



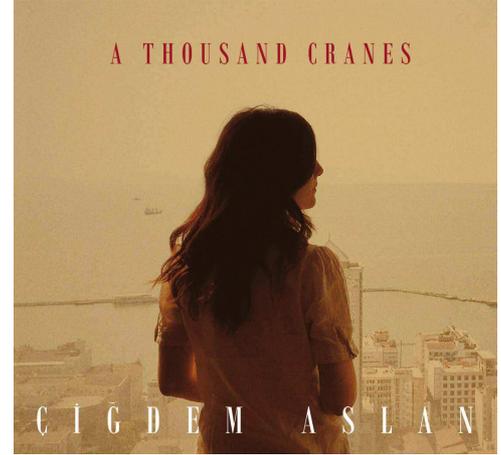
asphalt tango records presents

Çiğdem Aslan

"a rising star and a truly sublime singer of rebetika"
Evening Standard

In a flying start Çiğdem Aslan's debut album *Mortissa* was **Songlines Magazine Album Of The Year 2013** and **nominated as Best Album** in the **fRoots Magazine Critics' Poll 2013**. In October 2016 her second album, "**A Thousand Cranes**" was released.

Çiğdem Aslan (pronounced 'Cheedem'), was born in Istanbul's Şişli district not far from Taksim Square, to Kurdish parents from Turkey's Alevi community, and has always understood the ethnic mosaic that makes up modern Turkey. It was a singing household, and through her university years studying English literature she performed folk songs in Turkey's different languages as part of a project to shine a spotlight on Anatolia's minority cultures. Moving to London to study music, Çiğdem began performing with local groups including Balkan band Dunav, originally established in 1964, and the award-winning She'koyokh Klezmer Ensemble. As part of She'koyokh she has won plaudits for the "clear, natural ease" with which she sings (**Songlines Magazine**) and her "no-nonsense from the heart passion" (**fRoots Magazine**).



With her debüt album "*Mortissa*" Çiğdem Aslan was stepping onto the international stage as a bright young star in her own right. The **Guardian Newspaper** described her as "one of the best British-based discoveries of the year", going on to say, "Her success is down to her reworking of the old songs with a blend of delicate soulful vocals, subtle theatrics and a stage persona that could switch from stately to slinky and flirtatious..." London's **Evening Standard** named her "a lioness of Greek and Turkish song" who "transformed the Vortex into a rebetiko club, with the audience sipping raki and hanging on every note. Her charismatic performance also included other spectacular musicians." Those musicians, including Greeks and Turks, are some of London's finest.

Her second album "*A thousand cranes*" is a mesmerising sequel to the songs of the 1920's Smyrna and Istanbul of her debut album "*Mortissa*". Taking its name after *tourna/τούρνα* (crane); a migratory bird that resonates with strong symbolism in many cultures and mythologies; with "*A Thousand Cranes*", Çiğdem too is migrating through ages and across borders to continue her journey and explore songs of Athens, the Balkans and South East Anatolia. Keeping true to this lyrical journey, this second album was recorded in one of Athens' historical studios AntArt, where the likes of Theodorakis and Hadjidakis recorded their most famous compositions. A band of world class musicians, led once again by the musical director Nikolaos Baimpas, accompanies her journey with a modern and crisp sound, embellishing the deep rooted melodies with modern jazzy influences and inspired improvisations.

Mostly portrayed as messengers in songs, poems and stories, the *ournas/cranes* are the bearers of teachings, culture and tradition; their longevity standing as a symbol of good fortune and eternal youth; their dance a celebration of love and joy. With Çiğdem's effortlessly smooth & sultry, yet powerfully seductive and sophisticated voice, and her instinct for interpretation, she, like the *tourna*, becomes the perfect messenger to bring these timeless remnants of songs back to life.

But the cranes will also stand as partners to those missing their homelands and loved ones in the sadness of their exile. Cranes are lovers of freedom and above all, stand as a symbol of peace. Like cranes, music travels, taking sounds and stories to different lands; it evolves, changes and yet, remains the same. "*A Thousand Cranes*" is an effort to tell some of these stories.

The songs in this album ache with romance and nostalgia for a time when cultures, languages and ethnicities collided to create a music that seeps into our bones, with its joy and tragedy alike. Çiğdem's album is both a celebration of and a dedication to a time that, now more than ever, seems distant but still within reach. Çiğdem and her band spread a message of hope and resilience.

So let us release "*A Thousand Cranes*" to spread the word... Çiğdem is with us again!