

Less is Gore: How Tipper lost 25 pounds

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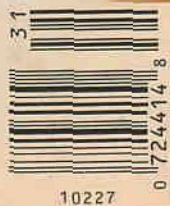
**SLEEPLESS
IN SEATTLE'S**

MEG RYAN

A happy marriage and a new baby help heal the wounds of a long rift with her mother



Meg and husband Dennis Quaid at the film's L.A. premiere





quips, may account for his own restlessness. "I never wanted to stay planted in one place."

At 19, he joined the Irish immigrant wave to New York. A guitarist, singer, songwriter and budding playwright, Kirwan played with a succession of bands and scored music for several small improvisational and dance theater groups, including one run by choreographer and dancer June Anderson. "We met at a party," Kirwan says. "She told me she'd like to get a piece of music that would inspire her like Van Morrison does. I was drunk and said, 'Sure, no problem.'" Prolific collaborators ever since, the two married six years ago and now have two children, Jimmy, 5, who appears in the "Funky Ceili" video, and Rory, 3. Last spring, a Soho theater presented a dance piece directed and choreographed by Anderson, with music by Kirwan, during a program that also included the latest of his six plays, *Blood*, about the Irish uprising of 1916.

Black 47, meanwhile, began as a twosome in 1989 when Kirwan hooked up with Chris Byrne, 30, a Brooklyn-born cop—now on leave from his Hell's Kitchen beat—who had learned to play Irish folk instruments during summers in the old country with his parents' families. The quirky mix of Kirwan's electric guitar and Byrne's uilleann pipes—"a bellows with flute attached," Kirwan says—disturbed customers at the more traditional Irish pubs in the Bronx where the duo debuted. "They flat out hated us," says Byrne.

By the time the group began playing Reilly's in 1990, former Dexy's *Midnight Runners* sax player Geoff Blythe, 38, and two Yanks—trombonist and whistler Fred Parcells, 38, and percussionist Thomas ("My girlfriend's Irish") Hamlin, 34—had signed on. Since then, Black 47 has performed at Reilly's more than 700 times. Though touring will take them out of town this summer, the band intends to keep playing the hothouse where it first flowered. "We always connect with the audience at Reilly's. There's this incredible rush," says Kirwan. "I'd be crushed if it didn't happen. It'd be like bad sex . . . if there is such a thing."

■ STEVE DOUGHERTY in New York City

▲ "There's a real feeling of empathy between the band and the audience," says Kirwan (on-stage at Reilly's in New York City).

◀ Kirwan helped his wife, June Anderson, translate the Gaelic epic poem "Lament for Art O'Laoghaire" for her Soho production.



Young, the Clash's Joe Strummer and Bob Dylan have all joined the throngs there.

When former Cars driver Ric Ocasek showed up with his supermodel wife, Paulina Porizkova, he offered to produce Black 47's first full-length album. "I didn't know who Paulina was," confesses Kirwan. "I couldn't figure out why everyone was asking for her autograph. Finally I asked, 'Who's your friend?'" Once his Paulina consciousness was raised, a deal was struck, and last March, *Fire of Freedom* hit the stores. Thanks to a popular MTV video of one of the band's bar hits, "Funky Ceili (Bridie's Song)"—about an Irish cad who flees to the Bronx when the father of his pregnant girlfriend threat-

ens to castrate him—Black 47's fame spread far beyond Reilly's.

Last spring, Kirwan's politically charged lyrics—"James Connolly" is about the martyred Irish socialist; "Black 47" rants against British economic policies that helped cause the Irish potato famine that culminated in 1847—struck a chord among the John Deere crowd at the Farm Aid concert in Ames, Iowa. "Wherever the economy is not going good," Kirwan says, "that's where we do well."

Probably because Kirwan knows of what he sings. One of five children, he grew up on a small farm in Wexford, on Ireland's southeast coast. His father was a merchant seaman, and his mum ran her father's headstone business, which, Kirwan

Black 47 rocks with its songs of the old sod

IRISH UPRISING

ABANDON ALL HOPE OF AIR CONDITIONING, ye who enter Paddy Reilly's. The blue-collar pub on Manhattan's East Side where the Irish American rock brigade, Black 47, holds sway over a sweat- and Guinness-soaked crowd each week is hot as Hades and twice as crowded. Which is

fine with Larry Kirwan, the band's fiery-haired lead singer, who says the wilting heat is good for his voice and the band's combustion. "Welcome to Reilly's sweathouse!" he shouts as the group reels into "Maria's Wedding," about an Irish lout who disrupts an ex-girlfriend's nuptials.

Such rousing cautionary tales, sung with beery but impassioned punch by Kirwan, 36, and performed at warp speed with four bandmates thrubbing an odd assortment of electric guitars, Irish pipes, drums, horns and tin whistles, have earned Black 47 an ecstatic following in New York. The group's twice-weekly gigs at Reilly's are among the hottest, hippest tickets in town. Robin Williams, Matt Dillon, Ellen Barkin and Irish hubby Gabriel Byrne, as well as rock icons Neil



A "Irish music is popular," says Kirwan (right, with, from left, Parcels, Blythe, Hamlin and Byrne), "because the oral tradition still exists there."