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BLACK 47 - RISE UP

[A SoundPress.net CD Review](#)



Black 47 Gets Revolutionary in Retirement

Black 47 in the course of their 25 year career have looked at Irish & Irish-American life through the eyes of activists and the working class from past through present times. *Rise Up* is a collection of 15 out of a possible 50 political songs that Black 47 has recorded over the years. The CD opens with a rallying version of "Patriot Game (Behan)" from their early days and closes with Black 47's latest caustic commentary in "US of A 2014".

Black 47 announced in 2013 that they would be calling it quits in the fall of 2014. In the past year the band has been on tour, releasing *Last Call* with *Rise Up* being the last official album from Black 47. It is a partial summary of their political body of work. Their sound has always been varied melding traditional Irish instruments with rap reggae, rock and more.

Lead singer/songwriter Larry Kirwan is also a playwright thus his songs are stories that go to the heart of a character or in some cases real people. Larry has a gritty vocal quality that works well in the context of issues that one could picture being debated over a pint of Guinness. Kirwan's observations span the world from Baghdad to Belfast then back to where it all began in NYC.

In addition to the career spanning bookends of the CD there are other highlights such as the classic "James Connolly" a sharp shooting anthem of fighting for labor & liberty. "Change" features lots of changes blending a reggae vibe with horns. "The Big Fella" is also diverse with Mary Martello solemnly singing before Black 47 struts in with bold instrumentation.

In "Stars and Stripes" Larry implies over a snappy rhythm that "it is patriotic to disagree with your government". "Downtown Bagdad Blues" is another jab at American policy makers. The track is a look at life during wartime with dissonance and distortion punctuating the points along with helicopter sound samples. "Joe's Hill's Last Will" is a stark piece based on a statement written by a man named Joe Hill who was executed in SLC in 1915 on trumped up murder charges. Since 1989, Black 47 has spoken out for the working class, stood up against the war in Iraq and put out an assorted and astute body of work culminating with *Rise Up*.

Black 47: Larry Kirwan - guitar/vocals; Joseph "Bearclaw" Burcaw - bass; Geoff Blythe - saxophones; Fred Parcells - trombone/whistle; Thomas Hamlin - drums; Joseph Mulvanerty - uilleann pipes/bodhran

• **Info:** -- USA/NY: [Black 47](#) (Laura Turner Lynch/[SoundPress.net](#))

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