

Van Morrison & The Chieftains - Irish Heartbeat (1988)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Star of the County Down* (2:42) 2. *Irish Heartbeat* (3:51) 3. *Ta Mo Chleamhnas Danta (My Match It Is Made)* (3:31) 4. *Raglan Road* (4:56) 5. *She Moved Through the Fair* (4:44) 6. *I'll Tell Me Ma* (2:30) 7. *Carrickfergus* (4:25) 8. *Celtic Ray* (3:41) 9. *My Lagan Love* (5:20) 10. *Marie's Wedding* (3:15) Van Morrison – Vocals, Arranger, Drums, Guitar, Producer, Vocals Derek Bell - Harp, Keyboards, Timpani, Tiompan Mary Black - Vocals (Background) June Boyce - Vocals (Background) Kevin Conneff - Bodhran, Drums, Vocals, Vocals (Background) Martin Fay - Fiddle, Percussion Seán Keane - Fiddle Matt Molloy - Flute Paddy Moloney - Arranger, Pipe, Producer, Tin Whistle, Uilleann Pipes, Whistle (Instrument) Maura O'Connell - Vocals (Background) Ciaran O'Braonain - Bass

On their wide musical journeys in the '80s, the Chieftains decided to collaborate with Van Morrison, who had an artistic peak at the end of the decade. The result was a highlight in both of their '80s productions: the traditional *Irish Heartbeat*, with Morrison on lead vocals and a guest appearance from the Mary Black. Morrison and Moloney's production puts the vocals up front with a sparse background, sometimes with a backdrop of intertwining strings and flutes, the same way Morrison would later use the Chieftains on his *Hymns to the Silence*. The arrangement and the artist's engaged singing leads to a brilliant result, and these Irish classics are made very accessible without being transformed into pop songs. Of the ten tracks included, eight are Irish trads. The title track and "Celtic Ray" are written by Morrison, and also appear on *Beautiful Vision* and *Inarticulate Speech of the Heart*, but since they are written in a pseudo traditional style, the folksy treatment given them by the Chieftains makes these versions sound as if they were the originals. ---Lars Lovén, allmusic.com

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