

# klezroy m



*Andrea Pandolfo, trumpet and flugelhorn*

*Gabriele Coen, soprano saxophone and clarinet*

*Pasquale Laino, alto and baritone saxophone*

*Riccardo Manzi, guitar, bouzuki, voice*

*Andrea Avena, doublebass*

*Leonardo Cesari, drums*

*Eva Coen, voice*



*At the same time passionate and contemplative,  
sometimes wild and frantic,  
Klezmer music assimilated very much  
the East European and gypsy folklore,  
blended with the distinguishing jewish expressivity.  
Klezmer, so extremely captivating, is an example  
of traditional musical form still in continuous transformation,  
which interacts successfully  
with the most contemporary musical expressions.*

Klezmer Music and, in a broader sense, all the jewish diasporic music, have been the source and the starting point of a research, which led the [Klezroym](#) to write their all original compositions and arrangements. The traditional origin is an important musical reference, but it also allows the freedom of expression and inclusion of the different cultural frameworks among the musicians of the ensemble.

**Klezroym** started from rediscovering the ashkenazi (jewish from eastern Europe) and the sefardic musical heritage (judeo-spanish), then developed an ongoing work about the meeting between different musical cultures (Mediterranean, Middle-East, Italian), building an evocative bridge of sounds between traditional music and contemporary jazz.



Some of the most relevant **Klezroym**'s achievements are:

the publication of [five albums](#) with more than 50,000 sold copies;  
about 400 concerts in Italy and abroad;  
three years - from 2003 to 2005 - as guest ensemble in the television show [Dove osano le quaglie](#) by Marco Presta and Antonello Dose (RAI 3 Italian television);  
they ideated and co-authored the theatrical production [Saccarina, cinque al soldo!](#) with Ascanio Celestini and Olek Minzer, performed in all the most important italian theatres.

**Klezroym** offer three different shows

**The Concert**, where they present the result of 15 years of research and elaboration activity made by the ensemble;  
[Yankele nel ghetto](#), an original and innovative interpretation of the songs of Lodz's ghetto in Poland, collected by Gila Flam in the book "*Singing for survival, songs of the Lodz ghetto*". "Yankele nel ghetto" is a structured suite, where the sequence of songs complies with strict narrative requirements.  
The Reading with live music [Saccarina 5 al soldo!](#)

## To listen

[KLEZROYM various videos](#)



## Biografia

With the debut album "**Klezroym**" (CNI editions), published in **1998**, the international audience got acquainted with the ensemble, since Klezroym were ranked as one of the 10 best klezmer music ensemble in the world, according to the special list by Ari Davidoff (for the US web magazine [Klezmer Shack](#)). In **2000** the ensemble from Rome released the second album "**Sceni**" (CNI), where they carried on the exploration in the territories of jewish music, without ignoring some digressions in the contemporary jazz, the East European and Mediterranean music, and the Italian songwriters through a reinterpretation of "*Canzone dell'amore perduto*" by **Fabrizio De André**.

In **2002** they presented their work [Yankele nel ghetto](#) (CNI), an original and innovative interpretation of the songs of the Lodz's ghetto in Poland, collected in the book "*Singing for survival, songs of the Lodz ghetto 1940-1945*" by Gila Flam, director of the Music Department and National Sound Archive in Jerusalem.

These songs were sung by the people in Lodz's ghetto during the harsh years of Nazi oppression in Poland. They describe a people overwhelmed by hunger and death, despair and oppression, but not yet deprived of the faculty of dreaming, joking about the power and crying out the injustice. "Yankele nel ghetto" is dedicated to all the peoples still suffering nowadays for the loss of freedom, overcome in their basic rights.

After "Yankele nel ghetto" Klezroym ideated and co-authored the theatrical production [Saccarina, cinque al soldo!](#) with [Ascanio Celestini](#) and **Olek Mincer** performed in all the most important italian theatres during the season 2001/2002.

In **2003** the compilation "**Klezroym**" (elleu, CNI editions) was published as part of the collection "*Sconfini*".

**Klezroym** were for three years - from 2003 to 2005 - guest ensemble in the television show "*Dove osano le quaglie*" by Marco Presta and Antonello Dose (RAI 3 Italian television).

In 2006 they released (CNI editions) the live album "**Klezroym, venticinque aprile live in Fossoli**", a live recording of a concert in Fossoli for the Italian Liberation Day (April, 25th).

Two tracks of the debut album "Klezroym" were selected for the soundtrack of "Once We Were Strangers", first feature film by [Emanuele Crialesi](#).

The television show [Sorgente di vita](#) on RAI 2, dedicated to Judaism and the jewish culture, presented several times in the last years journalistic reports about the artistical activity of the ensemble.

**Klezroym** performed hundreds of concerts all around Italy, in many different situations, social centres as well as classic music temples like [Teatro Regio](#) in Torino or [Cappella Paolina](#) del Quirinale Rome), and in foreign countries too (Spain, Israel, Belgium). They attended the 2003 concert for the [Worker's Day \(May, 1st\)](#) in Piazza San Giovanni (Rome), in front of 700,000 people.



## Relevant concerts and activities

1997 - Klezmer Festival in [Safed](#) (Israel);

1998 - [Olympic Stadium](#) in Rome with the participation of Angelo Branduardi;

2000 - Tour in Spain;

2001 - Albergo dei Poveri (Naples), for the celebration of the First European Day of Shoa's Memory, with the special project "*Yankele nel ghetto*". The President of the Parliament's Chamber of Deputies at that time, Luciano Violante, was attending the event.

- Sala A in via Asiago ([Radio 3](#)): live broadcasting of the show "*Saccarina 5 al soldo!*";

- Tour in the most important Italian theatres of the show "*Saccarina 5 al soldo!*" by Klezroyim and Ascanio Celestini, with Klezroyim, A. Celestini, Olek Minzer, Laura Polimeno;

2003 - Teatro Regio in Torino, "*Yankele nel ghetto*", for the International Holocaust Remembrance Day;

- Rome, "*Yankele nel ghetto*", Cappella Paolina del Quirinale - live broadcasting of RAI Radio3's program "*I concerti del Quirinale*";

- [Concert for the Worker's Day](#) (May, 1st) in Piazza San Giovanni (Rome)

2003-2005 - Prolonged participation, as guest ensemble, in the television show "*Dove osano le quaglie*" by Marco Presta and Antonello Dose ([RAI 3 Italian television](#));

2005 - Bruxelles, Concert during the making of the documentary film "*Yiddish Soul*" by Natalie Ferretti and Turi Finocchiaro;

- Carpi, Ex campo Fossoli, concert for the Italian Liberation Day (April, 25th). This live recording made possible the live album "*Klezroyim, venticinque aprile live in Fossoli*";

2007 - Rome, [Auditorium Parco della Musica](#), sala Petrassi, “*Yankele nel ghetto*”;

2008 - Roccella Jonica, [Roccella Jazz Festival](#);

2009 - Mestre, [Venezia Jazz Festival](#);

- Spain, Palma de Mallorca, Festival Musica Antiqua Mallorca;

2011 - RAI Radio3, [Teatri sonori](#), *Saccarina 5 al soldo!*;

2013 - Rome, Cappella Paolina del Quirinale, Klezroyim presents “[Il canto del tempo](#)” broadcasted by RAI Radio3 for the program “I Concerti del Quirinale”;

2014 - Varsavia, Polonia, [Singera 11<sup>th</sup> Jewish Culture Festival](#), Saccarina 5 al soldo! con Olek Mincer;

– Lodz, Treatr Nowy, Saccarina 5 al soldo! con Olek Mincer, commemorazione dei 70 anni dalla liquidazione del [ghetto](#).

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## Press Review

### Ari Davidow – “[Klezmer Shack](#)”

"Klezroyim's debut Cd is wonderful, almost psychedelic klez at times. At its best, it reminds me of the Shirim/Naftule's Dream album, with a near-perfect mix of traditional klezmer and the rest of the musician's rivers, now fused into something new and expressive of our time".

### Ari Davidow - [KlezmerShack](#)

"I posted this to the main [KlezmerShack](#) page last week, but it's still an exciting album that people should know about, even after it disappears "below the fold" on the [KlezmerShack](#). Here's to a first listening (and second and third) to "Sceni," by Italy's "Klezroyim," a band about whom I got very excited when their first release came out a few years ago. This second release, based on a quick first hearing, continued that Klezmer/Jewish-music based improvisational framework that caused the first album to stand out. Here, I think that they've gotten tighter. They also continue to feature the exquisite voice of Eva Coen. Despite some annoyingly bland English lyrics to something called "Klezmer Song," the band, and especially her voice take off on the rest of the recording. I draw special attention to a very well-done eastern-sounding "Morenica." Clearly influenced by the current high standard set by Israel's "Natural Gathering," (Ha Breira-Ha'tiv'it), KlezRoym still make it their own." [GRADE: A]

### Ari Davidow - [KlezmerShack](#)

"Opening with a few bars of "Vayl ikh bin a yidale" this tribute to the Jews of the Lodz Ghetto consists of songs collected by Gila Flam. KlezRoym manages to take difficult material and to present it in ways that we will all listen. Sometimes, as on the opening vocal, also by Yankele Hershkowitz, the words are more spoken than sung: "It is our grief, it is our problem!...." This magically intense album, including several pages of preface by Gila Flam, whose collection of songs from the ghetto, *Singing for survival: Songs of the Lodz Ghetto, 1940-45* is the source of this material.

Not since *Ghetto Tango* a few years ago have the words of the Ghettos under the Nazi occupation and extermination been presented as compellingly. Differently from "Ghetto Tango," where the

material was presented as a cabaret, these songs are presented here in ways that try to make the words and melodies sear, while making the music almost transparent. It is like listening to master typographers (the point of good typography is to make the words clear while never distracting the reader with thought of the typography) at their craft, just working in music. Yet, sometimes, it is the music that conveys the emotion and mood, as in "Sakharin finf a marek" inspired by children selling sacharin on street corners, or at the end of "Ikh fur in kletser kant", or as on the "Yankele nel Ghetto #2," in which the constant clang clang clang of the muted cowbell create a sense of work work work and of striving to create from exhaustion and endless industrial labor, music.

Klezroyim is one of the few bands that I can imagine with the range of styles, and the musical skill to tackle such a task. (Another is Brave Old World. I wish that they, too, would release their Lodz Ghetto material.) In some ways, this material suits them more than the klezmer music, not so known prior to recent decades in their native Italy, with which they began performing and recording. At the same time, grappling with such material is one way in which an ensemble performing new Jewish music today can assimilate the past, make it part of who the band is and what it does, and face the future, never to forget. Part of the never forgetting is to read the words of the songs, to listen. The words are bitter, sad, wise in things that humans should not have to know. They describe life that is impossible to imagine. But they are not passive songs, nor are they songs of despair. From "Kalt: A lidl fin lodzer getto 1945", sung by the exquisitely-voiced Eva Coen:

Cold.

I see closed railroad cars  
speeding by all through  
the night,  
Where did they take you?

This is a such a world....

and then the music takes flight with a song written for a theatre review in the Ghetto, sounding almost like a Yiddish Pentangle (the British folk-rock group of the '60s) in "Tsigayner Lid". Before this sinks in, the group is playing "Vayl ikh bin a yidale," one of the most memorable songs arranged by Mlotek and Cooper on "Ghetto Tango." Here, however, the band makes the song their own and finds a different way to make the song powerful, and their own. Finally, having built up the tension, the two singers begin to work back and forth together on "Papirosn" and Ver klapt du azoy shpet bay nakht". Finally, the sad theatre song: "Nit kayn rozhinkes in nit hayin mandlen":

No raisins and no almonds,  
your father has not gone  
out trading  
lu, lu, lu, my son,  
lu, lu, lu my son.

Some bands have chosen to mix klezmer melodies with whatever, turned klezmer into something like a musical spice. Others have focused on the '78s and an imagined or researched Eastern Europe of yore, playing klezmer as it was, or it might have been. Other than their name, this album has everything to do with Jewish folk tradition and continuity, and very little to do with klezmer, per se. Klezroyim make it clear here, more than ever before, that they are creating new Jewish music, and doing it with subtlety and skill that put them in the first rank of the best of new Jewish music bands. In that sense, the band is also according this material the highest honor--carrying the words forward to be heard by new generations, lest they never forget, and lest that part of whatever Jewish means in our generation, or the next, be lost. This is an album that will be hard to find in the United States. The band is Italian. Liner notes are in Italian and English. The music is universal, sweet, and haunting. Make the effort. You will be richly rewarded."



## Brendan Foreman - [Greenmanreview](#)

"This is a lesson that I find myself learning over and over again: Never, ever underestimate humanity's ability to reconfigure venerable art forms into new, often strange objects. Just when I thought I had klezmer pretty much pegged as a musical form, I get this CD in the mail.

KlezRoym is a band out of Italy who combine the fervor and stylings of klezmer with the improvisation of Gypsy jazz and the feel of Mediterranean music. Sure, all klezmer, being the hybrid genre that it is, has a [little Gypsy](#), a little jazz, and maybe a little Mediterranean harmony.

But KlezRoym, a seven-person unit

consisting of Gabriele Coen, Andrea Pandolfo, Pasquale Laino, Riccardo Manzi, Marco Camboni, Leonardo Cesari, and Eva Coen, add their own mixture of moxy, imagination, and excellent improvisational skills to the music. The absence of any fiddles or clarinets and the emphasis on saxophones, bouzoukis, and

trumpets give the music of KlezRoym a distinctly forthright, sultry sound.

From the beginning track, "Trokar Kazal, Trokar Mazal (Change Country, Change Fate)," a Latin-flavored song about a Spanish exile pining for his homeland, we know we're in for a treat. Eva Coen's singing is simultaneously sensual and mournful, which is echoed in the plaintive saxophones and trumpet of Gabriele Coen, Pasquale Laino, and Andrea Pandolfo. The song meanders into an extended instrumental, the arrangement of which easily recalls some of the 3 Mustaphas 3's best work.

This is just the beginning -- literally. From here, KlezRoym prove how little they can sit still, moving from the ska-flavored klezmer of "To East," which ends with a wonderfully discordant guitar solo, to the melancholy Italian love song "Canzone Dell'Amour Perduto (Song of Lost Love)," written by Fabrizio De Andrè, then onto the Jewish-Hungarian hora "Szol A Kakas Mar (And the Cock Crow)."

Interspersed between many of these tracks are snippets of "Radio Freylach"'s. A "freylach" (meaning "joy" in Yiddish) is a standard melody form in klezmer, like the czardas in Hungarian music and the jig in the music from the Isles. The half-minute freylachs that KlezRoym uses here to introduce their tracks are all traditional tunes, which they've recorded in mono, giving them an "old-time radio" sound.

Guitarist and bouzouki player, Riccardo Manzi, gets to stretch his vocal chords in "Arum Dem Fayer (Around the Campfire)." Its haunting melody runs counter to the gaiety of the lyrics about the Gypsy life of song and dance. This ends abruptly to the klezmer and jazz hybrid sounds of the title track "Sceni, Sceni."

Rather than just the almost standard sounds of Gypsy jazz that is often found within klezmer, one can also hear some strains of the cool jazz that was pioneered by Miles Davis back in the late '50's. KlezRoym fills the rest of the CD with just as various a selection of music from the dirge-like "Nostalgia," which is immediately lightened up by the up-beat jazz improv of "Regalo Di Nozze," to "Klezmer Song," KlezRoym's own celebration of klezmer music, and the foreboding Sephardic folk song, "Morenica." The CD

"officially" ends with the lullaby "Oyfn Pripetshik (At The Fireplace)," a popular children's song which prisoners of the death camps of Europe would often sing to each other and thus has become a symbol of the Shoah.

Rather strangely, there are two bonus tracks, old-style house versions of "Morenica" and "Oyfn Pripetshek." They're a bit of a shock after the traditional sounds of the previous tracks, but they are a transition back to more modern sounds.

There really is no way any self-respecting klezmer or Gypsy jazz lover would want to miss this CD. Actually, anyone with a passing interest in traditional European music will find plenty to enjoy on this CD."





### "Alias" de "[Il Manifesto](#)"

"Il klezmer ha nei Klezroyim, primo gruppo italiano del genere, una punta di diamante. Con il loro terzo album, poi, ci troviamo di fronte a un piccolo capolavoro. 15 brani, alcuni originali altri rielaborati, per raccontare la tragedia del ghetto di Lodz, primo ad essere costruito in Polonia nel 1940 e ultimo a essere liquidato nel 1944. Dei circa 270 mila ebrei rinchiusi dai tedeschi, sopravvissero alle violenze e ai campi di concentramento appena 887. In un luogo di così grandi sofferenze restava solo il canto: Yankele Hershkowitz era proprio uno dei cantanti più sensibili nella comunità. Canti intrisi di dolore, strazio ma anche di malinconia alternati a rari momenti di gioia, vengono riproposti ora dal sestetto con arrangiamenti rigorosi legati alla tradizione ma spruzzati di jazz e intonati dalla voce alta e commossa di Eva Coen."

### Giuseppe Videtti - [Musica di Repubblica](#)

"Le prime note dell'esordio discografico di questa formazione klezmer sono così struggenti, che l'ascoltatore rimane aggrappato ai suoni come a un sogno."

### Giuseppe Videtti - [TrovaRoma](#), [La Repubblica](#)

"Queste danze dal sapore gitano, inventate da zingari e girovagli geniali, rivivono senza accusare il peso dei secoli nelle intriganti atmosfere venate di jazz dei KlezRoym"

### Giuseppe Videtti – [Musica di Repubblica](#)

"Lavorando sulle canzoni di Yankele, i Klezroyim - primo gruppo italiano di musica klezmer partito dalla riscoperta del patrimonio musicale askenazita e sefardita - hanno inciso il loro capolavoro. Non solo è lodevole lo straordinario lavoro di ricerca condotto dall'ensemble di Gabriele Coen, non solo è avvincente e toccante la vicenda di Yankele, ma soprattutto è attuale, pulsante, coinvolgente, toccante, persino stravolgente il risultato. Più ricco di un romanzo di mille pagine o di una produzione di Spielberg, *Yankele nel Ghetto* convoglia rigore della ricerca e nuova sensibilità interpretativa sullo stesso binario. Se non avete familiarità con la musica klezmer, immaginate semplicemente canzoni struggenti, un jazz malinconico, un efficace cabaret mitteleuropeo, un'opera,

un album concept o una lunga suite appassionata. Mai come nelle canzoni di Yankele, la voce di Eva Coen era stata così versatile e comunicativa. E raramente oggi un disco con 15 titoli merita di essere ascoltato tutto.

#### "Io Donna" del ["Corriere della Sera"](#)

"Ispirato ai canti germinati nel ghetto ebraico di Lodz durante gli anni bui del nazismo è il notevolissimo *Yankele nel Ghetto* dei romani Klezroyim, superba formazione a cavallo tra musica klezmer e jazz. Da non perdere".

#### Federico Scoppio – ["Jam"](#)

"*Yankele nel Ghetto* è un progetto estremamente complesso e fuori da schemi e preconetti di genere. E' l'elaborazione in forma musicale delle canzoni del ghetto di Lodz, raccolte nel testo della musicologa Gila Flam. A più di mezzo secolo di distanza i Klezroyim hanno ricostruito musicalmente il volto sonoro di quelle canzoni, tingendole di sacro e irripetibile, con il loro modo, sempre più unico, di suonare raccontando. le canzoni e gli strumentali dell'incisione servono a individuare i contorni e i lineamenti dei tre volti dei protagonisti: il cantore di strada Yankele, la giovane donna Miriam e David, direttore musicale del teatro. E il cerchio si chiude. Questo non è un semplice disco di miscela tradizionale-popolare dei Klezroyim, ma un progetto che mischia storia, letteratura, tragedia, sentimenti, emozioni...Musica.

#### Vincenzo Cerami - [Musica di Repubblica](#)

"... La dote maggiore di questi ragazzi sta proprio nella organizzazione dei concertati (basati sull'affiatamento del gruppo), negli arrangiamenti e soprattutto nella struggente espressività dei loro strumenti: contrabbasso elettrico, fiati, batteria, chitarra, buzuki e la voce incantatrice di Eva Coen. Sono brani che rielaborano temi e musicalità ebraiche e zingare, canzoni e danze della ritualità yiddish... Musica colta, di scatenata raffinatezza, ma in grado di costringere gli spettatori a partecipare alla festa. Vien Voglia di ballare, di battere le mani, di cantare ..."

#### Paolo De Bernardin - [Musica di Repubblica](#)

"Nella difficile e anonima realtà culturale del nostro paese il secondo lavoro discografico dei Klezroyim arriva come una specie di cometa luminosa. Partendo dai colori sefarditi del brano d'apertura e scorrendo lungo la tradizione dell'Europa dell'Est, il gruppo si cimenta con alcune composizioni proprie che meritano davvero l'applauso per la maturità inventiva e per la sensibilità esecutiva. E di notevole fattura sono anche tutti gli arrangiamenti dei tradizionali ripescati dalla ricchissima letteratura popolare degli ebrei sparsi per il mondo. E hanno fatto davvero bene i sette musicisti a rendere omaggio, in chiave klezmer, alla canzone popolare di Fabrizio De Andrè nella delicata e suggestiva versione de *La canzone dell'amore perduto*. Un gran bel lavoro, insomma, degno di stare alla pari con le migliori formazioni klezmer internazionali."

#### Sandro Cappelletto - [La Stampa](#)

"Nel cuore del precipizio ritmico, entra improvvisa una melodia morbida come una carezza: sono gli influssi sefarditi, della Spagna arabizzata, del Nord Africa. E quando al gruppo si aggiunge anche Massimo Coen, e il suo violino adesso vola come un personaggio di Chagall, diventa esplicito il potere tremendo di questa musica."

#### Pinotto Fava - [RaiTre](#)

"Richiami islamici, attraversamenti jazzistici, vibrazioni zingare, "zoppi andamenti balcanici, approcci minimalisti: con i KlezRoyim la remota, forte matrice ebraica si fa voce e respiro di un mondo che cerca nuove identità e altri smarrimenti".

