

## WARSAW VILLAGE BAND

In 2004, they were presented with the BBC WORLD MUSIC AWARD. In 2006 they won the Polish Grammy "Frederik Award". Following a one-year 'maternity/paternity' leave break they returned with two new albums and a series of concerts worldwide. The first CD to be released was the remix CD "Upmixing". In response to countless requests from the world's DJs, this CD was produced with the consent of the musicians. The band's only condition was that it should be a Reggae remix album on the basis of their last studio CD "Uprooting". This CD climbed to 8th place in the European charts and 1st place in the German world-music charts. The new studio album "Infinity" followed in November 2008 to high critical acclaim.

### brief history of the band

WVB (Warsaw Village Band) made their first major performance in 1999 at the Sopot Festival on a stage it shared with world stars. JARO producer Ulrich Bals, who was represented at the festival with several artists, discovered this young band with the fourteen-year-old Maja Kleszcz on the cello. It was not until the spring of 2003, however, that the second CD "People's Spring" was released by JARO. That's when the ensemble began to conquer the world – concerts in places as far-flung as Alaska, Japan, Taiwan, Portugal, Moscow and Paris reaped exuberant reviews. Meanwhile they're a symbol of young, intelligent Eastern European music which combines traditions with modern elements and is capable of eliciting enthusiastic responses from rock audiences and traditionalists



alike. In London they were even referred to, among other things, as the Polish Pogues. Their music has established itself in Europe and the world. These distinctions were followed by composition commissions for video games and movie sound tracks, theatre productions and concerts all over the world. The BBC honoured the band with a sixty-minute portrait documentary which has since been broadcast in several European countries. Their CDs were licensed in America and Japan, and the WARSAW VILLAGE BAND has become one of most successful Eastern European ensembles outside the mainstream. The band's creative minds are Maja Kleszcz – vocals and cello, the sextet's front woman, and Wojtek Krzak – violin and zuka. The two formed the production team INCARNATIONS which was responsible for their new CD "Infinity".

### band members

#### SYLWIA SWIATKOWSKA

Sylwia was born in Warsaw in 1974. After finishing her violin studies at high school and musicology classes she started working with several Polish folk groups and eventually joined WVB in 2000. She is one of the best violinists of the Polish scene. In 2002, she was awarded the "Golden Violin" during the New Tradition Festival in Warsaw. Her way of playing shows how much she has been inspired by jazz music. She also plays the old Polish fiddle, a unique instrument similar to the Indian Sarangi. Now the sound of her violin is a characteristic trace of the WVB sound.

#### MAJA KLESZCZ

Maja Kleszcz is the daughter of a well-known family, born in Warsaw in 1985. Her father Wlodzimierz Kleszcz is a Polish music journalist, also known as the producer of Twinkle Brothers & Trebunie Tutki albums who dedicated themselves to world music. Maja is a real expert of Reggae and African music. She started playing with the

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WARSAW VILLAGE BAND when she was 14 years old and is the youngest member. Her beautiful voice and the powerful way she plays her cello made her a shooting star of the Polish roots music scene and even outside the country she could establish a good reputation. In spite of her youth, she already managed to make a compromise between the "white voice" and classical singing, creating her own style. From time to time she also works as a presenter and co-author for the Polish Radio. She is the founder of the "Incarnations" project as well, working with Senegalese and Mauritanian artists, known for their work with artists like Baaba Maal and Ali Farka Toure (Wojtek Krzak was also involved in this project). [www.incarnations.pl](http://www.incarnations.pl).

### MACIEJ SZAJKOWSKI

Maciej Szajkowski on frame drums and percussions was born in Warsaw in 1975. He is the founder of the WVB and a graduate of Warsaw University, carrying a degree in Political Sciences and Journalism. At the beginning of his musical career he played in several independent, punk rock and hard core bands, (incl. Antidotum as well as the folk band Yuva Shakti, Wianki Samagri). Furthermore he worked as a journalist and co-worker for publications such as "Sztandar", "Antena Krzyku", "Nowa Wies", "Machina", "Gadki z chatki", "Puls Swiata" and for the following radio stations - Polskie Radio, Jazz Radio, Las Vegas. Maciej also was the author of the "Muzykanty" - series, presenting profiles of traditional Polish musicians and folk bands. Since 2000 he regularly organises the „Muzyka w Muzeum” concert series, taking place at the Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw – [www.muzykawmuzeum.serpent.pl](http://www.muzykawmuzeum.serpent.pl). In addition to that he inherits the position of an Ethnic music populariser - in Europe as well as in Asia and is a member of the Masala soundsystem and co-creator of the electro-ethnic Village kollektive.

### PIOTR GLINSKI

Piotr was born in Warsaw in 1972. He is the band's best educated member: he finished the percussion class at the Frederic Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw and has been a music teacher for primary and secondary school. Piotr played with philharmonic and chamber orchestras as a soloist (he used to play his wife's compositions on marimba). After he had left the academy, he started his roots music career. For a few years, he has been a member of "Zespól Polski", a legendary Polish folk group. With them, he toured through countries like Japan, Germany, France and many more. As a part of the Warsaw Village Band his drum performance is an essential part of the mix, amongst other basic musical features it forms the band's musical heartbeat.

### WOJCIECH KRZAK

Wojciech is an anthropologist, ethnologist and journalist. He was born in



1980 in Kozienice, a small town in the Mazovia area. One day he was lucky enough to meet the traditional violin master Kazimierz Zdrzalik. He has been so deeply impressed by him that he committed himself to learn playing the violin the old Polish way. Today, he is one of the youngest musicians in Poland who commands this style. Wojciech became a member of the Warsaw Village Band when he moved to Warsaw to study there. It is because of the characteristic style with which he plays his violin that makes him a very important part of the WVB sound. Besides being a musician, he works as a press journalist - as the head director of the World Music section "Free Colours" - the biggest roots, reggae, world magazine in Poland. Together with Maja Kleszcz he started the "Incarnations" project, working as radio dj's (World Music shows) for the Polish radio. Their biggest success was Charlie Gillett's compilation "World 2006" where you can find their project among stars like the Kronos Quartet and Amadou & Mariam.

Older people still playing traditional Polish instruments served as the major inspiration for the musicians. It was with the help of those people that most of the band members learned to play the old instruments auto-didactically. "We travelled from village to village, seeking out the old people; we listened to their music and their stories. What surprised us most was that no one else in the villages is interested in this music anymore. These are old people, and when they die, the music will die with them.' All credit is due to these old people: they are the reason why the members of the WVB are able to play their instruments the traditional way".

The most interesting instrument in the collection of the WARSAW VILLAGE BAND is the Suka, played by Sylwia: its an old Polish kind of violin, having its origins in the sixteenth century. Its strings are played with the fingernails. The other two women in the band play the zither and the cello, two of the men play drums, and one of them the violin and hurdy-gurdy.

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# biography



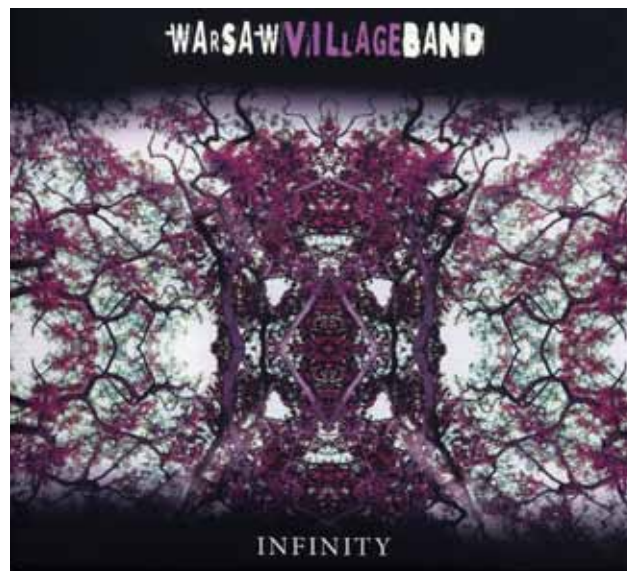
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### Press Quotes

**"One of the promising New Folk Bands from Eastern Europe. WVB perform folk music combined with medieval music and a pinch of 'Apocalyptica'.**  
(Nordwestzeitung, Germany, July 2003)

**"The Warsaw Village Band have already run off with a Best Newcomer trophy from the BBC's Awards for World Music 2004. The rebellious Polish six-piece describe their house style as 'hardcore folk', and the signature sound is indeed formed by uncompromising traditionalism, updated with a guttural punk rock aesthetic".**  
(BBC Radio 3, UK)

**"The success of the WARSAW VILLAGE BAND stems from its musicians' great love for their national musical heritage and their will to preserve the old musical traditions. For these musicians, however, preservation does not mean restoration but as we have experienced with 'The Pogues' or 'Les Negresses Vertes', for example reanimation, i. e. the transportation of the old songs' spirit into the here and now. Polka gets a shot of Techno, and despite the acoustic instrumentalisation, the band conjures up sounds that have electronic impact."**  
(Rheinische Post/Germany, Jan. 2004)



### Weblinks

More Info at the WARSAW VILLAGE BAND can be found at the following links:

[www.warsawvillageband.net](http://www.warsawvillageband.net)

[www.myspace.com/warsawvillageband](http://www.myspace.com/warsawvillageband)

[www.jaro.de](http://www.jaro.de)

[www.frusion.co.uk](http://www.frusion.co.uk)

[www.incarnations.pl](http://www.incarnations.pl)

[www.muzykawmuzeum.serpent.pl](http://www.muzykawmuzeum.serpent.pl)

### Discography

Hopsasa (1998) - JARO 4265-2

People's Spring (2002) - JARO 4247-2

Uprooting (2004) - JARO 4261-2

Upmixing (remix CD 2008) - JARO 4286-2

Infinity (2008) - JARO 4289-2



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