

Mp3 Siucra - A Very Siucra Christmas



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Irish traditional trio's part-live, part-studio release of traditional and original Celtic Christmas music: strong trad style, killer vocals and instrumentals (timber flute/whistles), and an eye to the unusual melodic twist. 14 MP3 Songs

WORLD: Celtic, FOLK: Traditional Folk Details: Boston trio Sicra (shoo-kruh), announces a gorgeous Christmas album of old and new Irish traditional and original music for the holiday season: *A Very Siucra Christmas*. This part-live, part-studio recording features heavenly vocals, Irish flute whistles, guitar, bodhran, and stellar songwriting. Irish traditional trio Sicra (Irish for 'sugar') has always been sweet on Christmas. Beginning with a casual presentation of a few carols in 1999 in Denver, the project has developed into a full-length, wildly creative program of Sicra-style Christmas music. This year the group celebrates its 5th annual series of Christmas concerts with the launch of *A Very Siucra Christmas*. Sicra is Matt and Shannon Heaton (driving guitar, timber flute, vocals) with vocalist/percussionist Beth Leachman. *A Very Siucra Christmas* brings the trio's creative focus onto music of the season. With 14 tracks drawn from Sicra's annual Christmas show, the band's third release includes traditional carols such as "The Cherry Tree" and "The Holly and the Ivy"; high energy reels and jigs such as "Apples in Winter Feast for a King"; and Sicra original music for the season such as "Christmas Day, Christmas Night" and "Come Day, Go Day". Sicra formed five years ago in Boulder, Colorado. Though two of the members, the husband-and-wife Heaton, relocated to Boston over two years ago, Sicra maintains a busy touring schedule, performing throughout the United States. In May 2002, the trio released "Here Among Strangers", a follow-up to their debut CD "A Place I Know." This third release offers more of Sicra's stirring and sentimental music, and hopes to evoke Christmas past and present---a very Sicra way to usher in the holidays.

REVIEWS FOR SIUCRA'S LAST RELEASE: Scott Alarik, Boston Globe, June 9, 2002 "Sicra, which is Irish Gaelic for 'sugar,' is the perfect name for a hot young Boston-based Celtic trio.

The music is pulsing and vibrant, yet warmly embraces the sweet simplicity of classic Irish melody and lyric sentiment." Tom Nelligan, *The Reel World*, Dirty Linen #103, December 2002 "The disc *Here Among Strangers* from Siucra has a somewhat higher ratio of songs to tune sets here than many recordings from groups of this type. With an engaging lead singer like Beth Leachman, that's a good decision. Joined by Shannon Heaton on wooden flute and whistles and Matthew Heaton on guitar, Leachman is a marvelously smooth singer of songs like the traditional "Peggy-O" and "P Stands for Paddy" and "The White Birds," a bracing arrangement of a William Butler Yeats poem. The tune sets are a joy as well, simply arranged but played with spirit and feeling, proving that you don't need a roomful of instruments to fill a room with music. Great name for a record label, too." Rob Weir, *Sing Out! Magazine*, Spring 2003

Siucra is Irish for "sugar," and this solid album from the Boston-based Irish-American band is sweet and satisfying. What this young group does best is keep things simple and pure, an absolute necessity given that its entire instrumental complement is Matthew Heaton on guitar and Shannon Heaton on flute and whistles. The third member, Beth Leachman, thumps out steady bodhran to assist Matthew Heaton in setting tempos, but dazzles most with her lovely voice, which is deeply rooted in sean nos stylings. Leachman sings with a light, bouncy energy that effortlessly matches the flute's swoops and glides, her voice often acting as an instrument in its own right. Songs like "Lovely Annie" and "Peggy-O" are well-travelled, but Siucra stays within itself and never tries to dazzle us with virtuosity or strained reinterpretations. Its straightforward approach ends up as disarmingly infectious. Leachman and Heaton's duet segue to a lively flute-driven reel on "P Stands for Paddy" is another example of the small shifts that punctuate the material. Not that Leachman needs much help; her keening on "Pulling Hard Against the Stream" is an impressive exercise in breath control, while "Maeve's Grave" is a gorgeous original song sung to guitar accompaniment and features a soaring bridge. Siucra also impresses instrumentally. Shannon Heaton establishes most of the melodic lines, and Siucra's flute-based tunes often evoke artists like Kevin Crawford or Petrie and Carnahan. "The Piper's Despair" set has a quick-paced guitar setting a backdrop against which the flute dips and weaves. Clean percussion on the "Only for Barney" set makes a nice counterpoint to the guitar and flute, keeping the set light and buoyant. "The White Birds" proves this trio is just as fine live as in the studio. Siucra never overwhelms; they just entertain, the sweetest gift of all. Aidan O'Hara *Irish Music Magazine*, November 2002 "Siucra ('sugar' in Irish) perform mostly Irish traditional songs and tunes, but with a couple of their own compositions; they provide a great selection of

songs and tunes, expertly performed with great skill. Sicra had its start in 1998 in Boulder, Colorado. From there, this trio of accomplished, energetic players went on to perform throughout the Western and Midwestern United States. In 2001, two of the members moved to Boston. Acoustic Guitar magazine described Sicra as being full of hot musicianship, confidence and unstoppable energy. A five-piece band would be hard-pressed to match the amount of music these three musicians produce." Matthew Heaton has had fiddle lessons from Tommy Peoples. He has his master's degree in classical guitar, played lead guitar in a rock band and in a nuevo tango group. Beth Leachman founded the Colorado Singer's Circle; she plays the harp, and lived for a while in Dublin. Her father is a ragtime pianist and her great-grandmother played the mandolin. Shannon Heaton has been learning the button accordion, and speaks fluent Thai! With such variety and versatility, I wouldn't hazard a guess at what sort of sound Sicra might produce in a few years time." Marty Jones, Denver Westword, May 31, 2002 "Sicra features the singing of Beth Leachman and an earthy sound that matches fierce craic with instrumental prowess and buckets of emotion."

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