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Biographies for David Krakauer, Fred Wesley, Socalled

DAVID KRAKAUER

Internationally acclaimed clarinetist DAVID KRAKAUER redefines the notion of a concert artist. Known for his mastery of myriad styles including classical chamber music, Eastern European Jewish klezmer music, and avant-garde improvisation, Krakauer lies way beyond “cross-over”. His best-selling classical and klezmer recordings further define his brilliant tone, virtuosity and imagination.

As one of the foremost musicians of the vital new wave of klezmer, David Krakauer tours the globe with his celebrated *Klezmer Madness!* ensemble. While firmly rooted in traditional klezmer folk tunes, the band “hurls the tradition of klezmer music into the rock era” (Jon Pareles, *The New York Times*). With *Klezmer Madness!*, Krakauer has forged alliances among his genre of world music and jazz, rock, funk and hip-hop. It simultaneously shouts out to those who remember “yesterday’s” klezmer and to the hard dance clubbers and world music enthusiasts of today.

In addition to annual European tours to major international festivals and jazz clubs, Krakauer and his band have performed at the Library of Congress, Stanford Lively Arts, San Francisco Performances, Hancher Auditorium, and Symphony Space in New York. European venues have included the Venice Biennale, Krakow Jewish Culture Festival, BBC Proms, Saalfelden Jazz Festival, La Cigale, WOMEX, New Morning in Paris, and many others.

Krakauer is also in demand worldwide as a guest soloist with the finest ensembles. Recent collaborations have included the Tokyo String Quartet, the Kronos Quartet, the Emerson String Quartet, the Lark Quartet, Eiko and Koma, the Orquesta Sinfonica de Barcelona and the Brooklyn Philharmonic Orchestra. He had an 8 year tenure with the Naumburg Award-winning Aspen Wind Quintet, and has also has enjoyed enduring relationships with Summer festivals including the Marlboro Music Festival, the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival and the Aspen Music Festival.

In the Spring of 2003 Krakauer performed at Carnegie’s Weill Recital Hall as soloist with the Kronos Quartet in a performance of their renowned collaboration on Osvaldo Golijov’s *The Dreams and Prayers of Isaac the Blind*. Mr. Krakauer was invited to perform with his band in the Spring of 2004 for the inaugural season of Carnegie’s new theater, Zankel Hall, in collaboration with renowned jazz pianist Uri Caine. Krakauer performed music written for him by Osvaldo Golijov for the BBC documentary *Holocaust*,

A Music Memorial from Auschwitz, which won the International Emmy in the performance category (2005). He was guest artist on tour in 2006 with the Emerson String Quartet and in 2007/08 with the Orion String Quartet, both projects that will continue to tour.

Krakauer's discography contains some of the most important klezmer recordings of the past decade. His first release on the prestigious French jazz label Label Bleu (harmonia mundi usa), "A New Hot One!" was hailed a masterwork. His CD "The Twelve Tribes", released in Fall '02, was designated album of the year in the jazz category for the Preis der deutschen Schallplattenkritik, the most important and established music award in Germany. "Klezmer, NY" (1988) on John Zorn's Tzadik label - features his visionary suite, "A Klezmer Tribute to Sidney Bechet," written in honor of the 100th birthday of the legendary jazz clarinetist. Also on Tzadik is "Klezmer Madness" - one of the label's best-selling discs. Other CDs include the groundbreaking "Rhythm and Jews" (Piranha/Flying Fish) and "Jews with Horns" (Piranha/Green Linnet) with the Klezmatics; "In the Fiddler's House" with violinist Itzhak Perlman and the Klezmatics; and chamber music recordings on the Musical Heritage and New York Philomusica labels. His CD, "David Krakauer Live in Krakow", was released in 2004 (Label Bleu/harmonia mundi usa), and his new CD, "Bubbemeises: Lies My Gramma Told Me", featuring his collaboration with Jewish hip hop beat architect Socalled, was released in Europe in May 2005 and is due for its U.S. release by Spring of 2006.

Krakauer has had major profiles in The New York Times, The New Yorker, The International Herald Tribune, and Downbeat, Jazz Times, Jazziz and Chamber Music magazines. The performance of Krakauer's *Klezmer Madness!* at Joe's Pub on April 30th 2005 was picked one of the best performances of the year in AllAboutJazz-New York's Best of 2005. David is on the clarinet and chamber music faculties of the Mannes College of Music of the New School University, the Manhattan School of Music and the Bard Conservatory of Music.

FRED WESLEY

As the longtime musical director for soul legend James Brown's renowned backing unit the J.B.'s, trombonist Fred Wesley was the world's most famous sideman, orchestrating the sinuous grooves and contributing the bold, surgically precise solos that defined the language of funk. Born July 4, 1943, in Columbus, GA, Wesley was raised in Mobile, AL. At age three, he studied classical piano under his grandmother, a music teacher, but much preferred the big band music played by his father, Fred Wesley, Sr., who also chaired the music department at Mobile Central High School. Wesley, Jr. remained with the piano until middle school, first adopting the trumpet before moving to the trombone. He made his professional debut at age 12 in a big band led by his school's music teacher, E.B. Coleman, and soon was sitting in with local R&B acts as well. While studying music at Alabama State University, Wesley briefly tenured with the Ike & Tina Turner Revue as well as Hank Ballard & the Midnighters before serving in the U.S. Army, playing with the 55th Army Band and graduating from the Armed Forces School of Music. After returning from military duty in 1967, Wesley formed his own project, the Mastersound, fusing R&B with hard bop. The group splintered within a year, however, and when he received a phone call from J.B.'s trumpeter Waymon Reed, who told him Brown was seeking a new trombonist, Wesley accepted the offer. Brown's infamously dictatorial approach wore greatly on Wesley, and the two men clashed often. After appearing on landmark singles including "Say It Loud (I'm Black and I'm Proud)," "Licking Stick," and "Mother Popcorn," the trombonist even quit the J.B.'s in late 1969, briefly gigging with Sam & the Goodtimers before returning to Brown's camp in early 1971 and assuming the role of musical director and arranger. Wesley's contributions to classic funk outings including *Black Caesar*, *Slaughter's Big Rip-Off*, and *The Payback* cannot be overstated: alongside bandmates including Maceo Parker and Bootsy Collins, he spearheaded Brown's groundbreaking transformation from soul to funk, establishing the template for the R&B of a new decade. "I completed [Brown's] creations, I followed his blueprints," Wesley later said. "He would give me horn things to write, but sometimes maybe it would be incoherent musically and I would have to straighten it out, so to speak. When it came out of my brain, it would be a lot of James Brown's ideas and my organization." Wesley even wrote a handful of Brown hits including "Doin' It to Death" and "Papa Don't Take No Mess," and headlined several J.B.'s records including the classic *Damn Right I Am Somebody* and *Breakin' Bread*. But creative and financial differences again forced him to part ways with Brown in 1975, this time for good. Wesley signed on with George Clinton's Parliament-Funkadelic in time for their seminal *Mothership Connection* LP. And unlike Brown, Clinton encouraged his collaborators to pursue their own projects, even co-writing most of the songs comprising the trombonist's 1977 official solo debut, *A Blow for Me, A Toot for You*, credited to Fred Wesley & the Horny Horns. After a second solo disc, 1979's *Say Blow by Blow Backwards*, Wesley exited the P-Funk sphere to return to his first love: jazz. He joined the Count Basie Orchestra, and also moonlighted as a producer, helming the self-titled debut LP by R&B group Kameleon. After settling in Hollywood in 1981, Wesley assumed the role of hired gun, playing on studio sessions headlined by Earth, Wind & Fire, Barry White, and the Gap Band, and also arranged records by Curtis Mayfield and Terry Callier. He reignited his solo career with 1990's jazz date *New Friends*, and continued recording straight-ahead jazz LPs throughout the decade to follow. As his unmistakable syncopated style became a crucial component of hip-hop via endless sampling of his

vintage James Brown sides, Wesley also toured with fellow Brown alums Maceo Parker and Pee Wee Ellis as the JB Horns before forming his own Fred Wesley Group in 1996. In 2002 he published his memoirs, *Hit Me, Fred: Recollections of a Sideman*. He concurrently served as an adjunct professor of jazz studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Written by Jason Ankeny, *All Music Guide*.

SOCALLED

Socalled is a musician, photographer, magician and writer based in Montreal. He was born Josh Dolgin in Ottawa, Ontario and raised just north, in Chelsea, Quebec. As a kid he was always in musicals and drew cartoons for the Ottawa Citizen. He hated soccer. He was bribed by his mother to continue piano lessons until high school, then he picked up the accordion. He wrote for the newspaper and played in any kind of band – salsa, gospel, rock, funk – then discovered MIDI and hip hop. He worked with rappers, he made madd beats, he got into studios. He graduated from McGill and made a 50 minute animated film for the Canada Council, meanwhile writing for Hour Magazine and performing. He has now appeared on a dozen recordings as pianist, singer, arranger, rapper, writer and producer. He rocks the machine with David Krakauer's Klezmer Madness!, sings with Toronto-based Beyond the Pale, performs with home-base band Shtreiml in Montreal, with LA-based the Aleph Project. He conducts the Addath Israel choir for High Holidays. Socalled performs and records widely with a crew of mixed-up freaks and geniuses from around the world, including Killah Priest, Susan Hoffman-Watts, Frank London, and Irving Fields. He has produced tracks for many rap acts, as well as the Greekbeat soundtrack for the award-winning documentary *Man of Greece*. His own documentaries and animations have won many awards at the McGill Film Festival. Socalled's self-released EP *The Socalled Seder* was hailed in the Yiddish Forward as "one of the greatest works of Jewish music in years." His second album, *Ghettoblaster* reaches back into the past and mines many varying influences rich with context. The entire album is an amalgamation of traditional and contemporary influences, evoking a sound reminiscent of the past while engaging listeners of all types.