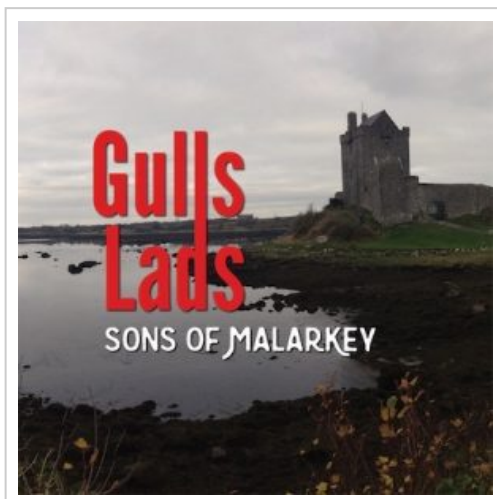


Sons of Malarkey – Gulls Lads (2016)

Posted on **January 23, 2017** by **Grinning Beggar** —

Like 27

G+1 0



Gulls Lads is the 3rd release from Portland Oregon 6 piece **Sons of Malarkey**, and offers great insight into this band. They effortlessly mix traditional Celtic songs, **sailing** songs, and originals, all while utilizing a dizzying assortment of instruments – guitar, accordion, fiddle, whistle, keyboards, drums, bass....too many for my **humble** brain to keep track of. Hell, I wouldn't be surprised if there was a **tuba** in there that I just didn't pick up on. And while this might sound like too much for what they do, they make it work. **Very well.**

The CD kicks off with Leaving of Liverpool. I **personally** love this song, and have heard more renditions than I can count. Luckily, the Sons do it **justice** with their blend of classic & modern instruments, giving it a nice **balance**

between traditional pub song and rollicking sing along, with just enough kick. A perfect way to set the tone. Their **instrumentals** (*Fiona's Chicken & Waffles*, *Killarney Boys of Pleasure* & *McMahon's Reel*) are very **tight** and filled with intricate melodies between the instrumentation. "Rocky Road", "Marie's Wedding" & "Foggy Dew" are equally **well-crafted** – songs that you all know & love, but with the Son's personal **twist**

added. Rocky Road threw me off with the addition of the keyboard, but it was a welcome change for a song that everyone knows, and really set the **mood** without drastically altering it. The same with Foggy Dew – they changed it just enough to make it theirs & seem **fresh**, without taking anything away from the depth of it.

The songwriting on the **original** tracks are brilliant, to say the least. “Case for Hurricanes” and “Captain” are slower numbers, with the latter having an almost **bluesy** feel that was unexpected but welcome. “Oh Journey” and “Angel” will have you crying in your **pint** if you aren’t prepared for it. “So Far Away” and “Tell Me Why” are again filled with their **signature** blend of traditional instruments with modern, and the fiddle **layered** throughout really lifts them to another level. And last but not least, my 2 **favorite** songs on the CD, “To The Gulls Lads” and “Nothing More Honest”. To The Gulls is a lyrical **masterpiece**, that’s reminiscent on Thousands Are Sailing by the Pogues, and I mean that in the best possible way. Nothing More Honest is a very bittersweet song that really grabbed me, and any song that can stir up **emotion** like that is a winner in my book.



I’ve never seen the **Sons of Malarkey** live, but after listening to this release I could easily see myself settling in with a pint at my favorite pub and listening to these guys for hours. With songs of **rebellion**, love, loss and hope, combined with expansive instrumentation and a fresh take on the **classics**, it seems they have a little something for everyone. Slainte.

~Knuckles