

Cold Frosty Morn at West River

The sounds of Maggie's Music bring on the season

reviewed by Kathy Knotts

Need help transitioning into the holiday mood? My go-to solution is playing seasonal music. This year, I'm jumping out of the same old rut with *Cold Frosty Morn at West River*, by local Celtic musician Maggie Sansone.

Sansone, who lives in Shady Side but has international renown, combines classic carols with traditional Scottish, Irish and Appalachian arrangements. Irish singer and guitarist Pat Egan and Scottish harpist Sharon Knowles add the Celtic credentials we've come to expect from Maggie's Music, Sansone's quarter-century-old performance and recording company. Fiddler Andrea Hoag brings Swedish fiddling and adventurous stylings.

Appalachian evocations have me longing for my own snowy mornings in those mountains. But this music — along with the harp and Sansone's hammered dulcimer — has deeper roots, as far back as the Middle Ages. Transporting as the music is, it's also suitable as background music during a busy day in the office.

Many of *Cold Frosty Morn's* 15 tracks are lilting and soothing instrumental tunes from annual Celtic Christmas performances recorded at



historic Christ Church in West River. Others are rousing acoustic interpretations that urge your feet to move, thanks to Hoag's energetic fiddle work.



My favorite tracks on the joyful 53-minute disc are the Shetland Christmas Set, Planting in Winter and the Appalachian Christmas set, which includes Egan singing *I Wonder as I Wander*.

Cold Frosty Morn at West River will stay in my holiday music rotation.

Hear a Celtic Christmas live Sunday, December 6 at 3:30 & 6pm. A reception follows each performance. Christ Church, West River. \$20 w/age discounts: 410-867-0346.

