

# Mp3 Cloudstreet - Violet Sarah And Muckle John



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cloudstreet - New Australian Folk. A combination of traditional Anglo-Celtic and Australian music performed with fabulous harmonies and a spirit of fun. Backed with flute, guitar and concertina. 11 MP3 Songs in this album (48:47) ! Related styles: FOLK: Modern Folk, FOLK: Traditional Folk People who are interested in Steeleye Span Maddy Prior Fairport Convention should consider this download. Details: With their warmth, talent and loving stage presence, Australian duo Cloudstreet makes their audience feel that they are the privileged viewers of something very special. Combining contemporary arrangements of traditional ballads with original songs in a traditional style, their magic is marked by their dazzling vocal harmonies. A "cloudstreet" is a row of thermals marked by cumulus clouds. When gliders fly from thermal to thermal by following the clouds, they "fly the cloudstreet", staying aloft for miles. (Review of Violet Sarah and Muckle John) Cloudstreet are John Thompson and Nicole Murray. Based in Brisbane, the Australian duo are popular performers at home, drawing their material mainly from Irish, English and Australian traditions. They have an attraction to the big ballads the muckle sangs the 'soap operas of a former age'. Many of the songs in their repertoire are accompanied by guitars, flutes, whistles and percussion, but a particular strength of their performance is their use of harmony. In a similar vocal range, both voices are spectacularly suited to each other. While Murray's voice is a remarkable instrument, particularly notable is that of former chorister Thompson, who possesses a strikingly beautiful tenor voice, and a deft and inventive touch with harmony. Violet Sarah and Muckle John is their second release. The rather cryptic title combines the names of two of the songs. Murray's composition, 'Violet Sarah' opens the album, and comprises a series of stream-of-consciousness reminiscences of a holiday with friends on their narrow boat on the English canal system. In tight harmony with only guitar accompaniment, its quirky rhythm is an enticing introduction to the duo. 'Muckle John', words by Thompson, set to music by Murray,

describes one of the last court jesters lamenting the passing of his trade. I've heard Sheldon Harnick's *The Shape of Things* many times over the years, but I think Cloudstreet's version is masterful. The tight arrangement, the accomplished harmony, and mock serious presentation are fine counterpoints to the bathos of the lass' geometric betrayal and ultimate revenge. The rest of the album is a combination of traditional songs and composed pieces. Murray proves her talents as a composer in a fine set of tunes which includes two of her own. To me, the sign of a well-written tune (or song) is that it sounds as if it already has the edges knocked off it by having been played a lot by others. These tunes have that worked-in feel to them, to their credit. The high point of a uniformly excellent production is the closing track - a stunning unaccompanied rendition of Tom Waite's 'The Briar and the Rose'. This is one of these arrangements that echoes around in your head long after the last notes have faded away. One hopes they end their concerts with it. The streets of Brisbane must be filled with the sound of humming after a performance by Cloudstreet. The album features no studio pyrotechnics, no cast of thousands, no extra musicians imported for the occasion (well, apart from the cello on one track, but cellos are special), just two very talented performers at work. Sometimes it is difficult to form an impression of a group in action from a recording, but Cloudstreet's Violet Sarah and Muckle John lets us know exactly what to expect from a live performance, and certainly leads us to look forward to an appearance a little closer to home before too long. (Alistair Brown - *The Green Man Review* - September, 2003)

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