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SVÄNG
Sväng
Alto 005

Sväng is a unique and accomplished Finnish harmonica quartet playing recent compositions and arrangements en passing their national folk music the tango, the Swedish ha dies, ragtime and A project began a folk

century

mparraleele" and
Turkka compositions.
a festive romp with ascending
ep chord changes reminiscent of flamenco, and the latter a tango marked by delicate counterpoint and an accordian-like quality. Next are "Saaren Erakko," a Grundstrom arrangement that sounds like a 1930s stride piano solo, and "Kurjet," a reflective, classically influenced piece. Several folk tunes follow. "Moara" and "Lelita Loanna" are Romanian pieces with a gypsyesque, even circus-like flavor. The quartet then returns to their Nordic roots with "Tyyska," a Finnish melody which sounds like a slow reel, and a melancholy Swedish hambo, "Om Inte Du Vill." "Po Murumskoj Doroshjkeminor," a Russian waltz learned across battle lines by a Finnish soldier in 1939, illustrates how music can transcend conflict.

The inclusion of two well-known Southern Appalachian fiddle tunes, "Sandy Boys" and "The Hangman's Reel," are a nod to old-timey music. Then, after another accordion-esque tango, "Sateen Tango," the group concludes with Turkka's "Svangtime Rag," a piece more like the Beatles' "When I'm 64" than a classic piano rag.

Sväng has shown what delightful possibilities abound when the medium of the harmonica quartet finds itself in sophisticated yet fun-loving hands. — GW

DEITSCH
Königskinder
Artes 3037

Mention the words "traditional German folk music" and you're likely to encounter a lot of blank faces. It's something not too many people have come across. Even in Germany it's very much a minority sport. But Gudrun Walther and Jürgen Treyz, the duo at the heart of Deitsch (the name is a South German corruption of Deutsch) have done extensive research and come up with an album of mostly trad.-arr. that offers a lovely little insight into German folk, be it the simple, but very memorable, tune of "Vetter Michel," or a good collection of ngs, some of which have echoes all across rope. The older songs work better than originals, perhaps because they've been d in over the centuries. But this isn't demic exercise. There's real love be- music here, and a sense not only of but also proselytizing. And well Granted this is just one album. e tip of the iceberg. But if it's anything, then there's plenty uff to be investigated here, and tsch are at the front of the pack. — CN

DOBRANOTCH
Gagarin Chochek
Orange World 010

With members from Russia, Moldova and Lebanon, and a CD on a Polish label, you could say there's an international perspective to the music here. But klezmer's at the heart of it (not a bad trick for a group that started out playing Irish folk!), mixed with a fair leaving of Gypsy music from all parts of the Balkans – "Yeni Yol," for example, seems to come from Macedonia, while the title cut calls Serbia home. However, klezmer and Gypsy music are two sides of the same coin in many ways, with much the same feel, rhythms and rippling play with room for improvisation, which the band fill excellently. The tuba bass is a bit of a novelty – a touch of Balkan brass – and the cimbalom gets a little lost in the mix sometimes, but it's a very strong, accomplished effort; a postcard from MittelEuropa. — CN

GENDOS
Ham-Dyt
Luna Music 089

The folk singers of Tuva, an area just outside of Siberia in Mongolia, devised one of the craftiest techniques known to mankind in *khoomei*. Also know as throat,