



**Balkan Motown - Gypsy Hip!**  
**New Album**  
 File under World, Roma, Rock & Beyond

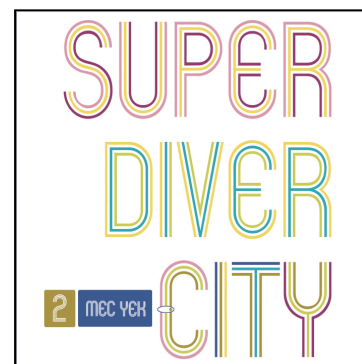
**SUPERDIVERCITY**

Sometime midway through the 1990s, **Piet Maris** (frontman with the acclaimed Euro roots outfit **Jaune Toujours**) began to make contact with gypsy musicians and, through their guidance and contacts, to travel regularly to a Roma community in Slovakia. Through the latter, the ever curious musician learned their gypsy style of playing. Afterwards, this repertoire was thoroughly reinterpreted by the musicians of Jaune Toujours, who, in their usual fashion, began pushing the music beyond the boundaries of tradition by adding their own musical flavours to the sound. At first, the more traditionally-minded gypsies in the band's audience frowned in astonishment at these changes but the sound began to catch on with the younger Roma. The latter's stamp of approval was, ultimately, given authority when two young Roma singers - **Katia and Milka Pohlodkova** - joined the band on stage and never left... The gypsy incarnation that has developed from Jaune Toujours is called **Mec Yek** and **Super Diver City** is their latest recording.



**Piet Maris:** "When I look back, I'm pretty impressed with the itinerary we embarked on together with Katia and Milka. From that first moment on stage, when we had just fallen into each other's cultures, as a manner of speaking, we were still discovering our common identity and the way we deal with music. The way we look at things, how we're positioned in our lives, the differences but at the same time the similarities between the cities we live in... Meanwhile, the multicultural society has been declared dead – while I was thinking that we even have not begun yet – up next came the declaration of "superdiversity"... All those years at least we have worked together to present a valuable, authentic alternative for the clichés that still surround the Roma, the gypsies."

As you'd expect from Mec Yek's origins, **Super Diver City** contains some musical surprises: twelve tracks, nine particular arrangements of traditional Roma-songs, two songs written by Katia and Milka and one Amy Winehouse-cover, translated into Romanès. Some songs show minimal orchestration, other pull out all the stops (now and then even with a Hammond organ). The band travels back to its nostalgic roots, from the early years with the Roma in Slovakia, to more contemporary and urban dub, ska, latin and soul. All nicely mixed together by **Shazalakazoo**, leading duo in Balkan Beats from Belgrade, Serbia, who delivered already in 2010 some surprising remixes of Jaune Toujours and Mec Yek tracks for the **remix album RE:PLUGGED**. But, against all expectations: Mec Yek is a gypsy band without violin.



**Line-up :**

**Katia & Milka Pohlodkova** (vocals), **Piet Maris** (accordion & vocal), **Théophane Raballand** (drums & percussion), **Mathieu Verkaeren** (double bass), **Mattias Laga** (sax soprano & clarinets).

**Mec Yek quotes :**

**SONGLINES** (\*\*\*\*): what they do, they do with style, grit and grace **FROOTS**: Balkan hip is a good description of the combination of earthy traditionalism and hot jazz on display as your likely to find **STIRRINGS**: drawn from the Roma tradition, all souped-up with some quite superb playing and plenty of go-faster stripes without losing the emotion at the heart of it all **TAPLAS**: excitement, virtuosity, originality, emotion – it has it all. If you're a fan of anyone from Manu Chao over Rachid Taha to the Kroke Band and Ivo Papasov, give this a listen. You will love it. **WOMAD**: The fantastically groovy, cross-bred gypsy sound. Exactly the kind of mongrel sound that the isolationist politicians would hate. **DJ SCRATCHY**: Even if I don't speak the language, I understand. It's all there in the sound and it makes my spirit soar. **RIFRAF**: une musique 100% métissée **BALKAN TRAFIK**: Chant a capella, instrumentation minimale et larges sections de cuivres : la musique un peu déjantée de Mec Yek rassemble un tas d'éléments **DE STANDAARD** (\*\*\*\*): Mec Yek trekt de traditionele liederen knap naar zich toe door ze te vermengen met eigentijdse genres **MIXED**: inventief, eigenzinnig en levenslustig **RIFRAF**: een mix van gypsy, ska, klezmer, Balkangrooves en ander feestelijk gerief, aangevuld met snuifjes reggae en soul

**MEC YEK "SUPER DIVER CITY" (chou 1502)**

**Label Choux de Bruxelles - contact : info@choux.net +32 478 82 57 63 – www.mecyek.be**

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