

Balagan Café Band

An eclectic new project, this group combines the worlds of jazz, world music and classical, featuring the intimate chamber instrumentation of violin, guitar, cello and accordion and an elegant yet fiery fusion of improvisation and written music.

Ranging from Parisian and American Jazz, the Chaabi music of Algeria, Tango from Argentina, Balkan folk melodies through to the early modern and folk music of Western Europe, Balagan fuses these threads into a coherent and characteristic sound world.

‘...this is music for the ears, heart and feet.’

The past couple of years have seen the band perform at venues including the Elgar Room, Omnibus and National Portrait Gallery to enthusiastic public responses. The ensemble features some of the UK's most versatile and capable artists.

Christian Miller – Guitar/Leader

Having traded Astronomy for jazz, Christian has played guitar with the broadest possible spectrum of UK jazz musicians – including Heidi Vogel, Mike Mondesir, Adrian Cox, Alex Garnett and Nigel Price, as well New York swing scene favourite Gordon Webster. Equally at home on electric and acoustic instruments, his current projects include Kit Massey's Hot Club of Jupiter, the Southside Gypsy Trio and his own trio and quartets playing modern and contemporary jazz.

Richard Jones – Violin

Richard Jones is a dynamic, exciting young British musician who strives to forge and unearth musical collaborations between a wide range of musical contexts. Since completing his Masters studies at the Guildhall, he has immersed himself in the London music scene and has found a seat within a plethora of different bands. Far removing the violin from the orchestral setting, he delves into rock, folk, world music and jazz to find his sounds. Already, Richard has had the pleasure of working with a host of renowned musicians, including Nicolas Meier, Audrey Riley, Robert Mitchell, Alex Hutton and Christine Tobin.

Shirley Smart – Cello

After 10 years living in Jerusalem, Shirley now lives in London, where she has quickly established herself on the jazz and world music scenes. She has performed with Yo-Yo Ma, Yasmin Levy, Neil Cowley, Gilad Atzmon, Antonio Forcione, Shekoyokh, Kosmos, London Klezmer Quartet, Avishai Cohen, Omer Avital, Sabreen, Ross Daly, Arun Ghosh, Alice Zawadski, Maurizio Minardi, Sefiroth Ensemble and Partikel as well as leading her own projects, including North African and Middle Eastern group the Melange Collective.

She also performs on releases by singer Alice Zawadski on Whirlwind label, and Maurizio Minardi's Piano Ambulance.