

#### YURODNY - Evenset (Diatrube Records)

This is an excellent new ensemble from Ireland. The personnel is Oleg Ponomarev, Adrian Hart & Cora Venus Lunny on violins & viola, Kate Ellis on cello, Nick Roth on soprano & alto sax, Colm O'Hara on trombone, Francesco Turrisi on piano & accordion, Dave Redmond on double bass and Phil Macmullan on drums plus two guests on clarinets & two guests on trumpets. Where do they all come from...? That's what I ask myself every week as I make my way through dozens (hundreds?) of promos every week. Yes, that is the great thing about this job is that you never know when one of those unknown gems will show up. Here's today's treasure...Earlier this week the drummer for this band, Phil Macmullan, left us with two fine discs from the unknown-to-me Irish octet called Yurodny. The instrumentation is certainly unique: four strings, two horns, piano, bass & drums. "Balkantown" has a rather Klezmer-like melody with the accordion leading the rhythm team and a feisty trombone solo over those swirling strings. The groove alone had me feelin' good. The guest clarinetists, Mihaly Borbely or Gilad Atzmon, start off the title track with a swell Klez-like tone and melody played sublimely by the strings. This piece also features some lovely flugelhorn also played by one of two guests. "Red Hora" has one of those intense Bulgarian wedding band-like sounds, with great strings and a cimbalom, (large hammered dulcimer) at the center. What makes this disc so special is the unique and crafty arrangements, making full use of the octet and their six guests. Although this band is from Ireland, it is impossible to tell from their charming Eastern European sound. Saxist Nick Roth, who wrote three of the eight pieces on this disc, plays a superb soprano solo on "Folia", which is followed by a sublime piano solo from the song's composer Francesco Turrisi. "Griffmadar" is an impressive progressive piece that shows off different members of the ensemble and is episodic with unexpected twists and turns. Yurodny is one of those bands who is astonishingly diverse and successful on a variety of different levels. Strange that I've never heard of them before. Can't wait to check out their other disc.

Bruce Lee Gallanter, Downtown Music Gallery

#### YURODNY - Odd Set (Diatrube Records)

This earlier version of Yurodny features Oleg Ponomarev & Adrian Hart on violins, Kate Ellis on cello, Nick Roth on soprano & alto sax, Colm O'Hara on trombone, Francesco Turrisi on piano & accordion, Dave Redmond on double bass and Phil Macmullan on drums plus guests, the Myriada Ensemble whose instrumentation includes saz, ney and oud. This is the earlier (2008) of the two surprisingly wonderful discs that their drummer left us with recently (mid March, 2010). This one is filled with more traditional pieces from Bulgaria, Macedonia, Serbia and Hebrew sources. Which we should find a bit odd coming from this marvelous Irish ensemble. The "Miserable Hora" is certainly not miserable sounding, but it does have the vibe of a hora or a quick Jewish dance piece. "Taraf" is a traditional Romanian song and it sounds like the band is on speed: fast, furious, tight and most exciting, with some burning solos from the violin & accordion. "Koj mi Tropa" is from Macedonia and it features some exquisite soprano sax and enchanting strings. Although "Hangu" is a traditional Klez tune, it has some unexpected sections of free weirdness selectively placed. Here's a band that takes traditional material and modernizes it without any the music losing any of its vitality or creativity. One of the best and most adventurous world music (ethnic-sounding) discs I've heard in a long while.

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