

Group Statement:

Meden Glas (meaning “sweet as honey” or conversely, “a “silvery, metallic timbre”)

is a Toronto-based band and project that joins like-minded singer-instrumentalists who share a passion for grassroots music from the Balkans (Bulgaria, Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia, Erbia, Greece, and Turkey) in addition to peripheral musical cultures (Italian, Russian, Kurdish, and Romani [gypsy]). Based on their own individual research activities and regional areas of musical expertise, the members of **Meden Glas** strive to present diverse audiences with rural-based musical traditions as well as arranged and more contemporary, and innovative repertoire. **Meden Glas** also performs much of their dance-oriented repertoire with the expanded ensemble **Balkan Mixologies** that includes virtuosic and talented instrumentalists from the Toronto community.

Meden Glas Bios:

Irene Markoff is an Bulgarian-Canadian ethnomusicologist, singer and instrumentalist (accordion, Macedonian *tambura* (folk lute), and Turkish *bağlama* (folk lute) whose performing activities center on the musical traditions of Bulgaria, Turkey, and the Balkans. Irene’s Bulgarian heritage and early involvement in Bulgarian traditional music and dance led her to pursue graduate studies in Bulgaria where she also worked at the Institute of Musicology (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences). Doctoral research took her to Turkey where she researched and mastered the *bağlama* (folk lute) as well as traditional vocal repertoire to complete a PhD degree (Ethnomusicology) at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Irene currently teaches music at York University in Toronto where she also directs a Balkan Music Ensemble and offers private instruction in Balkan and Turkish vocal styles and Turkish *bağlama*. She has performed with and directed Bulgarian (*Zornitsa* and *Balkan Connection*), Turkish (*Dostlar* and *Ezgi*), and Balkan music ensembles (*Ružice* and *Radost*) in Canada, the U.S., Turkey, and Bulgaria where she has also given many Balkan singing workshops and lecture/performances. Irene’s group *Balkan Connection* was awarded a Canada Council grant (1998) to perform at a Showcase for Culturally Diverse and First People’s Music in Toronto and she received a Toronto Arts Council grant in 2013 to work with Toronto-based Bulgarian vocalists for participation in an annual Bulgarian Arts Festival. She can be heard on the album

Balkania After the Rain (2011) and *Ružice – Songs of Old Croatia* (1983). Irene has collaborated with Turkish, Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Iranian artists and performed in Toronto as a soloist and with various groups at venues such as the McMichael Gallery, the Lula Lounge, Harbourfront, The Music Gallery, and the Tranzac Club.

Born in Kazakhstan and of Russian descent, **Ekaterina Pyatkova** is a versatile singer and an instrumentalist (percussion, guitar, and recorder) with a passion for studying and performing traditional music from the Balkans, East Slavic cultures and the Near East, as well as early music. She also enjoys adapting traditional elements into contemporary music styles as a member of Protokult, a local folk metal band, and the Collide Project. She can be heard on the albums *No Beer in Heaven* (2014), *Marzena* (2011) and *Entwine* (2014).

Ekaterina has successfully completed her Bachelors of Fine Arts with Honours specializing in Music at York University, and is currently working on M.A. degree in Ethnomusicology and Popular Music Studies.

Jamieson Montgomery is a poet hammering sound bites amidst the cacophony of an urban backdrop. He is a singer of songs, and a player of piano, guitar, violin and accordion, as well as an arranger, of folk, pop, rock, and world music. His past projects have included performing with the Toronto Fringe, recording with Spectra Showcase, for which the group's single *If You're Not Here At Christmas* became a certified Gold Record. He has performed with Pride Toronto, Canadian Idol, Pride Calgary, Nuit Blanche, Cabbagetown Festival, The Canadian Special Olympics, Toronto Fringe, Ottawa Fringe, Buzz Festival, and 60x60 Dance Festival. He has created sound design for award winning playwrights Edward Roy and Sky Gilbert and produced an urban LGBT folk festival called Sneak Attack Festival at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre 2009-2011. Jamieson is from Calgary, Alberta where he studied theatre at Mount Royal University before moving east to Toronto to perform and study Ethnomusicology at York University. His current projects include producing his fourth album and collaborating with other artists in world, Balkan, Gypsy jazz, and popular styles.

www.Jamiesonmontgomery.com

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Nadia Younan is a saxophonist and vocalist of Assyrian-Italian heritage whose eclectic musical interests have led her to also perform with the Silverthorn Symphonic Winds, and the Complesso Bandistico Guiseppe Verdi (an Italian marching band). While pursuing her undergraduate degree, Nadia studied jazz theory, jazz performance, and world music. She has extensive training in Balkan vocal techniques and was a performer with the York University Balkan Ensemble for several years. Nadia has performed within the Assyrian community at events such as the Mesopotamian Christmas Concert (2013) and the inaugural Assyrian Chaldean Syriac Student Union's Art Festival (2014). She has also been a guest artist on several occasions with the Toronto-based, Persian music ensemble *Baarbad*. At present, Nadia is a PhD student in the Ethnomusicology program at the University of Toronto where she is investigating themes of music, nationalism, and diasporic communities.

Mario Morello is a Toronto-based folk musician, composer and arranger of southern Italian heritage. He is deeply engaged in traditional music from the Balkans, Italy, and Georgia, and actively researches the many multi-part vocal traditions that are a part of these musical cultures. He has participated in a variety of local community-based ensembles, choirs, and collaborations, and is passionate about the revival and dissemination of traditional music in urban settings. Since 2011, Mario has been an active member of the widely-acclaimed Toronto-based Georgian choir *Darbazi*, who have performed in festivals and symposiums in Canada and Georgia. He has also contributed significantly to York University's Balkan Ensemble as vocalist, instrumentalist and arranger. Mario holds an Honours. BFA in Music, and is currently pursuing an M.A in Ethnomusicology at York University, wishing to enrich his knowledge of traditional multi-part singing through academia and performance

Geoff Cook is a multilingual vocalist who has been performing as a tenor with the York University Balkan Ensemble since 2008. He has performed Balkan and Anatolian folk music at various events across the Toronto and Hamilton region, in addition to recording his own music in Russian and Japanese. His performance with *bağlama* accompaniment at the Kurdish Newroz Festival in 2011 appeared on Rogers Television. Aside from music, Geoff has worked extensively with environmental NGOs in both Canada and Greece. He believes passionately in pacifism, interculturalism and the building bridges through the celebration of the arts.

Alana Cline, a guest artist with *Meden Glas*, is a Toronto based Celtic fiddler who combines Irish, Cape Breton and Scottish styles to create her own sound. She first started playing at the age of 8 under the tutelage of Cape Breton fiddler Sandy MacIntyre. She has augmented her playing style with private lessons from Irish fiddlers Kevin Burke, Liz Carroll, Tony DeMarco and Patrick Ourceau. Alana has also studied privately with All-Ireland Fiddle Champion Maeve Donnelly. Alana holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts, Specialized Honours Music, Summa Cum Laude. In 2008 Alana became the first Canadian to be accepted to the auditioned Meitheal School of Irish Traditional Music in Limerick, Ireland, and she has also studied fiddle at the Gaelic College of Celtic Arts in St. Ann's, Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. Most recently, she performed at the City of Toronto's Canada Day Celebrations at Yonge-Dundas Square & Mel Lastman Square, as well as at the Taste of the Danforth 2013. She has performed at many pubs and private events including house parties and weddings, for Tourism Ireland, Fredericton Tourism, The Toronto Irish Film Festival, The Ireland Fund and Golf Newfoundland and Labrador at their promotional events, as well as a main stage solo act at the Distillery District East Coast Festival. Alana was exposed to Balkan music through her father, Leigh Cline, who has performed and made recordings of Greek and Turkish music for many years. This contributed to an interest in learning the Pontic Grekk *lyra* (folk fiddle) and performing violin with York University's Balkan Music Ensemble for several years.