

# Mp3 Band Of Shysters - The Girl From The North



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Irish folk/pop/punk with an unique, unmistakable Savonian streak. This debut release by Finland's foremost Celtic folkpunk group is already quickly becoming a hit a classic. 3 MP3 Songs FOLK: Contemporary Celtic, FOLK: Irish Traditional Details: Bastardizing the tradition "The torch of tradition is there for arson!" Or so claim Band of Shysters who have been, as they put it, bastardizing the tradition of Irish folk tunes since early 2006. First started as a duo, the acoustic band quickly grew to a strength of eight men and women, among them two lead singers (from both sexes), a drummer, and an electric bass player. Fiddles, whistles, accordions, guitars, mandolins and the like, band members maintain, go without saying. The Band of Shysters' sound is probably best described as high-energy contemporary folk. Their closest comparison is probably to be found with The Pogues, though both their singers would blast Shane MacGowan clear out of the water six ways from hell, on any day of the week. Still, they hurriedly acknowledge MacGowan's prowess and skill as a superior songwriter. "Hopefully that gap may narrow as we gain more experience." says lead singer Aapo Halme with a mischievous grin. More melodic than The Pogues, more lyrical and dynamic than the Dropkick Murphys, more aggressive and modern than The Dubliners, and more nuanced than Flogging Molly it is obvious that Band of Shysters immensely enjoy playing for a live audience. Though a carousing and fun-loving bunch the band members are tried and tested professional musicians from various fields and share an understanding that the crowd's thirst must be quenched first, before the band can partake in the revelry. And, boy, do they have the ability to deliver! From merry bright songs o'war to melancholy love ballads, from soft lullabies to angry frustrated, punk-infused social commentary, to legendary, age-old drinking songs, the emotional spectrum inherent in Band of Shysters' music appears incredibly vast, if not altogether unlimited. But no matter the range of highs and lows in every set, the audience is bar none left in an exhilarated and fulfilled, if exhausted state.

Amazingly, the same effect is accomplished without effort in under fifteen minutes with just the three songs on *The Girl From the North* -maxi-single. Beginning with an autobiographical story by singer Aapo the original title track conveys all the heartache and troubles of an unrequited love, yet the atmosphere remains indisputably positive and hope-filled. The second track, traditional song *The Foggy Dew* builds on the mood, adding the sorrow and frustration, and the patriotic zeal of an oppressed people struggling for freedom. Lastly, a rowdy and contagious, fun version of *The Wild Rover* tops things off, bringing much needed release and relaxation, and an inevitable smile to the listener. Though more known for their live work, the thrill and substance that Band of Shysters have seemingly effortlessly managed to cram on a recording of just three songs, one can't help but ponder with giddy anticipation the journey that a full-length album could hold. Luckily, such an album is already in the works. The band has even received an arts grant from a regional arts council to help cover the costs of making the CD. Not wanting a record company involved in the process affecting the artistic outcome seems a reasonable motive for self-producing the album, however, wouldn't government funding presumably present an even bigger hindrance to an intact artistic vision? "Presumably, yeah, for sure!" Halme chuckles, "But not in the least with our case. We merely gave the arts council a very rough idea what the album would be like and they responded by throwing money at us. Apparently they like to give money to folk music in general. They never asked to have a say in how the album ends up as. That's not how they operate. The people making the decisions are mostly artists themselves and they know the value of integrity. Besides, they only gave us a fraction of what we had the audacity to ask for. We're still mostly paying for the album from our own pockets." "On the other hand, of course there exists a danger that arts grant recipients will start currying favour with the decision making bodies hoping for more and bigger grants, but we are well aware of that threat and just being aware of it, I think, goes a long way. In any case, we are keeping a keen eye on ourselves for that contingency. We ain't gonna let that happen. Our vision remains intact, our collective pure!" he ends with a laugh. Though always first and foremost a live group, Band of Shysters are very excited to start making the, as of yet unnamed, full-length CD. The whole vision isn't entirely coherent yet. Aapo contemplates. Which is to say we have a lot of ideas. One hell of a lot. In all probability too many. We are in the process of writing songs and mulling things over. Trying different combinations of songs to see which would make for the best album as a whole. We absolutely, adamantly hold the notion that all albums should be theme-albums. And I don't say that to mean they should all be storytelling albums with

each song detailing some part of the same narrative. But there needs to be at least some underlying common theme for all songs in order to achieve a solid, harmonious, complete whole. Altogether too many albums these days Hell, all albums from the Majors, it seems, have just two or three properly thought out songs that are expected to make singles and become the hits. The rest are just complete shite put there so they can jump up the price tag on the CD. And even those two or three better songs are engineered for the most hit potential. They are average length songs, contemporary average sounding songs with average themes designed to fit the average tastes of the average consumer, aiming for the maximum potential sales to the average Joes of the world. The excess engineering removes so much of the humanity from the music, to the point where there almost isnt any music left in the music! Trying to guess and predict the likes of the average music consumer is killing the art! And the artists! And thats been going on ever since the first major record companies came to be. And then commercial radio comes up with fucking playlists! Aapo rants on for ten minutes, blowing off steam about the degradation and faults of the music business (Business and art just dont mix. I make a tremendous effort trying to keep the two separate. But its a losing battle. It scares the shit out of me, thinking about what would happen if I should ever stumble upon the misfortune to make it big in the game!) and fully demonstrates the reasons for decidedly keeping Band of Shysters firmly on the indie path. Finally, he winds down, and with a deep sigh, an embarrassed self-aware grin and a But I digress. he smoothly transitions right back to the point where he swerved off course talking about the Band of Shysters album in the works. Albums and live shows are two completely different creatures that need to be mustered in largely different ways. The end goal for both is the same, as for all art forms, to through entertainment attempt to awaken an emotional response in the listener, and in those rare elusive moments when all things go click and out of music something greater which I like to call art is born teach or show the audience, and maybe the performer as well, something new about themselves or the world around them. If youre gonna try to do that on a CD youd better know damn well what youre gonna put on that CD. And thats where the theme becomes important. I think we have a pretty good grasp on doing this in live shows, but were pretty much starting from scratch learning how to do it on an album. Its gonna be a challenge, for sure. But its also an astoundingly exciting prospect. Were just gonna work our arses off trying our very best and see where we end up. And trust that the binding theme for the album will be revealed to us in due course. And so we wait with eager anticipation and great enthusiasm to find out how the album turns out. Will it be just great

music, mere brilliant entertainment? Or will it turn out to be something greater? Something notable? Truly something to remember? Will it encompass our hearts and minds and elevate our souls to high heavens? Gosh, I do hope so! And so we wait. People who are interested in The Dubliners Flogging Molly The Pogues should consider this download.

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