

Europe

The name 'The Other Europeans' refers to the Jews and Roma who have been marginalised by the nations of Europe



The Other Europeans Splendor

Ethnomusic Records

Budget Price (2 CDs, 95 mins)

★★★★★

Remarkable big-band with unusual takes on klezmer standards



The music and musicianship on this recording is outstanding and the concept intriguing. 'The Other Europeans' refers to the Jews and Roma who have both been marginalised – or worse – by the nations of Europe. This project brings together outstanding musicians playing Yiddish *klezmer* and Roma *lautari* music largely from Bessarabia (now Moldova), where Jews and Gypsies often played together before World War II. An eight-piece klezmer sub-group and a six-piece lautari sub-group were assembled by pianist and accordion player Alan Bern

(Brave Old World), who leads the project. Alongside Bern, the klezmer group includes Christian Dawid (clarinet), Matt Darriau (various winds) and Guy Schalom (drums), while the lautari group includes Martin Bunea (violin), Adam Stinga (trumpet), Petar Ralchev (accordion) and Kalman Balogh (cimbalom). The recording was made live at a concert at the Yiddish Summer Weimar course in 2009 and is stunning. Out of the full, 14-piece band opening, the serpent-like clarinet of Christian Dawid rises with a sinewy elegance in a lovely Romanian *doina*.

In Bessarabia there were towns that were predominantly Jewish, others that were predominantly non-Jewish and others that were evenly mixed, such as Edine, from where music appears on the second disc. 'In many cases, Jewish and non-Jewish audiences demanded the same repertoire but played in markedly different styles,' writes Bern in the excellent liner notes. There are several tunes that are well-known in klezmer circles (thanks to

revival bands), but played here in very unusual versions. For instance, there's an extraordinary version of 'Khaiterma' – better known as the Naftule Brandwein tune 'Der Heisser Tartar Tanz' – played by Matt Darriau on clarinet and Mark Rubin on slap-bass in a lop-sided rhythm that the lautari guys apparently loved. Another highlight is 'Lautar Clarinet Suite #1' with Moldovan Adrian Receanu on clarinet, Bulgarian Ralchev on accordion and Hungarian Balogh on cimbalom, in which the seductive 'Sârba' dance is awesome. On the second disc there are sequences for violin, trumpet and a full-band 'Edinets Suite' which, like all of this music, seems to recreate a lost world of Jewish (and Roma) music. Without question, this is one of the most important klezmer releases in years.

Simon Broughton

TOP
OF THE
WORLD
ALBUM

