on 'Bare Love Pale'. You might recognise 'Korobushka & Dolina' as the tune used for a certain block-stacking computer game and there's a hint of Southern Italy in 'Shukar Romani'. A wide musical

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catchment that reflects the group's diverse backgrounds as well as the itinerant heritage of the Roma people.

TOM NEWELL

TRACK TO TRY *Bare Love Pale*

