

Lilt's CD "Little Falls" reviewed in The Irish Echo January 28, 2014

Traditional Music / by Daniel Neely

...the Washington DC-based group Lilt has a new album out called "Little Falls." It's a lovely album of unvarnished instrumental and vocal music from the wilds of Washington DC's Irish music scene. Lilt comprises Keith Carr (bouzouki, banjo, mandolin, vocals) and Tina Eck (flute, tin whistle, vocals), two musicians who met on Washington DC's session scene years back who found they shared a musical vision.

Eck and Carr are accomplished players: Carr is classically trained on the trumpet and piano and often appears in trad ensembles with various notable DC-based players; Eck has a TTCT teaching certificate and plays with the bands Rambling House and Cuil Mor. They are both faculty members in the Washington Conservatory of Music Folk and Traditional Music department.

Although each is individually respected, they make an outstanding pair and display some nice musical chemistry on this album. I'm particularly drawn to their ensemble work on the "P&O Polka /". A track like "Eddie Kelly's / ..." is where Carr's bouzouki playing really shines and his banjo work on "The Warbling Robin / ..." and "The Galway Reel / ..." reveals a player with a nice, breezy style that is sweet and melody forward.

Eck takes the lead on several tracks and distinguishes herself on the the flute and whistle throughout. One excellent example is on the air "Planxty Dermot Grogan" (composed by Holly Geraghty), which is a soulful, loving tribute to the memory of one of the best loved musicians of recent memory. Grogan passed away in 2006 after spending many years in New York City, but memories of his personality and music are still strong and Eck does him a great justice on this track.

There are many fine guest musicians on this album, including Eileen Estes (vocals), Conor Hearn (guitar) and Kristen Jones (cello). Graham DeZarn lends his fiddle to three tracks, all of which benefit from his presence. "The Messenger / ..." features the dancing of Shannon Dunne, who adds a surprisingly subtle but very welcome percussive element that rounds out some already very nice duo playing.

The most significant guest contributor is Josh Dukes, who not only played bodhrán and guitar on more than half the album, but who also served as its production advisor. Dukes is a top player and soloist in his own right, but he sets a perfect tone here in a supporting role.

Ultimately, "Little Falls" is a nuanced album from two of the DC scene's finest, and is one trad fans should check out and enjoy. To learn more about Lilt and how to get this album, visit www.liltirishmusic.com.