

## FAT FREDDY'S DROP



### **BASED ON A TRUE STORY**

From the underground to the higher-ground, Fat Freddy's Drop is the seven-headed soul monster doing it for the love of music, and food! Driven by the power of hypnotic live performance, sheer hard work and savvy independent CD and vinyl releases, the Freddy's voodoo is heading for worldwide domination.

The watershed year for the purveyors of hi-tek soul was 2005 as the band stepped out of the rush to release their debut studio album Based On A True Story on CD and double gatefold vinyl. Envisaged as a 'slow burn release' Based On A True Story has exceeded all expectations. Officially released in Aotearoa, NZ in May 05, B.O.A.T.S shipped Gold on its first day, and made history as the first independently distributed album to strike #1 on the NZ Album Charts.

In October 2005 B.O.A.T.S garnered a stash of Tui Awards at the NZ Music Awards: official Freddy's loot; Album of the Year, Best Aotearoa Roots Album, Best Group and direct from the peeps – the People's Choice Award. The Freddy's then traveled to London in December to be on-hand to pick up the Worldwide Album Of The Year at the Radio 1 Gilles Peterson Worldwide Music Awards 2005, as voted by fans worldwide that tune in to the tastemakers show on the BBC.

The album was declared the second top selling album in NZ for 2005, and one year on from its release had spent 42 out of 52 weeks in the Top Ten NZ Album charts, 11 of those at #1. By May 2006 B.O.A.T.S hit x7 Platinum sales in Aotearoa NZ, reaching over 100,000 album sales, and is independently now available in Australia, UK, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Holland and Japan, with the US on the horizon...

Fat Freddy's Drop are Fitchie, MPC technician, Joe Dukie, lyricist & vocalist, Fulla Flash, tenor and alto sax, Tony Chang, trumpet, Ho Pepa, trombone, Jetlag Johnson, guitar Dobie Blaze keyboards. Dukie's cartoon sketches bring the Freddy's alter egos to life and links them closer to the bands namesake, Fat Freddy's Cat, a character from US cult comic strip The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers. Too much Freddy's.

### **MYSTIC SOUL CONNECTION**

Fat Freddy's Drop is first and foremost a live band, no two Freddy's gigs are the same as the midnight marauders improvise and jam mystic supernovas of future funk, fakes and freaky sidesteps. Fitchie says "What's great about live performance is that it belongs to those in the audience on that night, it's a one off experience".

Freddy's hi-tek soul delivery is a specific flavor that trips through and fuses skanking urban Pacific roots, soul, dub, jazz and electronica, hypnotic and thunderous grooves. Reggae is one of the most popular music genres in New Zealand. The 1979 Bob Marley concert at Western Springs Stadium in Auckland is credited with having a huge influence of the growth of reggae in the country. "The three-strong horn section builds on these solid foundations, with Dobie Blaze playing an array of vintage keyboards, before the annoyingly good-looking Joe Dukie adds his silky-voiced lyrics. They have the feel of a genuine spiritual collective, and the audience fed off the band's intimacy with each other.

While songs regularly broke the 10-minute barrier, there was no pointless filler. Every note, every beat, every word, every harmony, is perfectly pitched, proving that behind their languid, laid-back image, lies hours and hours of hard work...Sweet as" Brixton Academy, Record Collector, June 06



Winner of Best Live Act at the b-Net NZ Music Awards in 2004, Freddy's regularly tours nationwide, to Australia, to infinity and beyond. The bros have made annual summer pilgrimages to the Northern Hemisphere since 2003, busing, flying and training to gigs and festivals across Europe and the UK, and building up international partnerships with London's Kartel and Berlin's Sonar Kollektiv and Jazanova.

Stand out gigs in 2006: the pimped out sunset session at Algarve Summer Festival in Portugal playing alongside The Black Eyed Peas, on the street in the heat for Sonar Festival, Barcelona, FFD in the spotlight for the sold out Bass heavy Brixton Academy show, two smooth Parisian evenings at Cabaret Sauvage, a riotous reception in Denmark at the esteemed Roskilde Festival. Back home, a fish and chip birthday gig and the Red Bull Daylight savings showcase, Grey Lynn Park, Auckland, New Zealand.

Standouts in 2005: Hammersmith Palais, London, Shed 6 in Wellington, Christchurch Town Hall, live at the Worldwide Awards at Koko, Camden in December, Big Chill Festival, two sold out Freddy's shows nights at Koko in September, a rawkus record release party at Café Moskau, Berlin and off the radar at Les Nuits Zebrees, Paris sited by hip Parisian radio station Radio Nova as the no.1 gig of 2005.

### **THE BAND THAT EATS TOGETHER**

The seven-piece family of musicians emerged through a multitude of musical incarnations on the Wellington soundscape, graduating from funk jam bands, reggae soundsystems and jazz improvisation cliques to live techno experiments. Fitchie AKA Mu, Freddy's band-leader and 'Master of Reality'. Armed with his MPC sampler, Fitchie is the technician at the core of the Freddy's bouncing beats, bottom heavy bass lines and sublime samples, always anticipating the next pass with freaky finesse.

Fitchie picked up Best Producer and Most Outstanding Musician at the b-Net NZ Music Awards 2005, and Best Producer at the b-Net's in 2003. Joe Dukie AKA Dallas Tamaira, lyricist and mystic singing sensation. His stage name/alter ego is drawn from his father Joe, also a singer, and his grandfather, a musician nicknamed Dukie after Duke Ellington.

Heavily influenced by Bill Withers, Dukie's lyrics are chocolate deep and his vocals resonant and uplifting. Dukie was awarded Best Vocalist at the b-Net NZ Music Awards 2005.

The bootae shaking three-piece horn section are Freddy's wall of sound on the frontline, featuring the intricate licks of Fulla Flash AKA Warryn Maxwell on tenor and alto sax, Tony Chang AKA Toby Laing on trumpet and Ho Pepa AKA Joe Lindsay on trombone and most outrageous 'Bad Ho Jelly Roll' dance moves.

Meeting at the respected Wellington Jazz School in the mid nineties, the horn section helped shape a new musical movement in New Zealand in the last two decades. Their solo and combined musical talents can be found in respected NZ bands TrinityRoots, Scribes of Ra, The Black Seeds, Little Bushman and Tyra and the Tornadoes.

On the FFD backline with Fitchie are Jetlag Johnson aka Tehimana Kerr holding down the skank, roots and mind bending Jimi Hendrix riffs on electric and acoustic guitar, and Dobie Blaze AKA Iain Gordon is the keyboard collector who serves up funkadelic analogue keys juxtaposed with baby grand piano and Casio.

Meals are a sacred pastime for Freddy's, and Dobie Blaze doubles as the family chef. His culinary feasts keep the family from going hungry. Skinny bunch of punks they're certainly not! As Fitchie says 'the band that eats together stays together!'

### **THE DROP**

Freddy's HQ is affectionately referred to as the beach, home to Fitchie's studio and The Drop , the bands independent label. FFD Manager Nicole Duckworth is at the Drop helm, collaborating with the bros to expand FFD unorthodox business and 'tribal' philosophy worldwide. The beach studio is literally 6 feet from the surf, situated underground in the basement of a 19th Century Bath House in Lyall Bay, one of the oldest buildings in the capital city.

Life at The Drop exists on Island Time, the bros work at their own tempo, under few pressures from the outside world. *Based On A True Story* was recorded, engineered and mixed by Fitchie at the beach over 18 months with breaks for live gigs around the nation and summer tours to the UK and Europe. The production process was pure organic Freddy's, the ten tunes evolving almost entirely live on stage and the arrangements then recorded and fine-tuned by the seven players and a myriad of guest artists in the studio. Fitchie escorted the final mix to San Francisco to master with George Horn at Fantasy Studio.

### **MAKING RECORDS TO BREAK RECORDS**

One of the debut albums first singles, the Flashback 12" vinyl debuted at #1 on the New Zealand alt charts in early 2005. The tune spent weeks in the b-Net Top 10 charts as well as sitting on Kiwi FM's 'A' rotate for more than a month. The 12" b-side featured a stripped back version of Midnight Marauders recorded live by the Freddy's at the BBC Maida Vale studios in 2004. That session also featured Hope and Willow Tree and was nominated for Best Session at Gilles Petersons Worldwide Music Awards 2004. Another track, This Room, features amongst an all-star line up on Gilles Peterson's The BBC Sessions Vol 1.



The second single from Based On A True Story was the Wandering Eye which made history as the most-played song on New Zealand radio. The CD single featured The Italian Reprise from a live recording of the party anthem in Locorotondo, Italy, as well as the Wandering Eye music video shot in a fish and chip shop in Grey Lynn and directed by MC Slave aka Mark Williams.

The vinyl vein runs deep in Freddy's. A Wandering Eye remix by Aukalani hip hop producer, Submariner was released on vinyl only while Jazzanova dropped dancefloor phatness on Flashback, The Nextmen put their spin on Roady. and DJ Vadim and One Self translated Cays Cray's onto 7" vinyl.

Historically the Freddy's sound first hit the international dance circuit in 2002 when Midnight Marauders, dropped under the guise of Joe Dukie and Fitchie was released on 12" vinyl.

Detroit born producer Reclose who had relocated to Aotearoa, took a copy to Berlin and played it to Sonar Kollektiv and Jazzanova. Daniel Best's imprint Best Seven re-released the hypnotic track, the Jazzanova DJ's began peddling it among their wares, and the rest is history as people began to ask, 'what is that sound?'

Freddy's released the bands 'official' debut on wax in 2003, a limited edition 10" vinyl featuring Hope a song that Dukie scribed to inspire positivity, spirituality and creativity', an anthem for a new generation. The b-side dub trip was Bluey. The limited edition release on London based Kartel imprint gained cult status and a Hope re-print was just released in 2006.

Midnight Marauders and the original Hope both scaled to the number one spot on Gilles Peterson's Top Twenty Worldwide picks in 2002 and 2003 respectively.

The band's original CD is Live at the Matterhorn, a recording of the band at Wellington's den of iniquity featuring four songs, spanning 80 minutes. It struck Gold sales in Aotearoa NZ purely through word of mouth and in 2006 was released by Kartel in the UK.

## **WWW.FATFREDDYSDROP.COM**

FAT FREDDY'S DROP DEBUT ALBUM BASED ON A TRUE STORY  
RELEASED ON KARTEL VIA QUANGO DISTRIBUTION IN 12 FEBRUARY 2007.

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