

## CD Reviews - Brian Bender & Little Shop of Horas



**With Special Guests:** Frank London (Klezematics, Hasidic New Wave), Alicia Svigals (Klezematics, Mikveh), Stuart Brotman (Brave Old World), Charles Neville (Neville Brothers), Grant Smith (Klezmer Conservatory Band), Jose Gonzalez (Bando Criollo), Raquy Danziger (Raquy and the Cavemen), and others.

“I have received your Little

Shop of Horas CD 'Eyn Velt' and it is FANTASTIC!! Everything from the art on the CD jacket to the liner notes to the music on the CD is first class. I have already scheduled several tracks to use on my six-day-a-week klezmer / Jewish music program on WNWR and wnwr.com in Philadelphia. My listeners are in store for a real treat when they hear the fresh and exuberant sound of your music. Your blending of the rhythms and the combination of traditional and new selections makes for a wonderfully varied and delightful listening experience. 'Eyn Velt' is a 'must-have' for anyone who enjoys klezmer. Thanks for the great new addition to my playlist!!”

Barry Reisman  
Program Host, WNWR AM 1540 (Philadelphia, USA)

“Brian Bender...the most-requested Klezmer trombone in the Northeast USA”  
“Bender's trombone is an entire horn section, when needed, by himself.”

Ari Davidov, Klezmershack

“On the aptly titled 'Eyn Velt' (which means 'One World'), Brian Bender achieves several landmarks. For one, he gathers some of the greatest Klezmer and non-Klezmer musicians in the world, including trumpeter Frank London and violinist Alicia Svigals of the Klezematics and the saxophonist Charles Neville of the famed New Orleans group, the Neville Brothers. The dozens of other musicians on hand from all traditions testify to Bender's universal musical world-view, as does the music they make: World Music with Jewish roots.”

“Bender exhibited his inventive streak, exploring new possibilities for the trombone in the ensemble, as melody or rhythm instrument, and for the melodica, a breath-powered keyboard from which he elicited a particularly ancient sound.”

Seth Rogovoy, author of “The Essential Klezmer”  
Host of “The Klezmer Hour” radio show

"Lovingly brings back the rhythms and sounds of our ancestors as the sounds of today. Some wonderful unexpected twists, like a tangy latin version of the yiddish chestnut "Shloimele, Malkele" and a Rastafarian approach to a traditional Bobover Hasidic processional."

Dr. Hankus Netsky, New England Conservatory of Music  
Director, Klezmer Conservatory Band  
Pioneer of the Klezmer revival

“I find your sound very interesting. You really mix the rhythms in a nice way and the arrangements are very effective. And you did not lose the precious traditional melodies.”

Carlos Kibrit, YiddishMusic.com (internet radio station based in Sao Paulo, Brazil)

“Oy, I've been looking everywhere for this CD!”  
Elijah T. Prophet

[www.LittleShopOfHoras.com](http://www.LittleShopOfHoras.com)

"Brian Bender has an adventurous musical spirit that is reflected in the tracks of Eyn Velt, his latest CD release. Combining his gift for mixing melodies and rhythms from different cultures with his multi-instrumental abilities creates a distinctive sound that can be readily identified as his own. While it is not uncommon these days to find Jewish melodies mixed with other cultures, Bender has collaborated with some of the best known Jewish musicians and added an outstanding cast of backing musicians that combine to give a compelling listening experience. The CD booklet describes the music as "Original and traditional Jewish melodies blended with Latin, Caribbean, African, and Middle Eastern rhythms.

Bender has composed four original songs for Eyn Velt and arranged all of the songs. He performs on Trombone, Trumpet, Baritone Horn, Melodica, Keyboards, Percussion, and Vocals. Quite an impressive range of abilities. He also has some of the best-known guest artists appearing on the album, such as Alicia Svigals- Fiddle, Frank London- Trumpet, and Stu Brotman- Bass. I must also mention the outstanding Flute/Sax performances by Lise Brown.

What we find on these tracks is a blending of Jewish melodies with rhythms and backgrounds from many different cultural traditions. We end up with a style of world fusion music that has Bender's signature sound on each track. Yet, each song's arrangement lives up to the tradition of the particular culture. While each song stands on its own, as you listen through the album there is a common thread woven by Bender that ties the album together nicely as a suite.

I cannot single out just one song as my favorite. I like them all, and find myself humming along without even thinking about it. However, if I were pressed for a response, I would pick El Judio as the most representative of the music on the album. An original by Bender, it combines a Klezmer theme with a Latin Jazz groove. Latin Jazz happens to be another favorite genre of mine, so it plays to my taste quite nicely.

The disc sounds quite good, with all the instruments, vocals, and exotic percussion clear and distinct. The CD booklet does not credit the recording engineer, but lists that the album was mastered by Jim Hemingway.

The CD booklet is a 8-page foldout with good song information, a page by Bender detailing his motivation for the album, and a bio page.

I enjoyed this album very much. Jewish music does blend well with other cultures, and this is an excellent example of how to do it right. The title Eyn Velt says it all, and should appeal to a broad range of listeners."

Keith Wolzinger, Klezmer Podcast

"Love the music...I can't wait to put it on the JazzXpress playlist. Amazing fusion of genres....YES! YES! YES!"

Helen Simons, JazzXpress 94.1FM Jazz Radio (Queensland, Australia)

"I am the music manager for radio station PBS FM Melbourne Australia. We have just received your wonderful CDs "Urban Jungle" and "Eyn Velt". Certainly two highly stylish CDs, incredibly sublime yet subtle, explorative, with exquisite composition choice and orchestration. These CDs are very passionate and intimate with colorful mood changes all joining together to create a vast musical tapestry of styles. The compositions you have chosen are stunning interpretations accentuated by your playing and by your very talented band, minimalist in nature at times but very rhythmic so as to not distract from the beauty of your playing. Your passion for the music shines through every note played, a truly wonderful partnership. World music-inspired Jazz is one of our most listened to and leading styles here at this station and in this city."

- Peter Merritt, PBS FM  
(Melbourne, Australia)