



A JEWISH CULTURAL  
REVIVAL BAND



## THE BAND

MOSTLY KOSHER is an award-winning Jewish cultural revival band based in Southern California. As featured by World Music Network, MK repeatedly wins audiences with their upbeat klezmer, plaintive Yiddish melodies, and other Jewish heritage folk genres spun with a modern twist. Their mission is to preserve Jewish musical traditions as well as progressing these genres by fusing them with the sounds of other cultures as well as the contemporary music. Directed by the multi-talented clarinetist, pianist and singer, Leeav Sofer, Mostly Kosher is already making a name in the Jewish music world. Leeav is joined by Janice "Rachele the Matchmaker" Mautner Markham on violin and shtick, as well as Casey Solow, Mike King, Will Brahm, Adam Levy, Eric Hagstrom, and Michael Bolger.

From their standing-room-only show at the Orange County Yiddish Festival to their exuberant performances at the Skirball Cultural Center, John Anson Ford Theater and Gene Autry Museum, **Mostly Kosher** band members are honored to grace some of the best stages southern California has to offer! MK is also proud to have joined forces with Craig Taubman and Pico Union Project for the recent "Shabbat at the Ford" and the CD release concert. They are 2014 winners of World Music Network's Battle of the Bands and you'll even see them in the upcoming Idyllwild International Festival of Cinema for their independent award-winning music video, as voted by World Music Network, Ikh Hob Dikh Tsufil Lib (I Love You Much Too Much).

Just what is this **Mostly Kosher** experience? Well, after you finish dancing until your feet are sore, and after you wipe your eyes dry from nostalgic renditions of Yiddish lullabies, Jewish Mama, "Rachele the Matchmaker" will already be wagging her finger at you. "The story and joke-telling tradition is so strong in our families, and in the Jewish tradition - that's what we're drawing from," says founding member, Markham.

Band leader Leeav Sofer has expanded his musical and artistic life with **Mostly Kosher** from clarinetist, vocalist, pianist and actor, to that of composer and arranger. "Besides the traditional melodies we perform, we also play various styles and genres from all around the world. It's very exciting to take the Klezmer and Yiddish Theater tunes and give them a unique feel from Latin Jazz to Afro-Cuban and even add a Hip-Hop rhythm. We often include South American Ladino music in our program, as well as Yiddish tangos with a French flare. The music of our Jewish roots thrived during such a critical time in Europe and America, and I want to help it continue into the future and bring this music to the next generation."

# THE GANG



**Leeav Sofer** is an Israeli-American singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, composer/arranger, and teaching artist with a performance degree in clarinet and voice from the Bob Cole Conservatory of California State University of Long Beach. He has performed at venues such as the Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Ford Amphitheater as well as singing backups at the Staples Center with the Rolling Stones for their 2013 tour. He currently is on faculty at The Colburn School of Music in Los Angeles teaching classes, directing choirs and community engagement programs. Under the auspice of Colburn, Leeav initiated music programs to culturally elevate the surrounding communities. These programs include a choral ensemble made up of students from underserved high schools and a choir with homeless men and women drawn from the community within Skid Row, Los Angeles. These programs have recently found Leeav recognition on the front page of the Los Angeles Times as well as on NPR's All Things Considered. In addition to co-founding Los Angeles's only current Jewish Youth Orchestra, he continues to find new ways to bring music and music education into the greater Los Angeles area.

**Janice Mautner Markham** is a Los Angeles based musician, actor, writer, educator and activist. She is a founding member of Mostly Kosher, and besides playing violin and helping choose repertoire, Janice brings the Yiddish Theater flavor to the group, having performed off-Broadway and in regional theater productions. She plays violin in the contemporary World Music trio Triumph of the Egg, a group that was artist-in-residence at the Los Angeles Craft and Folk Art Museum from 2005-2010. To quote former director of CAFAM, Maryna Hrushetska: "Triumph of the Egg is a musical gem rooted in cultural tradition while inspiring us all to dream a bit brighter."



Janice's favorite performance venues of Southern California have included the West Hollywood House of Blues, the John Anson Ford Amphitheatre, and the Skirball Cultural Center. She grew up performing with her sisters and her father, Raymond Mautner, an accomplished classical and "piano bar" pianist, who introduced Janice to the immense joy of Cole Porter and Irving Berlin. She credits much of her musical passion to the Hungarian czardas music she heard and then played growing up - the gypsy and Jewish music is at the root of her musical expression. As an arts educator, Janice is artistic director of Vox Box Arts Collective and co-directs the Jewish Youth Orchestra (JYO) with MK bandleader, Leeav Sofer. She lives in Eagle Rock, California, with her husband, Gideon, and two daughters Raina & Czeska. [www.janicemarkham.com](http://www.janicemarkham.com)



**Will Brahm**, born and raised in Portland Oregon moved to Los Angeles after high school to pursue music at California State University Long Beach, where he graduated with a Bachelors degree in jazz guitar performance in 2012. During his time in school he was a five-time Kjazz scholarship recipient and played in the Award winning Concert Jazz Orchestra all five years as well. He has been an active musician in the Los Angeles area for the past seven years. Surrounding himself with a wide variety of music including Jazz, pop, classical and Latin, he is able to function in many different styles of music and he loves them all. He has two albums out under his own Trio ("Will Brahm Trio"), and he also runs a duo guitar project ("Tea for Two"). He plays with a number of different artists including Kim Richmond's jazz orchestra, Bijon Watson's Latin jazz syndicate, singer/song-writer Rob Gonzalez,

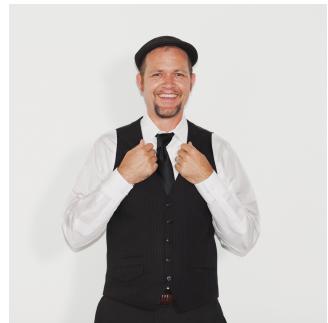
and jazz vocalist Anna Mojil. Will is a founding member of Mostly Kosher, and is always eager to have a guitar in his hands.

**Adam Levy** grew up in a musical family in Florida. After studying jazz performance in college, he moved to New York City to pursue a career playing bass. Finding the jazz scene less than lucrative, Adam diversified. It didn't take long to realize the city's infinite musical culture was to be his graduate program. Accompanying a wide variety of acts nurtured Adam's ability to communicate musically. As his palette grew, he noted that many aspects of bass playing transcended genre. Armed with this insight, no gig was too far out, or too far in. Always a sideman, Adam now lives in Los Angeles with his wife, Susie. He can be heard backing reggae and salsa acts, children's folk groups, bebop trios, songwriters, and hard rockers, to name a few. Learning new styles is still a thrill. As a member of Mostly Kosher Adam puts to use the entirety of his musical background.



**Michael King** is a professional musician in Los Angeles, having received his Bachelors in Jazz performance at the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State Long Beach. He is currently working on his Masters in Jazz performance at the University of Southern California. He considers himself a Low Brass entertainer, performing all over the world on Trombone, bass trombone, tuba, euphonium, bass trumpet, and vocals. He was in the 2010 Disney All American College Band performing at Disneyland daily. His recordings include artists from around the globe, but he is particularly proud of his bass trombone and tuba playing on the recent Queens of the Stone Age album, "Like Clockwork." Mike's heritage is primarily Russian and German and includes a smattering of other European countries as well. Speaking of the Russian side, Mike's favorite joke is from his grandma: She would say, "You know what a Russian Jew walking into town not holding a instrument is... a piano player".

**Michael Bolger's** musical career can be summed up in one word: diversity. His skills as a multi-instrumentalist on a varied assortment of brass and keyboard instruments are matched by his stylistic diversity, which he is able to take full advantage of in Mostly Kosher! Michael was born and raised in Los Angeles. He fell in love with music at a young age and pursued study at UCLA and Cal Arts, earning a BFA in jazz trumpet in 1997. Since graduating, Michael's career has blossomed to include a long list of accolades and recording credits including Jewel, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Ry Cooder, Jimmy Cliff and the ubiquitous television cartoon Spongebob Squarepants for which he received the 2013 BMI TV Music Award. He can be heard performing trumpet, valve trombone, sousaphone and jazz organ in a wide variety of Los Angeles ensembles. Michael has also served as a teacher at the Silverlake Conservatory of Music since its beginning in 2001. Michael is currently learning, practicing, creating, arranging or composing music.



**Eric Hagstrom** is a professional drummer and teacher in the Los Angeles area. He recently graduated from California State University Long Beach where he received his Bachelor's Degree in Music Performance. In addition to his education at Cal State Long Beach, he has had the honor of studying under the tutelage of the world-renowned drummer Jeff Hamilton since 2012. At Cal State Long Beach he was a member of the



prestigious Concert Jazz Orchestra and Pacific Standard Time – both regularly awarded by Downbeat Magazine. Eric was also featured on Concert Jazz Orchestra's album *High and Mighty*, which received a Downbeat award in 2013. He stays busy performing around Los Angeles and has the honor of sharing the stage with greats such as Kristin Korb, Carl Saunders and Bob McChesney. He joined Mostly Kosher in 2012 and has become involved in arranging and writing for the band. In addition to his work with Mostly Kosher, he has the chance to play a plethora of styles in many situations giving him a broad knowledge of music in the world.

**Casey Solow** is Mostly Kosher's studio vocalist. After growing up in the Ojai Valley in California where she discovered her passion for music, Casey went on to receive her Bachelor's in Vocal Performance from the Bob Cole Conservatory of Music at California State University at Long Beach. She is very grateful for the solo performance opportunities at CSULB, including performances of Mozart's Coronation Mass. A "choir geek" at heart, she has performed with numerous prestigious choral ensembles and conductors. Casey's singing career has taken her all over the world, giving her the opportunity to perform at incredible venues including Walt Disney Concert Hall, Grace Cathedral, the Sistine Chapel, Carnegie Hall, and St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. Over the past several years, she has rediscovered her love of Jewish music through Mostly Kosher. After recently spending a year serving as a Cantorial Soloist in Tel Aviv, Israel, she plans on pursuing a career in Jewish music. Casey currently resides in Los Angeles, teaching voice and serving as the Music Director for Congregation B'nai Israel.



# THE BUZZ

Oy, do people love us!

"The two bands [Mostly Kosher and the Klezmatics] share a love for preserving traditional Yiddish music and cultural traditions — sometimes with the addition of a contemporary spin — and both have enjoyed plenty of critical and audience acclaim. Still, Mostly Kosher and the Klezmatics can, to some extent, be viewed as the new klezmer kid on the block and the genre's lion, respectively."

— Evan Henderson, Los Angeles Jewish Journal Magazine

"I had very little involvement in last night's sold out Invisible Hour at the Pico Union, but it was a highlight event of the year for me. I loved the music, the crowd and the energy - but most of all I loved watching really great people do their thing really well and I love what they were doing. All honor to Mostly Kosher for a superb evening!"

— Craig Taubman, Pico Union Project

"Mostly Kosher shined throughout their concert at BCC, making use of their exquisite musicianship, contagious energy and poignant light-hearted humour -all of which were great ways to introduce the attendees to the sonic and spiritual experience that Klezmer music is about!"

— Cantor Juval Porat, Temple Beth Chayim Chadashim

"Mostly Kosher perfectly complimented our *Jews in LA* exhibit. The traditional music and songs were beautifully executed and performed. The comedy sketches disbursed among the musical performances were hilarious. Through comedy very real and moving moments representing Jewish culture were respectively brought to life."

— Robyn Hetrick, Director of Programs and Public Events, Autry Museum

"Your group's enthusiasm, wit, talent and high energy created a one-of-a-kind experience for our visitors."

— Michael Fritzen, Head of Family Programs, Skirball Cultural Center

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