

## **EVA QUARTET "MINKA"**

**Riverboat Records/ World Music Network 2021 (TUGCD1127)**

Link

<https://worldmusic.net/products/eva-quartet-minka?fbclid=IwAR2VwwduSjklPJ5Rb4CqyTJA8XoOeGeUMiBkMcJFYlgXlacgRm1CKE8Vtqw>

Video

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=US09eazmdrl](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=US09eazmdrl)

From heartfelt tales of marriage and a mother's love to whimsical songs about laziness and a girl's discourse with a dove, this long-awaited new release by the Eva Quartet sees them continue to unveil the timeless beauty of traditional Bulgarian folk song.

Formed in 1995, the Eva Quartet have been at the forefront of Bulgarian folk music for over twenty-five years and this debut Riverboat Records album *Minka* is their first since the highly acclaimed 2012 project (*The Arch*) with Hector Zazou. From the heartfelt folk songs of Bulgaria's Rhodope Mountains to spellbinding contemporary explorations, this seamless collection highlights the incredible versatility of the Eva Quartet and is an innovative and beautiful exploration of the joys and sorrows of Bulgarian folk song. Famed for their spine-chilling harmonies, the Eva Quartet are guardians of Bulgarian traditional polyphony, and these wonderful re-interpretations invoke an earlier age when music was an indelible part of village life. Many of these folk gems, both famous and relatively unknown, continue to be passed down through generations, such as the deeply moving opener 'Minka E Rano Stanala', a song taken from the repertoire of the great Kuschlevi sisters, the first vocal quartet in Bulgaria to perform traditional folk songs. This beautiful arrangement shows why these pioneering sisters have become cult figures in their homeland. The album includes beautiful re-interpretations of songs by renowned Bulgarian composers Stefan Dragostinov and the late/great Ivan Spassov (1934-1996), whose composition 'Balno Li Ti E Sinjo Ljo' highlights his totally innovative approach of taking a traditional Bulgarian melody and adding rich and contemporary ornamentation and rhythmic diversity. Also, Dimitar Hristov, the artistic director of the Bulgarian National Radio Folk Orchestra, includes several of his own compositions including the humorous 'Leme Dreme', a song from the western outlands of Bulgaria and something of a playful game between voice and gadulka (a traditional Bulgarian bowed string instrument). All of the members of the Eva Quartet have been part of the Grammy Award winning all-female choir, *Le Mystere des Voix Bulgares* which has had a profound influence on their collective musical vision. Likewise, the Orthodox Church continues to play an important role in their lives, to which they pay respects on the closing 'Gospodi, Pomiluy' which dates from the 10th/11th century.



**EVA QUARTET "MINKA"**  
**REVIEWS**

"their blend of voices, rhythmic precision and emotional understanding are stunning"

**Songlines by Kim Burton**

the voices yearn, surge, linger, interlock, drone and counterpoint, and on the up-tempo pieces fizz and chatter, in ways that no Western-classical ensembles, even the progressive ones, match in style or sound

**RootsWold by Andrew Cronshaw**

Magnificent picture!

**Moors Magazine**

"they take their otherworldly close harmonies, surreal whoops and shivery ornamentation to more recent places"

"And the drones of the album's final cut are stunningly unwavering. "

"Folk music never stands still: it's always evolving, and this album is a good idea of where one of the world's edgiest, most popular flavors is going."

**New York Music Daily**

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