

**Susan McKEOWN
& Lorin SKLAMBERG
SAINTS & TSADIKS:
Rare Yiddish and Irish Songs
Available on World Village Aug 11 2009**



Following on the heels of their GRAMMY Award-winning work with the **Klezmatiks**, vocalists **Susan McKeown** and **Lorin Sklamberg** have created an exciting musical collaboration: **Saints & Tzadiks (World Village – 468089)** an album of Yiddish and Irish song that will be released in August 2009 with supporting tour dates.

Culled from rare archive material and old recordings, McKeown and Sklamberg have selected songs on various themes from the Jewish and Irish traditions: love, death, betrothal, betrayal and the demon drink, as well as cumulative and macaronic songs are represented.

“We love singing together and started to explore the connections between Yiddish and Irish songs awhile ago,” says McKeown. “Lorin is a true scholar and so he’s come up with some beautiful songs. It’s been

both fascinating and fun to learn these Yiddish songs from him.” In fact, the bulk of the Jewish material was drawn from the papers of the legendary collector and performer Ruth Rubin, specifically from the recently published *Yiddish Folk Songs from the Ruth Rubin Archive*, drawn from her field recordings held at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, where Sklamberg serves as Sound Archivist. “Part of the thrill of this project is having the privilege of being the first to commercially record most of these treasures,” enthuses Sklamberg. The Irish songs come from both the popular and the ancient Gaelic sean nós traditions.

When Sklamberg, the voice of the Klezmatiks, decided with his band mates to seek an additional vocalist for their Woody Guthrie project *Wonder Wheel*, the choice was McKeown. The resulting album went on to win the 2006 GRAMMY for Best Contemporary World Music Album.

SUSAN McKEOWN is from Dublin, Ireland. Her mother was raised in a neighborhood known as Little Jerusalem and spoke to her youngest daughter in Irish. Susan immigrated to Manhattan's East Village in 1990 to take up a scholarship to the American Musical and Dramatic Academy. Her debut

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album *Bones* (1995) established her as a powerful vocalist and inventive songwriter. She has since recorded ten albums of original and world music and built an impressive career through her many releases, extensive touring and performances on programs such as *A Prairie Home Companion*, *All Things Considered*, *Mountain Stage* and for PBS, *Sessions at West 54th* and *American Masters*. Susan's album *Sweet Liberty* (World Village, 2004) received a BBC Folk Music Award nomination. She has performed with Natalie Merchant, Pete Seeger, Mary Margaret O'Hara, Linda Thompson, Billy Bragg and Johnny Cunningham, as well as with the Klezmatics.

"McKeown grabbed both song and audience by the throat, dragged them through heaven and hell and back again, and left the stage to the loudest applause heard all evening." – **Rolling Stone**

"Think Frida Kahlo crossed with Oumou Sangare." – **The Irish Times**

Los Angeles native LORIN SKLAMBERG grew up in a culturally supportive Conservative Jewish community and began playing klezmer at 16. He has been the lead singer of the Grammy-winning Jewish American roots band the Klezmatics since its founding in 1986. His work as vocalist, composer and multi-instrumentalist can be heard on some 50 recordings, solo and in collaboration with such diverse artists as Itzhak Perlman, Don Byron, Uri Caine, Frank London, Jane Siberry, Marc Cohn, Tony Kushner, Moxy Früvous, and, of course, the Klezmatics. His song *Headdy Down* (with unpublished lyrics by Woody Guthrie) was recently printed in *Sing Out!* magazine. He has written for film, stage and circus and has produced a number of recordings of world and theater music, and has performed and taught Yiddish song from Buenos Aires to Kiev. Lorin serves as the Sound Archivist of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

"One of the premier American singers in any genre." - **Robert Christgau, All Things Considered, National Public Radio**

"Special note should go to lead vocalist Lorin Sklamberg, who sings for all he's worth." - **Ed Silverman, Dirty Linen**

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