

# Kesaj tchavé



Musique tsigane

Slovakia

<http://myspace.com/Kesajtchave>



KESAJ TCHAVÉ is above all a human story, a story about young Roms wishing to share their spontaneity, energy and enthusiasm through music, song and dance.

The result is an infectious mix of gypsy music at its most raw.

### **A wonderful story still in its early days**

*Kesaj : a gypsy fairy who preaches that to receive love, you first have to be able to give it to others.*

The story of the group began in 2000 in the Roma slums of Kezmarok, a town built at the foot of the Tatra mountains in Slovakia, on the initiative of Ivan Akimov, a professional musician, and Helena Akimova, a street worker. The group was originally created to serve as a platform aimed at helping young underprivileged Roms. In a very short time, perhaps thanks to the advice of the fairy Kesaj, which they chose to use as the group name, these young musicians, singers and dancers took on the mission of spreading this principle of love to humans far and wide. Call it the magic of the fairy Kesaj, or simply fate, the youthful spirit, generosity and the obvious joy that emanates from the group while on stage led to the group rapidly gaining a large following, firstly in Slovakia, then in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Switzerland and France, and the list goes on and on. Their success is naturally also the result of relentless work and dedication. The leaders of Kesaj Tchavé, professional musicians, endlessly help the young people, ensuring that their creativity is both encouraged and valued, and enabling them to achieve excellent standards in terms of tone, form and sound.

The young Kesaj children, Kesaj Chave, Diesci Kesaj, to name but a few of the variations of their name, are today a fine example of what makes the Rom people what they are: one of the rare nations for whom singing and dancing are still part of daily life, and are practically a necessity. Without music, these people could simply not exist.

## A wonderful patchwork of song, dance and instrumentation

According to the gypsy philosophy of «all or nothing», the Kesaj children give their all when on stage, transforming each of their shows into a rare and unique moment. It's undoubtedly this love of the stage and what they are capable of doing up there which has helped them win over audiences throughout Europe.

Their custom-built repertoire includes the young people's favourite Rom songs and current Slovakian hits, as well as traditional songs. They are given a lot of freedom in the choice of songs, as Ivan explains: «They decide everything. I'm only there to channel the energies and put a little bit of rigour into our 4 hours of daily rehearsals.» Their songs, full of ardour, are accompanied by a multitude of instruments – the balalaika, guitar, accordion and violin, and guest performers also perform with the group on a regular basis. What's more, to offer a truly authentic experience of gypsy music, Kesaj Tchavé are not just singers – they also dance, and present a wonderful and unique combination of traditional and modern styles. The result is a breathtakingly colourful show full of energy, joy and life.

### CD



#### CD Naše CD-čko

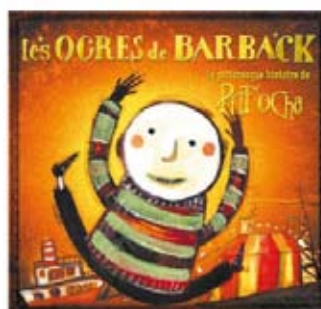
This work, entitled «Naše CD-čko» is their first self-produced album. (2007)

### Compilations



#### «Pulsations 2008/2009»

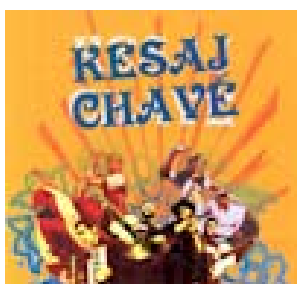
Kesaj Tchave is the star of this compilation, alongside Boban Markovic and Beltuner.



#### Pitt' Ocha 2

This new album by Les Ogres de Barback, aimed at children, features many other artists, including Tiken Jah Fakoli, Mouss et Hakim, Pierre Perret, 17 Hippiés. and Kesaj Tchavé! (Nov. 2009)

### Audiovisual works



#### DVD

This film features a selection of material produced by video artist Magic Marmelade at home and on tour.



#### Short film

by director Pavol Pekarčík about the inter-slum festival AKA-NAME organised each year by Kesaj-Tchavé.

## Major festivals and concerts in France:

- 50th Fête du Houblon Haguenau - World Folklore Festival 17 - 23.8.2009
  - 37th Montoire Festival 11 - 16.8.2009
  - 32th Festival of Song, Dance and Voices and Music of the World, Felletin 3 - 9.8.2009
  - Festival of Song, Dance and World Music, Sarran 31.7 - 2.8.2009
  - Summer residence in Autrans, Meetings with Slovakian and Romanian Roms in the Vercors
  - 13th Issoire international festival - 19.8.2009
  - Fête Romani with Arman Gatti, with the children of the Parada Foundation and DJ TAGADA, 12 April 09 (Montreuil)
  - Akaname Bis - Meeting and concert in a Romanian Rom camp, 11 April 09 (Montreuil)
  - **Zénith in Paris**, guests of Les Ogres de Barback on 8 April 09, World Rom Day (Paris)
  - Latcho Divano Festival, Chapiteau du Fort St-Jean, 2 April to 5 April, (Marseille)
  - Towns and Music of the World Festival , 4 to 15 Nov. 08 (Seine St-Denis)
  - Concerts with the Roms of Montreuil , Grand Hall du Parc Montreuil 11 Nov. (Montreuil)
  - Concert in Issy-les-Moulineaux, 7 Nov (Issy les Moulineaux)
  - Recorded with Les Ogres de Barback, 12 Nov. (for the release of the album PitOcha ii - Nov. 09) (Cergy Pontoise)
  - Residence at the MJC Bréquigny, Rennes, Closing night with DJ TAGADA and Gallina la Lupa - 17 to 20 Nov. (Rennes)
  - 7th Festival of Tongues, 28 June (Decazeville)
  - Fête de la Musique, 21 June (Grenoble)
  - Concert in Autrans, 18 June 2008 (Région PACA)
  - ARTE TV - Documentary - «Les habitants des Cimes... », 10 April 2008
  - Wroblewski workshop, 16 July 2007, Paris
  - RIFE Children of the World Festival, July 2007 (Saint Maixent l'Ecole)
  - Rhythms and colours festival, 1-2 July 2007 (Valentigney)
  - 26th Folk Festival, 20-30 June 2007 (Reims)
  - 47th Festival of World Cultures, Saintes July 2006
- French tour April 2006 -
- Paris region: Bois-Colombes (Salle Jean Renoir), Clamart (Centre socioculturel du Pave Blanc), Puteaux (Théâtre des Hauts-de-Seine), Bois-Colombes (Salle Jean Renoir), Paris 19th arr. (Fnasat), Montreuil (Casa),
  - Finistère (29): Commana (29), St Rivoal (29), Landivisiau (29), St Martin des Champs (29), Plougonvelin (29) (Gypsy Night: supporting act for Urs Karpacz), Plozevet (29)
  - World Folk Festival 2005, August 2005 (Plozévet)
  - Les Estivales, August 2005 (Evron)
  - 16th International Folk Festival , August 2005 (Port-sur-Saône)
  - 28th Festival of Song, Dance and Voices and Music of the World, August 2005 (Felletin)
  - 25th Montignac Festival «What a wonderful world», July 2005 (Montignac)
  - Interfolk Festival of Le Puy-en-Velay, July 05 (Le Puy-en-Velay)
  - Festival du plateau - Dance and Music of the World, July 2005 (Perpezac-le-Blanc)
  - 14th Rencontres Théâtrales de Tomblaine / Aux Actes Citoyens festival -May 05 (Nancy)
  - Slovakian culture days -November 2004 (Bosc le Hard)
  - ARTE & TV5, programme broadcast worldwide, October 2004, to celebrate Slovakia's entry into the EU
  - 13th Rencontres Théâtrales de Tomblaine, May 2004 (Nancy)

## Other major festivals and concerts outside France:

- Italy tour - 27 to 29 March 09 - (Udine - Venice - Vicenza, ITALY)
- Uvolnete se, prosim, Jan Kraus, CT1, Divadlo Ponec, 14, 15 May 09 (Prague, CZ)
- Majove reje na Dobezce, Divadlo na Dobezce, 25 May 09 (Prague, CZ)
- Festival in the Performers House - 16 to 24 May - (Silkeborg, DK)
- Concert in the French Institute in Vienna - 4 May 09 (Vienna, AU)
- **SZIGET Festival** - Gypsy stage, 13 August 08 (Budapest, HU)
- Rom Festival, Sukar dzives, 30 June and 1 July (Hradec Kralové, CZ)
- International Festival of Young Roms - Ferypfest, August 2007 (Macedonia)
- Sticna Festival, 30 Nov. 2007 (Sticna, SL)
- Took part in the Master Class given by Ida Kellarová, July 2007 (Svojanov, CZ)
- Vysehrani Festival, 19 June 2007 (Prague, CZ)
- Sokolow European Festival, June 2007 «Guest of honour» (Sokotow, PL)
- The Prague Spring with the fairy Kesaj, March 2007 (Prague, CZ)
- **World Rom Festival, Khamoro**, May 2006 (Prague, CZ)
- 11th Nemzetkozi Validor Cigany Tanc Festival (11th international travelling festival of Rom dance) October 2005, (Rendozo, Hungary)



## Festivals et Concerts majeurs en SLOVAQUIE :

- Dobry Festival, Delna, 27.6.2009, (Presov, SK)
- Inter-slum festival AKANA ME IV (Kubachy - 6.5.2009) -(Velka Lomnica 5.5.2009)
- Slovakian TV - Finalist on the programme «Incredible Slovakian Talent» - 30 Nov. 2008 - TV Markiza (Bratislava, SK)
- Gypsy Dance Festival, 26 Sept. 08 (Starà L'ubonvna, SK)
- Rom Festival at Spis castle, 6 Sept. 08 (SPIS, SK)
- Festival of minority cultures, 29 August 08 (Kosice, SK)
- Day of Jewish Culture, 26 August 08 (Giraltovce, SK)
- Festival of minority cultures, 14 August 08 (Bratislava, SK)
- Jánosikové dni festival, 2 August 08 (Terchovà, SK)
- Concert in Zakovce, 26 July 08 (Zakovce, SK)
- ELRO Festival, 11 to 13 July 08 (Kezmarok, SK)
- Live concert for national TV, 4 July 08- (Nitra, SK)
- Goral Festival , 15 June 2008 (Cerveny Klàstor, SK)
- Inter-slum festival AKANA ME III - 5 to 7 June 2008 (Rakusy, SK)
- Live concert for national TV, 1 June 2008- (Bratislava, SK)
- Concert - Sculptor A. Rodgers - CNN - Discovery Channel TV, 31 May 2008 - (SPIS, SK)
- Concert at the castle of Kezmarok, 19 April 2008 - (Kezmarok, SK)
- ARTE, Documentary, Oct 07, Concert tour (Rom slums of Kezmarok, SK)
- Festival of ethnic minorities, Sept. 2007 (Zilina, SK)
- Inter-slum festival AKANA ME II 2007, May 2007 (Rom slums of Kezmarok, SK)
- Gala for the India Ambassador Mr. Kùpele Sliac Lokesh, June 2006.(Kezmarok, SK)
- 13th Spis Festival of Rom Culture, Tatravagònka 2004 (Poprad, SK)





## Ivan Akimov : biography

Ivan Akimov was born in Czechoslovakia in 1955. The Prague Spring brought him to Paris in 1968, and in 1972, he began to play in mythical venues of the French capital, such as RASPOUTINE, SHEHERAZADE, TSAREVITCH, CABARET DE LA TOUR EIFFEL, etc. This was the time during which he would meet famous artists such as Aliocha Dimitrievitch and Paul Toscano.

From concerts to galas, his career took him all over Europe. For two seasons, he was the soloist at the Chatelet Theatre in Paris in a Francis Lopez operetta called “Volga”. With this orchestra, he participated in many different programmes on French television, usually accompanied by Yehuddi Menuhin. During this time, he also took part in several recordings with artists such Mireille Mathieu, Dalida, Gilbert Becauld, etc.

In an effort to reconnect with his roots, he was the soloist at the Ukrainian National Theatre in Prešov, Czechoslovakia, from 1985 to 1990. In 1988 Ivan Akimov was the guest of honour of the Soviet Union’s Ministry of Culture.

In 1991, he was the laureate of the Struny Rossii festival and worked in conjunction with the young Romathan Gypsy Theatre of Košice, bringing his 52 artists to Paris in 1994. From 1990 to 2006, he performed with his ensemble in the Russian Cabaret of Paris – Douchka.

His artistic activities are extremely varied, and range from taking part in the fashion show organised by Japanese designer Yoshi Yamamoto in 1999 in Bercy to performing in the Lausanne Opera House in an opera called “The Nose” written by Dmitri Shostakovich, directed by Armin Jordan.

But what truly inspires him is a group of young Rom street children, in whom he seeks to inspire hope by creating the gypsy singing and dancing ensemble “Kesaj Tchavé” in Eastern Slovakia. .

### **KESAJ TCHAVE: extracts from articles that have appeared in the press**

*Whoever has seen **Késaj Tchavé**, a group of girls and boys who sing and dance under the baton of Ivan Akimov, will never forget them! The beauty of their performance is breathtaking. The show leaves you spellbound from the very start through to the end, and you’ll even stay under the spell of these performers when you leave. Through the voices of these children, we can feel the unspoken spirit of a world that cannot be allowed to die...*

Le Dauphiné Libéré, 21. 08. 2008

*Let your inner gypsy take over! Glorious spontaneity, Gypsy soul and simple and incredible joie de vivre can be found in all of their songs. Spend just two minutes in their company and your throat will close up and your heart will cry out, filled with intense emotion which is taking hold of you.*

Ouest-France, 24. 08. 2005

*The 25th annual Festival of World Dance and Music of Montignac came to a close last night. One of the most memorable moments was certainly the Saturday night show performed by the Slovakian ensemble **Kesaj Tchavé**, which is made up of about twenty Gypsy children and adolescents, all of whom are street children. A pure and simple moment of joy.*

Sud-Ouest, 1. 08. 2005

*The Slovakian group **Kesaj Tchavé** is proof that street children can become veritable animals on stage. A huge wave of Rom energy can be felt, constantly switching between sadness and jubilation and washing over the audience, which was soon won over by the group’s energy.*

Télégramme de Brest, 22. 08. 2005

*When the members of the public, filled with emotion, applaud the extraordinary performance of the children from Kežmarok, they do not realise that for these children, dancing and singing are a bridge to normal life. All of the members of the ensemble live together in a house, where they learn to live a different kind of life.*

Korzár, 27. avril 2004

## Kesaj children: presented in groups:

### Musicians



### Dancers and choirs



### CONTACT

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