

'Four Leaf Clover,' Four Celtic Voices (MVDaudio, 3 ½ stars)

'Strings Of Gold,' Celeste Ray Ensemble (MVDaudio, 3 stars)

The first of these Feb. 8 CDs presents a 2009 album that debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard World Music chart. Traditional Celtic songs like "Danny Boy" along with Celtic original songs are what FCV offers. The voices are Celeste Ray, who adds bowed psaltery, harmonium, and piano; Erin Hill, who adds Celtic harp and bass; vocalist-only Carol Crittenden and Wendy Luck, who plays flute.

The highlights include a vocal version of the ever-popular instrumental tune "Greensleeves" and a heavenly Hill/Ray original, "Angels."

The second Feb. 8 CD presents several other traditional and newly-arranged songs using traditional Celtic instrumentation, some instrumental, others with voices. The album was recorded in 2005. Highlights include the familiar "Whiskey in the Jar," the beautiful "Come By The Hills" and several of the instrumental numbers. Vocalist Ray (harmonium, bowed psaltery) is joined here by steel string guitarist James Gilchrist (who sings the aforementioned "Whiskey"), Irish whistle/flautist Darius Kaufmann, electric bassist Eric Mauriello and percussionist Andrew Potenza. Fans of Celtic music will dig both of these releases

- Ricky Flake

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