

# Buenos Klezmer – full bio

Buenos Klezmer perform uplifting and heart-warming authentic Jewish folk music of the Eastern European shtetl and Sephardic world.

Vocalist Maya Levy weaves a fascinating tale of these long ago worlds while clarinetist Livia Frankish wails, guitarist Eyal Pik serenades and cellist Mayda Narvey straddles the support of stand up bass and the interweaving melodies. With consistently sold-out performances, this is a foot-stomping, heart-warming band.

'Great gig - brilliant music especially Buenos Klezmer'

'A truly magical evening'

## **Audience reviews from Tsitsit Fringe Festival at Toulouse Lautrec, London**

Buenos Klezmer debuted in 2019 at The Jazz Room, London. The quartet met while playing for Shabbat Shira (a participatory musical Friday night song service to mark the start of the Jewish Sabbath at West London Synagogue). Being all of Jewish background, both Sephardi and Ashkenazi, they decided to form an ensemble to play specifically secular Jewish songs and Klezmer instrumental music. They play Yiddish & Ladino songs and Klezmer, spanning the breadth of Jewish secular music and have performed to sell out audiences at venues including several returns to The Jazz Room, JW3, Green Note Camden and OSO Barnes.

## **Maya Levy - Soprano**

Maya Levy was born in New York City. She is a professional singer, songwriter, actor and theatre deviser/ writer, with a Bachelor of Music from the prestigious Oberlin Conservatory, Ohio, (in piano and voice), a Bachelor of Arts in English and Theatre from Oberlin College as well as an MA from The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in Acting and Devised Theatre.

In addition to her work as a Cantorial Soloist at West London Synagogue, her focus of the last 15 years has been on composing pieces of music theatre, song writing and working as a professional performer. Some musical plays include *The Adventures of Nellie Bly*, about the 19th century reporter and daredevil Nellie Bly (funded by Arts Council England), and *The Damsels Most Daring Present The Bravery of Miss Anne and Other Tales of Splendorous Adventures*, a piece of comedic, musical, storytelling theatre. Other work ranges from recording NPC voices for Tom Clancy's *The Division 2* (video game) at Pinewood Studios to performing as a guest soloist with The London International Orchestra. Maya's grandparents were Sephardi Jews from Bulgaria who spoke Ladino (Judeo Espanol) at home. She grew up around Yiddish speakers in New York City and loves the traditions of both the Sephardi and Ashkenazi world.

### **Mayda Narvey - Cello**

After some years performing and touring with the National Arts Centre Orchestra of Canada, Mayda Narvey relocated to the UK where she established Ismena Collective, a group of musicians and wordsmiths who create performances that integrate words with music. She has composed and arranged for Ismena and performed with them in venues across London and beyond, including King's Place, St. Martin in the Fields, The Forge Camden, and many others. Over the years she has enjoyed playing her cello in many contexts including solo and chamber recitals, spoken word events, cabarets in the West End of London, and of course, as the string member of Buenos Klezmer. The daughter of Russian Jewish immigrants to Canada, Mayda grew up in a Yiddish-speaking home.

'What a breath of artistic fresh air! I was completely bowled over by the standard of musicianship, the elegance of the programming and the relaxed joyously friendly atmosphere.' **Audience reviews, Ismena Collective**

### **Eyal Pik -Guitar**

A multi-talented guitarist and singer-songwriter with an MA in commercial music production, Eyal was trained by and has worked with top artists and producers such as Jon Kelly (Paul McCartney, Kate Bush), Sister Bliss (Faithless), Aviv Geffen (Blackfield), ELK (Rita, Mosaic Project) and many more. Being an active professional musician since the age of 14, he has played countless recording sessions, radio and television shows in many countries as well as numerous shows in top venues including the Royal Albert Hall

(playing for members of the Royal family) and City Hall (for the Mayor of London), Camden Assembly, and Tel Aviv's famous Barby Club. Originally from Tel Aviv (8th generation born in Israel), Eyal comes from an Ashkenazi-Jewish family with origins in Poland, Austria and Jerusalem, growing up surrounded by Jewish tradition, hearing songs and stories in Yiddish, Polish, German and Hebrew.

### **Livia Frankish - Clarinet**

Livia Frankish gained her Bachelor's Degree from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance under the tutelage of Michael White. Having performed with a number of orchestras and chamber groups, she found her love of Klezmer whilst studying and discovering her identity, spirituality and connection with Judaism. She was fortunate enough to study with Merlin Shepherd, one of the world's leading exponents of traditional klezmer clarinet style and has performed with internationally celebrated cantor, Shulem Lemmer. As well as performing with Buenos Klezmer and other chamber groups, Livia teaches class music in a busy East London secondary school.