

fROOTS

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SUSAN MCKEOWN & LORIN SKLAMBERG

Saints & Tzadiks World Village 468089

Dubliner Susan McKeown is not afraid to push the envelope; since arriving in New York in 1990, she has wandered a road between interpreter of traditional songs, composing her own idiosyncratic material and working on collaborative efforts where Irish and wider influences criss-cross. *Saints & Tzadiks* is her most intriguing work to date: an Irish/ Jewish project with Klezmatiks vocalist and accordionist Lorin Sklamberg, it mixes Irish and Jewish idioms and nuances with style. The material offers McKeown the opportunity to sway with the tango cadences of *Buenos Aires* and Sklamberg to sing in Gaelic on *The Hag With The Money*. The opening *Heart's Blood* combines Scots and Yiddish texts in a compelling mixed-genre murder ballad. This proves the twin genres compatible and compelling. While Mick Moloney's work is purely interpretative and academic and serves its purpose, this combination of Susan McKeown and Lorin Sklamberg offers to sketch a connection between the Irish and Jewish populations and their musical traditions. Together they provide acknowledgement of an important and often missing link in Irish music's journey as a social entertainment and a contemporary language.

John O'Regan