

# MEC YEK

Balkan Motown - Gypsy Hip!



Alex Vanhee

A combination of earthy traditionalism and hot jazz on display. Drawn from the Roma tradition, all souped-up with some quite superb playing and plenty of go-faster stripes without losing the emotion at the heart of it all. Mec Yek is a gypsy band without violin

# About Us

Sometime midway through the 1990s, Piet Maris (frontman with the acclaimed Euro roots outfit Jaune Toujours) began to make contact with gypsy musicians and, through their guidance and contacts, to travel regularly to a Roma community in Slovakia.

Through the latter, the ever curious musician learned their gypsy style of playing. Afterwards, this repertoire was thoroughly reinterpreted by the musicians of Jaune Toujours, who, in their usual fashion, began pushing the music beyond the boundaries of tradition by adding their own musical flavours to the sound.

At first, the more traditionally-minded gypsies in the band's audience frowned in astonishment at these changes but the sound began to catch on with the younger Roma. The latter's stamp of approval was, ultimately, given authority when two young Roma singers - Katia and Milka Pohlodkova - joined the band on stage and never left... The gypsy incarnation that has developed from Jaune Toujours is called Mec Yek!

As you'd expect from Mec Yek's origins, their music contains quite some musical surprises. As the successor to SuperDiverCity they released the new album Taisa, end of 2021, meaning 'tomorrow' - the Roma 'mañana', you could say.

And the Covid years 20-21 would show to be decisive for the sound of the new repertoire. Mec Yek opted for a lightweight percussion device, so that it could be easily manoeuvred for safe rehearsals in a wide variety of locations: outdoors or in large indoor spaces, with the necessary distance. Most of the recordings were also done this way, in the concert venue VK in Molenbeek, Brussels.

For the repertoire itself, Katia and Milka went back to their youth in Kosice, Slovakia, to a demo of songs they made with their brothers. But there are also special arrangements of traditional Roma songs. Singing is in Romanes, but sometimes also in Russian and there is even a little bit of Dutch. With a wide range of styles, from tarantella to ska to island blues. But against all odds : Mec Yek is a gypsy band without a violin.

# Information

## The Band :

Milka Pohlodkova -voix  
Katia Pohlodkova - Voix  
Piet Maris - Accordéon & voix  
Théophane Raballand -percussions  
Mathieu Verkaeren - contrebasse  
Mattias Laga - sax soprano et clarinettes  
Bart Maris - trompette et tuba

## Discography :

1999 Caravan 2000: EP, Jewelcase CD  
2002 Caravan 2002: EP, Jewelcase CD  
2008 Antikrisis: Album, Jewelcase CD  
2010 Re:Plugged: Remix Album, Jewelcase CD  
2015 SuperDiverCity: Album, Jewelcase CD  
2021 Taisia Album, Digipack CD

## Sites and Socials :



[Spotify Mec Yek](#)



[Choux.net](#)  
[Choux.net/MecYek](#)



[Instagram Mec Yek](#)



[Bandcamp Mec Yek](#)



[Facebook Mec Yek](#)



[Apple Music Mek Yek](#)



[Youtube Mec Yek](#)

## Contact :



[info@choux.net](mailto:info@choux.net)



+32 2 538 94 55



Gustave Schildknecht 33/3  
1020 Brussels

# Links

Audio -Videos-Live

## Audio Links :

- [Soske Me Te Tshorel Geilom](#)
- [Sako Ratshi](#)
- [Shun Tu More](#)
- [Soske Dzjava](#)
- [Shukar Romani](#)

## Videos Live :

- [Sidzjar Mamo live - Digital Choux Fest '21](#)
- [Shun tu more - LIVE at Show de BXL](#)



# Highlights



Alex Vanhee

The band honoured its outstanding live reputation on many occasions, such as **Goûts de Gand**, **Bendana and Propulse Festival** (Belgium 2023), **Colora Festival**, **Quartiers d'O** (TAZ), **Zilleghem Folk** and **Jam'in Jette Festival** (Belgium 2022), **Mabatato Festival**, **Festival d'Art de Huy** (Belgium 2021), **Balkan Trafik**, **Choux-Fest VK Brussels** (Belgium 2021, online), **The Canopy Sessions** (Belgium 2020) **PAS Festival** (The Netherlands 2017) **Zomer Van Antwerpen**, **Copacabana Festival** (Belgium 2017) **Glatt und Verkehrt Festival** (Austria 2016), just to name some...



Theophane Raballand

## Press Quotes

FINANCIAL TIMES (★★★★★) : "The dominant Gypsy jazz offers endless twists."

SONGLINES (★★★★★) : "A wide musical catchment that reflects the group's diverse backgrounds as well as the itinerant heritage of the Roma people."

ROOTSTIME (★★★★★) : "Virtuosity and emotion fit together wonderfully and the kind of Roma music Mec Yek makes today, without giving up any of its authenticity, has effortlessly made the step to modernity."

LUST FOR LIFE MAGAZINE (★★★★★) : "Stirring music that connects Eastern and Western Europe in an original way ."

RnR (★★★) : "Taisa revels in its jauntiness, whilst the band are adept at providing restless rhythms amidst a joyful approach that would excite any audience."

MIXED WORLD MUSIC : "Katia en Milka kunnen een keel opzetten van je welste, maar ook zo verleidelijk koeren dat het de luisteraar week wordt in de benen."

AT THE BARRIER : "Manic and maverick Roma ska-punk gypsy jazz from Belgium, without a violin in sight."



vzw CHOUX DE BRUXELLES asbl		
Technical Info Mec Yek		
	INSTR.	MIC/DI
1	cajon	SM 91
2	bells	SM 57
3	shekere	SM 57
4	OH	CK 93 / Neu 184 / C 451
5	bells	SM 57
6	contrabas	DI compressor 1
7	accordeon L (Low)	XLR (mic < band)
8	accordeon R (High)	XLR (mic < band)
9	clarinet	XLR (element < band) compressor 2
10	bass clarinet	XLR (element < band) compressor 3
11	sax soprano	MD 421 / SM 57 compressor 4
12	trumpet	MD 421 / SM 58 compressor 5
13	tuba	MD 421 / SM 58 compressor 6
14	lead voc	SM 58 compressor 7
15	lead voc	SM 58 compressor 8
16	lead voc (voc acc.)	SM 57A compressor 9
17	backing voc (megapho)	XLR (mic < band)
18	backing voc (bass)	SM 58 compressor 10
MONITORS: min. 6 x 15" floormonitors, pref. on 6 sends		
REMARK		
all mentioned items may be replaced, on the condition that the quality is the same or comparable		
if the p.a. is rented, the renting company has to be informed of the technical demands formulated		
in this sheet		
if you have questions, please contact the band		
this sheet is part of the contract.		
vzw Choux de Bruxelles asbl		
G.Schildknechtstr. 33/3, 1020 Brussels, tel +32 (0)2 538 94 55		
BTW BE 466.505.167 TVA		
www.choux.net - info@choux.net		

