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**Tommy T Presents *The Prester John Sessions***  
**Gogol Bordello's Bass Player Explores Music**  
**Without Boundaries on His First Solo Album**

**Available exclusively via iTunes Oct 13 and traditional retail outlets November 10**

**LOS ANGELES, September 1, 2009** -- For the past three years, **Tommy T** (Thomas T Gobena) has been the bass player for gypsy punk powerhouse Gogol Bordello. Tommy was born and raised in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia's capital city) and the knowledge of global rhythms he brings to Gogol's sound has become part of their unclassifiable approach to music making. With the encouragement of his Gogol Bordello band mates, Tommy has produced his first solo effort, ***The Prester John Sessions***. An aural travelogue that ranges freely through the music and culture of Ethiopia, the album is a collection of 11 songs including a remix of the track "Oromo Dub (Cushitic Dub)," featuring fellow Gogol Bordello band mates Eugene Hutz and Pedro Erazo and mixed by Michael Goldwasser of the Easy Star All-Stars. ***The Prester John Sessions*** will be released exclusively via iTunes on October 13, 2009, with the wide release at traditional retail outlets everywhere on November 10, 2009 via Easy Star Records.

"In the 70s, funk, wah-wah pedals, and jazz had a huge impact on Ethiopian music," Tommy explains. "***The Prester John Sessions*** will give people an idea about the musical diversity of Ethiopia, which includes influences and ideas borrowed from the sounds of the 70's with the added bonus of up-to-date production values."

Tommy discovered the story of Prester John in Graham Hancock's book *The Sign and the Seal*. "Hancock was looking for the Biblical Ark of the Covenant," Tommy says. "His quest led him around the world, from the Middle East to Europe and back to Ethiopia." In the 12th and 13th centuries, Prester John was an unknown Christian king with massive troops that got the attention of European kings. Prester John is the character I use to symbolize the man who will bring Ethiopian culture to the rest of the world."

To fulfill his vision, Tommy started digging through Ethiopian folk music, choosing melodies he could improvise on. He also wrote his own compositions based on traditional modes. "A lot of popular Ethiopian music is based on a 6/8 beat called chikchika, but there are also many other rhythms in Ethiopia that have their own unique characteristics," Tommy states. "I play with The Abyssinian Roots Collective on the album. They are sometimes known as The ARC, which coincidentally ties into the Ark of the Covenant and the Prester John story."

Tommy composed and produced the music, along with his brother Henock, contributing to the tunes "Brothers" and "East-West Express." The tracks were written at Tommy's home studio, cut live in studios around Washington, DC, and overdubs were laid down in real time with a final mix by Victor Van Vugt (Nick Cave, Gogol Bordello) giving it the feel of Herbie Hancock's Headhunters jamming with Ethiopian godfathers The Imperial Bodyguard Orchestra. The music blends Ethiopian modes with dub reggae, funk, and jazz, for a sound that's at once familiar and mysterious.

"We are extremely excited to be working with Tommy," says Easy Star co-founder Lem Oppenheimer. "He's made an incredible record. The way he integrates reggae and dub into Ethiopian music fits right into what we have been releasing for the past decade - music that expands on a reggae foundation, taking the genre in new directions."

"I believe in music without boundaries," Tommy says. "Music should be inclusive, not exclusive. People who love music know the best music is created without boundaries and limitations. ***The Prester John Sessions*** take that idea to the next level."

**ABOUT EASY STAR RECORDS:**

For over a decade, Easy Star Records has been a groundbreaking indie label, releasing progressive reggae and classic recordings from Jamaican artists. The label's best known releases are the tribute series by the Easy Star All-Stars, which began in 2003 with *Dub Side of the Moon* and includes both *Radiodread* (2006) and Easy Star's *Lonely Hearts Dub Band* (2009). The last release twice cracked the Billboard Top 200, something no reggae album had done in over two years prior. The boutique label has also released critically acclaimed albums by John Brown's Body, Ticklah, The Black

Seeds, The Meditations and Sugar Minott.

**For more information please visit:**

- [www.gogolbordello.com](http://www.gogolbordello.com)
- [www.easystar.com](http://www.easystar.com)

**Also catch Tommy T on tour with Gogol Bordello this fall:**

**Upcoming NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL Tour Dates:**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>CITY, STATE/PROVINCE</b>	<b>VENUE</b>
10/03/09	Winnipeg, Manitoba	Burton Cummings Theater
10/04/09	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan	The Odeon
10/05/09	Calgary, Alberta	MacEwan Hall
10/07/09	Edmonton, Alberta	Edmonton Events Centre
10/09/09	Vancouver, British Columbia	Vogue Theatre
10/10/09	Vancouver, British Columbia	Vogue Theatre
10/11/09	Spokane, Washington	The Knitting Factory
10/12/09	Boise, Idaho	The Knitting Factory
10/13/09	Eugene, Oregon	McDonald Theatre
10/15/09	Oakland, California	Fox Theatre
10/18/09	Anaheim, California	The Grove of Anaheim
10/20/09	Tempe, Arizona	Marquee Theatre
10/21/09	Tucson, Arizona	Rialto Theatre
10/24/09	Lawrence, Kansas	Liberty Hall
10/25/09	Columbia, Missouri	The Blue Note
10/27/09	Columbus, Ohio	Newport Music Hall
10/28/09	Richmond, Virginia	The National
10/30/09	Atlanta, Georgia	Variety Playhouse
10/31/09	New Orleans, Louisiana	Voodoo Music Experience
12/1/09	St. Petersburg, Russia	Glav Club
12/2/09	Moscow, Russia	Grand Milk Theatre
12/4/09	Kiev, Ukraine	Balkan Fest
12/8/09	Warsaw, Poland	Stodola
12/9/09	Krakow, Poland	Rotunda
12/11/09	Prague, Czech Republic	Sporthall
12/12/09	Dresden, Germany	Reithalle
12/13/09	Erlangen, Germany	E Werk
12/14/09	Karlsruhe, Germany	Tollhaus
12/16/09	Thessaloniki, Greece	Principal Club
12/17/09	Athens, Greece	TBA
12/19/09	Tel Aviv, Israel	Hangar 11
12/20/09	Tel Aviv, Israel	Barbey Club

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