

The Blarney Brothers

A Fine Line Between Ambition and Delusion<http://web2airmail.net/blarney>

by Ryan O'Connor

The Blarney Brothers is a six member band based out of Texas. Citing influences ranging from Makem and Clancy, Garth Brooks and Stan Rogers, this group is talented not only in the vocal department but also in the fact that all six members play at least three instruments — and well! Incorporated

with the usual guitars, pennywhistle, harmonica, banjo and bass are such instruments as the bouzouki, hammered dulcimer, and digereedoo.

There are many interesting things about this album, first of all is that of the song selection. The twelve songs included on this album

could very easily fit in with the East Coast music scene — such songs as “Rocky Road To Dublin,” “Witch of the Westmoreland,” “Roddy McCorley,” and “Paddy Murphy” bring up images and sounds of our local performers. However, the Blarney Brothers do great

jobs of all of these songs — it’s hard to realize that they’re from Texas. Also included are their versions of Garth Brooks’ “Ireland” and Tommy Makem’s “Rambles of Spring.” The Blarney’s are definitely a fun and entertaining band that are worth a look, so check them out.

Dramtreeo

Stormwww.southernbranch.com

by Ryan O'Connor

Dramtreeo is an energetic folk group based out of Virginia. In their 17th year of existence, this is an excellent release, featuring the great harmonies and vibrant instrumentation of this five member band. Just as the liner notes to this album suggests, this music is timeless, for some of the songs, such as “Sixteen Tons” and Woody

Guthrie’s “This Land Is Your Land,” date back to the 1940’s and 50’s — yet they sound just as relevant and fresh today as they must have back then. Other songs included on this album are “Aragon Mill” by Si Kahn — a song about a factory closing resulting in the ghostlike appearance of a town, “Storm Comin’ On,” written by Rob

Crutchfield, “Black Velvet Band” — an old Irish tune that has never sounded better (and believe me, I’ve heard a tremendous number of different versions), and “Mbube” — a Zulu chant that was adapted by Pete Seeger and later turned into the song “The Lion Sleeps Tonight.”

As a last note, I’d like to congratulate Dramtreeo on

this CD. Not only am I pleased that they included the original, somewhat sarcastic version of “This Land” by Guthrie (which was written as a reaction to the situation during the Great Depression), but they made a fan of me. A great band with great harmonies and a fine repertoire of songs, a great formula.

various artists

Joyful Noise: Celtic Favorites from Green Linnetwww.greenlinnet.com

by Ryan O'Connor

Green Linnet is a label based out of the United States that specializes in the best of Celtic music. Included on their label are such greats as Altan (seen recently at the Celtic Colours Festival in Cape Breton), Cherish the Ladies, Tommy Sands and

Eileen Ivers -- all of which have at least one cut on this 2 CD compilation.

Tommy Sands contribution to this album is his emotional song “There Were Roses,” in which the Northern Ireland troubles are presented through the eyes of

friends, and it’s a great song. Altan have two songs on this album, and Cherish the Ladies contribute “Green Grow the Rushes Oh.”

This album is must for any fan of traditional Irish and Scottish music. If you’re

interested in such, contact Green Linnet for a free catalogue via their web page or by calling 1-800-468-6644.

I would go on to describe this album more, but it must suffice to say that it must be heard to be believed.

Shane MacGowan and the Popes

The Crock of Gold

(ZTT Records)

www.ztt.com

By Ryan O'Connor

MacGowan first rose to prominence in the 1970s following an incident at a Clash concert in London at which part of his ear was bitten off by another concertgoer. By the early 1980s, MacGowan was the leader of one of the period’s most innovative and refreshing bands — the Pogues. Com-

bing MacGowan’s punkish poetry (not to mention his unique delivery), and the bands skill at Irish traditional music, they paved the way for many.

This is the second release from Shane MacGowan and the Popes, and it essentially sticks to the formula that made the Pogues so suc-

cessful. Including excellent covers of “Spanish Lady” and “Come to the Bower” — both Irish traditional songs, MacGowan also contributed two songs that rival anything he wrote in earlier days — “Mother Mo Chroi” and “St John of Gods” (the latter of which features a wonderful chorus of “F yas all, f yas

all”).

Also of special note, this album features MacGowan at his Irish nationalist best. I’m pleased with this album, although I’ll be the first to admit that it took a listen or two before I got the hang of it (the transition from the Pogues to the Popes took a little time).

Music Reviews

with a special irish twist