



Green	Blue
Purple	Red
<b>TURKMENISTAN</b>	Orange
Light Blue	Dark Blue
0777 7 87847 2 2	Light Blue
CDRW 34	Orange



Alain SWIETLIK  
4 Juin 93 - Éd. -

This label has been established by Real World and WOMAD to release a wide-ranging catalogue of music from the traditional to the very modern from all corners of the world. We have worked hard to build a special place for performance. Whatever the music, whatever the technology, great records come from great performances. I hope you get as much enjoyment from these records as we have had in making them.

Peter Gabriel

AFRICA	
NORTH AMERICA	
SOUTH AMERICA	
ASIA 1	
ASIA 2	
OCEANIA	
CARIBBEAN	
EUROPE	
INDIAN SUBCONTINENT	

A WOMAD PRODUCTION FOR REALWORLD

**ASHKHABAD**  
CITY OF LOVE

1. **AYRYLSA**  
(Traditional) Text by Makhtumkuli. Arranged by A Tsharykuliev 5:00
2. **AGLAR MEN**  
Written by Makhtumkuli. Composed & arranged by A Tsharykuliev 4:59
3. **BAYATY (Instrumental)**  
Composed by E Mansurov. Arranged by G Mamedov and S Rizaev 5:56
4. **BALAM SENI**  
(Traditional) Arranged by Ashkhabad 5:09
5. **SHALAKHO (Instrumental)**  
(Traditional) Arranged by G Mamedov 2:38
6. **YAMAN YKBAL**  
Written, composed and arranged by A Tsharykuliev 5:53
7. **BIBINING**  
(Traditional) Arranged by Ashkhabad 4:28
8. **AISHA (Instrumental)**  
Composed & arranged by G Mamedov 7:10
9. **KAKAN GYZ**  
Written by N Bairamov. Composed by O Tekayev. Arranged by A Tsharykuliev 3:47
10. **KETSHPELEK**  
(Traditional Text) Composed by N Khalmamedov. Arranged by Tsharykuliev and Rizaev 8:35
11. **GARAGUM KESHDELERI (Instrumental)**  
Composed & arranged by K Allamuradov 2:40

**Musicians**

**Atabai Tsharykuliev** vocal, tar; **Gassan Mamedov** violin; **Sabir Rizaev** clarinet, soprano sax, serp, nagara; **Kurban Kurbanov** accordion, piano; **Khakberdy Allamuradov** dep, serp, nagara

**Guest musicians**

**Elektra Strings** - **Sonia Slany** violin; **Jocelyn Pook** viola and **Caroline Lavelle** cello on *Ketshpelek, Part I* and *Bayaty*

**David Defries** flugelhorn on *Ketshpelek, Part II*

**Bernd von Ostrowski** acoustic bass on *Bayaty*

**LYRICS**

**AYRYLSA** (Separation)

"I'm far from home, travelling the world. Every country has its own beauty but my heart longs for the black stones and sweet people of Turkmenistan."

**AGLAR MEN** (I'm Crying)

"I'm crying because of my people's troubled fate, because our land is parched and nothing grows anymore. I cry and wonder how I can transform my country into a flowering, blossoming place."

**BAYATY** (Instrumental)

Composed by Eldar Mansurov. Arranged by Gassan and Sabir with accompaniment from acoustic bass player Bernd von Ostrowski and Elektra Strings.

**BALAM SENI** (My Child)

"I love you my child and always see you by my side, even though you're not there. I yearn for you."

**SHALAKHO** (Instrumental)

A breathtaking traditional tune with a 32 bar drum solo.

**YAMAN YKBAL** (Sad Fate)

"I once loved a girl with wonderful hair, teeth like pearls and beautiful eyes. I met her years later; her beauty had gone, her face was lined with sorrow."

**BIBINING** (Bibining)

"I dream that I'm always with my beautiful Bibi. I'll never get enough of her kisses. I'm going to take pen and paper and write a novel about her."

**AISHA** (Instrumental)

*Aisha* features the soulful violin playing of Gassan.

**KAKAN GYZ** (Dancing Girl)

"She stepped into the forest glade - I've never seen anything so beautiful and her nightingale voice drove me out of my mind. With my poetry, I celebrate your beauty in song, dancing girl."

**KETSHPELEK** (Bitter Fate)

The story of a musician who can't marry Maral, the girl he loves, because her parents have decided she has to marry a rich man. The musician is invited to play at the wedding and he elopes with his loved one. Her family runs after them and kills the girl. Maral's lover sits beside her body and sings this song.

**GARAGUM KESHDELERI** (Instrumental)

A solo piece featuring Khakberdy on congas and traditional Turkmenian drums. The piece is named after the Kara Kum Desert, but some of the rhythms have travelled great distances from other parts of the world.



Ashkhabad

Ashkhabad is the capital of Turkmenistan and its cultural heart. The city's finest musicians have come together and called themselves ASHKHABAD, a word which derives from the Persian language and means CITY OF LOVE.

The Orient has always been a cultural melting pot and so is the music of ASHKHABAD. Atabai, Gassan, Sabir, Kurban and Khakberdy play an exciting mixture of traditional Turkmenian music infused with elements from Persia, Azerbeidjan and Turkey. They have been influenced by everything they've ever heard: from the sounds of the desert to jazz and rock.

When John Leckie - best known as producer of guitar rock bands - first heard ASHKHABAD, he was struck by their musical mastery and by the heartfelt beauty of their music. He knew instantly he had to go into a studio with them.

The result is a completely acoustic recording - truly unplugged. It captures the intensity of feeling and the romanticism of ASHKHABAD's music.

#### **ATABAI**

(vocal, tar, dutar), born in Ashkhabad 1958

As a child Atabai took care of his father's sheep. With this solitary existence he had lots of time to pick up various instruments, but singing inspired him above all. A few years later he discovered that he had a love for hard rock, as well as traditional Turkmenian music: "Hard rock singers scream just like our Turkmenian singers."

His apprenticeship began when he started playing at weddings and he later joined Turkmenistan's national philharmonic orchestra. This was less fun and paid less money so he went back to the kolkhoz (collective farm) and traditional music. Secretly he would tape his favourite wedding singers with a mike hidden up his sleeve.

At the end of the Seventies the state launched a campaign against traditional wedding music; it was considered "too Islamic and too religious". Atabai was banned from working. The media were no longer allowed to cover his activities and those who tried to help him were fired. Many established musicians were afraid to play with him. At the peak of this campaign Atabai was locked in a mental institution for six weeks.

Since 1985 Atabai has been allowed officially to work again. Today he is the most popular and most proficient singer in Turkmenistan; for him it's a joy to serve as guardian of the Turkmenian cultural tradition.

#### **GASSAN**

(violin), born in Ashkhabad 1956

Gassan's father was a farm hand who loved music. When Gassan was six his father asked him what instrument he would like to learn. There was some classical music on the TV at that moment and Gassan pointed to one of the violinists on the screen. His father bought him a violin and threatened to throw him out of the house if he didn't practise. The young Gassan was only interested in football, but he was scared of his father....

At the age of nineteen he began playing the accordion at weddings. For him the violin was reserved for European classical music but his love for the instrument eventually won, and four years later he sold his accordion. Today he plays everything from classical music to folk, jazz, rock and pop. His idols are Jasha Heifetz and Jean-Luc Ponty.

Gassan, who is of Azerbeidjani descent brings Azerbeidjani, Turkish and Persian influences to the music of Ashkhabad.

#### **SABIR**

(clarinet, soprano sax, percussion), born in Mary 1958

Sabir's father, a teacher, is an amateur tar player and helped his son to develop his own musical talents. At a very early age Sabir learnt to play the piano and went on to study percussion, clarinet and saxophone. He played in the opera orchestra, for the radio big band and organized jazz-festivals and concerts in Ashkhabad. In the seventies he was a popular player with a number of jazz-rock groups.

Today he is Head of the Department of Popular Music at Ashkhabad University and works as a composer. Sometimes he joins his friends and plays at weddings.

Sabir has written the music for a number of films and is preparing the first publication of his chamber music compositions which are strongly influenced by oriental music.

He names Prokofiev, Stravinsky, Ravel, Charlie Parker and Michael Brecker among his greatest influences but for him Turkmenian music is the source of his inspiration.

**KHAKBERDY**

(dep, sarp, nagara), born in Kirov, 1958

Khakberdy's father worked in the cotton industry, his elder brothers played tar and accordion. At kindergarten he wasn't content just to sing along with the other children; he had seen men playing the dep (a drum similar to the tambourine) on TV and at weddings and he knew already what he wanted to do in life.

As a boy, Khakberdy played along with Persian melodies on the radio and when he was thirteen he started to play drums at weddings, learning the traditional Turkmenian repertoire. He went on to study percussion at university and played with many local groups.

The virtuosity, energy and creativity of his playing are extraordinary. Khakberdy works in many different musical spheres. At the moment he is studying Indian and Latin-American percussion and rhythms and he would like to link up with drummers from all over the world.

**KURBAN**

(accordion, piano), born in Ashkhabad 1961

Kurban comes from an academic background; his parents didn't want their son to go into folk music. He had to go to weddings in secret to listen to the best traditional accordion players.

Today Kurban doesn't enjoy weddings very much because the musicians are often treated badly: "If we go to a wedding we feel like soldiers going to the front." He does think, however, that weddings are vital to his fitness; after a weekend of playing accordion for twenty hours or more your fingers certainly move more easily ....

With the release of their first album as a group, Kurban is happy that many people will have the chance to hear Turkmenian music for the first time.



Gassan



Khakberdy



Atabai



Sabir



Kurban

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ASHKHABAD - CITY OF LOVE

FARAFINA - FASO DENOUE

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A WOMAD PRODUCTION FOR REALWORLD

# ASHKHABAD: CITY OF LOVE

Orient vocals • romanticism violin • virtuosity clarinet • harmony accordion • passion drums  
unplugged

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MEDIATHEQUE MOB



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REALWORLD



1. AYRYLSA
2. AGLAR MEN
3. BAYATY
4. BALAM SENI
5. SHALAKHO
6. YAMAN YKBAL
7. BIBINING
8. AISHA
9. KAKAN GYZ
10. KETSHPELEK
11. GARAGUM KESHDELERI



TURKMENISTAN

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