

## Mp3 Shilelagh Law - Good Intentions



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Moments of exuberance, compellingly-presented history, the twins of love and loss, Shilelagh Law segues from point to point like an artist with a beer-soaked paintbrush. 14 MP3 Songs WORLD: Celtic, FOLK: Traditional Folk Details: Like a gifted modern painter with a beer-soaked brush, New York's Shilelagh Law communicates the Irish-American experience with unflinching reality and amazing color. 'Good Intentions,' their third album, abounds with the energy, insight, and humor that inevitably emerge from the far corner of the bar at 4 a.m. 'Good Intentions' showcases a more mature and polished version of Shilelagh Law. "It was our goal to show some growth and really put our personal stamp on Irish music with this effort," says Richard Popovic, lead singer and guitarist. "We had more confidence in ourselves as musicians and a better sense of direction going into the studio this time around. We wanted to feature our songwriting and concentrate on achieving the sound we knew we were capable of producing. The result is a tight, deliberate collection of songs we are very proud of." The album's first cut, the title track 'Good Intentions,' tears out of the gate, perfectly capturing the feel of the band while setting the tone for the rest of the album. It follows the story of a well-meaning soul from his earliest days of Catholic school to his defiant though lonely end. He is a character we are all familiar with: well meaning, likeable, but ultimately flawed, a loveable rogue who makes an excellent drinking partner but whom we would never allow to date our sister. The story is spun over the Law's trademark no-holds-barred style and is highlighted throughout by some dazzling fiddle work by Denis McCarthy. Six more original songs stand out as the true stars of this solid release. Terence Brennan (percussion, vocals) contributes 'Boys of '98', a historical rebel song in the vein of the Wolfetones that easily holds its own against the best of this genre, and 'Here We Go,' a modern day anthem that pays tribute to Brennan's roots in hardcore music. Popovic's 'Weariness Falls Away' is a spare and haunting love song, while his 'Songs to Sing' is a

revealing look into what it is really like to be in a working pub band. Popovic and Denis McCarthy (fiddle, tin whistle, piano) collaborated on 'Nothing Gold Can Stay,' a pretty ballad that wistfully looks back upon the pleasures of youth while celebrating the present. McCarthy also penned 'Meet Me on McLean,' a snappy tribute to an avenue in Yonkers famous for its abundance of pubs and Irish culture. Aside from their own compositions, there are some traditional standards that are sure to bring a smile and raise a few eyebrows. Their treatment of 'Broad Black Brimmer' breathes new life into an old tune, and their reworked version of Terence Winch's classic 'When NY was Irish' is inspired, to say the least. The Law proves they can bring it down a notch with a melodic 'Wild Mountain Thyme,' and their faithful rendition of 'Green Fields of France' is stirring, especially in these troubled times. Fans who revel in their music served up fast and faster will certainly get into 'Finnegan's Wake' and 'Whiskey You're the Devil,' and I challenge you not to smile while listening to 'Jug of Punch.' A nod to the classic recordings of The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, the whole band steps to the microphone for this one. Everyone takes a lead verse, including Steve Gardner (bass), a man more accustomed to the shadows. The song ends this album on a perfect note. With everyone pitching in, the sense of true camaraderie and humor that makes this band special really shines through. Musically, there is a lot to be said for Shilelagh Law and this album in particular. Instead of turning out a formulaic album that echoed their previous two, they branch out into different styles, rhythms and instruments, and it pays off. Kevin McCarthy (accordion) lends a depth and texture to the tracks that makes you miss him when he sits one out. The bodhran, a notoriously difficult instrument to record, comes through crisply and allows Brennan to finally receive the prominence that players of his caliber deserve. Popovic's guitar is clear and warm, Gardner's acoustic bass lends a welcome smoothness, and McCarthy's fiddle and flute work will make you wonder if there was a symphony sitting in. Touches of piano and banjo are also a nice surprise. But the true treat is the harmonies. These guys can really sing, a fact that is easily lost in the often rambunctious sing-a-longs. Beautiful two and three part harmonies are scattered throughout the recording like flowers after a spring rain-refreshing, alive, and lovely to behold. 'Good Intentions' is a must-have for any fan of the band and is sure to earn them plenty of more fans along the way. Fourteen songs that perfectly capture the Irish-American experience all wrapped up in a handsome and tasteful jacket--this disc is a real treat.

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