



Fat Freddy's Drop's pirate soul train has seen them beat a resolutely independent path to the ears and feet of audiences around the globe for over a decade.

Formed in 1999 the Wellington seven-piece has never stuck to a script. Their sound draws inspiration from almost every part of the black music lexicon. Soul drenched vocals and jazz harmonies collide with tape delays and echo chambers, underpinned by a rhythm section as comfortable laying down a throbbing, techy soundscape as they are a swampy blues stomp.

It's an approach that demands a lot of performer *and* listener. According to DJ Fitchie, MPC & producer, Fat Freddy's Drop is the product of both the band's restless creativity, and New Zealand's geographic isolation.

"One of the upsides of being far away from the action and not having to deal with the weight of a strong musical history is that we don't feel we have to stick to one particular style or approach," Fitchie said.

A string of legendary festival performances around the world set the scene for Freddy's debut album, *Based On A True Story*. Released in 2005 to a storm of critical acclaim and public support it remains the highest selling independently released album in New Zealand's music history (8x Platinum) and garnered the band seven New Zealand Music Awards between 2005 and 2006.

Championed in the UK by BBC Radio's influential left-field DJs Gilles Peterson and the late Charlie Gillett, and constantly evolving live performances led to invitations to play iconic festivals, such as Glastonbury, WOMAD and Barcelona's super-hip SONAR Festival, and a string of sold out tours of the UK, Europe and Australia.

On the second studio album release, 2009's *Dr Boondigga & The Big BW*, their songs took a natural path from the live stage to the studio and the band stretch themselves further musically by digging deeper into their grab bag of influences. There are stylistic nods to Memphis soul (the low slung soul of *Boondigga*), Detroit (album opener *The Big BW*) and even Africa jazz alongside the blues and dub that Freddy's fans expect.

"It's still jazz, soul and reggae with a bit of a modern take on it. I like that you can keep coming back to it to make sure you've discovered every layer. We're better songwriters now too," Fitchie said.

Dr Boondigga & The Big BW was the biggest selling local release of 2009, going Platinum in four days and picking up several NZ Music Awards. The nine track seventy minute long disc has again attracted critical international acclaim. Charlie Gillett named it one of his top seven albums for 2009 while Garth Trinidad, Radio KCRW, Los Angeles, hailed Fat Freddy's Drop as 'the bugged out love child of Isaac Hayes and Lee Scratch Perry.'

Celebrating the release, Fat Freddy's Drop sold their album shakedown shows in Berlin, Paris and Amsterdam and London. All three shows at their USA headline debuts in San Francisco, San Diego and The Roxy in LA sold out. No two Freddy's shows are ever the same and given the band's beginnings, it's no surprise that live performance is really what excites and drives the band.

That free-spirited approach to making and performing music spills over into all facets of the FFD operation. Their marketing campaigns are spread via word of mouth by feverish fans. They design, produce, and sell merchandise via fatfreddysdrop.com, the website where they also host an internet radio show and a direct FFD Dealer model enabling indie record stores worldwide to order exclusive product directly. In 2009 the band launched their second website, fatfreddysdrop.tv, an online TV channel.

The band release all their music on their artist operated label The Drop, and their albums are available across Europe, United States, Australia and New Zealand with distribution partners Rough Trade, !K7, Inertia and Rhythmethod.

"It has been very important being independent and guiding the direction of the band ourselves. We've been together for over a decade now and being independent has given the band a strong identity," Toby Chang said.

FAT FREDDY'S DROP BAND MEMBERS

Fitchie aka MU/Chris Faiumu - MPC, **Joe Dukie** aka Dallas Tamaira - Vocals and lyrics, **Do-bie Blaze** aka Iain Gordon - Keys & Synth, **Jetlag Johnson** aka Tehimana Kerr - Guitar, **Tony Chang** aka Toby Laing - Trumpet, **Hopepa** aka Joe Lindsay – Trombone & tuba, **Chopper Reedz** aka Scott Towers – Saxophone

www.fatfreddysdrop.com

www.fatfreddysdrop.tv

FAT FREDDY'S DROP HITS

- Fat Freddy's Drop TV Finalist, Best Music site, SXSW Web Awards 2010
- *Dr Boondigga and The Big BW* ships Gold on release in New Zealand, May 2009, debuting at #1 NZ Music Charts. Shipped Platinum in four days
- *Dr Boondigga and The Big BW* winner Best Aotearoa Roots Album and Fat Freddy's Drop winner Best Producer for New Zealand Music Awards 2009. Nominated for Album of The Year, Best Group and People's Choice Award, and Otis Frizzell for Best Album Cover and Fitchie for Best Engineer
- Fat Freddy's Drop TV winner Best Music Site, Pixel Awards 2009
- *Based on A True Story* x8 Platinum sales in New Zealand. First independent release to ship Gold and debut at #1 on the New Zealand Music Charts
- *Live At The Matterhorn* x1 Platinum sales in New Zealand
- *Ray Ray* Winner Best International Music Video, New York Independent Film and Video Festival 2007
- Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Excellence, b-Net NZ Music Awards 2006
- Fat Freddy's Drop nominated for BBC Radio 3 World Music Awards 2006, representing Asia/Pacific region
- *Based On A True Story* winner Highest Selling Album, *Wandering Eye* Best Video and Fat Freddy's Drop winner People's Choice Award, New Zealand Music Awards 2006
- Hopepa 'Male Fox' at the B-Net NZ Music Awards 2006
- *Based On A True Story* voted Worldwide Album Of The Year at the Radio 1 Gilles Peterson Worldwide Music Awards 2005
- *Based On A True Story* winner Album of the Year, Best Aotearoa Roots Album, Best Group and People's Choice Award, NZ Music Awards, 2005
- Joe Dukie Best Vocalist at the b-Net NZ Music Awards 2005
- Fat Freddy's Drop Best Live Act at the b-Net NZ Music Awards 2004
- DJ Fitchie, Best Producer and Most Outstanding Musician at the b-Net NZ Music Awards 2005, and Best Producer at the b-Nets, 2003

DR BOONDIGGA & THE BIG BW Album Reviews

Blissfully epic jams. It's impossible not to love Fat Freddy's Drop. Classic of spirit and sound but still contemporary, their loose-limbed upbeat jams of ska, soul, reggae, dub and electronic flourishes rise to the next level on this second LP. 4.5 Stars, *Allan McGrath, DJ Magazine, UK*

The epic Shiverman is probably the most radical departure, driven by an organic, dubbed-up house beat, and featuring a fiery performance by lead singer Dallas Tamaira. Big BW airs another new direction, with its trippy broken beat/nu-soul feel rather reminiscent of D'Angelo, while Boondigga is an affectionate homage to producer Willie Mitchell's classic Memphis soul sound, best heard on Al Green's mid-70s albums. *Jon Lusk, BBC, UK*

'...infectious mix of retro-soul and dub reggae, heavy with brass and fronted by the silky falsetto of Dallas Tamaira.' Neil Spencer, *The Observer, UK*

Perhaps it's the genre-hopping, the willingness to engage with forms that might not be considered the height of cool, or even the fact that Fatty Freddy's Drop are from New Zealand. There is often an engaging, can't-quite-put-your-finger-on-it oddness about Dr Boondigga & The Big BW, which, along with a commitment to good old-fashioned musicianship, makes it worthy of a recommendation. *John Donnelly, The Music Fix, UK*

Joe Dukie's voice is still as velvet as a cad's smoking jacket, the bands' grooves remain luxuriously loose and the vibe is ultimately horizontal. Yup, FFD are back and it's business as usual. But there's more... There's a strong electronic twang, and a propensity to drop into lively carnivalesque hornfests that belie the band's previous, somewhat mellower output. Warming the soles of any dub and funk lover's feet as we're dragged kicking and screaming into the colder months, 'Dr Boondigga' is thoroughly indicative of the band's international appeal. Knocking spots off 'Based On A True Story', there's a depth and element of surprise that's only been hinted at before with vibes spanning from the Noze-esque party jam 'Shiverman' to the slightly mournful dancehall moment that is 'Pull The Catch'. Business as usual indeed, welcome back FFD. 9/10, *Dave Jenkins, iDJ, UK*

With a silk-smooth tenor, oven-hot horns, and a rhythm section that teeters on the edge of the pocket, it's a tripped-out electro-soul heaven *Soundbleed, USA*