

Warsaw Village Band

The Warsaw Village Band was founded in 1997 as a response against the narrow-mindedness of the music scene which they believed was leading to the destruction of human dignity. That is why they turned to their roots in search for musical inspiration by “exploring the folklore and archaic sounds of their ancestors and instincts” (The Kennedy Center, US). They travelled from village to village, seeking out the old people. They listened to their music and their stories. What surprised them most was that no one else in the villages were interested in this music anymore. The Warsaw Village Band members realized that, when the old people died, the music would die with them. Due to their great love for their national musical heritage, they fervently wanted to preserve the old musical traditions. For them, preservation does not mean restoration but reanimation - the transportation of the old songs’ spirit into the here-and-now. Despite the acoustic instrumentation, the band conjures up sounds that have electronic impact.

1999, one year after the release of their debut album “Hopsasa”, JARO producer Ulrich Blaß discovered the band at the Sopot Festival where it shared a stage with world stars. 2003 the second CD “People’s Spring” was released by JARO and the band could step on the ladder of fame. In early 2004, they were presented with the BBC WORLD MUSIC AWARD 2004 in Edinburgh. In 2006, they won their first Polish Grammy “Frederik Award”; (they now have 3). These distinctions were followed by composition commissions for video games and movie sound tracks, theatre productions and concerts all over the world. The BBC honoured the band with a sixty-minute portrait which has since been broadcast in several European countries. Their CDs were licensed in America and Japan, and the Warsaw Village Band became the most successful Eastern European ensemble outside of mainstream music. The New York Times once referred to them as one of the most important bands on the World music stage calling them “the sound of globalization!”.

The Warsaw Village Band is a symbol of young, intelligent Eastern European music which combines tradition with modern elements and is capable of eliciting enthusiastic responses from rock audiences and traditionalists alike. The Folk World Magazine described their style as: “based on the so-called white voice, a traditional vocal technique originating from the shepherds’ shouts, always on the top of their voices. This is combined with the traditional techniques for playing the old Polish instruments.”. The Nordwest-Zeitung (Germany) referred to them in 2003 as: “One of the new promising New Folk Bands from Eastern Europe. WVB perform folk music combined with medieval music and a pinch of ‘Apocalyptica’[...]Violins sing, a cello is played by brute force, drums resound into the farthest corners.”. And the magazine was right: WVB’s music has truly managed to establish itself in Europe and the world.

They have given concerts in places as far-flung as Alaska, Japan, Taiwan, Portugal, Moscow and Paris, reaping exuberant reviews from both the critics and the audience. All in all, they have managed to performance more than 500 concerts on four continents in more than 30 countries.

In 2012, the Warsaw Village Band celebrated their 15th jubilee with their current CD “NORD”. This album examines the influence on Polish musical heritage, of music from the North, such as the musical traditions of the Inuits and Vikings. It is solid, a little rough, with a pinch of nostalgia!

Line-up:

Piotr Glinski - percussion

Maciej Szajkowski - percussion

Pawel Mazurczak - bass

Ewa Walecka - vocals, violin

Sylvia Swiatkowska - violin, viola, zuka, vocals

Magda Sobzak - dulcimer, vocals