

Tri: A-measg Chàirdean - Among Friends

This is Tri's debut CD. It is a delight. Tri's sound is easygoing and natural. There is no striving here for musical eccentricity—simply a deep delight in the tradition itself while being true to oneself. The trio of Cliff McGann with vocals and guitar, Doug Lamey on fiddle, and Matthew Phelps on pipes, aided and abetted most ably by Kimberley Fraser, Keith Murphy and Eric Kilburn have created an album which will make anyone happy who values solid musicianship, respect for the tradition, and also individual skill and vision.

This CD starts out strong with "In Praise of Maureen MacKenzie." Along with this opening combination of tunes in the same vein and in great strength as well are "The E Set" and "Donald MacLean's Farewell." I found all three both great traditional work, and a showcase for how Doug's fiddle and Cliff's guitar provide such a strong infrastructure for these pieces. Matthew Phelps is excellent on the cauld wind pipes in the CD cuts, but he is superb in the wonderful "Pipe Marches," and the dramatic "Everlasting Peace." Cliff McGann supplies vocals in the Downeast "When I First Went To Caledonia." and in the Gaelic "S'Truagh Nach Do Dhi fhuirich Mi Tioram Air Tir." I have heard both of these from other artists and Cliff adds his own take here, with the ease of a storyteller on the first, and with a relaxed almost conversational pace on the second, which fit well with the rest of the album.

You can find Tri in their natural habitat, that is at ceilidhs and other events where they are understandably much in demand, for to the northeast they are local. Tri proves that you don't need to go very far, but to the wilds of Metro Boston West, Massachusetts, to hear great Celtic music.

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