

## Mostar Sevdah Reunion Café Sevdah

Snail Records SR66009

Full Price (60 mins)

★★★★

*Reunion reconvene without the whole team*



It's fair to say that Mostar Sevdah Reunion – a multi-ethnic group of musicians that came together after the vicious inter-communal war in Bosnia – has spearheaded a revival of the local *sevdah* music, as well as the careers of some of the veteran singers of old Yugoslavia – Saban Bajramović and Ljiljana Buttler. MSR has become the international voice of this beautiful city with its glorious Turkish

bridge (reconstructed since its destruction by Croat shells in 1993), but still divided Croat and Bosnian population. This latest *Café Sevdah* CD represents a new formation of the band – the previous vocalist Ilijaz Delic and accordionist Mustafa Santić having decided to stick to a more traditional ensemble. Here the clean, agile guitar lines of guitarist Mišo Petrović defines the sound of the band, rather as he has done on MSR's recent albums, along with the vocalists Nermin Alukić, Suad Golić and Elmedin Balalić.

It's a beautifully packaged album, with translated lyrics – very important with these poetic, usually melancholy songs – and images from beautiful old postcards of Mostar in the early 20th century. But the music is wider-ranging than previous MSR albums with Petrović's jazzy guitar and piano on several tracks and a playful Cuban sound on 'Čije je ono Djevojče?' (Whose Girl is That?). This is a great, if pensive, selection of songs, but it sounds like the band is in a state of transition and needs to find itself again before matching the depth of their debut recording.

*Simon Broughton*