

# Mp3 MacCrimmon's Revenge - Ecstasy



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Acoustic based Celtic/World music, both primal and cerebral, once described by a film maker as "like mouldy trolls wheezing in caves." 10 MP3 Songs WORLD: World Fusion, WORLD: African- North Details: MacCrimmon's Revenge is an all-acoustic 6-person ensemble whose sound was once described by a film director as ...mouldy trolls wheezing in caves. ECSTASY follows from several years of inspired independent instrumental composition, which represents a significant contribution to the Canadian celtic music genre. While based in the celtic tradition of tin whistles, traditional bagpipes driving guitar rhythms, ECSTASY also incorporates instruments from a rich world music palette including the Turkish oud, Irish uilleann pipes, cello, African percussion, tenor banjo, the unmistakable drone of the Australian didgeridoo. The 10 tracks which comprise ECSTASY have been accepted for mastering by Bob Katz, a world-famous Grammy-award winning engineer, at his studio in Florida. Halifax Chronicle-Herald March 9, 2007 MacCrimmons Revenge revels in Ecstasy Celtic band set to release new CD and dips deeply into "pibroch tradition By STEPHEN PEDERSEN Arts Reporter Glenn Coolen is a bagpiper with a rogue gene. Growing up in Nova Scotia pipe bands, he learned to play what pipers call "the Little Music" (Ceol Beag in Gaelic), consisting of dance music, marches and airs accompanied by drums. But he wanted something else. He travelled to 40 different countries in search of Ceol Mor "the Great Music," the obscure, expressive, less formally rigid art of piobaireachd also pronounced "pibroch." "The pibroch tradition of Ceol Mor was lost for a couple of hundred years," Coolen said over coffee Wednesday morning. "It was picked up by people who really didnt understand it like the British military." "The (true) pibroch tradition has been transmitted by metaphorical stories because the only musical link we have comes from transcriptions by classically trained British violinists. But we believe that in the stories is information about how the people wanted the music to sound." Together with Mark Currie (didgeridoo,

bodhran, percussion), Guy Major (acoustic guitar, vocals) and Ian MacMillan (African and Latin hand drums, percussion) Coolen helped found Nova Scotias most unusual Celtic band, MacCrimmons Revenge. Saturday at 8 p.m. in St. Matthews United Church, MacCrimmons Revenge release its second CD, Ecstasy, in a concert of pibroch-inspired original music. The six-member band now includes cellist John Spearns and Jeff Harper, who plays banjo, whistles and guitar as well as the lute-like Turkish oud. Coolen plays Scottish lowland bagpipes, Uilleann pipes, whistles and drones. Ecstasy, from which most of the music on the release concert comes, is both musically and technically a work of high art. Mastered by Floridas Bob Katz, the music is filled with layers of instrumental timbres which seem to be separated not just to the left and right as in conventional stereo, but back to front in a sort of three-dimensional musical plaid. The effect is enchanting. "Katz wrote the bible on mastering," Coolen said. "He is the ears these days for acoustic music. He thinks most CDs are too loud, that they should have more dynamic range." An ideal fit then, for the unique MacCrimmons Revenge sound, a Celtic sound, ranging from the uproar of an orchestra to the transparent vigour of a Renaissance dance, with an acoustic impression of resonant space between the players. "Our style comes from three things: bagpipes, drones and Celtic rhythmercussion," Coolen said. "There was no Celtic percussion until bodhran came along about 100 years ago. Till pipe bands came along where were no drums." "Much of our stuff is North African hand-drumming. Ians focus is on how to introduce new types of percussion to a musical tradition that only has a 100-year history of percussion." "You can tune a Djembe (African hand drum). When you think of a drum as a pitched (melodic) instrument, then a whole world opens up. Many (Celtic) drummers seem to have come from playing a drum kit and are not used to thinking of drums as a melodic instrument." Then there is the didgeridoo, a long hollow tube which Australian aboriginals used for communicationit can be heard for miles across the Outback. "Pipe bands are grounded in the sound of the drones you cant change key," Coolen said. "But when the drone is a didgeridoo it can not only change pitch, but it can also be a percussion instrument." All of the music MacCrimmons Revenge plays is original and notated. They never stop exploring new possibilities. "We have all these layers," said Coolen. "We develop our own language. Our instrumentation is unique. Our melodies have little shards of rhythm and melodic lines from pibroch." There is a tradition that Scotlands clan MacCrimmon, a clan honoured for its extraordinary piping, was named for the Italian town of Cremona, home to the most famous violin makers of the 17th century. Coolen said they came to Scotland in the 16th century and started to make bagpipes and set up

schools to teach piping. "Someone coming from away, who didnt know Celtic music, did something new and became the most famous piping family in Scotland," Coolen said. "Thats where the name, MacCrimmons Revenge, comes from. We formed ourselves to discover what Celtic music would have been without drum-kit, without the English/St. Paddys Day beer-drinking songs."

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