**Musicdeli Review 2016**

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[**https://musicdeli.wordpress.com/2016/09/11/album-review-london-klezmer-quartet-to-the-tavern-intimate-and-expressive/**](https://musicdeli.wordpress.com/2016/09/11/album-review-london-klezmer-quartet-to-the-tavern-intimate-and-expressive/)

[**Album Review: London Klezmer Quartet – To the Tavern – Intimate and Expressive**](https://musicdeli.wordpress.com/2016/09/11/album-review-london-klezmer-quartet-to-the-tavern-intimate-and-expressive/)

Posted on [September 11, 2016](https://musicdeli.wordpress.com/2016/09/11/album-review-london-klezmer-quartet-to-the-tavern-intimate-and-expressive/)by [kazuum](https://musicdeli.wordpress.com/author/kazuum/)

What a great listen! This is **London Klezmer Quarte**t’s fourth album. Having followed their progress though a few different line ups, and with initial curiousity about how quite a minimal band would interpret often wild Jewish klezmer music, it’s great to be able to see that LKQ are still going strong, gigging and releasing very good new music.

In fact**To The Tavern** plays to LKQ’s strength of being a close-up expression of klezmer with a focus on its slower, reflective side, though not without some sprightly faster dances; even the cabaret swing number Goodbye New York gains by being understated rather than overblown. When it comes to putting on an album at home, there’s something to be said for the intimate rather than the bombastic, which some klezmer bands can be – great live but too big for the living room.

The Yiddish vocal of double bassist Indra Buraczewska, part of the band since before their previous album, adds enormously to the repertoire and expression, but the album is clearly a quartet album where the instruments shine. As so often in the projects that she is involved in, it is the clarinet of Susi Evans that stands out for its honeyed tone, delicate phrasing and sweet high notes, but it’s clear that LKQ is a band very much in tune with each other personally as well as musically.

Although the sleeve notes say that the tracks are “traditional except where stated”, in fact only five pieces are traditional. Most of the rest are utterly convincing compositions of the band members, confirming them as amongst the leading klezmer composers of our generation. Though it has to be said that the stand out track of the album is the traditional title track and drinking song A Gleyzle Jas (To the Tavern), with a great vocal by Indra. It’s worth remembering that German speakers will mostly understand Yiddish songs; the song translations in the sleeve notes are a help to appreciation.

Listen to [Borscht](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLAVxo7UmOQ)on the band’s Youtube.

The style of a number of the tracks such as The Inn Keepers Wife by accordionist Carol Isaacs remind us too that klezmer music has roots in central Europe as well as East Europe and Russia, and even the presumably Romanian style Hora de Lacovache Pana (a curious name, googling doesn’t help) is a simple dance in a major key that has the feeling that it connects to the 19th century dance music of Vienna and Budapest.

The album comes with an enigmatic illustration of 6 frames of a film.  The album is inspired by Konrad’s Bukovina Khosidl, a short story by Peter Newall. A bit of digging reveals that a departing train, a signpost to a town and an empty hotel room with a lonely violin, represent this story, which you can download [here](http://peterjustinnewall.blogspot.co.uk/2016/07/konrads-bukovina-khosidl.html) for extra enjoyment. A few words from the story set the tone:

*“Without this violin I am nothing in this world, merely a man with bad papers, without a*
*job, who speaks every language, even my own, with an accent, a foreigner everywhere except in the valley round my home village, and I am not going back there…”*

All in all a beautifully conceived and well crafted album. Buy [here](http://www.londonklezmerquartet.com/shop.html).