

Milo ke Mandarinini



Sephardic Music



MILO KE MANDARINI

Traditional Sephardic Music from the Mediterranean

Milo ke Mandarinini ("Apple & Mandarin" in Greek), formed in 2008, derives from the interest that two young musicians - Carlos Ramírez and Isabel Martín - have in learning about different traditional music of the Mediterranean. They have investigated first hand this music, travelling on many occasions to the eastern Mediterranean countries, studying their modal traditions that have survived the *westernization* process to which traditional music has been exposed. They have also discovered the relationships the Sephardic Jews established with their host territories, mainly in the Ottoman Empire, in regions like Bulgaria, Greece or Turkey.

Native to Toledo, their research on the Sephardic culture has allowed them to understand their own identity and history. They feel this music to be a living and present experience - not just a museum piece - that acts as a link between our present and our past, between East and West. They have directly approached these traditions guided by important figures of the Sephardic culture like: Karen Gerson Sarhon, Director of the Research Centre for Sephardic Jewish Culture in Istanbul, where the most important Sephardic community (after the Sephardic Jewish community of Jerusalem) lives today, or the Canadian ethnomusicologist Judith Cohen, specializing in Mediaeval and Sephardic music.

The Sephardic or Spanish Jews

In 1492 Spanish Jews were forced to convert to Christianity by Queen Isabella of Castile and King Ferdinand of Aragon, or be expelled from the Iberian Peninsula. From the first century there are detailed records of the presence of Jews in the Iberian Peninsula, who developed prosperous settlements. The Diaspora forced many Jews to head for Portugal, the Kingdom of Navarre or the Italian States. Those who fared better settled in the territories of the Ottoman Empire (in The Balkans or in North Africa), where Sultan Bayezid II gave orders to welcome them with open arms. The Sephardic not only kept their religion, but also many of their ancestral customs, like the language, which is still preserved in the present-day communities descended from those Spanish Jews. The old traditions, passed down orally from one generation to the next, blended with the new traditions from their host countries, integrating into their everyday lives new customs, words, expressions and melodies.

It is currently estimated that the Sephardic community reached a population of two millions, mostly in Israel, the United States and Latin America. Not counting the numerous Spaniards who, even without knowing it, are descended from those Jews who converted to Christianity and remained on the Iberian Peninsula.

Milo ke Mandarinini and the Sephardic tradition from the Mediterranean.

If we understand culture as an ever-evolving living organism, the music from the Spanish Jews preserves the essence of the original Iberian language. However, new material learnt from the host societies emerge and even translations from songs sung in different languages appear in relatively modern and original compositions.

Milo ke Mandarinini presents Sephardic music through the perspective of Mediterranean tradition. A very special tradition linked to the Iberian Peninsula and preserved orally for more than five centuries. The musical instruments these musicians play are the same that we find in Turkish folk music or in Ottoman classical music repertoires. We find also glimpses of Greek and Bulgarian folklore, with which the Sephardic tradition has been closely linked, giving rise to a new version of their own music.

Biography of the group

At the end of 2008 and as a result of their initial studies, they recorded their own CD that helped to get them known. In 2009 they were selected by the "Instituto de la Juventud" (Spanish Youth Institute) for its program "**Circuitos de Música 2009**", from which they went on tour around Spain. They received aid from the *Injuve* of Castilla-La Mancha to continue their studies on the island of Crete (Greece) at the *Labyrinth Center*, director of music Ross Daly. In the same year they were finalists at the **10th Concurso Folk Cuartu Los Valles de Navelgas** (Asturias).

Since that year, when their music career began, until today the following performances are noteworthy: **Festival Internacional de Música Sefardí de Córdoba** (2014), **Aula-Museo de Instrumentos Tradicionales Ibéricos de Paco Díez** in Mucientes (Valladolid, 2014), **Jornada Europea de la Cultura Judía** in Cordoba (2013), **Antigua Sinagoga** of Segovia (2013), **Festival Internacional de Música y Danza Ciudad de Úbeda** in Jaen (2012), **Semana Europea de la Cultura** in Accra (Ghana, 2012), **Festival Getxo Folk** (Bilbao, 2012), **Festival Folk Segovia** (2009 and 2011), **Círculo de Arte** of Madrid (2011), **Festival de Músicas del Mundo de Quito** (Ecuador, 2010), **Red de Teatros de Castilla La Mancha** (several concerts in the region, 2009-2011), **Festival Internacional de la Sierra** in Fregenal de la Sierra (Badajoz, 2010), **Festival de Teatro La Celestina** together with the theatre company La Recua Teatro in La Puebla de Montalbán (Toledo, 2009-2014), **Diputación de Cádiz** with their project of educational concerts "*Mar en el medio de las tierras*" (2009-2014), etc.

On the radio they have presented their work on Spanish programmes like *Discópolis* of **Radio3**, *Me lo dices o me lo cantas* of **Radio Exterior** of RNE (Spanish National Radio), *La noche en vela* of **RNE1**, *Factoría Musical* of **Radio Castilla-La Mancha**, **Cadena Ser**, **Onda Cero**, etc. - some of the most important radio stations in Spain.

In May 2011 they won the Spanish National Youth Prize **Premio Nacional Injuve a la Interpretación Musical "Creación Joven"** (Injuve National Youth Prize for a Musical Performance) in the Folk Music category.

During 2013 and 2014 they shared the stage and explored new sounds together with **David Larrínaga** (La Baldosa Flotante) or **Hristos Kanellos** (PA NI KE SO), among other artists. Recently they were invited by one of their most admired maestros, **Efrén López**, to join his new project. On stage they will present the new compositions of his first

solo album, "El Fill del Llop". This new band, called "Abracadabra", brings together the great musicians **Miriam Encinas Laffite, Hristos Barbas and Alexandre Guitart Luengo.**

Currently their work as a duo consists of studying and preparing their first album, "La Vereda de la Gitana".

Group members



Isabel Martín: Voice, bendhir, square tambourine of Peñaparda, tambourine, spoons, davul, riq, daf...

From her childhood she was attracted by the traditional music and folk culture. She began studying singing and Iberian percussion at the Centro Ángel Carril of Salamanca; afterwards during her travels to Crete and Bulgaria, she connected with the techniques of bulgarian and ottoman singing, guided by the renowned singers Tsvetanka Varimezova, Mercan Erzincan and Mariana Pepelyankova. Furthermore, she was instructed in percussion by Zohar Fresco, Vanesa Muela, Eliseo Parra and Vassilis Sarikis; in vocal technique by Mónica de Nut and in modal music by Efrén López, Hristos Barbas and Hristos Kanellos. She graduated in Social and Cultural Anthropology from the UNED.



Carlos Ramírez: saz, oud, lavta, hurdy gurdy, yayli tanbur, rabab.

His musical career began by playing classical guitar when he was a child, becoming interested afterwards in other less common stringed instruments. He has a passion for Ottoman classical music, as well as for other forms of modal music, ranging from Castilian folk music to Afghan or Indian traditional music. He has travelled on many occasions to Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey, where he has taken master classes of saz, ud, yayli tambur, makam and ottoman music with top-class teachers such as Ross Daly, Efrén López, Hristos Barbas, Evgenios Voulgaris or Erdal Erzincan.

Multimedia



Promotional video. [Puncha-puncha / Nihavent Yürük](#)
(Tradicional sefardí / Carlos Ramírez)



[Directo Sinagoga Mayor de Segovia](#). September 2013



[Devojce, devojce](#). Traditional from Macedonia



[Milo ke Mandarini en Tarataña](#) in RNE 3



[Milo ke Mandarini en Discópolis](#) in RNE 3

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