

# MUSIC

*Irish*

May 2007

Gan Bua

Live at Martyrs'

11 Tracks Running Time 52:17

Self Produced

The Chicago based quintet of Gan Bua is a gathering of musicians from across the American Midwest who are among the finest in traditional music in America. Led by percussionist Jackie Moran and fiddler Christy Bain, the group is rounded out with Brian Hart on vocals and concertina, Brian Miller on Guitar, and Sean Gavin on pipes, flute and whistles. "Live at Martyrs" highlights the band's strengths, with nary a weakness to be seen, and is as well-developed as any studio production could showcase. It is a work without gimmicks, where the musicianship is of the highest quality.

Their opening gambit is one that almost takes the match. "Up in the Garret/Seanin da bhfaigheadh/Perrywig Jockey" has a pair of jigs surrounding the vocals of Brian Hart. Sean Gavin's spirited piping is featured on Drumngarry/Dulaman Na Binne Bui/ Thady Casey's, and then on the next set, "The Ballykeel/Condon's Frolics/The Humors of Glynn/Lietrim Fancy. Christy Bain's fiddling is both strong, as on "Bobby Casey's/The Otters Holt/The Easy Club", and understated, quietly painting the vocals on "Hares Dream". Brian Miller's guitar slips easily from rhythm to lead and back again throughout the album. Jackie Moran's percussion is the driving force on many of the reels, but it also a restrained but effective feature on "Jig of Slurs/September Wedding/Padrig O'Keeffe's." Hart's vocals are reminiscent of Johnny Moynihan's or Andy Irvine's.

Gan Bua is the essence of a superb band, collaborative in nature, and able to build upon the best qualities of other's playing, and unselfish in sharing the leads. In many ways it is a throwback to the playing of the 1960's and 1970's, keeping the music down the path of tradition.

"Live at Martyrs" is a piece one can play without fear of wearing out its welcome.

Brian G Witt