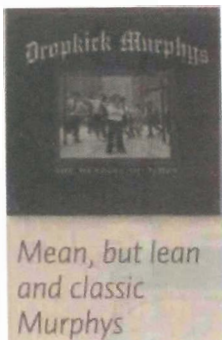


# The Boston Globe

## Dropkick Murphys

The Meanest of Times (BORN & BRED)



The 2005 album "Warrior's Code" represented the creative high mark for Boston's favorite Celtic punks, Dropkick Murphys. If "The Meanest of Times" does not quite scale the same heights in terms of diverse textures and poignant songwriting, it is still a

worthy successor. All of the familiar elements are in play, from punkabilly rave-ups ("Famous for Nothing") to snarling throwdowns ("Vices and Virtues") to comic relief ("(F)lannigan's Ball"). Fiddles, mandolins, tin whistles, and bagpipes continue to fight side by side with frenzied electric guitar, breathless bass lines, and hard-hitting drums in the battle for punk domination. Whiskey, women, and wistfulness remain on the lyrical menu as does the band's familiar theme of family. In that regard, the devastating "The State of Massachusetts" perfectly encapsulates the demons of parents whose children are placed in state care. Angry, joyous, danceable, gritty, and Hub-specific, "Meanest" is everything you want in a Murphys record and a great inauguration for the band's newly minted indie label, Born & Bred Records. [Sarah Rodman]

DROPKICK MURPHYS PERFORM AT AVALON SUNDAY.