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— ON THE TOWN —

CATHY FINK & MARCY MARXER

"Postcards"

Community Music

There was a time when folk music wasn't merely a vehicle for foisting your own musical diaries and confessions upon the world; it was a community activity where the best singers and pickers searched out the best songs of the past and present. The new album from Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer, "Postcards," returns to that older vision. The longtime Takoma Park duo has found 11 terrific but mostly obscure songs written by others and given them splendid settings. As good as the harmony singing is, the instrumental picking is even better—and that's also unusual for a contemporary folk recording.

The songs include an unrecorded tune by old-time mountain singer Ola Belle Reed, a waltz by Django Reinhardt, a Hank Williams gospel hymn and a Woody Guthrie lyric with new music by Billy Bragg. The new material includes funny songs by Australia's Bernard Carney and Wisconsin's Peter and Lou Berryman as well as musings by Pete Seeger and Metamora's Pete Sutherland. The combination of Fink's hearty alto and Marxer's sweet soprano serves the material well, but best of all is Fink's banjo picking on the old Scottish tune "Mason's Apron," and Marxer's sparkling electric-guitar break on the Boswell Sisters' 1940s swing tune "It's the Girl."

— *Geoffrey Himes*

Appearing Monday at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver Spring ■ To hear a free Sound Bite from Cathy Fink & Marcy Marxer, call Post-Haste at 202-334-9000 and press 8106. (Prince William residents, call 703-690-4110.)

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