

Music from Central Asia and the Alps

A group of 20 musicians from Kyrgyzstan, Khakassia, Mongolia, Switzerland and Austria comes together for a musical summit under the slogan „mountains unite“.

tien-shan suisse schweiz express





TIEN-SHAN-SWITZERLAND EXPRESS

Music from Central Asia and the Alps

In the summer of 2002, the Tien-Shan-Switzerland Express went for the first time on tour to Swiss music festivals. 20 musicians from Kyrgyzstan, Khakassia, Mongolia, Switzerland and Austria met for a musical summit under the International Year of Mountains slogan „mountains unite“. The project emerged from the initiative of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation of the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs.

A success story is about to start. Since that time, the Tien-Shan-Switzerland Express performed at 29 places in 8 states in front of more than 40'000 listeners and had a highly appreciated concert at the UN in Geneva. With its unique music the Express everywhere left an enthusiastic audience and was rewarded with standing ovations. It is always pointed out that the interplay of the Asian and Swiss-Austrian musicians causes a surge of mutual liking beyond borders and delights all social classes.

The Tien-Shan-Switzerland Express comprises the ensemble Tenir Too from Kyrgyzstan, Sabjilar from the Russian Republic of Khakassia, Egschiglen from Mongolia and the National Mountain Orchestra from Switzerland and Austria. Under the musical direction of the jazz musician and professor of music Heinrich Känzig the formation of this highly qualified orchestra provides a fascinating view across the traditional and contemporary musical cultures of the mountains of Central Asia and the Alps.

The program is a mixture of traditional music, jazz, pop and a lot of humor, far away from any crossover stereotypes. It is a kind of music with rough edges that is variedly fighting on the one hand and fusing to a powerful unit on the other hand - a unique worldmusic of the mountains.

The twelve colorfully dressed musicians from the mountain and steppe regions of Asia solely fill the first part of the concert. Egschiglen intonates the traditional overtone singing of the Mongolian nomads and introduces new elements. The ensemble Sabjilar from the Sajan mountains presents drums, dulcimers and lutes that are hardly known in the western hemisphere and delights with the many-faceted voice of Viatcheslav

Kouchenov. The female singer Kenjagul Kubatova, the flute and mouth harp player Nurlanbek Nishanov and the brilliant komuz player Rahatbek Kochorbaev from Kyrgyzstan finally amaze with extraordinary playing and singing techniques.

In the second part of the concert the eight Swiss singers and instrumentalists break musical conventions of the Alps. They explore cultural roots that were thought to be forgotten and present these roots in new contexts and varieties.

The third part of the performance is reserved to joint music. The musicians play new compositions and new arrangements of existing compositions in different combinations. Differences and shared values become obvious. Musical fusions and interplays develop between the Central Asian and Alpine traditions; motives of another group are picked up, varied or contrasted, consonant or dissonant, until all musicians are finally united in the great summit - music as common language bridges all cultural differences without deleting them.

Line up

NATIONAL MOUNTAIN ORCHESTRA (Switzerland / Austria)

Heinrich Känzig **Bass, musical director**

Zabine **Yodeling**

Paul Haag **Alphorn, buechel, trombone**

Melanie Schiesser **Schwyz accordion, alphorn, buechel, trumpet, vocals**

Patricia Dreager **Accordion**

Roland Schildknecht **Hammerdulcimer**

Marc Halbheer **Drums, percussion**

EGSCHIGLEN (Mongolei)

Tumenbayar Migdorj **Morin khuur, vocals**

Tumursaihan Yanlav **Morin khuur, vocals**

Uuganbaatar Tsend-Ochir **Ih khuur**

Wandansenge Batbold **Percussion, vocals**

Amartuwshin Baasandorj **Khoomii, tobshuur**

Sarangel Tserevsamba **Yoochin, vocals**

SABJILAR (Khakassia)

Sergey Charkov **Chathkan, kay, yh, vocals**

Anna Bournakova **Percussion, vocals**

Viatcheslav Kouchenov **Chathkan, kay, yh, vocals**

TENIR TOO (Kyrgyzstan)

Kenjagul Kubatova **Vocals, komuz**

Rahatbek Kochorbaev **Komuz**

Nurlanbek Nishanov **Flute, temir komuz**



Concerts

- 23.07.02 Lucerne, Switzerland
- 25.07.02 Expo.02 Biel, Switzerland
- 26.07.02 Paleo Festival Nyon, Switzerland
- 27.07.02 Appenzell, Switzerland
- 28.07.02 Gemmi Alp, Switzerland
- 29.07.02 Leukerbad, Switzerland
- 31.07.02 Martigny, Switzerland
- 22.08.02 Fribourg, Switzerland
- 27.08.02 Baden, Switzerland
- 28.08.02 Winterthur, Switzerland
- 06.09.02 Zurich, Switzerland
- 22.10.02 Geneva, UNO Palais des Nations
- 24.10.02 Womex Essen, Germany
- 08.11.02 Aarau, Switzerland
- 14.07.03 Liestal, Switzerland
- 28.07.03 Konstanz, Germany
- 04.08.03 Estival Jazz Lugano, Switzerland
- 18.09.03 Tashkent, Uzbekistan
- 20.09.03 Bukhara, Uzbekistan
- 24.09.03 Dushanbe, Tajikistan
- 27.09.03 Khujend, Tajikistan
- 29.09.03 Osh, Kyrgyzstan
- 01.10.03 Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan
- 03.10.03 Almaty, Kazakhstan
- 07.10.03 Ulanbator, Mongolia
- 09.10.03 Erdenet, Mongolia
- 14.-18.07.04 Forum Barcelona 2004, Spain
- 21.07.04 Wuppertal, Germany
- 23.07.04 Dortmund, Germany



Media Highlights

- 26.07.02 **Radio DRS** Live recording at Paleo-Festival Nyon.
- 04.08.02 **Radio RSI** Live recording at Estival Jazz Lugano.
- 06.09.02 **CD-Release** at Moods in Zurich
- Aug. 2002 **TV DRS/VOX** „Vom Jauchzen und Jodeln“.
- Sept. 2002 **Radio WDR 3** „Obertöne auf der Hochalm“. **Worldmusic Award 2003 of Deutsche Welle and European Broadcast Union.**
- 21.07.04 **WDR 3** Live recording at Forum Maximum Wuppertal.



SHORT BIOGRAPHIES

National Mountain Orchestra (Switzerland / Austria)

Heiri Känzig - Musical director, bass. The Swiss bass player, who was born in New York, is among the few European jazz musicians that can be found on American major labels like Verve or Blue Note. His musical openness also brought him into contact with musicians from pop music or classical music. He performed more than 70 CD recordings and gained international acknowledgement above all with the Vienna Art Orchestra. Heiri Känzig's subtle work on the borderlines between styles and cultures distinguished him to direct the project.

Zabine - Yodelling. Sabine Kapfinger is the complete name of the lady who set out as Zabine to teach yodelling to people all over the world. She became famous under the name of Alpine Sabine with her appearances with the folk music rebel Hubert von Goisern and his Alpine Cats. After the band stopped performing she traveled to India and Africa. "I wanted to find back my voice and put it into a new context. I wanted to come back to my very own vision". The result is "a creative sweeping attack of a musical single fighter that dares to dream in dreamless-cold times like today" - and creates a very unique musical microcosm.

Paul Haag - Alphorn, buechel, trombone. Paul Haag started classical trombone studies in Basel in 1956 and subsequently changed over to jazz music. Some 15 years ago he started to play alphorn as well. In 1973 he had great success with Magog at the Montreux Jazz Festival. Haag performed with Alpine Experience in Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy and Australia. In 2000 he founded his own alphorn formation The Horns, a quintet that caused quite a stir with its further developed Alpine sounds.

Melanie Schiesser – Schwyzerörgeli (Swiss accordion), alphorn, buechel, trumpet, vocals. The musical roots of Melanie Schiesser are in the traditional folk music of the Glarnerland. Starting in 1983, Melanie performed together with her sisters in the family band Echo vom Kammerstock playing Swiss Accordion, trumpet and piano all over Switzerland and in the neighboring states and was often to be seen and heard in radio and TV shows. Yodelling, alphorn and buechel playing are still included in the music of Melanie today.

Patricia Dräger - Accordion. She had her first accordion lessons at the age of four, later she also learnt transverse flute at the music school of Zug. In Winterthur she studied transverse flute and passed with honors in 1998. This was followed by a degree with the main subject contemporary music. In 1995 she obtained admission to post-graduate studies in music, also with honors. Since then, she works as conductor and actress in various theatrical productions.

Roland Schildknecht – Hammered dulcimer. Roland Schildknecht was born in the canton of Glarus and learnt the play on the hammered dulcimer almost auto didactically. In the beginning of the 80s, he started to combine alpine folk music with jazz and rock elements and to experiment with the possibilities of the hammered dulcimer. In 1983, he founded the folk-jazz-rock group Schiltpatt. This band performed on various festivals in Switzerland and abroad and can be heard on various recordings and CDs.

Marc Halbheer - Drums, percussion. Marc Halbheer discovered his passion for drums in his youth. Since those days, he consequently developed his skills. Today he is a master of these instruments. He studied with teachers like Ralph Humphrey or the long-time Frank Zappa band member Ed Man in Los Angeles. During this time, he made friends with his most important musical companions Yiotis Kiourtsoglou, Lior Yekutieli and Martin Tillman. Since 1992, he is lecturer for percussion and rhythmic at the music university of Lucerne.

Tenir Too (Kyrgyzstan)

Kenjagul Kubatova - Vocals, komuz. Kenjagul probably has the most beautiful female voice of Kyrgyzstan. She was born in Narin, an important musical centre of Kyrgyzstan, and finished the state conservatory in the capital Bishkek. In her singing she combines power, perfection and finesse from the extensive tone material of Kyrgyzstan.

Nurlanbek Nyshanov - Flute, temir komuz. Nurlanbek is a multi-instrumentalist. He learnt playing the komuz (lute) and the temir komuz (Jew's harp) in his birth town Narin. After finishing secondary school he learnt among others the wind instruments sybyzgy and chopo choor. He studied European classical music at the state conservatory of Kyrgyzstan. Since 1998, he is conductor of the ensemble Ordo Sakhna and lecturer at the faculty of folkloric and traditional music.

Rahatbek Kochorbaev - Komuz. Rahatbek Kochorbaev studied the komuz at the state conservatory of Bishkek. His way of playing is extraordinarily brilliant. He is member of a vast variety of ensembles in Kyrgyzstan and he mainly gives solo concerts - just like the tradition of the Central Asian nomads.

Sabjilar (Khakassia)

The Russian republic of Khakassia is located right in the centre of Asia, between Mongolia, China and Kazakhstan. The singing of epics in laryngophony accompanied by the chatkhan, a kind of zither, is one of the most important art forms. Sabjilar ("ambassador") was founded to bring back to life the old epics from the 6th to the 12th century. In addition, they also perform nomad songs from the Siberian steppe regions, hunter melodies from the mountains and new improvisations on the chatkhan. All members are familiar with various instruments and styles of the overtone singing khay. Amongst the instruments are the komuz, a two-string lute, the yh, a two-string violin, the chatkhan as well as the dungur, a drum that is used by shamans with their rituals. Viatcheslav Kouchenov was awarded various prizes and is considered to be one of the best overtone singers of Siberia.

Viatcheslav Kouchenov **Khay, chatkhan, komuz, yh, vocals**

Sergey Charkov **Khay, chatkhan, komuz, yh, vocals**

Anna Bourkanova **Vocals, dungur**

Egshiglen (Mongolia)

The ensemble Egshiglen ("beautiful melody") was founded by master-class students of the conservatory of Ulaanbaatar in 1991. Until today, 4 of the founding members form the heart of the ensemble. The roots of the six musicians of Egshiglen lie within the tradition of the Mongolian nomads that are moving through the endless grassland, the barren beauty of the Gobi desert to the snow-capped mountain in the north for decades. Right from the beginning, the artists moved the contemporary music of their country into the centre and discovered systematically the tonal dimensions of this repertoire with traditional Mongolian instruments and Central Asian singing techniques.

Tumenbayar Migdorj **Morin khuur (horshead violin), vocals**

Tumursaihan Yanlav **Morin khuur, vocals**

Uuganbaatar Tsend-Ochir **Ih khuur (mongolian bass)**

Wandansenge Batbold **Percussion, vocals**

Amartuwshin Baasandorj **Khoomii vocals, tobshuur**

Sarangel Tserevsamba **Yoochin (hammered dulcimer), vocals**

Thomas Kayser **Production**
Heinrich Känzig **Musical Director**
Alba Kultur, Birgit Ellinghaus **Booking**
Hanspeter Ehram **Technical Direction, Frontmix**
Werner Dönni **Technical Assistant, Monitormix**
Olima Nabieva **Production Assistant, Translation**
Taivan Chimeddo **Translation**

Duration of Concert **120 Minutes without interval**

TK

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