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## Black 47 gets into terrific 'Trouble'

**POP/ROCK:** Black 47, *Trouble in the Land* (★★★½) Familiar to patrons of New York's Irish pubs since 1989, Black 47 remains one of rock's inexplicably obscure treasures. The

band, led by singer/songwriter/playwright Larry Kirwan, specializes in an honest, bawdy, politically charged brand of rock that could breathe needed life into a pop chart dominated by self-aggrandizing rappers and shallow teeny-boppers. On *Trouble in the Land*, Kirwan wraps his potent brogue around timely issues — racism in the title cut, drug nightmares in *Fallin' off the Edge of America* — with equal measures of rage, humor and wisdom. The high-energy music, a reckless blend of Irish roots and the multicultural sonic mayhem of New York streets, freely plunders Celtic tradition, ska, earthy rock and even splashes of reggae and funk. From the ambitious *Bodhrans on the Brain* to the glorious, hope-fueled *Touched by Fire* to the wickedly satiric *I Got Laid on James Joyce's Grave*, Black 47 parties with revolutionary fervor. — Edna Gundersen