

# Harmonia

Music from the Heart of Europe

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# Harmonia

Music from the Heart of Europe

A multi-cultural group of master musicians from several countries performing on authentic folk instruments, Harmonia presents the virtuosic and passionate traditional music of Eastern Europe.

Brilliant. Lush. Dazzling.. raved *SingOut!* Magazine.

Harmonia presents the traditional folk music of Eastern Europe, ranging from the Danube to the Carpathians. Its repertoire reflects the cultures of this region: Hungarian, Slovak, Ukrainian, Romanian, Croatian and Gypsy. Performing on authentic folk instruments, and styled after turn of the century East-European Gypsy bands, their music is drawn from both urban *cigányzene* and rural folk sources of Eastern-Europe. The ensemble's performances evoke the full range of human emotions; interspersing fiery, passionate virtuosity with soulful melancholy and nostalgic yearning. The six-piece ensemble uses instruments as varied as accordion, upright bass, violin, panflute, and cimbalom, the East-European 125 string hammered dulcimer. Capturing the emotion, depth, fire and passion of Eastern Europe; Harmonia's rhythms move in a heartbeat from mellow and dissonant to loud and frenzied. The musicians come from varied East-European backgrounds, finding a common musical language in Harmonia.

Their technical brilliance only adds to Harmonia's breathtaking performances .dizzying cimbalom solos coupled with soaring violin lines, haunting flute and accordion solos and soulful vocals are a joy by any standard. In addition to being polished performers, Harmonia's members are adept at explaining their music and culture - the ensemble is equally at home on the concert stage and in academic or workshop settings.

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Promotional pictures and

materials available for download

# Harmonia

## Biographies:

### **Walt Mahovlich, Accordion**

Walt Mahovlich got his start as a teenager playing Croatian and Macedonian weddings with traditional village musicians. He founded *Harmonia* in 1992. He's played frequent concert tours of Europe and throughout North America. A featured artist at the Smithsonian's 1976 Festival of American Folklife, he's performed at *Smotra Foklora* in Zagreb, as well as in Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and Kennedy Center. He made his off-Broadway debut in Tony Kushner's *A Dybbuk*, performing at New York's Public Theater. Walt appears on many recordings of East European and Klezmer music. He's performed with numerous East European and Middle Eastern musical groups and projects. In addition to *Harmonia*, he currently plays clarinet and sax with *TurliTava*, performing music of Macedonia and the central Balkans.

Walt studied ethnomusicology at Sarajevo and produced the UNESCO award winning album, *Nova Domovina: Balkan Slavic Music from the Industrial Midwest*. He worked as a folk music fieldworker and presenter for both the Smithsonian and the National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA). Walt also currently curates the *INSIDE World Music* concert series in Cleveland, Ohio.

### **Alexander Fedoriouk, Cimbalom**

Alexander Fedoriouk began playing the cimbalom at the age of 7 in Kolomyja, Ukraine. While still in his teens he played weddings in mountain villages in Ukraine and Moldavia. He studied music at the Kolomyia Music School, Chernivtsy Musical College and the Kiev State Conservatory and received awards at the Ukrainian national competition on folk instruments. He has performed as a soloist with *The Odessa Philharmonic Orchestra*, and the *Cleveland Orchestra*. He has performed for film scores both in the United States and Ukraine. Appearing on numerous recordings, Alexander was featured on jazz flutist Herbie Mann's final album, as well as with avant-garde composer and cellist Erik Friedlander, Nigel Pulsford of *Bush* and has performed in Carnegie hall with John Cale of the *Velvet Underground*.

### **Beata Begeniova, Vocals**

Born in Eastern Slovakia, Beata Begeniova grew up surrounded by Slovak and Rusyn folk songs sung by her family. She attended the music school in Prešov and received her music degree from J. P. Safarik University in Slovakia. While still a student, she was featured as a soloist on many recordings and radio broadcasts and received numerous awards in folk song competitions. A featured soloist with the professional Rusyn ensemble *Dukla* in Prešov, she toured Europe and North America with *Šarišan*.

### **Andrei Pidkivka, Folk Flutes**

Andrei Pidkivka began playing the *sopilka* and other folk flutes, as a child in his native Ukraine. Since then, he has become a master of folk wind instruments. Graduating from the Ukrainian State Academy in Lviv with a major in both folk and classical music, Andrei began his professional career as principle flutist for the Ukrainian State Folk Ensemble, *Unist* and performed with the *Lviv Philharmonic State Symphony Orchestra*. In 1992 he received first prize at the International Music Festival of European State Folk Ensembles in Vienna. His talents have brought him to Poland, Germany and the Czech Republic. Andrei's folk flute playing has also been featured across the country in numerous symphonic concerts of the music of *Lord of the Rings*. Andrei's extensive fieldwork in Eastern Europe researching folk flutes formed the basis of his PhD dissertation. He received his doctorate from Michigan State University in 2005.

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## Biographies, page 2:

### **Steven Greenman, Violin**

**Steven Greenman** is a seasoned performer of Hungarian, Slovak, Romanian and a wide range of other East European music as well as an internationally known performer of Klezmer music. Steven has performed for Hungarian and other East European communities in the United States since 1990. Steven has frequently collaborated with fellow Clevelanders Alexander Fedoriouk and Walt Mahovlich on East European and Klezmer musical projects. He has been a frequent soloist with the Cleveland Pops Orchestra in performances of his orchestral arrangements of East European Gypsy music. A participant in many classical music festivals, Steven received his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music Degrees at the Cleveland Institute of Music. Steven leads the ensemble *Khevrisa* and also performed with such groups as *Budowitz*, the *Flying Bulgar Klezmer Band*, and the *Klezomatics*. An accomplished teacher of traditional East European Klezmer violin, Steven has served on the faculty of *KlezKamp*-the annual Yiddish Folk Arts Program and *KlezKanada*. Steven is featured on numerous recordings including *Khevrisa European Klezmer Music* on Smithsonian Folkways and *Stempenyu's Dream* a double CD recording of Steven's own compositions which was introduced in at the Jewish Culture Festival in Krakow, Poland.

### **Branislav Brinarsky, Bass, Fujara, Gajdice, Vocals**

**Branislav "Brano" Brinarsky** began his musical studies at age six in his home town of Secovce in Zemplin County in Eastern Slovakia. While at the University in Košice, he began performing with the Jahodna folk ensemble playing bass, *gajdice*, *dvojacka* and singing. During his five years with Jahodna, he toured throughout Slovakia, Europe and Asia. After receiving his degree at Kosice he moved to the United States in 1998 where he immediately founded the Slovak Folk Band Pajtaši which he currently leads. Pajtaši has performed throughout the East Coast for numerous Slovak cultural events and also provides music for Slovak Folk Ensemble Limbora. Recently, Brano has branched out collaborating with other East European bands in the tri-state area. In addition to his folk music endeavors, he also performs with the Bensen-Scott and Jump Start big bands in the New York City area.

# Harmonia

Music from the Heart of Europe

## Instruments

Harmonia performs on a wide range of authentic East European folk instruments including:

***Cimbalom:*** The hammered dulcimer of East Europe, It exists in several forms in Eastern Europe. It was developed into a chromatic, four and a half octave concert instrument in mid 19th century Hungary by the instrument maker Schunda. The player can vary the sound by using different kinds of sticks and also by using pizzicato techniques and harmonics.

***Nai, (panflute):*** An ancient folk instrument, it consists of 25 pipes joined together, each of which produces one sound.

***Sopilka:*** A wooden shepherd.s flute with ten holes from Ukraine.

***Fujara:*** A 6-7 foot long, 3 holed, bass fipple flute from Slovakia.

***Tylynka, Tilincã :*** A simple folk flute from the Carpathian mountains with neither fipple nor holes; the player depends on overtones to play melodies.

***Drymba:*** a jaw harp with a free beating metal tongue.

***Zozulka:*** a ceramic, globular flute, similar to the ocarina

***Frula, Fluier:*** a small six-holed shepherd.s flute.

***Dvodencivka:*** a double flute that allows the player to play in harmony.

***Taragot, Tarogató:*** With a single reed and a conical wooden bore similar to a wooden soprano saxophone, it is derived from an ancient Hungarian military instrument.

***Gajdice:*** A double pipe with reeds and and cowhorn bells, with a sound reminiscent of bagpipes.

***Buben:*** A large, two headed drum topped with a cymbal, played throughout eastern Europe. The instrument is a key part of the Ukrainian mountain music called **troyista muzyka**.

Picture of the instruments are available at [www.harmoniaband.com](http://www.harmoniaband.com)

# Harmonia

Music from the Heart of Europe

Awards

And

Discography

## **Awards:**

Nominated for Cleveland Scene 2005 Music Award

Selected as Cleveland's Best Ethnic Band, The Plain Dealer 2004

Nominated for Best of Cleveland Music Award

Selected for American Traditions/Global Sounds Program

## **Discography:**

**Harmonia: Music of Eastern Europe** Traditional Crossroads 80702-4313-2

**Art of the Cimbalom** Traditional Crossroads 80702-4314-2

**Cimbalom Traditions** Folk Sounds Records

**Ciganska Krčma: in a Gypsy Café** Folk Sounds Records

**Balkans without Borders** Omnium Records

# Harmonia

Music from the Heart of Europe

## Press Quotes

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*"At the Goldman Theater, the Cleveland-based band Harmonia spurred toe tapping and hand clapping with Eastern European folk music. For more than an hour, Harmonia's virtuosic musicians spun through melodies and songs from Romania, Ukraine, Croatia and Slovakia. Using various combinations of instruments -- violin, accordion, cimbalom (a 250-pound predecessor of the hammered dulcimer), flutes, string bass and voices -- Harmonia generated music ranging from the pastoral setting of a lonesome shepherd's flute tune to the rhythmic evocation of a rustic circle dance.*

*Alexander Fedoriouk hammered his trapezoidal cimbalom with impressive velocity, while Marko Dreher played his violin with songful passion. Andrei Pidkivka breezed through fast passages on a number of ethnic flutes, but he was most winning playing plaintive melodies on the nai, or pan flute, and the tylynka, a long, slender shepherd's flute with no finger holes. Beata Begeniova sang with much spirit and spunk. Her cinnamon-flecked alto was as frolicsome in the Gypsy songs on the program as it was poignant in a traditional wedding song from eastern Slovakia. Walt Mahovlich, who founded the ensemble in 1992, played his accordion sensitively and kept the audience well informed about the program's music."*

GRACE JEAN, **The Washington Post**, June 17, 2005

*"Cleveland's Best Ethnic Band: Harmonia The spirited group led by accordionist Walt Mahovlich specializes in lusty arrangements of East European roots music."*

HARVEY PEKAR, **Cleveland Splendor: The Plain Dealer's Guide to Northeast Ohio's Best**, March 5, 2004

*a testimonial – "I'm not usually one to gush, but I first heard Harmonia last June at a festival in New York. I've listened to a lot of great Eastern European music (my specialty), but I was not prepared for the music I heard from Harmonia. 'Obscenely talented' is the best description I can come up with. As jaded as I am from hearing a lot of this stuff, Harmonia made my mouth open speechlessly, and my eyes stare trying to comprehend how the music I was hearing could possibly be produced by mere mortals."*

CHARLIE BAUM, **Folklore Society of Greater Washington**, December, 2001

*"Brilliant. Lush. Dazzling. Soulful. All true, but still insufficient to evoke the passion and exhilaration, the melancholy and triumph, that a Harmonia performance evokes. Each individual musician is stunningly virtuosic; together, they weave such a complex layer of richly textured sound that the only thing one can liken it to is the finest of traditional oriental rugs."*

JUDY BARLAS, **SingOut! Magazine**, Spring 2001

*"...I can't express enough my appreciation of Fedoriouk's remarkable and truly unusual talent - a talent that is very difficult to find here in the United States. His mastery of his instrument, the cimbalom, is most refined...."*

HERBIE MANN, May 2000

*"Harmonia is a select group of American and Eastern European musicians who blend Hungarian, Ukrainian, Romanian, and Croatian influences. The seven-piece ensemble uses instruments as varied as accordion, upright bass, violin, cimbalom, taragot, and pan flute. Its rhythms move in a heartbeat from mellow and dissonant to loud and frenzied. Imagine the energy of the Pogues, only with a female singer and no drummer. Beata Begeniova, from eastern Slovakia, has a voice as beautiful as her smile. A joy by any standard."*

JASON BRACELIN, **Cleveland Scene**, July 10, 2002

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## Press Quotes

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*".... they kicked things off with a short but impressive set of Romanian Gypsy music , ... allowing [the] sweetly passionate violin to soar. Mahovlich wailed on clarinet ... Things really got cooking when Fedoriouk took hammers to cimbalom. His fiery playing was jaw-droppingly fast, evoking gasps from the audience."*

PEGGY J. LATKOVICH, **The Cleveland Free Times**, September 11, 1999

**CD Review of Harmonia :*Music of Eastern Europe*** (Traditional Crossroads) *"Harmonia has been dazzling audiences in Cleveland and around the world for years with high-energy performances. They capture that spirit on Music of Eastern Europe, a collection of traditional and contemporary songs and dance music from Bulgaria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Hungary and all points in between. Anyone who's seen the band live knows of the virtuosity of violinist Marko Dreher, cimbalom player Alexander Fedoriouk and flutist Andrei Pidkivka. The addition of vocalist Beata Begeniova in recent years has taken the sound to a new level. Her confident voice has power and spaciousness that brings the mountains of Eastern Europe to the shores of Lake Erie. She gets to show her versatility on the medley of Gypsy songs that closes out the disc, exploring her lower range and working passionately phrased lines between Fedoriouk's rolling arpeggios and Dreher's impeccable trills. Combining the spotless technique of classical music with Gypsy passion, Harmonia is one of Cleveland's treasures."* Selected as one of the top ten albums of 2003

PEGGY LATKOVICH **The Cleveland Free Times**, December 31, 2003

**CD Review of .*Cimbalom Traditions***. *"Ukrainian cimbalom master Alexander Fedoriouk is the featured soloist on the album of rollicking traditional music performed by Harmonia. ... the musicians sound as wild and free as an authentic Gypsy band. They dig into melancholy sentiments, improvise expressively on traditional rubato forms and periodically take off on their own virtuosity. Skillful with syncopated rhythms and asymmetrical phrases, the players plug into the energy and excitement of music from a rich variety of Eastern European traditions.."*

WILMA SALISBURY, **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**, May 6, 2001

*."Harmonia, brought haunting resonance to music from a region that has suffered intolerable atrocities ... violin, accordion and vocalist overflowed with bittersweet sentiments and proud, folkloric gestures. The musicians captured the heartfelt emotions with the directness of cabaret players performing for a select audience."*

DONALD ROSENBERG, August 6, 1999 **The Cleveland Plain Dealer**

*".... driving, urban roots music ....."*

THE KNITTING FACTORY, January 1997, New York City.

# Harmonia

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## Residencies and Workshops

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Harmonia offers a variety of residencies and workshops, depending on the audience's interests, level of musicianship, and length of the workshop/residency. Workshops are available for audiences ranging from general audiences to elementary schools to graduate music seminars.

### **I. School workshop on East European music**

**Target audience:** Elementary, Middle School and High School students **Level:** Beginning - Intermediate

Harmonia presents an interactive concert: discuss East European geography, music, instruments, and culture; they also demonstrate various styles and types of music. The program can be tailored to coordinate with social studies units, history units or multi-cultural fairs. It can also be tailored to students participating in instrumental and vocal music programs. Folk flute demonstrations are particularly interesting to schools with elementary recorder/song flute programs. The program is interactive: students participate in singing and dance.

The main topics/activities include:

- Locations of the countries and their cultural connections;
- Instrument construction and performance techniques - specifically aimed at kids;
- Performance experiences in Eastern European countries, with musical selections from each country;
- Cultural settings of the music growing up in Eastern Europe and among US immigrant populations
- Dance - groups of students are taught traditional dance.

Presented at: Flint City Schools, Flint MI, Iolani School, Honolulu, Hawaii, Bloomington City Schools, Bloomington, IN, Crestwood High School, Mantua, OH, Garfield Middle School, Garrettsville, OH, Calsieu Parrish Schools Lake Charles, LA

### **II. General lecture-demonstration workshop on East European Music**

**Target audience:** General audiences to advanced university

**Level:** Beginning to Advanced

Harmonia members discuss East European music, instruments, and culture; they will also demonstrate various styles and types of music.

The main topics include:

- Locations of the countries and their cultural/political connections;
- Instrument construction and performance techniques;
- Performance experiences in Eastern European countries, with musical selections from each country;
- Cultural settings of the music both in Eastern Europe and among US immigrant populations;
- Wedding customs (compared and contrasted) in various Eastern European cultures.

**Presented at:** University of Michigan, Flint MI, Bismarck Art & Galleries Association, Bismarck, ND (general audience), Old Songs Festival, Guilderland, NY, Hiram College, Hiram, OH (University Seminar)

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## Residencies and Workshops

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### III. Lecture/demonstration of East European instruments (formal or informal)

**Target audience:** General (level of detail can vary depending on audience)

**Level:** From general audiences to graduate level

Harmonia members talk about and demonstrate a variety of East European instruments that we use - 7 different types of folk flutes - including panflute, *tilinca*, *dvodencivka* and *sopilka* - as well as cimbalom, violin and accordion. Beata discusses, demonstrates and contrasts various types of vocal styles from Eastern Europe as part of this. If appropriate (for Ethnomusicology or acoustics students), we can be very detailed about the techniques and construction of the instruments. This workshop can be offered informally (questions from the audience interspersed with Harmonia's commentary – for younger or general audiences), or as a more formal classroom lecture.

**Presented at:** The National Folk Alliance Conference; The Ohio Music Educators Association, Kent State University, Indiana University department of Ethnomusicology, McNeese University, Lake Charles, LA

### IV. Hands On Folk Orchestra Workshop

**Target audience:** Musicians/ music students (instrumental or vocal)

**Level:** Intermediate to advanced

A group workshop for musicians in which Harmonia teaches them to play one or more tunes and put together a band playing our Eastern European music. We work both in sections and as a group. Appropriate instrumentalists would include: violin, viola, bass and cello; flute, recorder and clarinet, soprano sax; accordion, hammered dulcimer or cimbalom as well as percussionists. As part of this, Harmonia member, Andrei Pidkivka, can teach the basics of playing *tilinca* (that's the flute without finger holes that operates on harmonics) and supply several *tilincas* for student use. We can also supply a few *sopilkas* (recorder-like folk flutes) and a *panpipe* for student use during the workshop. For a longer residency (three days or longer), we can also supply up to 3 small sized *cimbaloms* on which students can learn the fundamentals of the instrument - (additional shipping costs paid by presenter). We typically teach first by ear - which develops a sense of styling - and then supply written notes in the form of a lead sheet and chords. Beata, the group's female vocalist, can teach one or more songs as part of this kind of workshop, as well.

**Presented at:** Balkan Music and Dance workshop.

### V. Songs of Eastern Europe

**Target audience:** From interested amateurs to trained singers

**Level:** Intermediate to advanced

Beata Begeniova demonstrates and teaches songs of Eastern Europe with a focus on her native region of eastern Slovakia. Vocal techniques and styling, as well as the cultural setting of the songs are covered. The level of detail can be varied with the audience. Often dance is worked into the program and taught as an accompaniment to ritual song. Other members of Harmonia can accompany Beata as she teaches. This workshop is available either as a single one-hour presentation or as an extended multi-session residency culminating in a group performance.

**Presented at:** Mendocino Folklore Camp, Mendocino, CA, Old Songs Festival, Guilderland, NY

### VI. Balkan Rhythms

**Target audience:** Musicians, Dancers, Music Educators

**Level:** Interested amateurs to advanced university

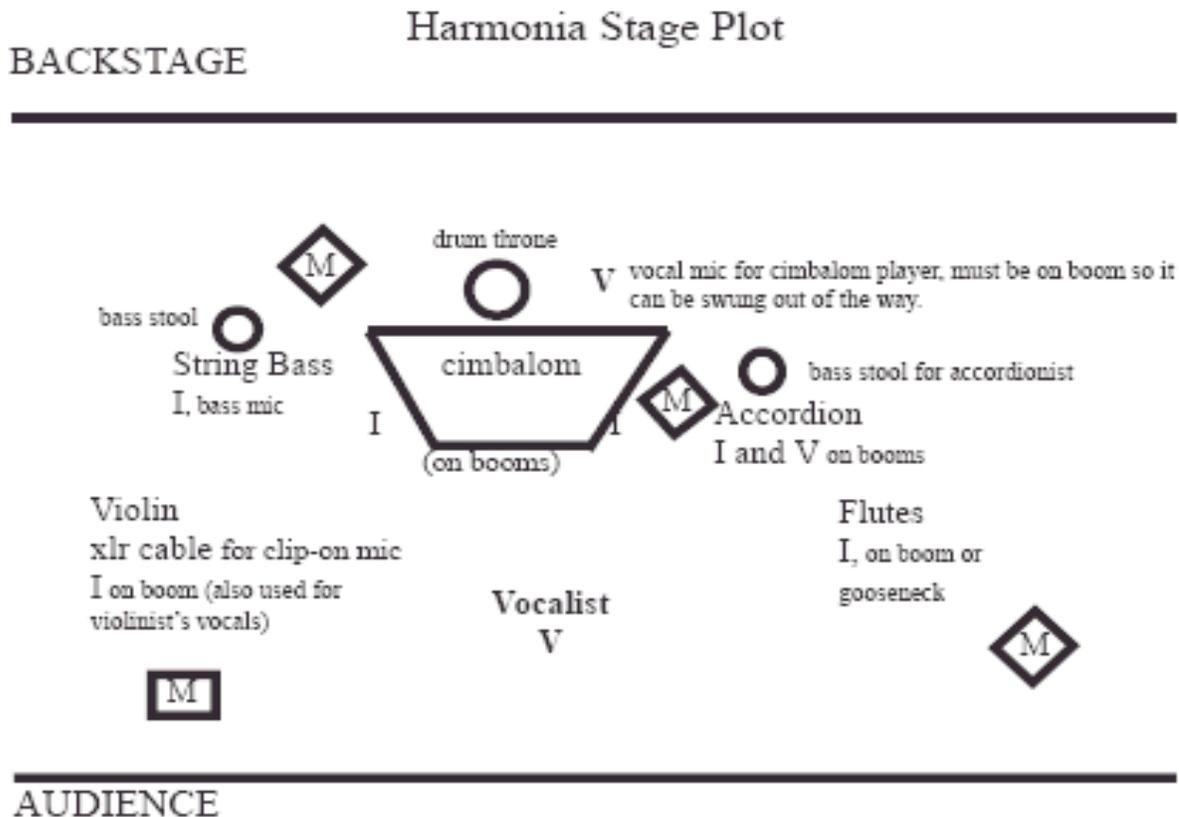
While western popular and classical music has restricted itself to duple and triple meter (4/4, 2/4 and 3/4), Balkan music uses a wide variety of unusual meters such as 7/16, 11/8 and 13/16. Walt Mahovich presents the unusual and complex rhythms used in south-eastern Europe. The presentation includes music demonstrations, ways of understanding counting, clapping and moving to Balkan rhythms.

**Presented at:** International Dalcroix Conference, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

# Harmonia

## Sound and Technical Requirements page 1 of 2:

Harmonia Technical Sheet, 1 of 2



### KEY:

V = vocal microphone (3 total)

I = instrumental microphone (5 total)

**M** = monitor speaker

○ = drum throne (adjustable stool)

○ = bass stool (high stool, like a bar stool)

### NOTES:

1. Phantom power is required.
2. Microphones for cymbalom must be on booms.
3. Violinist moves on stage - uses clip on microphone with XLR cable.
4. Cymbalom is miked similarly to a piano.
5. Microphone for string bass should be on a low microphone stand and should be designed for use with a bass.
6. 2 high bass stools without backs (for example, bar stools) are needed for bass and accordion.
7. **FOR SMALL VENUES:** 2 monitor speakers are sufficient.

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## Technical requirements page 2 of 2

### Microphone, Mixer and other Requirements :

1. XLR cable indicated is for violinist.s clip on mic; it requires phantom power.(We bring this microphone.)
2. Microphone for flutes should have a wind screen or pop screen.
3. Microphones for cimbalom should be on goose necks or booms.
4. Microphone. for string bass should be on boom or short mic stand as to stand about 2 feet off ground.
5. As a minimum, All microphones should at least of the quality of Shure SM58.
6. Shure Sm 58 or Shure Sm57 microphones are preferred, however any brand of good quality mics, such as Shure, Audio Technica, AKG, high end stage mics, are acceptable.
7. Condenser mics work particularly well, especially for the Cimbalom.
8. There should be 2 backless bar type stools on stage for use by accordionist and bassist and one sturdy music stand (black metal stand preferred, wire stand is not acceptable.)
9. The mixer should have reverb or an effects system of some sort.

### Mixing Guidelines:

1. **Violin:** Almost all highs should be rolled off of violin, lows should be turned up slightly more than middle. Violin should be slightly more than other instruments. Some reverb should be added.
2. **Flutes:** Flutes should be at about the same volume level as violin. Take care that it is not piercing when in high registers. Flutes should have a medium, or more, amount of reverb; slightly more reverb than violin. About half of the highs on the flute should be rolled off. Note that several types of flutes are used and need to be individually sound checked.
3. **Balance:** Violin and flutes are the main melody instruments; as such, they should be very present in monitor mix.
4. **Vocalist:** Vocalist's mic should have some highs rolled off with a nice amount of reverb. The style of singing is more open voice than that of a rock singer. Make sure that the singer can be heard over the instruments but is not piercing or downing out the instruments.
5. **Cimbalom:** Cimbalom serves as both an accompaniment and solo instrument. The mic on stage left is for the bass strings and the mic on stage right is for treble strings the cimbalom should sound warm - not percussive. A small amount of reverb should help this. Also, rolling off some highs on the treble end and boosting the lows on the low end should also help make it sound very warm. In general, cimbalom should be louder than accordion, except when accordion is playing solos. When the cimbalom is playing solos it should be heard as well as violin or flute.
6. **Bass:** Bass should have more bass sound and less bow and string noise. It helps to roll off highs and some mids and boost lows. Bass should be heard well in monitors.
7. **Accordion:** Accordion here primarily plays accompaniment. There should be some accordion in monitor mix but somewhat less than bass. Accordion should not overpower cimbalom. When accordionist plays solos, he will move closer to microphone to be heard more.