

Irish fest will have new look

By Katie Vaughn | Friday, September 15, 2006 |

With all the styles and genres available at young musicians' fingertips, it can be surprising when a group of 20 and 30-somethings chooses a centuries-old form to practice.

But there's nothing stale or stodgy about Gan Bua, a Chicago-based band that infuses traditional Irish music with innovative twists. Meaning "without talent" in Gaelic, the five band members came together based on mutual interests, said Christy Bain, the band's fiddle player and co-founder.



"This band was formed through a mutual love for Irish music and the performance of it," Bain said. "We had all known each other for years, from being in the 'scene' as it were. We decided to start a band project, and it is taking us to great places."

Along with co-founder, percussionist and vocalist Jackie Moran, flutist and Uilleann Pipes player Sean Gavin, vocalist and instrumentalist Brian Hart, and guitarist and vocalist Brian Miller, Bain travels to festivals and concert venues across the country to perform.

According to Bain, while band members range in age from 20 to 34, Irish music is not necessarily growing a young audience base. Rather, the relatively small genre is enjoyed by a mix of young and old people, he said. Regardless of age, he said the band loves a lively audience for its music.

"Our audiences can expect a great balance of interesting and exiting instrumentals and captivating songs," Bain said. "We're looking forward to sharing the Irish tradition with the people of the Quad Cities."

Gan Bua will get the chance to do so tomorrow, when it makes its debut at the Erin Feis in the District of Rock Island. The band is one of several changes to the annual celebration of Irish culture, said entertainment co-chair Sara Brewster.