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<< OBI at-a-glance >>

Orkestar Bez Ime (OBI), Bulgarian for "orchestra without a name," met in the Ethnic Dance Theatre around the turn of the millennium and has since grown to be one of the Midwest's most sought-after international dance bands. Specializing mainly in Balkan music, OBI also presents a broad range of international folk dance interests from Scandinavia to Israel to French Canada and beyond. Using a mix of folk and modern instruments—including accordion, bass, brač, clarinet, dumbek, flute, frula, guitar, kaval, tambura, violin and voice—OBI stays close to traditional Eastern Europe through its American melting-pot sensibility.

Orkestar Bez Ime is:

Dee Langley (accordion) has played the accordion since age four squeezing her way classically through the Minnesota Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra and a number of community orchestras to play for the Dolina Folk Dancers (1989-1996) and Ethnic Dance Theatre (since 1998). Concert tours of Poland, France and the Czech Republic, are a few of the highlights of her tenures with these companies. Dee has participated in seminars and symposiums on accordion styles and techniques in Chatel, France and Klingenthal, East Germany and most recently acquired a penchant for Bulgarian music.

Tim Wahl (kaval, tambura, guitar, frula and kitchen sink), a founding member of the Ethnic Dance Theatre in 1974, also performed with the Hej Bechari Tamburitza Orchestra and Tessara, a 5-piece ethnic folk band in the early 1990's. A true junk musician, Tim has performed on an additional 16 instruments, from accordion to zurla. Keeping a keen eye peeled for ethnic instruments and source music material, Tim has traveled to Yugoslavia, Greece, and Bulgaria to study folk culture.

Natalie Nowytski (vocals and percussion) honed her vocal skills at her grandmother's knee and climbed her way onto the lap of Mila Vocal Ensemble, which she directed for five years. She has since learned to hold a note for 38 seconds and has traveled to Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France and Ukraine to study culture and folk music from professional vocalists and villagers alike. She has also performed as a percussionist since 2000 and is periodically seen humbly sharing the stage with local legends Peter Ostroushko and Ruth MacKenzie.

Katrina Mundinger (clarinet), a classically trained clarinetist since 1979, discovered Balkan folk music in the fall of 1994 and has been hooked ever since. Her Balkan music instructors include Ivo Papazov, Ivan Milev, and James Stoyanoff, and her classical clarinet instructors include Robert Marcellus, Clark Brody, and Lawrence McDonald. She teaches clarinet and flute locally, and has been known to folkdance occasionally.

A native of North Dakota, **Colleen Bertsch** (violin) traveled quite a distance to find her love of European folk music. From age nine, Colleen strolled her way through banquet tables, served as concertmistress, gave recitals, and soloed with orchestras. In 2000, she answered a panicked call from the Ethnic Dance Theatre for violinists and a new appreciation for international folk dance music followed. Since then, Colleen has traveled to Mexico, France, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Serbia in search and study of ethnic music.

Orkestar Bez Ime Discography:

- *Nice Driveway, Volume 3: Rogarian Baba-que* (2007)
- *Nice Driveway, Volume 2: Lake Aquanyet Days* (2006)
- *Nice Driveway, Volume 1: Cheers from the Land of the Freeze* (2005)
- *Iz Tamne Noci (From a Dark Night)*, with Mila Vocal Ensemble (2004)