



BLACK 47 – ROCKY SULLIVAN’S, BROOKLYN, NY 10/11/14 (SHOW REVIEW)

🕒 October 22, 2014 👤 by [Shawn Donohue](#)

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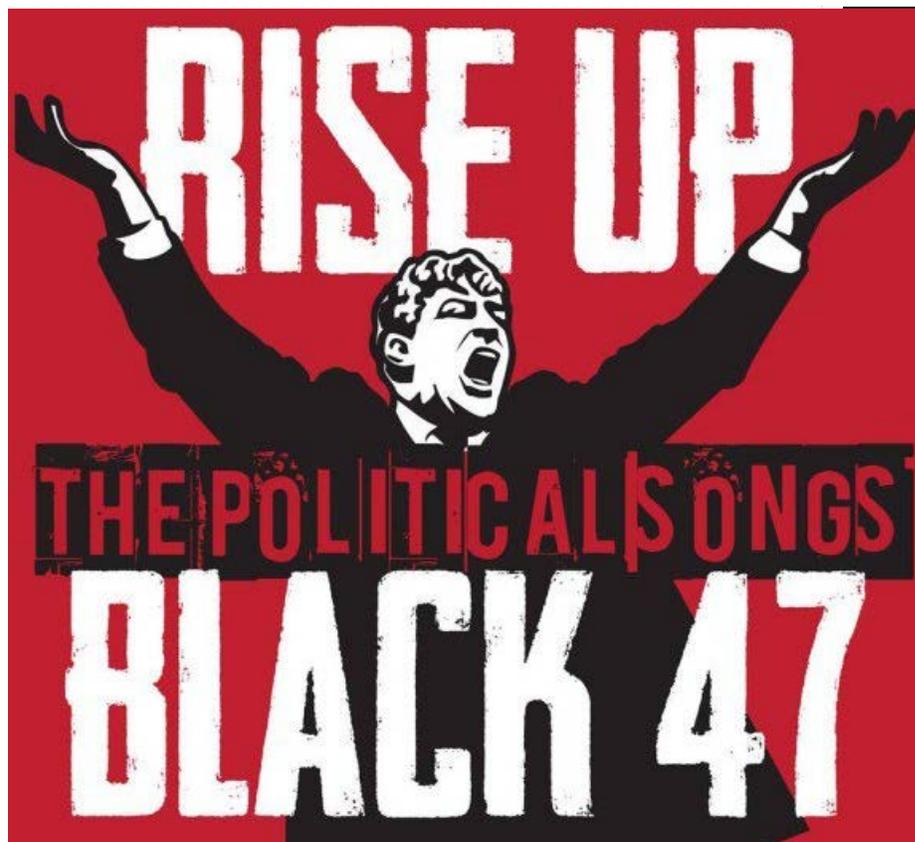


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A successful New York institution is hanging it up in 2014 after a year-long farewell tour, and no this review has nothing to do with Derek Jeter.

Black 47, who have been playing New York City's finest drinking establishments for over 30+ years, are turning on the lights and shouting last call as they close the book on their life as a band.

The group is currently finishing up playing their favorite haunts in town and across the country, but one night in particular stuck out on the schedule; Saturday night's headlining set at Rocky Sullivan's in Red Hook Brooklyn. Founding member Chris Byrne is Rocky Sullivan's owner and with his band The Lost Tribe of Donegal slated to perform before Black 47 there was hope for a reunion on this gorgeous fall night.



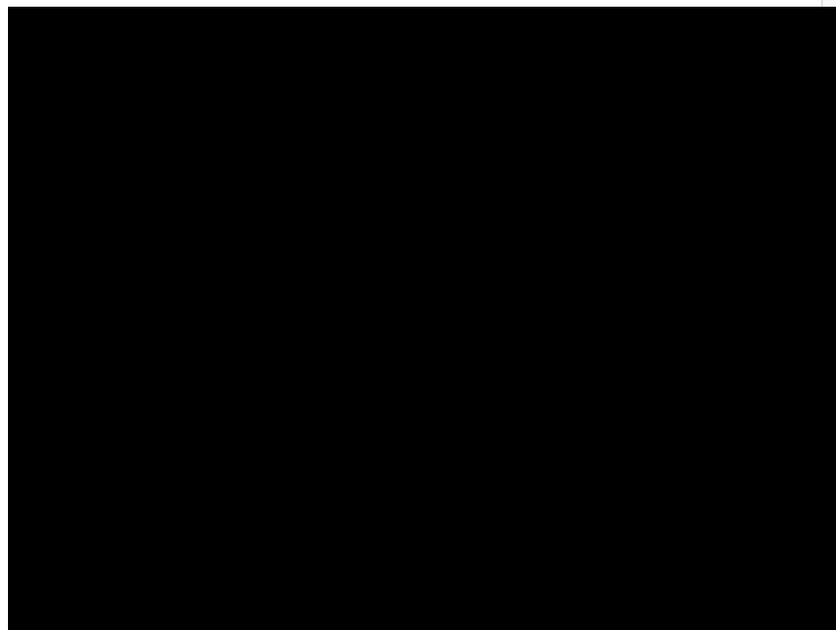
Before either band took the stage **Kevin McCormack** started things out with a set of gaelic flavored acoustic numbers backed by a fellow guitarist. Letting the crowd choose he ended his set with a rollicking “Rocky Road To Dublin” as happy fans sang along. **The Lost Tribe of Donegal** were up next and while Byrne has aged, his **Clash** inspired vocal tone and attitude are there and dominant, only now it is paired with an acoustic folk backing as opposed to the hip hop of his **Seanchai** days.

The headliners opened with their tribute to Michael Collins, “The Big Fella” from their 1994 release *Home Of The Brave*, but the song has found another life after being featured in Season 3 of *Sons of Anarchy*. Putting the crowd back in mid 90's form was a theme on this night as the small room sounded alive but never chaotic. The polished twin brass of Geoffrey Blythe and Fred Parcells tightly soared while the low end of Thomas Hamlin and Joe Burcaw never overwhelmed the space letting Joseph Mulvanerty pipes dance on top.

“The Reels” got dancers stepping and winning t-shirts, as the band played it extra fast sacrificing the groove before Larry Kirwan mentioned they would be playing some older cuts of theirs for friends in the audience. The successful pairing of their unique take on **Bob Marley's** “3 Little Birds” with the original “Desperate” proved that Celtic-Reggae isn't an oxymoron while also recalling the bands best release *Live in New York City*. Also harkening back to that 1996-7 era, Byrne joined his old band for a run through of “Walk All the Days” during which Byrne powerfully sang about both sides of the law and quoted “Police and Thieves”.

Classics like "40 Shades of Blue" and "James Connolly" got the crowd to participate, all though long gone are the days of throwing cigarettes at the stage, but it was the cover combo closer that ended things on a high note. Byrne again joined the group as they tore through "I Fought The Law" and "Gloria" in Black 47's upbeat rocking fashion. Seeing the original two members on stage brought smiles from all including the players themselves during the joyous finale.

Black 47 didn't just turn back the clock with their lineup and set-list, but one of the main takeaways from the night was talking with long time fans who have not been out to a show in many years and yet still walk into a bar (one they used to frequent on Lexington Avenue in Manhattan) and are greeted by smiling faces, dark pints and a friendly pat on the back. The night rolled on long after the music stopped with fans and neighbors chatting with each other, and the band posing for pictures. The family feel and positive vibrations were all around Rocky's and in the end, regardless of who is on stage; that is what it is all about.



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About the author: **Shawn Donohue**

Veteran music writer Shawn Donohue has covered the sound of America for Glide Magazine since 2005. A bass player by trade, when not setting the rhythm for New York City-based Angels and Vagabonds, Shawn writes reviews, interviews and feature articles. He

loves chronicling emerging acts, and has followed the ear's affections from the Big Apple to the Crescent City. Some of his all-time favorite albums are The Who's Quadrophenia, Miles Davis Bitches Brew, and pretty much anything Jack White touches.

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