

Exclaim! Magazine

By Brent Hagerman

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Celtae's story is as old as Canada: East coasters leave the bonny provinces to find work in Ontario. The twist comes when four musicians from the four Atlantic provinces pool their talent and unique styles to form a cornucopia of Canadian Celtic music. No Regrets is the acoustic band's hardy debut recording and it is an accurate account of the pub-stomping energy that must represent their live shows. From the get-go, No Regrets has a split agenda: narrate and compose versus play hard and pay homage to tradition. The band's two songwriters keep half of the album story-filled but leave enough room for five instrumentals, the best of which was composed by the band's original fiddler, Jules Sisk. Called "Killer Cod," the set of tunes is a partially narrated tale of a military experiment gone awry with some of the meanest and prettiest Acadian, Argentinean and Celtic fiddlin' this side of the Grand Banks. Newcomer Dana Arrowsmith (from Northern Ontario) shows of her own humour and four-string prowess with a set of tunes dubbed "Dana Wears the Pants" (referring to the fact that the three men in the band wear kilts, while she sports dungarees). Whether Celtae are singing a rousing Stan Rogers-inspired sea shanty, an a cappella disaster dirge or getting assistance from producer Brian Talbot (Slainte Mhath) on a funky-up traditional reel, the smell of fish, salt and maybe a bit of maritime steak is always strong on No Regrets.