## **Mp3 Switchback - Bolinree**



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Celtic-rock interpretation of traditional and original Irish music with an American roots influence. 9 MP3 Songs WORLD: Celtic, ROCK: Acoustic Details: The duo of Martin McCormack and Brian FitzGerald, known as Switchback, have released their 8th album, titled Bolinree. Two years in the making, the album is a tribute to the duo's Celtic roots. Several well-known artists in the Irish and Americana musical worlds joined Switchback for the making of this album: All-Ireland Fiddler Champion and National Heritage recipient Liz Carroll; Chicago squeeze-box legend (and member of the traditional Irish group, Solas) John Williams; and percussionist for such rock icons as Brian Wilson and Elton John Jim Hines. The CD was produced by Texas legend and Grammy-winner Lloyd Maines and features his pedal steel, guitar and dobra. "Brian and I started out playing traditional Irish music almost 19 years ago," says Martin McCormack. "It has never left our song writing and has permeated our musical style. So we look right at it with Bolinree and take our listeners 'to meet the family,' so to speak....Hear our roots and see how we've adapted to them." Bolinree is the name of the town land where McCormack's grandfather, Luke McCormack, came from in Claremorris, County Mayo, Ireland. It is also the title track of the CD, a traditional style Irish waltz about McCormack's first visit to meet his family in Ireland. "I grew up hearing about Ireland from my grandfather," McCormack explains. "I felt that I had been to Ireland even before I set foot in it and from early on, that always had a strange pull on me. It was reinforced by growing up with the Irish dance, music and gatherings in Chicago. I had a sense of identity, but I didn't know exactly what that meant. When I first came to Ireland, it only deepened my sense of being Celtic, being Irish and being American and how they did and didn't mesh. That plurality of 'being' has always had a powerful effect on me that I am still working out with my music." The duo first met at an Irish pub in the western suburbs of Chicago in 1980's and started working together with an ensemble led by the Chicago concertina player

Terrence "Cuz" Teahan. Later, they formed the Wailin' Banshees, along with Chicago fiddler Mary McDonagh and banjo player (and 2003 Comhaltas Ceoltir ireann Chicago Hall of Fame recipient) Bertie McMahon. The Banshees were together for over seven years and recorded one album. McMahon died in 2003 and Bolinree is dedicated to his memory. "We learned a lot from the traditional musicians," says Brian FitzGerald. "Cuz Teahan had extensive knowledge of traditional tunes and was writing them as well. We would sit and play one reel after another. Later on, Mary and Bertie helped us polish our Irish music. Bertie had many stories about Ireland that helped us with our songwriting. He and Mary McDonagh could also play many Irish tunes, many that we still play today. We were lucky to be able to be part of a group with them. We were on the road when Bertie died and his funeral was held. We wanted to honor him with this CD." The CD contains such familiar songs as the Star of the County Down and The Hills of Connemara. There are also several jigs and reels that have been arranged by Switchback. All in all the style of music ranges from traditional to Celtic-rock. The original compositions also are steeped in a Celtic musical brew. "We have always had a strong Irish element in our original music," says FitzGerald. "Bolinree has an old-fashioned Irish ballad feeling to it. Dance in the Living Room is a powerful combination of American rock and Irish traditional music. Love Won't Run Away has the contemporary, mystical feel that is found in a lot of current Irish songs." The contributions of the musicians who joined the duo helped them establish a strong CD. It was the first time that Switchback worked with Liz Carroll, John Williams and Jim Hines. And it was a reunion with Lloyd Maines at the Kingsize Studios of Mike Hagler that brought the album to life. "It was wonderful to have these songs embellished with the great playing of Liz, John and Jim," says FitzGerald. "Liz brought an elegance to our songs. John Williams was amazing at his understanding our desire to make an Irish-American CD. He made that happen with his many contributions on flute, accordion, synthesizer and bodhran. Jim Hines was a pleasure to have on percussion and really held the group together. And it was natural for us to join forces with Lloyd again. Lloyd has his own Irish connections and was very interested in recording this album with us. We also relied on the expertise of Mike Hagler at Kingsize Studios who once again engineered and helped produce the CD." Switchback's last album The Fire That Burns was produced by Maines as well. A Grammy winner and producer of the Dixie Chick's album, Home, Maines is recognized for his many successful projects with up and coming acts. The Fire That Burns was picked as a top independent album by Performing Songwriter Magazine in 2003. Contact SWITCHBACK: WayGood

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