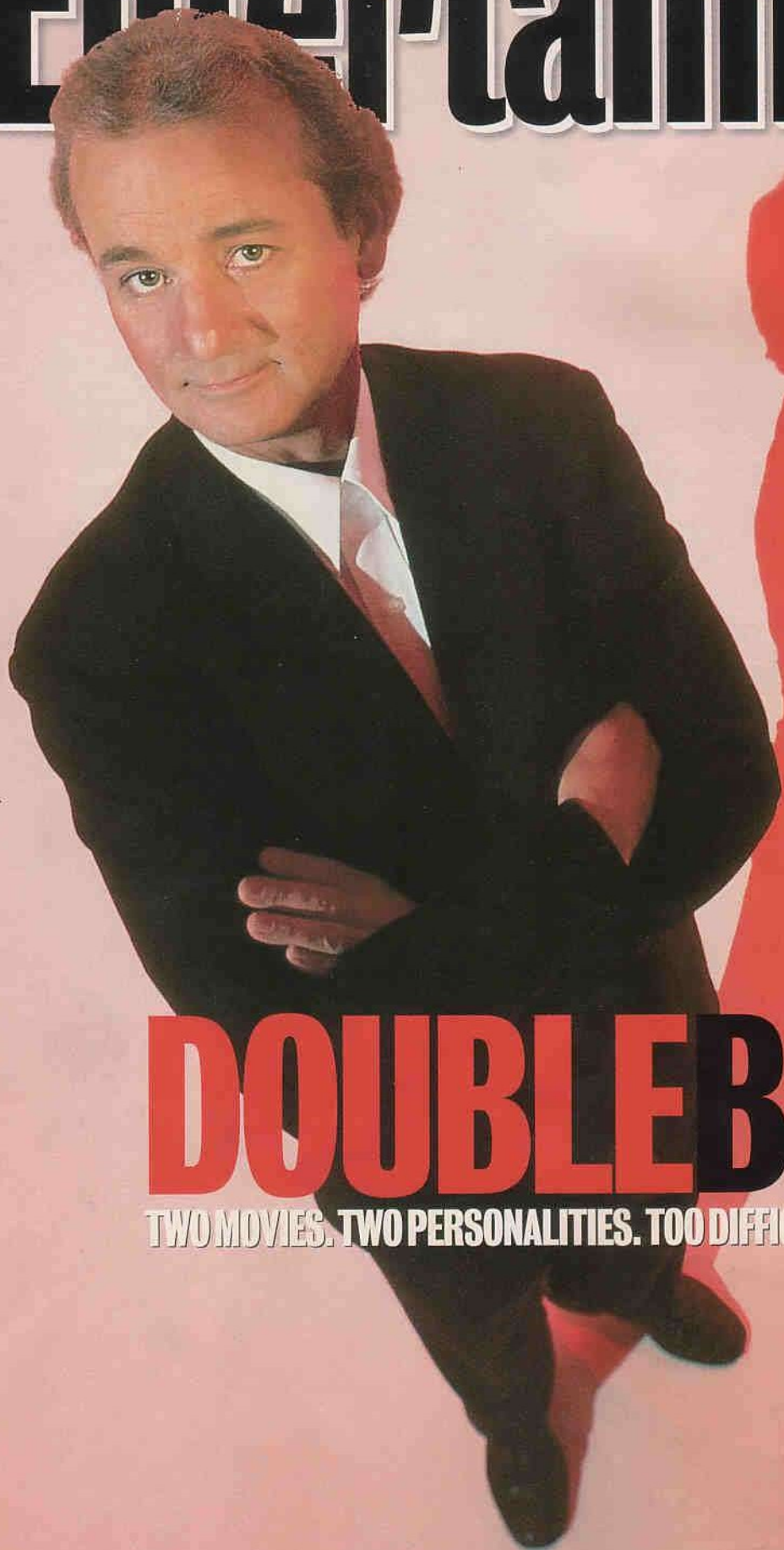


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DOUBLE BILL

TWO MOVIES. TWO PERSONALITIES. TOO DIFFICULT? TOO BAD.

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Who else would sing "I need God" as a method of foreplay in "Come On and Love Me" (in which he also immodestly quotes from his own "Let Love Rule")? Who else would cop a suave, Al Green sound for "Sugar"—all classy and uptown, complete with strings—and top it off with dopey love-man lyrics like "Sugar, dance for me/Sugar, taste so sweet/Climb on and take the wheel"?

No one but Kravitz, of course. And that's what's so commendable, in a perverse sense, about a moronic guilty pleasure like *Are You Gonna Go My Way*. A fascinating chronicle of one man indulging himself in public, it finds our hero continuing his quest to go more than one toke over the line. **B**

Pixie Dust

FRANK BLACK

Frank Black
(Elektra)

THE PIXIES, deities of Boston's alternative biosphere, have gotten a divorce, and fans have visitation rights with the first solo album by the band's deranged and cherubic doyen, Black Francis (a.k.a. Charles Thompson). His new alias is Frank Black, but more than the name has changed. The Pixies concocted a frenzy of guitar turbulence, with bassist Kim Deal's calm, whispered tones cushioning the metal spikes hurled from Francis' throat. Losing Deal is like removing a base Stimpfy from the acidic Ren.

Fortunately, the lyrics on *Frank Black* remain as wry and obscure as vintage Pixies (half the fun of albums like *Surfer Rosa* was trying to decipher the wacked-out words); in "Ramona," Black pleads that if the Ramones ever break up they should "pull another Menudo." And there is the occasional Pixies guitar squall (add bonus points for the presence of Donnie and Marie's former drummer, Nick Vincent). But the production is bloated with horns and synthesizers, and some of the stuff sounds suspiciously like art rock (as if we needed another Bowie or Pet Shop Boys). For the sake of the children, we can only hope Black gets this fling out of his system. **B-** —Michele Romero

CELTIC ROCK

Black and Tan and Green All Over

YOU DON'T WANT to ask Larry Kirwan whether he's Irish. He's the front man for a band called Black 47, and if you've seen its very popular "Funky Ceili" video on MTV, you know the song's chorus is a hard-rocking Irish reel. And fast-talking Kirwan, 36, with his Irish brogue, seems typecast as the irresistible Hibernian no-good who ends up in New York, thinking of his girl back home "whenever I'm sober, which isn't too often, I have to confess."

Of course, she was pregnant, and her father wanted to castrate him, so why *wouldn't* he drink? And what's a "ceili" (pronounced KAY-lee), anyway? According to Kirwan, it's a traditional Irish rave, more or less, with folk music and dancing: "We used to go to them to kick up hell."

As Kirwan recalls this, he's about to go kick up hell again, on the stage of Paddy Reilly's, an Irish bar in New York City, where, despite its growing MTV fame, Black 47 still plays to jammed houses twice a week. The crowd shouts along with Kirwan's pledge (in a song called "Maria's Wedding") to his



PAINT THEM BLACK: The Irish band still plays at a New York bar twice a week

former Italian girlfriend in Brooklyn: "I'll even"—"NO!" screams the entire club—"I'll even go out and *get a job* for you!" The wildly romantic music is thrown together like a mad rock-rap-reggae-Irish improvisation for an improbable group of instruments: trombone, soprano sax, both drums and drum machine, Irish uilleann bagpipes, and Kirwan's scorching guitar.

Ask Kirwan whether "Funky Ceili" is *his* story, and he responds with a disquisition on two literary "magic realists," Henry Miller and Gabriel Garcia Marquez. The story is an archetype, he says, based on things that *might* have happened. Kirwan, an active playwright, is also intensely political. The group takes its name from one of Ireland's many calamities, the potato famine of 1847, and "Funky Ceili" hints at the limited choices women face in Ireland, a land where abortion and divorce are outlawed.

But Black 47 is, above all, a party band. "I've seen them 90 times," says Robert Evitt, an Irish-American stockbroker. "I used to go every week, but my liver gave out six months ago. So it's every *other* week now." —Greg Sandow