

Booklet / CD Information

PIR-CD2113

Artists: Mercan Dede, Jadranka Stojaković & more

Title: Sevdalinka

Subtitle: Sarajevo Love Songs

Sevdalinka

There's nothing better than a heavy dose of heartache to inspire a good tune. Whether it's the sadness of a lost love, an unreturned love, a love that can never be, or the exile's longing for a distant homeland with memories of better days gone by and perhaps never to return. For centuries, all over the world, poets and musicians have tried to express the harsh realities of our transient existence in words and music as a testimony that can assuage, heal and transcend. Soul music. Music of the soul. Think of African-American Blues, Greek Rembetika, Portuguese Fado, Argentinian Tango, to name but a few.

Sevdalinka is the musical expression of the Bosnian soul. The name derives from the Turkish word "Sevdah", denoting "longing" or "amorous yearning". The music is informed by centuries of the region's turbulent history, developing through the meeting of Oriental and Slavic cultures, from the influx of Sephardic Jews fleeing Spain in the late 15th century, to the times of the Ottoman Empire. It carries echoes of societal changes in the region. The introduction of Islamic culture led to greater separation of the sexes. Elaborate courting rituals developed involving declamation of poetry and singing of verses that had to carry over the walls that kept young lovers apart. From these sheltered urban compounds to the rugged hills of the countryside, Sevdalinka was composed and sung at all manner of social gatherings: weddings, fairs, the village dance. It grew from the influences brought by itinerant musicians of varied origins and it is imbued with the hopes and dreams of generations of Bosnians.

As Omer Pobrić, one of the musicians featured on this album, says: "Sevdah is not just a word – it is rather an imaginative ambience of beauty, in whose immense expanse, souls feel, find grains of joy, thus forming a mosaic and making their lives beautiful. Unfortunately, life is not just love, and sevdalinka as a peak expression of sevdah is not just a love song. Sevdah is a style, a Bosnian lifestyle, and sevdalinka is a historical note-keeper of the lives of Bosnians."

The artists on this collection have been brought together by the young Sarajevo label Yaman in cooperation with the local Goethe-Institut. It features some of the great names of contemporary Sevdalinka such as Vesna Hadžić and Emina Zecaj alongside well-known Bosnian musicians from the Jazz, Rock and Classical worlds as well as international artists such as Mercan Dede and Theodosii Spassov. There are also international collaborations such as the fascinating contribution from Bosnian singer Jadranka Stojaković who now lives in Japan and performs here with two Japanese musicians on the beautiful traditional ballad, "Sto te Nema". All these artists have been moved by the spirit of Sevdalinka and come together on this album to celebrate the soul music of Bosnia with their own inspired interpretations. This is especially welcome as, it is true to say, Sevdalinka is not as popular at home as it once was, particularly amongst the younger generation who are more drawn to the Rap, Rock and Pop music that permeates the "globalized" culture of the modern world. But it must surely in time be incorporated into these styles as Sevdalinka has always managed to assimilate new ideas, as illustrated by this collection. The traditional

Sevdalinka performed with just voice and saz (track 11) is an example of the pure form dating back hundreds of years. More modern performers such as Safet Isović, Himzo Polovina and Zaim Imamović were criticized by purists for introducing instruments such as accordion, guitar, violin and clarinet but their recordings were immensely popular, also throughout the former Yugoslavia. However, on this album, we can hear on the fascinating bonus track how already in 1908 clarinet and accordion were part of the popular music of the area.

Let's face it, there's no such thing as "pure" music. It always comes from somewhere and is going somewhere else, changing with time and here Sevdalinka is using its voice of experience to speak the language of today and artists from around the world are joining in the conversation.

Colin Bass

Colin Bass *aka* Sabah Habas Mustapha is a musician, record producer, writer/ presenter of a weekly radio show on RBB Radio Multikulti and WDR Funkhaus Europa in Germany and a contributor to the Rough Guide to World Music and other publications. www.colinbass.com

Text title 10

Kraj Tanana Šadrvana (Der Asra)

Täglich ging die wunderschöne
Sultanstochter auf und nieder
Um die Abendzeit am Springbrunn,
Wo die weißen Wasser plätschern.

Täglich stand der junge Sklave
Um die Abendzeit am Springbrunn,
Wo die weißen Wasser plätschern;
Täglich ward er bleich und bleicher.

Eines Abends trat die Fürstin
Auf ihn zu mit raschen Worten:
»Deinen Namen will ich wissen,
Deine Heimat, deine Sippschaft!«

Und der Sklave sprach: »Ich heiße
Mohamet, ich bin aus Yemmen,
Und mein Stamm sind jene Asra,
Welche sterben, wenn sie lieben.

Heinrich Heine

TITLES / MUSICIANS

1. Mercan Dede feat. Zerina Cokoja

Moj dilbere kud se šećeš (trad./arr. M. Dede, S. Karić) 4:06

2. Avdo Lemeš feat. Theodosii Spassov

Sinoć sam ti, Safo, dvoru dolazio (Muhamed Mešanović-Hamić/Safet Kafedžić/arr. A. Lemeš, T. Spassov) 5:15

3. Jadranka Stojaković and Natsuko Kido Duo feat. Naoki Kita

Što te nema (trad./arr. J. Stojaković) 5:31

4. Quattro Bassi

L'jepi li su Mostarski dućani (trad./arr. Quattro Bassi) 5:23

5. Muammer Ketencoğlu

Pokraj vrela ploća b'jela mermera (trad./arr. M. Ketencoğlu) 4:49

6. Vesna Hadžić

Sini jarko sa istoka sunce (trad./arr. D. Mckewitt) 4:25

7. Damir Imamović feat. Vlatko Stefanovski

Što li mi se Radobolja muti (trad./arr. D. Imamović, V. Stefanovski) 8:04

8. Jadranka Stojaković feat. Miroslav Tadić

Kad ja pođoh na Bentbašu (trad./arr. J. Stojaković, M. Tadić) 4:05

9. Markus Burger - Dave Pozzi Duo

Theme of Nit' ja sanjam nit' ja dr'jemam (trad./arr. M. Burger, D. Pozzi) 7:32

10. Omer Pobrić feat. Hasna Kašmo

Kraj tanana šadrvana (Der Asra) (trad./Heinrich Heine/arr. O. Pobrić) 6:19

11. Emina Zečaj and Mehmed Gribajčević

Knjigu piše Tahir-Beže (trad./arr. O. Pobrić) 5:46

Bonus: Trio Mustafa Sudžuka i Merkuš

Kad ja pođem na Bendbašu (trad.) 3:00

For all titles published by PIRANHA Musik GEMA number in brackets:

01 (9649149), 02 (9649160), 03 (9649130), 04 (9649154), 05 (9649167), 06 (9649147), 07 (9649143), 08 (9649113), 09 (9649156), 10 (9649118), 11 (9649138)

1. Mercan Dede feat. Zerina Cokoja

Bridges loom large in the biography of musician/producer/DJ/composer Mercan Dede. He believes that music can build bridges between people and to that end he has dedicated himself to building musical bridges between Turkish Sufism and Western electronic sounds, pursuing his vision through, to date, seven albums. He appeared in the film “Crossing the Bridge: The Sound of Istanbul” and recently returned to Istanbul after years of exile in Montreal to build a studio overlooking that very bridge over the Bosphorous. It was a film about the rebuilding of the famous Mostar bridge that helped bring him to this project. His inspired accompaniment to the vocals of the popular Bosnian singer Zerina Cokoja bears all the hallmarks of his innovative approach that has made him a leading figure on the electronic world music scene.

Z. Cokoja: vocals / M. Dede: Ney and programming / Aykut Sütöglü: clarinet, trumpet / Sanin Karić: bass guitar / produced by M. Dede and Samir Šestan Droga / recorded in Munich (Germany) and Istanbul (Turkey)

2. Avdo Lemeš feat. Theodosii Spassov

Avdo Lemeš from Sarajevo is one of the few musicians who keep alive the traditional way of singing the Sevdalinka in accompaniment with the saz, seeking out little-known Sevdalinkas and interpreting them anew. On his contribution to this album he is joined by the Bulgarian kaval maestro Theodosii Spassov who has developed his own unique style of playing the instrument by synthesizing traditional folklore with jazz, fusion and classical music. T. Spassov has toured around the world, received several prestigious awards, has released more than 16 albums and is currently director of the world-famous Philip Koutev Ensemble of Music.

A. Lemeš: vocals, saz / T. Spassov: kaval // produced and mixed by Tayfun Kesgin and Atila Aksoj / recorded by A. Aksoj and T. Spassov at Baraka studio in Mostar (BiH) and Acoustic Version in Sofia (Bulgaria)

3. Jadranka Stojaković and Natsuko Kido Duo feat. Naoki Kita

At the age of 16 Sarajevo born Jadranka Stojaković joined her uncle's jazz group as a bass guitarist and performed with them throughout the former Yugoslavia as well as other parts of Europe. She went on to become a popular singer and songwriter and in 1984 sang the official theme song of the Winter Olympic Games in Sarajevo. In that same year she visited Japan for the first time. At the end of the 1980's she returned there and has lived there ever since, giving

concerts on saz and guitar, singing Bosnian and Japanese songs, performing with Japanese musicians and recording albums that have been released world-wide.

J. Stojaković: vocals, additional guitar / Natsuko Kido: electric and acoustic guitar / Naoki Kita: violin / produced by J. Stojaković / recorded and mixed by Akimi Tani at GOK studio in Tokyo (Japan)

4. Quattro Bassi

The idea for this unique bass quartet came from Sarajevo-born bassist Sanin Karić, who has played with well-known rock bands like Teška Industrija and Vatrene Poljubac. The other members of the ensemble are: Bodan Arsovski from Macedonia, who was a founder member of the legendary Folk-Rock fusion group Leb i Sol, with whom he released over a dozen albums and toured internationally before embarking on a solo career, composing music for theatre and opera and forming the acclaimed concert ensemble, the Ezgija Orchestra; Serbian bassist Vladimir Samardžić, graduate of Berklee College of Music in Boston, member of the Balkanopolis project and internationally in-demand session musician; and Henry Radanović, a well-known figure on the Croatian music scene who plays with the Matija Dedić Trio and the Elvis Stanić group.

Sanin "BassoloGuy" Karić: bass / Bodan Arsovski: bass (appears by courtesy of Ezgija Records) / Henry Radanović: bass (appears by courtesy of Dallas Music) / Vlada Samardžić: bass / produced by Quattro Bassi / recorded in Skopje (Macedonia)

5. Muammer Ketencoglu

Accordion master, radio broadcaster, folk-music archivist Muammer Ketencoglu is the most famous practitioner of and expert on Greek Rembetiko and Balkan music in Turkey. He was born in Izmir, Turkey in 1964 and received his first musical education at a school for the blind, where he began his life-long love affair with the accordion. Today he leads two ensembles: the Zeybek Ensemble, specialising in Greek and Western Anatolian folk songs and The Balkan Journey, which performs music from a variety of countries from Thrace to the Czech Republic. He is an acknowledged expert on folk-music styles of the world and regularly presents radio shows using material from his extensive archives.

M. Ketencoglu: accordion, vocals / Seda Hoşses: violin / Engin Gürkey: percussions / Cengiz Onural: guitar, base programming, recording engineer / produced by M. Ketencoglu / recorded in Istanbul (Turkey)

6. Vesna Hadžić

Vesna Hadžić is considered to be one of the finest female Sevdalinka interpreters. She spent many years recording for and performing on Radio & TV Sarajevo, when that institution was a Sevdalinka stronghold. She is known for her straightforward and technically tight delivery, which she accumulated through her years of vocal training at the Music Academy in Sarajevo. The string instruments on the track featured here were arranged by the classically-trained singer, composer and violinist Donna McKeivitt, once a member of the British all-female avant-garde group Miranda Sex Garden.

V. Hadžić: vocals / Tatjana Romanić: viola / Boris Lončar: violin / Almir Nejžić: double bass / produced by Tayfun Kesgin / recorded and mixed by Željko Skarić at the MP JS BiH studios, Sarajevo

7. Damir Imamović feat. Vlatko Stefanovski

Guitarist and singer Damir Imamović comes from a famous musical family. His late grandfather Zaim Imamović is considered one of the great masters of Sevdalinka singing. Damir takes the music to new heights, fusing traditional ballads with jazz and blues influences. On the track featured here he is accompanied by guitarist Vlatko Stefanovski, a founder member of Leb i Sol (see 4.), who has carved out an international reputation for himself with his solo projects and music composed for film and theatre.

Damir says of the collaboration: "For me playing Sevdah with Vlatko is like playing Blues with Hendrix. I have never learned more about music in such a short period of time."

D. Imamović: vocals, acoustic guitar / V. Stefanovski: electric guitar / produced and mixed by Tayfun Kesgin, Atila Aksoj / recorded by A. Aksoj at Baraka studio in Mostar (BiH)

8. Jadranka Stojaković feat. Miroslav Tadić

On Jadranka Stojaković's (see 3.) second track on this collection she is joined by world-renowned guitarist Miroslav Tadić. For nearly 20 years he has quietly influenced musicians worldwide, both through his prowess on his instrument and his role as a champion of Macedonian music. In 1979 he left his native Serbia and went to study at the CalArts music school in Los Angeles, where he eventually settled. Since then he has worked with an impressive roster of musicians including Terry Riley, Jack Bruce, David Torn, L. Shankar, Djivan Gasparyan, Kudsi Erguner, Markus Stockhausen amongst many others. His most enduring collaboration is with percussionist Mark Nauseef. Together they have released more than a dozen albums and are frequently mentioned in the same breath.

J. Stojaković: vocals, harmonica / M. Tadić: guitars / produced by J. Stojaković / recorded in Los Angeles (USA)

9. Markus Burger - Dave Pozzi Duo

German-born jazz pianist, composer, label executive and music educator Markus Burger draws his influences from a wide range of musical styles. Over eight albums he has explored a variety of directions ranging from his avant-garde jazz project with drummer Matt Marucci to the improvisations based on Bach chorales of his Spiritual Standards project. While teaching at the City College in Los Angeles he met saxophonist Dave Pozzi, whose list of recording credits include Santana, Henry Mancini, Diana Krall, Johnny Mathis among others. The pair display a perfect empathy on the improvisation on a Sevdalinka theme included here.

M. Burger: piano / D. Pozzi: tenor saxophone / recorded and produced by Markus Burger, Jim Linahon at LMP Studios, Los Angeles (USA)

10. Omer Pobrić feat. Hasna Kasmó

Omer Pobrić is one of the great figures of Sevdalinka music. Next to being a master of the harmonium, he works as a producer for other Sevdalinka musicians and singers, and has written several books about the subject. He is the founder and director of the "Institut Sevdaha" near Sarajevo, which works for the preservation of Sevdalinka. This and the following track were produced by Omer at the Institut Sevdaha studio, here featuring Hasna Kasmó with an interpretation of a poem by the German poet Heinrich Heine accompanied by Omer on accordion. The experienced Sevdalinka singer now lives in Germany and is currently finishing a whole Sevdalinka album in German language.

H. Kašmo: vocals / O. Pobrić: accordion / Enes Mujanović: violin / recorded and produced by O. Pobrić at the Institut Sevdaha studio, Visoko (BiH)

11. Emina Zečaj and Mehmed Gribajčević

Emina Zečaj is without doubt the *grande dame* of today's Sevdalinka music. She has made a great contribution to the development and preservation of the tradition by fostering widespread acceptance of the female voice in Sevdah – previously a strictly male domain – and by collecting hundreds of folk-songs, saving them from falling into complete oblivion. Now in her seventies she still performs mostly in the traditional way, accompanied only by the saz, as on the track included here, where the saz is played by her long-time partner Dr. Mehmed Gribajčević. She recently released a new album on the Gramofon label and another, with new re-mixes, is planned for the future.

E. Zečaj: vocals / Dr. M. Gribajčević: saz / produced by O. Pobrić / recorded at the Institut Sevdaha studio in Visoko (BiH)

Bonus: Trio Mustafa Sudžuka i Merkuš

The Bosnian Instrumental and Vocal Trio of Mustafa Sudžuka and Merkuš recorded as many as 30 sides for the Gramophone Company in 1907. The clarinetist Mustafa Sudžuka, a musician from Sarajevo, was already playing professionally by 1898. At that time the clarinet was mainly associated with military bands. The musician with the Sephardic first name Merkuš may have been Merkuš Alkalaj, who was born in 1886 and killed during the Second

World War. The third member of the trio remains unidentified.

The trio recorded a large repertoire of Bosnian instrumental tunes and songs, one song from Serbia, one from Vranje, four songs in Ladino, and several Ottoman pieces, most of them marches. This version of Kad ja pođoh na Bembašu is the original Bosnian-style tune for the poem rather than the nowadays popular melody which is based on the Ottoman march "Hürriyet marşı" from 1877 by Rıf'at Bey (1820-1888) (see 8).

M. Sudžuka: clarinet / possibly Merkuš Alkalaj: accordion and possibly vocals / Unknown Artist: def and possibly vocals / archive recording from 1908 kindly provided by Dr. Risto Pekka Pennanen (Finland) / mat. 5689L / cat. Zonophone X 100657 Kad ja pođem na Bendbašu

PRODUCTION

ORIGINAL RELEASE

Executive Production by Tayfun Kesgin (Yaman) & Michael Schroen (Goethe-Institut)

(P) 2006 by Yaman/Goethe-Institut BiH

www.yaman.ba / www.goethe.de/sarajevo

INTERNATIONAL RELEASE

Sequenced by Colin Bass

Mastered by Eberhard Kohler at Powerplay Mastering, Berlin

Bonus track text by Dr. R. P. Pennanen

Photos by Sara Terry www.bosniaaftermath.com (cover, p. 3, 6, booklet back, inlay inside), peperoni (inlay back)

Artwork by PEPERONI

Executive production by Brigitte Bieg & Borkowsky Akbar

CD SHORT INFO:

Soak up the sound of Sevdalinka, the music of the Bosnian soul. With roots in the meetings of Sephardic, Islamic and Slavic cultures over centuries, it tells a thousand and one stories of love and longing and the pain of our transient existence. This collection brings together some of the great names of Sevdalinka with an array of international artists inspired by the "Bosnian Blues" in a soothing and moving mix of classic and modern interpretations.

„One of the most innovative and bold Sevdalinka projects!" *RadioMultikulti, Berlin*

„An until now undiscovered side of Sevdalinka music! All the musicians have added their own unique touch." *City Review Magazine, Sarajevo*

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File under Balkan / Bosnia & Herzegovina / Sevdalinka

9 songs in **Bosnian** + 1 song in **German** + 2 **instrumentals**

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