



# Celtic Fair ( MM112) Maggie Sansone

## Review

Dirty Linen Folk & World Magazine

The ancient hammered dulcimer, according to Maggie Sansone, has “followed the migrations of early travelers across Asia Minor to the European continent.” And in these 12 pieces, Sansone and company have pushed that versatile instrument on into the 21st century.

This collection rings with the rich melodies of centuries-old compositions, presented in ways their original composers could never have imagined. The arrangements include not only the typical Celtic mix- Irish flute, fiddle, bodhrán - but the addition of such instruments as woodwinds and even sax that lend a contemporary, even jazz-new-age flavor, creating pensive tones, mystical auras and all manner of merriment.

Sansone performs masterfully on hammered dulcimer and smallpipes, along with Sara Read on fiddle and Rob Greenway (guitar, Irish flute, button accordion). Most notable, however, is the contribution of Bobby Read as producer and performer on sax, clarinet, bass clarinet, flutes, accordion, woodwinds, keyboards, percussion and drum programming). Read, who also performs in the Bruce Hornsby Band brings innovative arrangements to the recording and his seamless engineering allow the material to retain its Celtic sensibility, which is only enhanced by the some brilliant innovation.

Standout tracks include “Breton An Dro,” in which delicate string-reedy tones are overtaken by the silky, gentle swing of a sax. In this richly textured presentation, the artists demonstrate just how much can be accomplished within a simple, repetitive melody. There are two jig sets, the typical toe-tapper “Breton Jig/Castlebar/Train to Dublin” (Sansone’s original) and the more moody “Comb Your Hair & Curl It/ The Butterfly/Barney Brallaghan.” The lovely “Variations on an Irish Air (Pretty Girl Milking the Cow)” has all the emotional impact of the most heart-wrenching traditional song.

Throughout, Sansone performs in that hold-your-breath emotive style that has the listener hanging onto every note, awaiting the next bend in the road -and for sure it will be a delight.

—Oct./Nov. 2007, DirtyLinen Folk & World Magazine