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BLACK 47

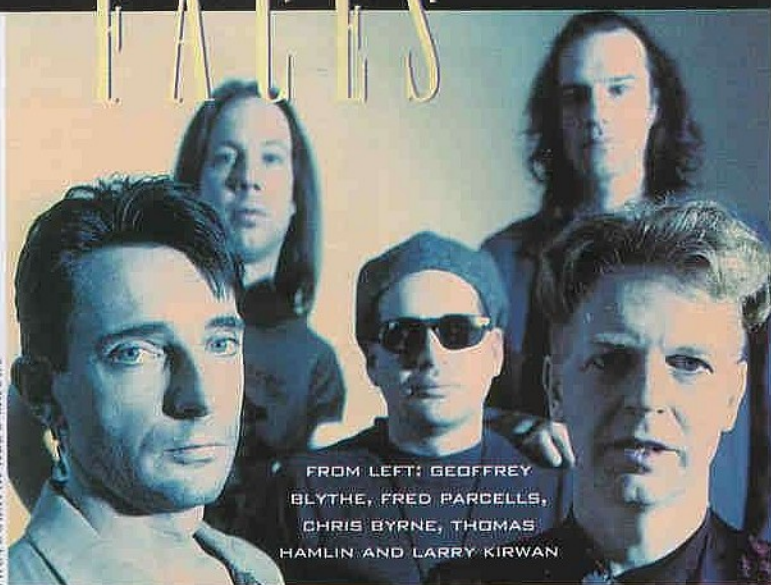
Irish Rock with a World Beat

RED-FACED DECLAMATION, Celtic growls, ring-around-the-collar rhythms and a real nuts-'n'-bolts horn section (pennywhistle, soprano sax, trombone and uilleann pipes)—Black 47 create a distinct sound from the get-go. Outside of Paddy Reilly's, a Manhattan alehouse where the band has whooped it up for the last year or so, a fan describes them as "kind of like the Pogues." Larry Kirwan, who writes and sings all the Black 47 tunes, cites a difference. "They came from a folk background, our roots are in rock. We put the beat down first and the Irish music must accommodate itself to that."

And the beats that they toss around make the bar go nuts. Such exuberance is just as crucial to Black 47's demeanor as catchy chord changes (which they've got), because much of their music houses a fierce political stance. "Free Joe Now," "James Connolly"—tributes to the martyrs and heroes of the Irish immigrant community—go hand in hand with songs of working-class dignity. "We decided to skip CBGBs and hit the Irish bar scene," Kirwan explains. "There the songs have to stand up quick or else you're dead; they want Springsteen stuff. There should be a moratorium on the old two guitar, bass and drums kind of band," Kirwan says.

FACES

PHOTOGRAPH: ALDO MAURO



FROM LEFT: GEOFFREY BLYTHE, FRED PARCELLS, CHRIS BYRNE, THOMAS HAMLIN AND LARRY KIRWAN

"There's just too fucking many! The only originality I hear these days is coming from the African guys." No wonder one song is called "Paddy's Got a Brand New Reel." Black 47 CDs and cassettes are available from Paddy Reilly's pub (495 Second Ave., New York, NY 10016), where they play every Wednesday and Saturday night. JIM MACNIE

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