Csókolom
May I Kiss Your Hand
Hungarian & Gypsy Fiddle Music & Songs

1. AMARI SZI, AMARI* (Kéren Chave) (She is ours, she is ours) (trad/arr v. Klewitz)
2. KALTOTASZEGI LEGÉNYES (in C Minor) (traditional)
3. MEDVED NA LANCU* (The Bear on the Chain) (Antti v. Klewitz - Tradition Music Co. BMI)
4. LULU-VALSE (Lulu Reinhardt - Hammer Music Co.)
5. FELJÖTT A NAP* (The sun has risen) (traditional) / ROMANIAN DANCE #4 (Bela Bartok)
6. NU FACE BINE* (I'm Feeling Bad) (trad/arr v. Klewitz) / ROMANIAN HORA (in B Minor) (traditional)
7. SZERELEM* (Love is a curse) / LÖRINCREVÉ (in A) (trad/arr v. Klewitz)
8. MORI SHEJ, SABINA* (My Daughter, Sabina) (Joszef Balogh)
9. GANKINO HÓRO (trad/arr v. Klewitz)
10. MYSTÉRIUSE (Valse Musette) (R. Varyssse - J. Privat)
11. ANII MEI* (Years of my life) (trad/arr by Johnny Raducano - Navigator Music Co.)
12. DANCE FROM GYMÉS (trad/arr v. Klewitz)
13. EDDIG VENDÉG* (Up to now) (trad/arr v. Klewitz)
14. KESERVES* (A Transylvanian lament) / SZEKELYFÖLDY (traditional)
15. KALOTASZEGI LEGÉNYES (in F) (traditional)
16. CINEGE* (Little bird) (trad/arr v. Klewitz)
17. SZATMÁRI / Csókolom* / SZATMÁRI (trad/arr v. Klewitz)
18. AMARI SZI, AMARI* (slow version) (traditional)
19. JÁNOSKA* / SZATMÁRI (trad/arr v. Klewitz)
20. LÖRINCREVÉ (in G) (trad/arr v. Klewitz)

Csókolom:
Antti von Klewitz - violin, viola & vocals* Gregor Schäfer - double-bass
Sander Hoving - violin, viola & kontra Anneke Frankenber - violin

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It was a chilly night in Memphis, Tennessee. I had gone to one of the local clubs to hear the many bands that were showcasing that night as part of the opening of the annual Folk Alliance conference, a major folk music gathering. The bands played, all good, but it was late and I was getting tired. So was a lot of the audience, which was beginning to thin. Only a few diehards remained to get their fill of the exotic spectrum of musical talents being displayed at the Daisy Theatre.

Wearily, I sat down at a table with a beer with some friends, hoping to last through the evening. Then, following the remarkable Gospel steel guitar playing Campbell Brothers, Anti von Klewitz and the members of Csőkolom came on stage. I could tell she was exhausted having just flown in from Germany a few hours before. She fuzzed with her shirt sleeves, fuzzed with her hat, fuzzed with her violin, and fuzzed with a microphone. She reminded me of a puppet, carefully attaching the right strings to all the right limbs. Then, with surprising focus, she dug her feet into the ground, rooted herself in just the right place, and began to play. And sing.

I remember the feeling that I was suddenly in another world. Everything happening around me seemed to disappear. The music I was hearing stunned me and deep feelings came whelming up. I didn’t know what hit me. Involuntarily, I began to cry.

I looked around to see if anyone else was hearing what I was hearing. Some people were talking, others drinking, and some listening. With tears in my eyes, I had to laugh. The old adage, "let those who have ears hear" came to mind and I returned my attention to Csőkolom and rested, entranced, in my own experience. Enchanted by a woman whose music gave voice to something so eternal and ancient, I listened as the young and the old, the new and the forever, collided and merged. The alchemy of musical genius.

After the set, I sat wondering if perhaps this extraordinary and rare experience had been given to me alone. Then I saw Chris Strachwitz, reputable founder of Arhoolie Records, running up the aisle towards us. Like a child on fire, he ranted on and on, seemingly unable to organize his feelings into sentences. Finally he was able to say, "I’ve got to record them!" Let those who have ears hear...let those who have record companies record!

He immediately arranged to record Csőkolom two days later at Sun Studios in Memphis, the same studio where Elvis Presley and other legends made their first recordings. It couldn’t have been a more appropriate studio. I went along to the session and listened as Chris captured the magic of these musicians in this small and somewhat dingy, yet historic, studio. Our hearts soared as we danced and drank wine through the night, as we celebrated the shared joy of "discovering" Csőkolom. I thank Anti, Sander and Gregor for taking the long flight to Memphis, going straight to the club without a break, and performing with such skill and soul, so that I could have the joy of hearing their brilliance.

Nora Guthrie – Woody Guthrie Productions

(1 to r) Anti von Klewitz, Gregor Schäfer, and Sander Hoving at Sun Studios in Memphis, Tennessee
1. Amari Szi, Amari (Kéren Chave) (fast version)

Anti von Klewitz heard this Hungarian gypsy song from Eastern Europe for the first time in Berlin from a Hungarian musician. Some time later she came across this piece again being played by gypsies in Hungary. This version is Anti’s arrangement.

Amari szi, amari,
Amari cini böri
Aj, lalalalala la la laj laj, (x2)

She is ours, she is ours,
she is our little daughter-in-law
Aj, lalalalala la la laj laj, (x2)

Dúj, dúj, desudúj,
Csumidau me lako núj
Aj, lalalalala la la laj laj, (x2)

Two, two, twelve
I’ll kiss her mouth
Aj, lalalalala la la laj laj, (x2)

Lako núj szi rupuno,
Puske tribulina dino
Aj, lalalalala la la laj laj, (x2)

Her mouth is of silver
She has to be shot
Aj, lalalalala la la laj laj, (x2)

Keren, savorále, drom
Te kehele o phuro rom
Phuro rom te keleia
Bistayek gyás malavia

Make way, children,
Let the old man dance
When the old man dances
He taps on for twenty-one days

Hoi, te merau
Ta na csakspó phenau!
Aj, lalalalala la la laj laj, (x2)

O let me die
If I don’t tell the truth
Aj, lalalalala la la laj laj, (x2)

Amari szi, amari,
Amari cini böri
Aj, lalalalala la la laj laj, (x2)

She is ours, she is ours,
she is our little daughter-in-law
Aj, lalalalala la la laj laj, (x2)


2. Kaltotaszegi Legényes (in C minor) (instrumental)

This tune is played for male solo dancers in Kalotaszeg, a Transylvanian region with a considerable ethnic Hungarian population and a very rich musical heritage. The dance resembles the German “Schuhplattler”, with a lot of clapping and foot stamping.

3. Medved na lancu (The Bear On The Chain)

Based on the children’s poem “The Bear On The Chain” which Anti remembers from her childhood in Yugoslavia. The language is Serbo-Croatian.

Jednoć sam sa svojom djedom
stao Cigo sa medvedom
ide Cigo našim klancem,
zaj njim medo, vezan lancem.

Pokloni se Cigo djedu,
Sapnu tiho wom medvjedu:
“Igraj medo, zločo stara,
hopa-cupa, bit će paral”

Uspravi se medo jadan,
tromo pleše medved gladan.
Priml Cigo groš od djeda
i poveđe svog medveda.

Zapi Cigo grošič djedov,
grošič djedov - il medvedov?
“Šteta groša” rekoh djedu,
“bolje kruške daj medvjedu!”

Ali nesta Cigo klancem,
Once me and my Grandfather
We came upon a Gypsy
On our village’s road
Tugging a bear at a chain.

On our village’s road
Tugging a bear at a chain.

The Gypsy bows to my Grandfather
and whispers the bear into its ear:
“Come on, old lad, Dance, there’ll be money!”

Up rises the poor bear,
Tired the hungry one dances.
The Gypsy takes Grandfather’s nickels,
and leads away the bear.

But the road takes away the Gypsy
and takes away the bear and the chain
and I’m eating Grandfather’s pears with sad
thoughts in mind — remembering the bear.
4. Lulu-Valse (instrumental) (Lulu Reinhart, Titi Winterstein Quintett)
This gypsy-swing waltz was written by Lulu Reinhart, guitarist with the Titi Winterstein Quintett.

5. Felj6tt a Nap / Romanian Dance #4 (Bela Bartok, Transcribed and orchestrated by many Hungarian folk songs, one played in a slightly different meter than usual)

6. Nu Face Bine (I'm Feeling Bad) / Romanian Hora (Be van Koloszvár kerítével, Nu face bine, hejde Majd elmegyünk mink majd oda, Nu face bine. I don't feel good. Dadj-ra-di rad rad etc)
The first part of this piece is a gypsy melody from Sarretudvarri sung in Hungarian and in Romanian. The second part was originally an accordion melody from Romania. (Possibly a song by a gypsy who would like to go to Koloszvár, but is not allowed to.)

7. Szerelem / Lörincreve (in A) (Be van Koloszvár kerítével, Nu face bine, hejde Majd elmegyünk mink majd oda, Nu face bine. I don't feel good. Dadj-ra-di rad rad etc)
The first song comes from Hungary. "Love is a curse; why don't the trees bloom any more? Love is like a rose – it does not want to bloom in a small garden." The second is a tune from Lörincreve, a region in Transylvania with a lot of archaic music.

8. Mori Shej, Sabina (My Daughter Sabina) (Joszef Balogh)
Balogh is a member of Kalyi Jag, a gypsy group from Hungary. This piece is sung in Roma, a language of the gypsies.

9. Gankino Horo (instrumental) (Mori drágó piko séj)
This piece is a traditional dance from Bulgaria.
10. Mysterieuse (Valse Musette) (R. Varysse / J. Privat) (instrumental)

This French gypsy guitar piece is a nice example for the tradition of the Valse Musette.

11. Anii Mei (trad./arr. Johnny Raducano; Navigator Music, Germany)

Anti sings this song in the Romanian language.

Anii mei sî tinerețea
Uite-i doamne cum s-au dus
N-am știut ce este viața
Si nimenea nu mi-o spus
Pot ști eu m-ndro cevrei
Pot ști eu m-ndro de toate
Viața care șt-i s-o dus
Nici-obat ne se-ntoarce

12. Dance from Gyimes (instrumental)

An arrangement of a piece from the eastern Transylvanian village of Gyimes, where strange ancient music is played.

13. Eddig Vendeg

This piece tells about a drunken man who refuses to leave the bar somewhere in a small village in Hungary. The story could take place anywhere in the world.

Eddig vendég jól mulattál
Ha tetszenék, elindulnál,
Szalad gazda, kapij boltra
S a vendéget indsitd útra
Szalad gazda, kapij boltra
S a vendéget indsitd útra
Ettél, ittál, jól mulattál,
Ordög vigyen, indulhatnál,
Szalad gazda, kapij boltra
S a vendéget indsitd útra
Szalad gazda, kapij boltra
S a vendéget indsitd útra

14. Keserves / Székelyföldy (instrumental)

The first of these two Hungarian pieces from Transylvania is a lament originating at the end of the last century, when the Austrians lured young men with wine and music to send them to war. It shows how metaphorical the Hungarian language can be.

Elment a madárka
Úres a kalitka
Azt üzente vissza
Vissza jö tavasza
Azt üzente vissza
Vissza jö tavasza
Ha tavasza nem jö
Báza virulásra
Ha akkorra sem jö
Szőlő lágyulásra
Ha akkorra sem jö
Tudd meg soha sem jö

15. Kalotaszegi Legényes (in F) (instrumental)

Another Hungarian dance from Transylvania.

16. Cinege

A very old song from the northern part of Hungary.

Hol jártal ez éjjel,
cinegemadár?
Ablakodban háltam,
gyöngé violá.
Miért be nem jötél,
cinegemadár?
Feltém az uradtol,
gyöngé violá.

("Tomtit" is a bird, "violet" a flower.)
Two melodies from Transylvania. Since the middle one is a mix of two Hungarian songs, the band decided to call it Csokolom - as it calls itself. Anti sings it in Hungarian.

I see you in all my dreams
And after my dream in all my things
When I’m sighing, you’re my complaint
When I’m happy that is also for you
Oh, how much I walked and tried
When I wanted to marry
But I found no one I liked
My lover is still the same, lalala
My lover is still the same, lalala

Anti von Klewitz is the musical leader of Csokolom. With her violin playing, singing and presentation she sets the tone for the group. Many of the compositions and arrangements are hers.

Anti is a violin player who masters a variety of musical styles. She is a singer and composer/arranger with a distinct, original approach, and has real charisma as a performer. As a violin player she focuses on Eastern European music, jazz and improvisation.

She grew up in various countries. Her first violin lessons took place in Zagreb in the former Yugoslavia (today the capital of Croatia). Early classical training was followed by Jazz lessons where she studied under Reginald Workman (John Coltrane’s former bass player) among others. Anti has been playing traditional Hungarian music for several years and was one of the first to introduce this music in Germany. She has composed music for different dance companies and theatre productions. She plays and sings with “Csokolom” as well as with the Cuban-styled salsa band “Cha-Charanga,” has won an important German musical award (PROFOLK’s “Deutscher Folkfürderpreis”) with her Berlin Balkan/jazz trio “Hora Colora,” writes music for the well-known Berlin dance company “Tolada,” and has performed in New York with American poet Donald Gardner. Since 1991 Anti has been living in both Amsterdam and Berlin.
Sander Hoving is a jazz violin player who likes interesting combinations of musical styles. He is also a kontra (Hungarian chord-violin) player who developed his skills with different Hungarian groups. He is leader of "Cha-Charanga" in the Netherlands, and has his own Eastern European quintet "Rhythm Futur." He works with dancers and poets, and has written music for theatre.

Anneke Frankenberg is an accomplished violin player in many different folk styles and classical music. She is successful with her own "Charivari-Trio" (Latin American, tango and Eastern European music) and the well-known mariachi group "Tierra Caliente." She has recorded CDs with both groups. She spends a lot of time giving workshops and teaching.

Gregor Schäfer plays double-bass in many jazz and world music groups in the Netherlands and is one of the few jazz bass players who is also at home with different Hungarian and Balkan styles. He has performed twice at the North Sea Jazz Festival and has recorded CDs with various groups.

"FROM TRANSYLVANIA OUT INTO THE WORLD ...."

We had more than just one good reason to put Csőkolom on the PROFOLK sampler CD "Prime Cuts 1998 – Folk, Song And World Music In Germany" and to invite them along with a group of musicians from Germany to showcase at the Folk Alliance Conference in Memphis, Tennessee in February of 1998. Their totally unique performance catapulted them into recording this CD in Memphis that same weekend. Congratulations!

Michael Kleff – president of PROFOLK, Association for Song, Folk and World Music in Germany

HOW EAST MEET WEST

"Gino's La Boheme" is the kind of Berlin dive where earlier you might have imagined rear tables occupied by spies, smugglers, and assorted femmes fatales, engaged in various types of "East-West negotiations". Despite, or maybe because of the fall of the Wall, that's still the case.

One evening a few years ago a similar meeting took place there, this time of a more musical nature. Swapping a single violin between choruses, Anti von Klewitz, an accomplished and daring fiddler in both the gypsy and Balkan village dance idioms, traded improbable musical ideas with Sander Hoving, salsa dance band leader and no mean fiddler and viola player himself. Something, as they say, clicked.

The result of that wild and crazy jam bloomed like a hybrid hot house (or rather Hot Club) flower, and resulted in the birth of a unique and exciting band with the unpronounceable name of Csőkolom (try something like "shock column"), roughly translated as "may I kiss your hand?" an old fashioned Hungarian greeting. A white hot mix of 2 and sometimes 3 violins – including the traditional Hungarian three-stringed rhythm violin, the 'kontra' – as well as a string bass, drives the undeniably curious and furious swing of Csőkolom. Led by the charismatic and energetic vocals of Miss Anti von Klewitz, and using both traditional, popular, jazz,
and improvised material from Buenos Aires to Bucharest, Csókolom has for the past few years been building their reputation in clubs, concert halls, and at festivals all over Europe. This band has paid its dues in more than one currency.

With a flamboyant exotic swing and an inventive, sometimes hair-raising musical flair, Csókolom is much more than paprika on your goulash, or a guy with a mustache playing rhapsodies at your dinner table. Who knows, perhaps this virtuoso and impressively inventive group transcends their roots in a manner that might even give the term 'fusion' its lost credibility back. In any case, these players from the corners of Europe are making one big sound you’re not likely to forget soon. take it from an old spy who came in from the cold – this stuff is really hot!

Rob List –
American writer and performer living in Amsterdam, 1998

SPECIAL THANKS FROM ANTI TO JÁNOSI FOR TIPPING THE 100 FORINT BILL USED ON THE COVER.
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file under:
World Music/Fiddle

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