

Mp3 Wholesale Klezmer Band - Shmir Me

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The Wholesale Klezmer Band's debut recording includes dance tunes, labor songs, prayer melodies and pungent social satire. 11 MP3 Songs WORLD: Eastern European, WORLD: Judaica Details: - - - - - CD Description - - - - - This debut album by the Wholesale Klezmer Band is a perfect introduction to their work - not only to their sound and style, but also to the group's view of the relevance of traditional Yiddish culture and values to contemporary life. The recording is a mix of dance music, including a wedding medley; new tunes (both vocal and instrumental) in the traditional style; a love song, and a couple of prayers. But the bulk of the vocal numbers on this recording are drawn from the Jewish labor and social justice movements. The members of Wholesale believe that these traditions represent a strong, vital connection between them and those who came before. Sometimes poignant, sometimes funny, these songs reach from the past into today, grabbing our attention and telling us that there is still work to be done to make the world a kind and just place for everyone. - - - - - Reviews of this CD - - - - - Sing Out, vol 39, #1 The Wholesale Klezmer Band has a bright, enthusiastic sound; they might seem a bit plain at first, but if you're looking for the basic elements of a working klezmer band, start here. WKB makes some of those other bands seem fancy-schmancy. Care and humor have gone into the arrangements; frolicsome, whimsical percussion, full of salty and sweet voices, makes me glad I've come to the party. (And what a welcome change after the "I'm so cool" jazz-based trap-set clichés of the nouveau klez-jazz drummers.) It sounds like the band was recorded live, in a real room. There is a good variety of tempos and moods, including an especially enjoyable, mellow, just-keep-trucking speed....The songs are fun and uncommon, and the calm, unpretentious diction is so clear even a novice can understand quite a bit. The band, respecting his low-key style, backs him up colorfully but with restraint. I like a band that can leave holes where they are required. - - - - - Lahri Bond, Dirty Linen, April-May 1993 What's the old saying, "you don't have to be Jewish to like..."? The Wholesale Klezmer Band has a great sense of humor from the Levi Jewish rye-bread style logo to their outstanding collection of traditional and original material. In spite of all the humor, it is clear that the Wholesales have a deep understanding and reverence for Yiddish culture and language. They're no slouches when it comes to their vocals or instruments, either,

they mix accordion with balalaika, flute, percussion, viola, violin, bass viol, trombone, clarinets and guitars for an authentic and lively brand of music. The title track "Shmir Me" tells a tale of Yankel, who goes from being a fine (if not whiny) little boy to a defense and weapons systems lobbyist in Washington. He goes from "Shmear me a little bread with butter: to "Shmear me a little money in my palm." Elsewhere and on a more political note they do a heartbreaking rendition of "Der Strayker" ("The Striker") about the Jewish labor movement and social justice. I am a striker I strike for a better world I struggle gladly Against the hand that blocks my way. They can cut a rug well with a lively Rumanian dance tune as "Mamalige" or an equally lively self-penned klezmer tune as in the "Wholesale Hora." It is the balance they achieve between social understanding and social satire that marks The Wholesale Klezmer Band as a truly great klezmer band. Who else would come up with "The March of the Unemployed"? Notes are given about each tune and lyrics are provided in both English and Yiddish. If you're already a klezmer music fan, this is an essential addition to your collection. If you are a newer fan, like myself, here is a great introduction to a rich, deep, and yes, at times very humorous tradition. - - - - About the Band - - - - The Wholesale Klezmer Band's approach to performing traditional Ashkenazic Jewish music is to unite elements from the older, European Yiddish melodic style with an ensemble approach modeled on traditional Ashkenazic community prayer style. As in the synagogues of the old country, there is a strong melodic voice, usually the clarinet, leading the group as the cantor would lead the prayers, with other individual voices echoing, anticipating, murmuring in the background, rising and falling with each individual's involvement in the flow of sound. It is a dense style, at times strongly in unison or deeply introspective, at other times almost argumentative, again, very similar to traditional Jewish prayer style. But whether the other voices join, echo, or respond to the leading voice, everything played by each musician is closely tied to the melody itself, as each person's prayers are anchored in the words s/he chants. The Wholesale Klezmer Band performs in Yiddish and Ashkenazic Hebrew, and specializes in making their material accessible to English speakers through translations, stories, explanations, visual aids, and that universal language, the music itself. They write many of their own dance tunes and Yiddish songs that speak to contemporary concerns. It is fitting that the Wholesale Klezmer Band's style should reflect the important Jewish values of community and egalitarianism, since their song repertoire deliberately focuses on other important aspects of Yiddish culture, especially humor, social justice, and tikun olam or the repair of the world. Unlike most working klezmer bands, Wholesale refuses, as a general rule, to perform non-Yiddish

material. The effect of this overall grounding of musical elements in the very core of the culture from which they stem is a powerful merging of form and content that is recognized by Jewish and non-Jewish listeners alike. In its 17-year history, the Wholesale Klezmer Band has grown from a local pick-up group to a professional ensemble bringing vibrant Yiddish music to a wide variety of audiences, young and old, throughout New England and New York state. In addition to performing concerts and workshops for both Jews and non-Jews, Wholesale remains firmly anchored in the Jewish communities it serves, carrying out the traditional function at weddings and bar mitzve celebrations through-out the region. The band has also performed at Carnegie Hall in 1990 and for the Presidential Inauguration of Bill Clinton in 1994.

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