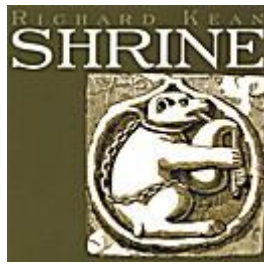


Mp3 Richard Kean - Shrine



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A presentation of the Scottish Highland Bagpipes and Scottish Small Pipes. Featuring a mix of contemporary and traditional music from Scotland Ireland and Brittany. 11 MP3 Songs

WORLD: Celtic, FOLK: Traditional Folk

Details: Born in Edinburgh Scotland, Richard moved to Canada at the age of three and at ten began tuition under his father, Pipe Major Eric Kean. Richard continued his tuition with several prominent Canadian pipers including, Rene Cuson, Rob Rife, and Allan Walters. By his late teens Richard began exploring the highland bagpipe outside of it's traditional setting. Bands such as Na Caber Feidh (Who went on to become Rare Air), Borne and MacLeod, Robert Matheson's first solo album, and the 78th Fraiser Highlanders all greatly influenced Richards interest in expanding the repertoire of the Highland Bagpipe Together with Duane Colley and Bruce MacKay, two other native Albertans, Richard formed the group MacBOFA and began developing new styles and compositions for the Highland bagpipe. Richard later moved back to Edinburgh where he teamed up with Pipe Major Lindsay Davidson, B.Mus. edu. forming the pipe duet Teribus. Teribus traveled extensively throughout Europe and produced two albums featuring strong traditional bagpipe music and new compositions by Richard and Lindsay. Richard also participated in the formation of Stockbridge Pipe Band, Edinburgh and was pipe sergeant for three years until returning to Canada. After a year in Winnipeg, Richard moved to Houston Texas and soon joined the Hamilton Pipe Band, a successful competition band based in Houston now renamed the St. Thomas Alumni Pipe band. In early 2000 Richard added Scottish Highland and Small pipes to the upbeat Celtic group from Austin Poor Man's Fortune. Joining Poor Man's Fortune has allowed Richard to express his love of traditional music and innovation with new arrangements, Blending Irish, Scottish and Breton traditions. Not content to play in just one band, Richard soon after joined the celtic-rock band Jiggernaut and more recently the re-invented Celtic/Americana group Beyond the Pale. From traditional,

to avant-guard, to straight up rock and roll, the combination of these bands presented an opportunity to contribute to the redeveloping role of bagpipes in modern music. In 2001 Richard formed the performance troupe Tartanic to explore the realm of mixing theater with music. Playing in Schools, festival, and concerts, Tartanic brings the roll of the bagpipes beyond a strictly musical instrument and allows it to be expressed as a theatrical tool as well. Work with Tartanic lead Richard to involvement with the performance group Wolgemut. Wolgemut represents a complete departure from anything Scottish or celtic, blending medieval and renaissance music with a "rock and roll" show on some very strange looking instruments. All of these endeavors share a common goal; to allow Richard to express his love of bagpipes and their music and to continue the development of bagpipes in new settings. Review from Jayme Lynn Blashke - Green Man Review I first encountered Richard Kean's piping on Jiggernaut's first two releases, the band's self-titled demo EP and In Search of More. I was impressed by Kean's lightning-quick, complex piping, and was eager to hear how his work held up on his solo effort, Shrine. Happily, Kean doesn't disappoint. Alternating between highland bagpipes and smallpipes, Kean plays with one of the crispest, sharpest sounds I've come across. His affinity for challenging arrangements seems to know no bounds -- the more complex, the better would serve nicely as the underlying philosophy of this album. Fellow Jiggernaut member Wolf Loescher serves as co-producer; and has quickly established himself as one of the most aggressive and innovative young producer of Celtic music around. Wolf also accompanies Kean on eight of the ten tracks here, providing backing percussion that comfortably accentuates the piping without getting overwhelmed at any point. The track selection here is a real joy. The disc opens with "And Now, the Reels" which strings together such traditional selections as "Glass of Beer" and "Rocky Mountain Road" with the E.J. Jones composition "Lifting the Sod." That opening barrage, with scorching piping and minimalist djembe accompaniment serves notice that seat belts must be fastened, because this is going to be a white-knuckled ride. Kean wisely follows that opening up with a smooth change of pace, giving the listener a taste of his original work on "Jimi the Piper." The smallpipes set up a odd mellow buzz, with a slipper, shifting tempo that is hard to get a handle on. It's a curious tune, one that I find myself listening to over and over trying to figure out, but my grasp on it is fleeting. Like a musical version of Rubiks Cube, I wonder if I'll ever "solve" this clever puzzle. "Leaving Port Dietrich" another Kean original also featuring the smallpipes, commemorates the Scottish native's first trip to Houston and the coffee shop he frequented there. More traditional in tempo

and style, the understated droning evokes scenes of the early morning hours when dew still sparks on the grass and the world, though stirring, hasn't awakened yet. If any bagpipe music could be called soothing, this would be it. A particular highlight is "Marche des petits Doigts," a lilting tune from Brittany in which Kean and Loescher (who picks up a bouzouki to accompany his percussion) are joined by E.J. Jones of Clandestine fame on a Breton bombarde. The music skips along, inviting anyone within earshot to get up and dance. The set is filled with layered complexity, and has a weight and substance to it that is unexpected. The title track, "Shrine," is an odd eastern-themed smallpipes arrangement that Kean built around Buddhist sensibilities. The overall effect is dreamy and reminds me somewhat of George Harrison's musical experimentation with eastern mysticism. Certainly, it's not what you'd expect to find on a pipe album. But this is what I like about ambitious, independent releases -- the artists aren't afraid to push back the boundaries and take chances. More Celtic musicians, straight-jacketed by tradition, should take such attitudes. "Farewell Pixel," a waltz named after a cat lost during tropical storm Allison in 2001, is suitably melancholy for the subject matter, and echoes several traditional pieces throughout -- most notably "Greensleeves" -- before picking up the tempo for an upbeat, optimistic finish. Curiously, Kean has slipped an "Easter Egg" onto the end of the disc, a hyper-kinetic riff on the traditional "The Mason's Apron." This short but intense out take from the formal recording sessions is exhausting just to listen to. If nothing else, it proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that Kean has very, very nimble fingers. One thing I realized after listening to Shrine several times is that there is no backing band. That took me by surprise. Other than Loescher's percussion and E.J. Jones's guest piping on that one track, Kean's piping is the only sound operating here. It doesn't sound that way when you listen, however. The arrangements are so spot-on, the piping so layered and textured, that the illusion of a full ensemble is created and never dispelled. Normally I'm not a fan of solo piping, feeling the instrument works best when balanced by other instruments that blunt the often-overbearing sound of bagpipes. But here, well, Kean has convinced me otherwise. Piping fans should make it a point to check out this effort, and non-fans, well, they should probably check it out as well to see if Kean doesn't change their minds.

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