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AMERICA

Longtime New York Celtic band Black 47 to call it quits next year

Group leader Larry Kirwan announced the musicians' split in an email.

BY [JIM FARBER](#) / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

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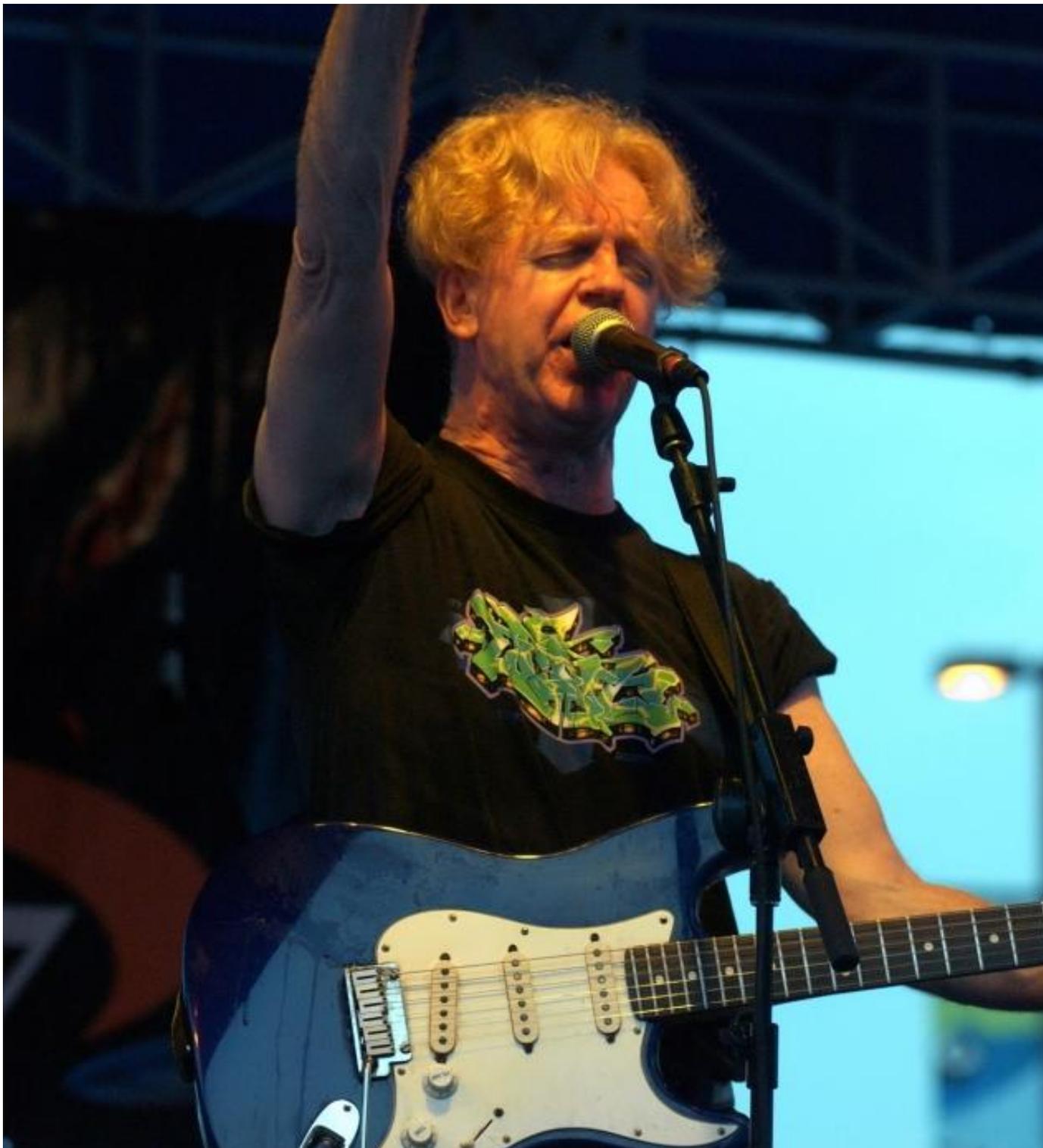
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MCALPIN, REBECCA

Lead singer of Black 47 Larry Kirwan performs at the South Street Seaport. Kerwin announced that the band would cease playing together in an email to his fans.

Black 47 - New York's most prominent, political and beloved Celtic band - will fade to black in November of 2014.

In an email sent out by band leader [Larry Kirwan](#), the singer announced that the group will pull-the-plug just over 13 months from now.

The timing coincides with the 25th anniversary of Black 47's first gig.

PHOTOS: ROCK BANDS WITH NEW LEAD SINGERS

In a long and detailed statement, the musician claims "there are no fights, differences over musical policy, or general skulduggery. We remain as good friends as when we first played together."

Kirwan puts the split down to "a simple wish to finish up at the top our game after 25 years of relentless touring and, as always, on our own terms. The last gig we played at the South Buffalo Irish Festival was as good as any we've ever performed. Our goal now is to play another full year plus and dedicate all those performances to you who've supported us through thick and thin."



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(Left to right) Thomas Hamlin, Geoffrey Blythe, Andrew Goodstight, Larry Kirwan, Fred Parcells and Chris Byrne in 1999. Kirwan announced that Black 47 would disabnd in November 2014.

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Kirwan, who has his own radio show on Sirius XM, also promises new music from the band. "Rather than just running out the clock," he wrote, "we will be recording 'Last Call,' an album of new songs this November. We would like to say good-bye to you all personally and will make every effort to come play in your city, town, college, pub, club, performing arts center and should you wish to alert your local promoter you can download booking particulars here."

PHOTOS: BANDS REUNITED

Kirwan, a native Irishman from Wexford, moved to New York at age 19. He formed the band with Brooklyn policeman Chris Byrne in 1989. They took their name from 1847, the worst year of the Great Irish Famine.

The group created their fan base by playing relentlessly at Paddy Reilly's bar on the East Side of Manhattan. They got their national breakout after being heard by Frank Murray, manager of the great Celtic-punk band The Pogues. They released their first album, "Home of the Brave, Live in London," in 1989.

In his missive, Kirwan summed up the band's core meaning and legacy. "Black 47 has always been more than a band. We've spoken out for the nationalist population in the North of Ireland, against the war but for the troops in Iraq, for our gay brothers & sisters, immigrants - legal and undocumented - as well as for the voiceless of 1845-47."

Yet, Kirwan admits, "in the end it all comes down to the music, the songs, and the desire to give audiences the time of their lives and send them home smiling and, perhaps, with a question on their lips. We look forward to seeing you all at the upcoming gigs. Thanks for the support and the memories - lets make many more over the next year."

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