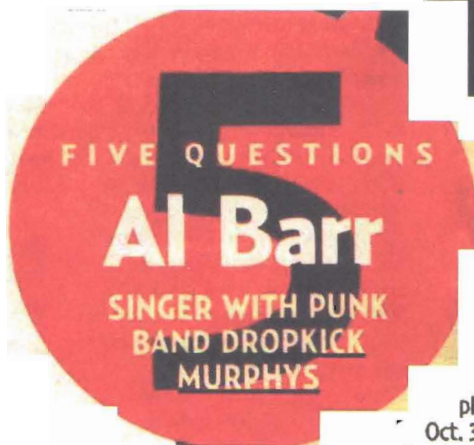


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As a fellow who once played for his arch enemy said, it was like déjà vu all over again: The Boston Red Sox staged a big comeback in the American League Championship Series and then went on to sweep the World Series, and vocal fans of the Dropkick Murphys got a great ending to a great season.

The pennywhistle punkers saw their hometown team devour the competition with the kind of gusto the band pours into its original songs and old-timey Celtic tunes with a DIY twist. But for the Murphys, the 2007 championship might have been a wee bit sweeter than the curse-shattering 2004 win. Why? Because this time, the band was all over the place, including performing at the ALCS and letting loose with the team at the Oct. 30 victory parade.

"Being in the parade was a monumentous occasion because we weren't asked to be in the parade the first time in '04," says Murphys singer Al Barr. "So this was really cool, and I think there was more of an awareness of the band, just because they had been playing 'Tessie' and 'Shipping Up to Boston' in Fenway for the last few years." "Tessie," the Sox anthem that was re-recorded by the band in 2004, also played a role in the Jimmy Fallon/Drew Barrymore/Red Sox romantic comedy "Fever Pitch" in 2005.

Members of the Dropkick Murphys are now touring in support of their new album, "The Meanest of Times." Barr had plenty to say about the Sox and the songs.

QUESTION: Unlike your band mates, you live in New Hampshire, not Boston. Is anybody else in the band not classic Boston Irish?

ANSWER: I'm actually not Irish either, I'm Scottish-German. There's another rock through the window of the assumptions that are always made for this band, like we live in Southie and we bathe in Guinness and Matt

Damon and his ilk hang out with us. It's funny. The Irish connection is definitely (there). The original founding members are of Irish descent, and we definitely draw on that influence in our music and stuff. But we're an American punk band.

Q: But you're all Red Sox fans, right?

A: Everybody is a Sox fan, for sure. No Yankees fans, although our front house guy is a Yankees fan — but any day he wears his Yankees shirt we dock him \$10 in his pay and donate it to the Jimmy Fund (a Boston-based cancer charity).

Q: You've had a pretty busy month with the Sox winning the World Series and playing the parade. Was it different this time than when the team won in 2004, since you had already gotten the monkey off your back?

A: '04 obviously was special because of that fact. I think that this was just as special for other reasons. Once they won in '04, every-

body in the Boston and New England area was pretty much all appeased and felt good that they had won. Everybody that died, died happy. So I can die happy now. But I think when they won again, it was so amazing and just Boston sports right now — they're on top everywhere and it's a pretty cool thing.

Q: What was the recording process like for your new album?

A: We just batten down the hatches and write songs and then record them. It's not really too much of a magical thing. It is what it is. We were going through a lot of things personally when we put out the last record. A really good friend of the band died; my grandfather died. So there were a lot of interruptions in the writing process. We'd have to shelve things and come back to them. This time was a lot more fluid. It was all done in one fell swoop almost.

Q: How do you pick what traditional songs to record on your albums?

A: We just basically fiddle around with the arrangements, and if it rocks our world, we do it. And if it's something that we don't feel is going to fit the band or not be something that we can pull off, we don't. So it's pretty simple. If it rocks, we do it.

BY ERIN PODOLSKY, FREE PRESS SPECIAL WRITER

Dropkick Murphys

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