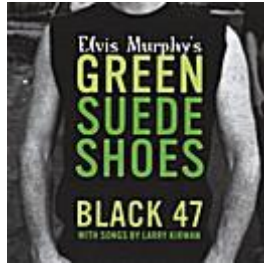


Mp3 Black 47 - Elvis Murphy's Green Suede Shoes



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Driving passionate New York Irish Music 12 MP3 Songs ROCK: Modern Rock, FOLK: Political Details: Black 47 Review by Joel Brown Friday, March 11, 2005 Good news for those planning to celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Irish-American rockers Black 47 at the Middle East on Sunday. The New York band's new album is the catchiest, most accessible thing it has made in ages. It is not as insular and literary as 2004's *New York Town*, even though it's the companion album to bandleader Larry Kirwan's new memoir, *Green Suede Shoes*. It's first and foremost a collection of excellent songs. "Far Side of the Wall" is a melodic hymn to bleary days, "blazin' years" and "breakin' through" - like a Springsteen lyric, but with pipes as well as sax and Stratocaster. "Downtown Baghdad Blues" is a gritty soldier's lament that dares to rhyme "land of Giuliani" with "Ayatollah Sistani." "Elvis Murphy" tells of young Larry's rock 'n' roll awakening. And the potent "Liverpool Fantasy" imagines the thoughts that might have boiled in John Lennon's brain if he'd never made it out of the old neighborhood (the subject of Kirwan's 2003 novel of the same name). The album is drenched in Kirwan's obsessions: New York, politics, Ireland's struggles, the immigrant experience, boozing, rock as liberation. His passionate bray does put off some. But for those who love this scrappy band, the new album is an excellent early St. Pat's present.

theedge.bostonherald.com/discReviews/view.bg?articleid=592 St. Patrick's Day 2005: Chapters and Verse Black 47 front man Larry Kirwan can now add memoirist to a list of titles that include poet, playwright and novelist. In memoir, Black 47's Kirwan traces an immigrant's journey Benjamin Franklin once said, "Either write things worth reading or do things worth the writing." To write one's own life story, both of these criteria must be fulfilled. For those who pick up *"Green Suede Shoes: An Irish American Odyssey"* (Thunder's Mouth Press), the new memoir by Larry Kirwan, best known as the lead singer and guitarist for the rock 'n' roll band Black 47, Kirwan proves worthy on both accounts. "Green Suede

Shoes," which Kirkus Reviews calls a "lively narrative," follows Kirwan through his many travels, triumphs and travails: his upbringing in "cozy" yet "narrow-minded" County Wexford; his baptism into the world of sex (a young lass sitting on his lap), drugs (a bottle of Harp) and rock 'n' roll (Wexford's Elvis Murphy) in the backroom of the Catholic Young Men's Society; his immigration to New York City and subsequent discovery of the "cauldron of varying and competing lifestyles" of the Lower East Side; and the countless stories of over 25 years in the music business. If that doesn't seem like enough to keep you busy, Kirwan's writing inspired a new Black 47 album, titled "Elvis Murphy's Green Suede Shoes," that comes out on St. Patrick's Day as well. Each chapter of the book in fact begins with the lyrics to a Black 47 song. When Kirwan couldn't find a song in the band's back catalogue that fit a chapter, he decided to write a new one. Ironically, the songs of Black 47 were suppose to be the inspiration for the story of his life, but, as Kirwan found out, art doesn't always imitate life. "My editor suggested setting a memoir around the songs of Black 47," Kirwan said recently. "But while some of the songs are autobiographical, others are more fictional, so that using the songs at the beginning of each chapter became more expressionistic." In the end, the songs came to serve as poetic introductions to the essence of each chapter of the book. Despite the different realities represented by the songs and the book, for Kirwan the stimulus to write each is the same. "You can turn an original thought into a song, a book or a play; it's just a different way of looking at it," he said. "A song is about condensing one impression into a three-minute shard, but with prose you have to look at the big picture and let the story flow outward." No matter the medium, anyone familiar with Black 47's music, of which Kirwan is the chief lyricist, knows of Kirwan's prowess as a storyteller. Now with the publication of "Green Suede Shoes," Kirwan has positioned himself to join heralded writers such as Nuala O'Faolain, the McCourts and Hugo Hamilton as the next breakout star of what has been called the "Irish memoir industry." But where many Irish-themed memoirs are focused almost obsessively on reliving the past, Kirwan story is the tale of a man always running, almost at a break-neck pace, toward the future. "Writing the book, I realized the speed with which I made the transition from Irish in Ireland to Irish immigrant to, basically, a New Yorker," Kirwan said. Despite this rapid cultural transition, Kirwan is far from being a man torn by his loyalties. The book shows how Kirwan's abrupt transition has given him a unique perspective on the relationship between the Irish and their Irish-American brothers. "The great unkept secret between the two is that Irish people basically don't like Irish-Americans, at least at first," Kirwan said. "I'm Irish but I'm in a band that plays to a lot of

Irish-Americans, and doing so I quickly grew to like them. I admire their toughness and the lives they've built for themselves and for their children." Such outspokenness is not uncommon in "Green Suede Shoes," the book or the album. In fact, Kirwan's forthright nature seems to be a direct outgrowth of the places he has called home and people with which he has associated. When Kirwan was 10, he moved in with his grandfather and uncle, whose staunch Irish republicanism has had obviously effects on Kirwan's music and writing. And if the rebel attitude was planted in Kirwan in Wexford, then it sprouted and bloomed in downtown Manhattan. During the 1970s, Kirwan found a home and a voice among the punks and immigrants who inhabited what he calls the "Republic of the Lower East Side." Kirwan's affection for the community flows through his writing, and the sections that deal with the neighborhood are among the most resonant and touching passages of "Green Suede Shoes." "It was a vibrant, anarchistic university of the streets," he said. "There was this counterculture feeling that you could reinvent yourself and be whoever you wanted to be." And, having seen bands like the Clash, the Ramones and Television tear through the clubs and bars of his adopted home turf, Kirwan knew exactly what he wanted to become. The book also points out that living in the Lower East Side meant that Kirwan came into contact with a world of tastes, sights and, especially, sounds that were new to him. "The melting pot of communities meant I was exposed to jazz, reggae, hip hop -- all for the first time," Kirwan said. All these new types of musical expression reawakened Kirwan's passion for his own culture. "After being exposed to new experiences, you swing back to your real roots," he said. "Forming Black 47, I took those new sounds and reinterpreted them through my Irish music roots." The trials and tribulations of 15 years of Black 47 feature prevalently in Kirwan's life and his book. He celebrates the good times of the band, like the 1992 hit "Funky Ceili" and the heady days in the early '90s when they were the toast of New York City. Still, Kirwan says the book was also written to serve as a cautionary tale to fellow musicians about the dysfunctional world of the music business. But don't pity him for the band's "Behind the Music" moments. "We knew we were making a deal with the devil every time we signed a record deal," Kirwan said. "But we learned from it and now we are totally independent." Independent musically, maybe, but not cut off from society. Just like Black 47's music, Kirwan's writing is filled with strong opinions on political issues like the current Iraq War. "Elvis Murphy's Green Suede Shoes" even features a track entitled "Downtown Baghdad Blues." "There is not a party line in Black 47, or for our fans," Kirwan said. "As long as we get people thinking, that's cool." Now a U.S. citizen with two children, Kirwan also uses his writing to voice his

concerns about the "alternative universe" of TV and the "tawdry consumer-driven society" we live in. Despite him being a man of his convictions (or probably because of it), don't expect Kirwan to give up playing music to join the list of entertainers who have decided to run for office. "When you get up on stage and hit that first note on an electric guitar, something indescribable goes through you," he said. "I can't give that up." That doesn't mean that Kirwan won't keep trying new things. Having added memoirist to a list of titles that already includes poet, playwright and novelist, Kirwan is, as always, already heading in a new direction. "I'm writing a musical with Tom Cahill, who wrote 'How the Irish Saved Civilization,' about a boatload of Irish women convicts sent to Australia in the 1940s," he said. "Since he has written the script and I am writing the lyrics and music, it's something new and interesting for me." And Kirwan certainly knows that anything new and interesting is something worth doing. This story appeared in the issue of March 9-15, 2005 JANUARY 10, 2005 - New York City - Thunder's Mouth Press/Avalon will publish Green Suede Shoes by Larry Kirwan and Gadfly Records will concurrently release Elvis Murphy's Green Suede Shoes by Black 47 on March 1st. A memoir written by Black 47 frontman Larry Kirwan, Green Suede Shoes begins in Wexford Ireland and traces the impact on a young Kirwan of his Irish Republican grandfather, his mysterious and often absent deep-sea sailing father, and first bandleader Elvis Murphy. These influences would propel him to the riotous Dublin of the early 70's and emigration to New York City where he would eventually form the political rock band, Black 47. On the way he chronicles life in the anarchistic East Village, literary awakening in the Bells of Hell and the Lion's Head, the seminal punk scene in CBGB's, involvement in the Irish Civil Rights and Republican movements during Bobby Sands' Hunger Strike, and life in the throbbing Irish bars and neighborhoods of the Bronx. There are sketches of his work, interaction and friendships with such diverse characters as the McCourt Brothers, Lester Bangs, Cyndi Lauper, Joe Strummer, Nick Tosches, Shane McGowan, Father Mychal Judge, Ric Ocasek and a host of lesser known but equally vibrant New Yorkers from across the political and social spectrum. The book gives a dry-eyed and unsparing account of the tumultuous trajectory of Black 47 from its roots in the Bronx and Paddy Reilly's through a number of major record deals, toast of the town status, deaths of musical associates, van crashes, the shooting at the Academy, closing down of Hoboken, the tragedy of 9/11, and the band's ongoing political commitment and opposition to the war in Iraq. The simultaneous release of their CD, Elvis Murphy's Green Suede Shoes, highlights the lyrics of forty-two of the band's and Kirwan's solo songs including those on Elvis Murphy's Green Suede Shoes, Black 47's most raucous

and stripped down outing since 1991's eponymous independent debut. It takes us on a romp through "The Bells of Hell" with remembrances or appearances by Malachy McCourt, Lester Bangs, Nick Tosches, Billy Altman and Dennis Duggan. The band reprises "Girl Next Door," the first ode to lesbianism to get national radio play before its banning in 1977. They commemorate "Elvis Murphy" in all his rockabilly glory and "Uncle Jim," Kirwan's irrepressible relative, a priest home from the Philippine Islands, who took the boy on a hair-raising and quixotic mission to convert Rev Ian Paisley and avert the Northern Ireland conflict. The band notes its ongoing commitment to Irish civil rights with the tragic "Far Side of the Wall" and its opposition to President Bush's vanity war in Iraq during the controversial "Downtown Baghdad Blues." -more - PAGE 2 / BLACK 47 PR Taking their name from the blackest year of the Irish Potato Famine, Black 47 burst out of the Irish pub scene on the success of 1992's Fire of Freedom (EMI). With their signature eclectic sound, socio-political lyrics and off-the-wall live shows they paved the way for other Irish influenced bands such as The Dropkick Murphys and Flogging Molly. "Too long relegated to the fringes, this Irish-American band belongs to the diminishing ranks of rock acts that balance serious sonic thump with intelligent social commentary," remarked USA Today in a 2004 review of New York Town. The band is led by Larry Kirwan (guitar/vocals), whose plays have been performed both in the US and Europe, while his first novel Liverpool Fantasy, an alternate history of the Beatles, was published in 2003. Black 47 will embark on a U.S. tour following the release of Elvis Murphy's Green Suede Shoes, with confirmed two-show performance at The Knitting Factory in New York City on St. Patrick's Day. Visit [black47for](#) for tour updates and a full history of the band.

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