

GYPSY MANIA

HOT CLUB QUARTET

Gypsy Mania "Hot Club" Quartet, a Twin Cities-based swing jazz band, performs a timeless jazz tradition commonly known as Gypsy Jazz, a blend of traditional Roma music and swing jazz. Originating in Paris in the early 1930s, the 'Hot Club' jazz tradition brings back happy memories of the swing jazz era, and for all an opportunity to nod, tap, or hit the dance floor. Their music keeps audience members on the edge (or out) of their chairs with the band's formidable improvisational prowess, and exceptional stylistic dimension. A group not to be missed!

Performing over 16 years, the ensemble includes the unmistakable mastery of jazz violinist Gary Schulte, the diverse guitar styling of Glen Helgeson, the tasty refined work of acoustic bassist Steve Pikal, and the rhythmic sensibility of jazz drummer Nathan Norman. Their self-titled CD, Gypsy Mania "Hot Club" Swing Jazz (2009), offers spontaneous and vivid performances in the Django Reinhardt tradition and includes savvy originals by guitarist and bandleader Glen Helgeson.

Glen Helgeson M.Ed - guitarist bandleader

Composing and performing for nearly three decades, Glen Helgeson has established himself jointly in both world music and in the field of music therapy. Glen has recorded eight CDs with combined sales of over 50,000 units. His professional recognitions include: A Minnesota Music Award for "Best Instrumental, Experimental, Environmental" album; A Minneapolis Walker Art Center commissioned grant for the Sculpture Garden; and the Jazz Composer Grant from the West Bank School of Music. Glen achieved a Masters degree in Music (1999); a certification in Neurologic Music Therapy (2003), and has practiced music therapy for nineteen years.

Gary Schulte - violin

Gary Schulte is a master improviser and performance composer to whom Stephane Grappelli gave his most sincere blessing. A veteran of A Prairie Home Companion, he has done everything from classical improvisation with harpsichord master Layton James to the avant garde with David Byrne, and extensive collaborative work with groups such as Ballet of the Dolls, Theatre de la Jeune Lune, and Zorongo Flamenco. Sought after as a jazz violinist, he has gigged with some of the greatest artists of the Gypsy Jazz genre, including guitarist legend Dorado Schmitt. A performance graduate of Indiana University School of Music, Schulte studied with Paganini virtuoso Rugiero Ricci.

Steve Pikal - bass

Steve Pikal is highly regarded as a first call bass player from the Minnesota Twin Cities area jazz scene. He has had the pleasure backing shows with legendary performers such as Cab Calloway, Bob Hope, and Margaret Whiting. Some of his additional playing credits include the Jim Cullum Jazz band, Butch Miles, Artie Shaw Orchestra, the Barbary Coast Dixieland Show band, Dick Hyman, Delfeayo Marsalis, Jon Weber, Danny Coots, Brian Holland, the Wolverines Big band, Butch Thompson, Hal Smith, John Cocuzzi, Jeff Barnhart, The Midiri Brothers, and the Bill Evans New Orleans Jazz band.

Jay Epstein - Drums

Jazz drummer, Jay Epstein, has an extensive career as a performer, recording and touring artist. He's been on 7 European tours with pianists Bill Carrothers & Giacomo Aulà. Some of the notable artists he has performed with include the rock band Gypsy, Barney Kessel, Roseanna Vitro, Manfredo Fest, Sheila Jordan, Karrin Allyson, Kenny Werner, Howard Levy, Toots Thielemans, and Sarah Vaughan. His CDs, 'Long Ago' & 'Easy Company', featuring bassist Anthony Cox and pianist Bill Carrothers, have garnered luminous reviews in the international press. Current bands include Red Planet, Klezmerica, Framework, Firebell, and Gypsy Mania.