



Press Kit

CONTACT

HENRI OPPENHEIM
 3927, AV. HENRI JULIEN
 MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA - H2W 2K1
 TEL : (1) 514-272-8635
 HENRI@MAGILLAH.COM

MANAGEMENT / BOOKING

LATITUDE 45 ARTS PROMOTION / BARBARA SCALES
 109, BOUL. ST-JOSEPH WEST
 MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA - H2T 2P1
 TEL : (1) 514-276-2694
 INFO@LATITUDE45ARTS.COM



מגילה MAGILLAH

Magillah (מגילה) is a multi-faceted project whose roots are found in the music of Eastern European Ashkenazi Jews. *Henri Oppenheim*, a Paris-born composer and accordionist of Jewish origin, heads this Montreal based project. He has been active in the Canadian and international world music scene for the last ten years (Opus Prize, 2007, album of the year, Quebec).

Magillah is currently involved in four distinct activities:

- A stage show of *klezmer* music and traditional songs presented since 2008 (March 2013 - Audience, Naxos).
- A project (« PYM ») involving original compositions based on poetry of Yiddish Montreal poets of the 20th century, sung by *Karen Young* (Nov. 2013).
- A performance of these original song in Yiddish with Magillah plus a classical string orchestra (May 2014).
- An album of original pieces for children (2014).

Inspired by a more modern sound, Magillah has been performing their own personal brand of traditional Jewish music using violin, voice and rhythm, since 2008. Magillah places emphasis on the beauty of the Yiddish language and its super sonorities and vibrant color. It is at once intense, deep, joyful and humorous.

The Show - Duration : 75 minutes

4 to 6 musicians

1 - Voice : *Michelle Heisler*

2 - Violin : *Julie Triquet*

3 - Accordion / Guitar / Artistic direction :
Henri Oppenheim

4 - Bass / Double bass : *Mathieu Deschenaux*

5 - Drums / Percussion : *Samuel Harrisson*

6 (optional) - Guitar : *Andy Dacoulis*

Discography

Merovitz Project (with singer Allan Merovitz) :

“Live in Montreal” 2008 (Audience, SRI)

Magillah : “Fotografie” (פּוֹטוֹגְרַאפִיעַ) - Apr. 2013 (Audience, Naxos)

Magillah : « **Tur Malka** - Poets of Yiddish Montreal »
(with singer Karen Young) - To be released in Jan. 2014



Click on the cover
for more details



Critic's Corner

“An exciting new musical experiment, somewhere between klezmer, marching-band, yiddish and hebrew musical genres (...). Melodies and rhythms straight from the streets of Eastern Europe, some spectacular tempo changes, gut-wrenching song/stories and blues laments, some current political reminders, klezmer on reggae rhythm, some wild and daring artistic choices.”

“It is jubilant, joyous, full of emotions, and totally crazy on fire music.”

Yves Bernard

Le Devoir - Montreal

“An exquisite listening experience.”

“On the violin, Triquet turn from her classical persona into a dervish when she switches to klezmer (...).”

“Some of the hottest klezmer in town.”

Heather Solomon

Canadian Jewish News - Toronto

“One hears talent on this CD (...) The playing is very good, and we look forward to new projects by the group.”

Itzik Gottesman,

Yiddish Forward - New York

Audio links

[*Abi Gezunt*](#)

[*Di Sapozhkelekh*](#)

[*Terkishe Freylakh*](#)

Liens Video

[*Promo Video*](#)

[*A Yiddishe Mame*](#)

Management / Booking

Agence Latitude 45 (Montreal)

Barbara Scales

(1) 514-276-2694

info@latitude45arts.com



MAGILLAH מגילה

ARTISTIC DIRECTION : Henri Oppenheim is an accordionist from Paris and now Montreal. A former researcher in mathematics, Henri studied composition and orchestration at McGill



University. As accordionist, he then directed the Montreal klezmer ensemble Kleztory for 4 years, producing between 2002 and 2012 over 200 concerts in Canada, the United States, South-America, China and Europe, including concerts with les Orchestres Symphoniques de Montréal et de Québec and I Musici de Montréal. With them, he recorded a CD in 2004 for the prestigious classical British label

Chandos. A Montreal-based multi-instrumentalist, he has done many artistic collaborations, as composer, arranger, musical director, accordionist, percussionist and producer, primarily in the fields of Jewish music and francophone song. He regularly gives conferences about klezmer and yiddish music.



MAIN SHOWS

2012 : Montreal Int. Jewish Music Fest (Montreal) / MdC Ahuntsic (Mtl) / Ashkenaz Fest (Toronto) / Salle Bourgie (Mtl) / Soloway Jewish Com. Center (Ottawa)

2011 : Fête de la Musique (Tremblant) / Salle Pauline Julien (Ste-Geneviève) / Théâtre du Grand Sault (Lasalle)

2010 : MdC. Maisonneuve (Mtl) / Salle de diff. Parc-Extension (Mtl) / Centre comm. de l'Est de Pierrefonds

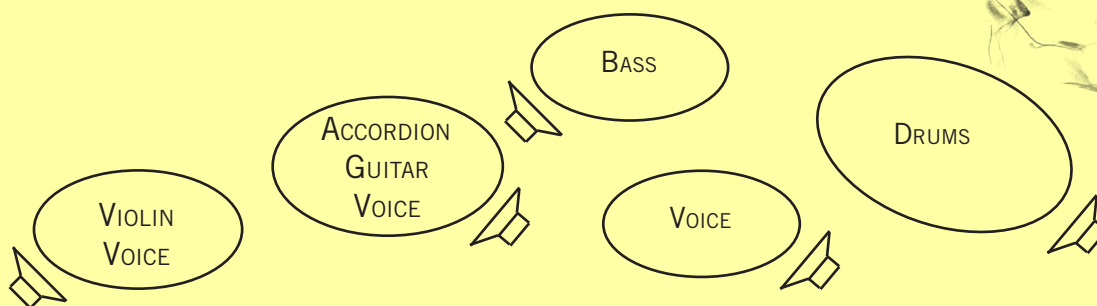
2009 : Fête de la Musique, Tremblant (avec la participation de Rémi Bolduc) / Synagogue Beth Ora (Mtl) / Segal Center (Mtl) / Festiv. Musique et Monde, MdC Ahuntsic (Mtl) / Octave Theatre, Kingston (Ontario) / Centre cult. de Pointe-Claire (Mtl)

2008 : Sala Rossa, Montreal / Club Soda, Montreal / Église Holy Trinity, Lakefield, Qc

STAGE :	Min 16 x 20 ft
DRESSING ROOM :	Artists' dressing rooms should be well lit and equipped with chairs, mirrors and a washroom..
LIGHTS :	According to the artist's requirements
SOUNDS :	Mixer with 24 inputs with EQ 4 auxs / 1 multi-effect unit with reverb / 4 compressors (insertion) / 2 eq units with 31 bands / CD player/ PA system with proper speakers
OTHER :	At least 1 stool of approx. 2 feet 8 (80 cms)
MONITORS :	Minimum 2 independant mixes / 4 monitors 45 degrees / 1 stereo eq 31 band

TOTAL : min 14 inputs (*=provided by the band)
 Drums (min 4 lines) : standard drum miking
 Accordion/Guitar/Voice (6 lines) : 2 XLRs, 2 DIs / vocal mic(*)
 Violin/Voice (2 lines) : clip-on mic(*) / vocal mic
 Voice (1 line) : vocal mic
 Basse/Contrebasse (1 entrée) : Preamp-DI(*)

STAGE PLOT :



Yves Bernard - Le Devoir - May 8, 2009

LE DEVOIR.com

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Vitrine du disque

Monde: Live in Montreal - Merovitz Project + Brass - Audience / S.R.I.: Même s'il n'existe que depuis deux ans, le Merovitz Project vient de remporter le prix MMM - Étoiles Galaxie 2009. Il s'agit du nouveau projet du compositeur, arrangeur et accordéoniste Henri Oppenheim, connu avec le réputé Kleztory. Un projet excitant, entre le klezmer, la musique de fanfare et la chanson juive en yiddish ou en hébreu. Avec le grand interprète Alan Merovitz, le groupe à géométrie variable, qui se présente ici avec des cuivres, explore des arrangements plus contemporains que ceux d'un Kleztory plus classique. De la prière entre le chant et l'incantation, des rythmes directs joués comme dans la rue, des variations de tempos spectaculaires, du chant venant des tripes et des lamentations blues, de la parole politique, du klezmer sur du reggae, quelques décalages déglingués et même quelques solos de Rémi Bolduc, qui fait glisser et chanter son saxo là-dessus. C'est larmoyant, jubilatoire et parfaitement allumé.

Yves Bernard

Though it is only two years old, Merovitz Project has won the MMM-Étoiles Galaxies 2009 Prize. Merovitz Project is a new initiative, spurred on by well-known Henri Oppenheim, composer, arranger and accordionist, of the renowned Montreal band Kleztory. Merovitz Project is an exciting new musical experiment, somewhere between klezmer, marching-band, yiddish and hebrew musical genres. Together with the great singer Allan Merovitz, this versatile band plays here in its full size with brass section.

Merovitz Project explore arrangements that are more modern and contemporary than the more classical approach of Kleztory. You will hear soulful prayer and incantations, melodies and rhythms straight from the streets of Eastern Europe, some spectacular tempo changes, gut-wrenching song/stories and blues laments, some current political reminders, klezmer on reggae rhythm, some wild and daring artistic choices, matched with the amazing guest saxophonist Remi Bolduc, who glides and soars on two numbers. It is jubilant, joyous, full of emotion, and totally crazy on fire music.

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Yiddish is a musical magnet for Magillah

They're all coming to Yiddish from different directions, but music links their efforts.

Button accordionist and musical arranger-producer Henri Oppenheim was raised secularly in France. He wanted to "move toward [his] roots" as his grandmother's generation began to wane.

Violinist Julie Triquet, originally from Quebec City, fell in love with klezmer when Oppenheim and his earlier klezmer band, Kleztory, came to play and record in an unusual collaboration with the chamber orchestra I Musici, of which she is a member.

Vocalist Michelle Heisler, born in Ste. Foy, Que., and arriving in Montreal as a teenager, had little Jewish education until she joined the Dora Wasserman Yiddish Theatre (DWYT), which has her speaking and singing in the mamaloshen.

The three of them, and two French-

Québécois musicians, Mathieu Deschenaux and Éric Breton, are playing some of the hottest klezmer in town, with Yiddish as their language of choice for song selection.

Under Oppenheim's musical direction, the Yiddish/klezmer band Magillah has already won the Radio-Canada Étoiles-Galaxie Prize in 2009 and is currently touring Montreal's Maisons de la culture and other



Arts Scene

By Heather Solomon

public halls, bringing Jewish *ta'am* to the unlikelyst corners of the city. Feb. 19 is their next concert, at the Théâtre du Grand Sault (Centre Culturel Henri-Lemieux), 7644 Édouard St., LaSalle.

An offshoot of Oppenheim's experiences with Kleztory, which he headed from 2002 to 2006, Magillah had its seeds planted in his Montreal Klezmer Trio.

In 2007, the accordionist then linked up with master storyteller and Yiddish singer Allan Merovitz for The Merovitz Project, renaming it Magillah in late 2010 when the two amicably parted ways. "I will never be able to give him back what he gave me in terms of inspiration," says Oppenheim.

Heisler took over as lead singer in November, a brilliant choice, since she already has followers

from her charismatic performances with the DWYT in such plays as *The Pirates of Penzance* (in Yiddish) and *On Second Avenue*.

"I met Henri when he played accordion for YAYA [Young Actors for Young Audiences] and I was directing *No More Raistns, No More Almonds*. I didn't start out in musicals. My training is in classical theatre, but when I came home from studying in New York, I got the lead in *Eutza* at Centaur Theatre, and the work just kept coming, all in musicals.

"Once I joined the DWYT, I started to feel, 'This is where I come from. This is who I am.'" That intensified with Magillah.

Oppenheim plans to introduce more theatre into the band's shows and has hired director and dramaturge Melanie Delisle, which has already begun with he and Heisler engaging in bilingual serio-comic patter between numbers.

Still, the concerts soar on the band's strongest point: musical virtuosity. The soulful accordion complements the human-sounding violin. Triquet, who trained under Aaron Rosand at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, turns from her classical persona into a dervish when she switches to klezmer. The per-



From left, Henri Oppenheim, Mathieu Deschenaux, Michelle Heisler, Éric Breton and Julie Triquet are the Yiddish/klezmer band Magillah. (Heather Solomon photo)

ussionist, often on hand drums, and the bass player take off on flights of fancy, coming down to earth for even more heavenly sounds with the others. It all makes for an exquisite listening experience.

"I always played folk music for my pleasure - Irish, French-Canadian and Gypsy," Triquet says. "When Kleztory played with I Musici, we came offstage, and I started playing by ear with Henri and we connected musically. He gave me a lot of klezmer recordings, and I picked it up. You don't have to be Jewish to feel the emotions."

Heisler, tambourine in hand, delights with such numbers as the energetic *Abi Gezunt* and the heart-wrenching *Mayn Ruhe Platz*, which was inspired by the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire of 1911.

Oppenheim has built a following among francophone Québécois who have taken to klezmer. "Now I look forward to bringing this show to a more Jewish audience."

He'll do so March 27, when Magillah plays the Dollard des Ormeaux Civic Centre and, in between other appearances, they'll be at the Eleanor London Côte St. Luc Public Library May 19. For details, call 272-8635 or visit www.magillah.com.

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Itzik Gottesman - Yiddish Forward - March 4th, 2011

Yiddish Music in the 21st Century: The Merovitz Project

Musical projects come and go; before one notices, bands have split up; groups that one would have wanted to hear again. For example, I received a new CD from Montreal, produced in 2009, called the Merovitz Project + Brass (Live in Montreal) with the singer Alan Merovitz. The recording is not among the very best of the last few years, but nevertheless one hears talent on this CD, and it is a shame that it won't be possible to see or hear them in the future.

According to Henri Oppenheim, the accordionist and arranger for the group, the Merovitz Project began in the fall of 2008 and ended in the fall of 2010. The same musicians continue to play, but without Merovitz; with another singer, the Montreal actress Michelle Heisler. Naturally the band changed its name, and is now known as Magillah (magillah.com)

Alan Merovitz is known in the wider klezmer world outside Canada as the first singer of the Flying Bulgars, a band founded and led by Toronto trumpeter David Buchbinder. This band was for many years the best of its kind in Canada. However, according to their website, they have not performed together for the last two years. Merovitz became famous for his unique singing style - emotional, but not theatrical, with a great need to pull the audience into the performance. After the "Flying Bulgars" Merovitz performed with "Ot Azoy Klezmer" (Amsterdam) and "Beyond the Pale" (Toronto). With his personality and voice, he takes center stage with whatever band he sings with.

Henri Oppenheim, the musical director of the "Project", was formerly a mathematician. In 1998 he decided to devote himself entirely to music and became the leader of the Montreal group "Klezstory". (Incidentally, he is not the only mathematician-klezmer; one can add to the list the saxophonist Alex Kantorovitch and the pianist Adrian - both mathematics professors and researchers). In 2007 Oppenheim won an important award from the Conseil Québécois de la Musique for his recordings. The ensemble "Merovitz Project" consisted of 7 musicians, featuring the violinist Julie Triquet and brass instruments.

Oppenheim writes that with "Merovitz Project" the musicians wanted "to reflect the roots and crossroads of the musicians in the multi-cultural city of Montreal - Québécois, English-Canadian, French, Jewish and non-Jewish; klezmer, jazz or world-music specialists" - a reflection of the musical traditions in the city - both old and new.

The CD, recorded during a live concert, begins with the Sephardi-style "Shalom Aleichem", with a Middle-Eastern rhythm. Merovitz sings the song with perhaps too much enthusiasm, and one can feel that the emotion is contrived. There is more sincerity in his rendition of the other songs, like his own composition "In Calgary" -

In Calgary there lives a klezmer / With his faithful wife and daughter / And so they start to celebrate / Ay day day, day day
In Toronto there lives a rabbi / Near his friend, even a gentile / And when he starts to pray / Boy, boy boy boy

Merovitz is a fine singer, but definitely not a Shakespeare.

In his arrangements, Oppenheim has added new rhythms to old songs, and the combinations are mostly successful. For example, in "Tantst a Freylekh" the Jewish melodies are played to a Caribbean reggae beat. A hip-hop rhythm was added to Molly Picon's "Abi Gezunt". But calling these arrangements "experimental", as Oppenheim does in the CD-booklet, is too extreme - klezmer musicians around the world "experiment" in the same manner these days.

As a singer Merovitz is at his best in Moyshe Oysher's "Dray Dreydelekh" (Three Small Dreydls), a lively Khanuka song. While it's clear that Merovitz likes to party, he can also sing a slow song like "Mayn Ru'eh Plats" (My Resting Place) by Morris Rosenfeld with heart and feeling. He also does a good interpretation of "Sapozhkelekh", a folksong from Bronia Sakina's repertoire. Oppenheim has added a rhythm that sounds more Turkish-Greek than Jewish to the folksong "Lomir Zikh Iberbetn" (Let's Make Up); and Merovitz improvises while singing that the whole world must make up in order to make peace in the world. Oppenheim's only original piece, "Yonas Stocato", played by the violinist, makes a deep impression and the listener would like to hear more original compositions.

The recording ends with the campfire song "Arum Dem Fayer" (Around the Fire) played to a tango rhythm. Why such a rhythm? I really don't know; it seems to me that not all rhythmic changes make sense. In general however, the playing is very good and Merovitz is among the best contemporary Yiddish singers. We look forward to new projects by the group, if not together, then as individuals.

(Translation from the Yiddish: Rivka Augenfeld September 25, 2011)

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Magillah: „פּאָטאָגראַפֿיע“

די מאָנטרעאַלער גרופע Magillah ווערט אָנגעפֿירט פֿונעם אַקאָרדיאָן־שפּילער הענרי אָפּענהיים! ער האָט זי געשאַפֿן אין 2008 צו שטעלן דעם טראָפּ אויף ייִדישן געזאַנג, און האָט צונויפֿגענומען די בעסטע מוזיקער פֿון זײַן הייַמ־שטאָט, סײַ פֿון דער קלאַסישער מוזיק, סײַ פֿון דער דזשעז־און וועלט־מוזיק. פֿון דער „סירבע“ אויף דעם קאָמפּאָקטל הערט מען אָפּענהיים! מס טאַלאַנט ווי אַ שפּילער, אָבער זײַן הויפּט־פֿעיקייט קען מען גיכער הערן אין די קאָמפּליצירטע אַראַנזשירונגען. די זינגערין מישעל הײַסלער זינגט די ייִדישע לידער אין אַ דזשעז־סטייל, ס׳רובֿ פֿון זיי די אַלטע שלאַגערס ווי „אַבי געזונט“ און „ראַזשינקעס און מאַנדלען“. רירנדיק זינגט זי מאַריס ראַזענפֿעלדס „מײַן רוע פּלאַץ“, צו וועלכן זי גיט צו אַן אַרײַנפֿיר אויף פֿראַנצייזיש, און טײַטש אויף ענגליש.

די פֿידלערין זשוליי טריקע שפּילט אין אַן עכט ייִדישן נוסח, אָבער די עלעקטרישע גיטאַר פֿון אַנדי דאַקוליס שפּילט די צענטראַלע ראָלע אינעם קלאַנג פֿון דער גרופע. מיט זײַן 1970'ער ראַק־סטייל פֿאַרוואַנדלט ער „די סאַפּאַזשקעלעך“ אין אַ ראַק־און־ראַל ליד. דער פֿאַלקלער סאַמועל האַריסאָן דערווײַל טערט נאָך מער די לידער פֿון אַ פֿאַלקס־סטייל, אָבער ס׳איז זיכער נישט קיין עבֿירה, וואָס, דורך דעם קלאַנג, וויל „מגילה“ געפֿעלן אַ גרעסערן עולם אין מאָנטרעאַל. סײַ טראַדיציאָנאַליסטן, סײַ מאַדערניסטן וועלן הנאה האָבן פֿון דער רעקאָרדירונג.

www.magillah.com

The Montreal group "Magillah" is led by accordionist Henri Oppenheim. He created it in 2008 to put emphasis on Yiddish song, and he gathered the best musicians from his hometown, from the worlds of classical music as well as from jazz and worldbeat. On the cut "Sirba" one hears Oppenheim's talent as a player, but his real skills can quickly be heard in the complex arrangements. Michelle Heisler sings the Yiddish songs in a jazz style, most of them old standards like 'Abi Gezunt' and 'Rozhinkes un Mandlen'. Morris Rosenfeld's 'Mayn Ruhe Plats' is sung in a very moving way, and she adds a French introduction and an English translation.

Fiddler Julie Triquet plays in a genuine Jewish style, but it is Andy Dacoulis' electric guitar that plays the main role in the sound of this group. His 1970's rock-style transforms "Sapozhkelekh" into a rock'n'roll song. Drummer Samuel Harrison takes the songs even further away from a folk style, but it is certainly not a sin that, through this sound, Magillah wants to reach out to a wider audience in Montreal. Both traditionalists and modernists will enjoy this recording.

(Trad. Rivka Augenfeld)

Le groupe montréalais Magillah est dirigé par l'accordéoniste Henri Oppenheim, qui l'a créé en 2008 pour mettre en valeur la chanson Yiddish. Il a réuni les meilleurs musiciens de sa ville, venant autant du monde de la musique classique que du jazz ou du worldbeat. Sur la pièce "Sirba", on peut entendre ses talents d'instrumentiste, mais ses vraies compétences apparaissent vite au travers de ses arrangements élaborés. Avec un son tendant vers le jazz, Michelle Heisler interprète principalement des grands standards comme "Abi Gezunt" et "Rozhinkes mit Mandlen". Elle chante avec beaucoup de sensibilité la chanson de Morris Rosenfeld "Mayn Ruhe Plats".

La violoniste Julie Triquet joue avec un son authentiquement juif, mais c'est vraiment la guitare électrique d'Andy Dacoulis qui détermine le son du groupe. Son style rock des années 70 transforme "Di Sapozhkelekh" en un véritable morceau de rock'n'roll. Le jeu du batteur Samuel Harrison nous éloigne encore plus du son "folk" traditionnel. Je n'ai rien contre cet effort au niveau du son, qui vise à toucher un public plus large. Les traditionalistes autant que les modernistes devraient y trouver leur compte.

(Trad. Henri Oppenheim)

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CD celebrates Yiddish in klezmer songs

Magillah, unlike most klezmer bands, has stepped from the safety of mostly wordless music-making and into the realm of Yiddish.

Founder and band leader Henri Oppenheim has been leading his musicians, joined three years ago by Yiddish vocalist Michelle Heisler, farther into the creative sea of the mamaloshen that now buoys them with a new album titled *Fotografie*.

Oppenheim calls the CD, to be launched next month, "a snapshot" of the band's four years of music-making. On the back cover of the CD case, beside the band name and above the track list, is, in large lettering, "Yiddish & Klezmer."

"I didn't hear Yiddish growing up in France. I heard Polish from my family, who were assimilated doctors and scientists, and I studied Russian. But Yiddish became

important to me because of the passion I developed for klezmer 20 years ago," says Oppenheim.

"Klezmer is the tip of the iceberg, in the sense that people know klezmer, but totally ignore what's behind it, the huge number of songs with words."



Heather Solomon

He moved ever closer to his roots after his 1997 arrival in Montreal with the establishment of successive and sometimes concurrent klezmer bands such as Kleztory, Montreal Klezmer Trio, Merovitz Project and Magillah.

What makes *Fotografie* even more special is the virtuosity of its instrumentalists who individually and as Magillah have been invited to play with symphony and chamber orchestras.

Oppenheim's nimble and pitch-perfect accordion, Julie Triquet's human-voiced violin that can let loose a dervish of sound,

Mathieu Deschenaux's mellow bass and double-bass, Andy Dacoulis' rhythmic guitar and Samuel Harrisson's danceworthy drums keep the 13 songs cooking.

Guest musicians on brass and specialized percussion flavour the mix. A 14th unlisted piece was added as "the cherry on the cake," the band's famous combination of a Quebec reel and the klezmer 7:40 *Train* that picks up speed and sweeps the listener into the stratosphere.

"That's the song we use to finish our shows. It connects Quebec culture to klezmer music. I think Yiddish music should reach a large audience and that was always my intention with klezmer," says Oppenheim, who believes the high production values of this CD, recorded and mixed by Richard Bélanger at Studio Planet, will boost his vision.

"In this album I tried to avoid clichés and I wanted to have fun," says the arranger. "We have a piece that is klezmer-blues, one that is klezmer-reggae, klezmer-bossa nova and *Ketsele Baroyges* that we turned into a disco tune, because I see it as a nihilist song. It has a man trying to seduce a girl by listing all his horrible relatives!"

There are traditional favourites as well, such as the instrumental *Odessa Bulgarian* that worms its way into almost every wedding reception. Morris Rosenfeld's dramatic gem *Mayn Ruhe Platz* memorializes the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire in a sweatshop eulogy sung with exquisite eloquence



Henri Oppenheim
[Heather Solomon photo]

The vocalist swings off the traditionalist branch with a foot-tapping take on *A Yiddische Mame* that morphs from schmaltzy into an irreverent tarantella.

Thanks to Oppenheim's interpretation, she is the first to turn *Rozhinkes mit Mandlen* into a feverish Peggy Lee-style come-on.

Bringing klezmer into the popular musical lexicon is one way that Oppenheim draws those outside the Jewish circle closer to its heart.

"To fight prejudice, people should see that Yiddish songs are universal," he says.

Another Magillah album is in the works, this one funded by the Conseil des Arts et des Lettres du Québec and setting the words of 20th-century Montreal Yiddish poets such as Rochl Korn, Melech Ravitch and Chava Rosenfarb to Oppenheim's original compositions.

Oppenheim was inspired by Israeli singer Chava Alberstein, who wrote music to Yiddish poetry.

"The arrangements for the poems are more electro-urban modern than my previous music, but the violin will still give it a klezmer touch," says Oppenheim, who chose award-winning jazz and world music vocalist Karen Young to interpret the fresh sound and Yiddish lyrics.

"Karen is not familiar with the genre. It's a totally new experience for her, except that she is famous for being able to sing in any language. She has a Yiddish coach for the album."

Meanwhile, *Fotografie* is being distributed by Naxos and will be made available at major music stores and online at <http://>

CONTACT

HENRI OPPENHEIM

3927, AV. HENRI JULIEN

MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA - H2W 2K1

TEL : (1) 514-272-8635

HENRI@MAGILLAH.COM

MANAGEMENT / BOOKING

LATITUDE 45 ARTS PROMOTION / BARBARA SCALES

109, BOUL. ST-JOSEPH WEST

MONTREAL, QUEBEC, CANADA - H2T 2P1

TEL : (1) 514-276-2694

INFO@LATITUDE45ARTS.COM



Yves Bernard - Le Devoir - May 17, 2013

LE DEVOIR. LE VENDREDI 17 MAI 2013

WEEK-END MUSIQUE



MAGILLAH

KLEZMER ETC.

FOTOGRAFIE
Magillah
Audience/Naxos
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Ex-leader de Kleztory, l'accordéoniste Henri Oppenheim plonge avec *Magillah* dans une musique plus sale. L'âme juive est préservée et le klezmer y est même mis en avant, tout comme la chanson yiddish. La chanteuse comédienne Michelle Heisler s'avère très expressive, sensible et un brin théâtrale, alors que la violoniste Julie Triquet peut, à l'image du répertoire, s'avérer grinçante autant que larmoyante. On danse et on pleure, à fond de train dans les deux cas. Les repères sont souvent prévisibles, mais le batteur cogne et le guitariste s'empreint de groove des années 1970. Puis on va vers la fusion, avec le jazz et la ballade lounge, le blues, le reggae, le shuffle et même le disco. À la fin, il y a même un reel à la Ti-Blanc Richard caché dans le lyrisme lent et très ornémenté du violon. Les genres abordés ne révolutionnent rien, mais il y a le mélange inédit et la manière Oppenheim: que du vrai, que du senti, que du bon!

Yves Bernard

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Ex-leader of Montreal's Kleztory, accordionist Henri Oppenheim takes his group "Magillah" and plunges into something more pungent. The Jewish soul is preserved through klezmer and Yiddish song.

The singer-actress Michelle Heisler is deeply expressive, sensitive with a touch of theatricality, while the violinist Julie Triquet, reflecting the range of emotions carried by this music, is by turn punchy and then poignant.

In both cases, it makes you want to dance and cry, at full intensity. Key points of reference are often to be expected, but the drummer nails it and guitarist grooves like it's the 1970s. Then it goes to fusion with jazz and lounge ballads, with blues, reggae, shuffle and even a little disco.

In the end, there is even a reel in the style of Ti-Blanc Richard intertwined with the lyrical and highly ornamented violin. There is no big stylistic revolution here, but it brings a unique mix and it sounds very "Oppenheim": nothing but the real things, the genuine feelings, and great stuff.

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Christophe Rodriguez - Le Journal de Montréal - May 18th, 2013

LE JOURNAL DE MONTRÉAL
SAMEDI 18 MAI 2013

EN BREF

MAGILLAH ★★★★★



FOTOGRAFIE

Fotografie, Indépendant ● Presque issues de la nuit des temps, les musiques yiddish et Klezmer sont un assemblage judicieux, souvent non écrit, de multiples influences. Fondateur du groupe Kleztory, l'accordéoniste/guitariste Henri Oppenheim vient de donner naissance à Magillah, ensemble soudé qui recouvre les deux courants musicaux, ci-haut mentionnés. Un imposant projet avec pas moins de 12 musiciens, dont Maxim St-Pierre, trompette, Muhammad Abdul Al-Khabyr, trombone, le batteur Samuel Harrison et la chanteuse Michelle Heisler, dans un format qui swingue d'aplomb, avec de belles trouvailles musicales et une connaissance du «terrain» approfondi. Taper du pied tout en redécouvrant ces univers.

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Dating back, almost, it seems, to the beginning of time, Yiddish and Klezmer music is a judicious blend, often handed down from generation to generation, of multiple influences.

Founder of the group Kleztory, accordionist / guitarist Henri Oppenheim has now given birth to Magillah, a tight ensemble that covers

both of these musical currents.

A massive project with no less than 12 musicians, including Maxime St-Pierre, trumpet, Muhammad Abdul Al-Khabyr, trombone, drummer Samuel Harrison and singer Michelle Heisler, in a format that swings straight, with beautiful musical ideas and a thorough knowledge of the "territory". Tap your foot, while rediscovering these worlds.

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