

= Fat Freddy 's Drop =

Fat Freddy 's Drop are a New Zealand seven @-@ piece band from Wellington , whose musical style has been characterised as any combination of dub , reggae , soul , jazz , rhythm and blues , and techno . Originally a jam band formed in the late 1990s by musicians from other bands in Wellington , Fat Freddy 's Drop gradually became its members ' sole focus . Band members continued playing with their other respective groups ? The Black Seeds , TrinityRoots , Bongmaster , and others ? for much of their 13 @-@ year career . Fat Freddy 's Drop are known for their improvised live performances ; songs on their studio albums are versions refined over years of playing them live in New Zealand , and on tour abroad .

The group gained international recognition in 2003 after their single " Midnight Marauders " was re @-@ distributed by record labels and DJs in Germany . The group has toured Europe nearly every year since then . The first studio album by Fat Freddy 's Drop , Based on a True Story , was the first independently distributed album to reach first place in New Zealand record sales directly after release in 2005 , and is the highest @-@ selling album by a national artist in the country 's history . Based on a True Story won Best Album at the New Zealand Music Awards the same year , and remained on the top 40 New Zealand sales chart for over two years , establishing them as one of the most successful contemporary bands in the island nation .

= = History = =

= = = Formation : 1999 ? 2001 = = =

The band Fat Freddy 's Drop gradually took shape from members of other bands in Wellington , New Zealand 's music scene in the late 1990s . The group 's founder , Chris " Mu " Faiumu , had performed with other bands for most of that decade under the name DJ Fitchie . He and two friends , trumpeter Toby Laing and vocalist Dallas Tamaira , occasionally played improvised jam sessions at his seaside home . Faiumu provided percussion and bass for these on an Akai Music Production Center (MPC) . All three were involved with other bands . Faiumu and Tamaira were members of the 15 @-@ piece dub band Bongmaster ; Laing was a member of The Black Seeds . In 1999 , they began performing together at local clubs and festivals , and released several vinyl singles distributed locally .

That same year , Faiumu founded the independent music label The Drop with the help of his partner Nicole , and money from private investors . According to Faiumu , the venture was a learning experience in the business of making and releasing records . The Drop 's first release was Dallas Tamaira 's solo project , the five @-@ track EP Better Than Change , followed by a single performed by the group named " Hope " . " Hope " was written and recorded over two days under the influence of LSD , according to interviews . Each blotter ? individual dose ? of that type of LSD , popular in Wellington at that time , had the image of Fat Freddy 's Cat (from Gilbert Shelton 's comic strip The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers) printed on it . Dropping ? common slang for taking LSD ? Fat Freddys became the inspiration for the band 's name .

The group organised several informal jam sessions in 2000 , inviting local musicians to play with them at Faiumu 's home . These sessions led to four new members joining Fat Freddy 's Drop : Warren Maxwell on tenor and alto saxophone , Tehimana Kerr on guitar , Iain Gordon on keyboards , and Joe Lindsay on trombone . Like the original three , the new members played with other groups in and around Wellington , and continued to for most of Fat Freddy 's Drop 's career . Iain Gordon was a fellow Bongmaster member with Faiumu and Tamaira . Gordon was also a member of the band Ebb which in 2001 performed an audiovisual concert and released an EP titled Plush Bomb , with Fat Freddy 's Drop playing in support . Maxwell was in the reggaemusic group TrinityRoots . Maxwell and Joe Lindsay , who make up the horn section of Fat Freddy 's Drop , were students at the Conservatorium of Music in Wellington in the mid @-@ 1990s . Faiumu was the " central point [and] the reason for the band getting together , " according to a 2009 interview .

= = = Live at the Matterhorn and singles : 2001 ? 2004 = = =

The now seven @-@ member Fat Freddy ? s Drop , sometimes calling themselves the " seven headed soul monster " , continued to play live at clubs and festivals . The band 's first full @-@ length album , Live at the Matterhorn , was released in 2001 by The Drop . The live album is a recording of their show at the Matterhorn club in Wellington that year . Very little mastering was done to the album , which is divided into four tracks averaging 18 minutes each . It was not formally promoted , but sold 9 @,@ 000 copies in its first few months via word @-@ of @-@ mouth , according to The Sydney Morning Herald .

In 2000 , the New Zealand government began a campaign to increase the profitability of the country 's music industry , and of music exports abroad , by funding artists and events . The percentage of music sold by nationals went from 5 @.@ 45 % in 2000 to 10 % in 2004 , and a 2004 government survey indicated one @-@ quarter of New Zealanders attended a live music event in the year previous . Fat Freddy ? s Drop were not one of the bands funded , but the elevated live music scene , and the relative success of Live at The Matterhorn , gave them more opportunities to establish themselves as one of the area 's best live acts . Several of their early singles , like " Hope " and " Runnin " , were featured on compilation albums published by local labels and radio stations . An established group from Kaikoura named Salmonella Dub ? who one member described as the " forerunner for Fat Freddy's " ? provided the band opportunities to play in front of larger crowds in New Zealand and neighbouring Australia .

The third single , released by The Drop in 2002 , " Midnight Marauders " became their first step towards international recognition when a copy was taken to German record label Sonar Kollektiv by a producer . That year , Sonar and affiliated label Best Seven re @-@ released the single in Germany , and European DJ group Jazzanova used the track in several mixes . A second single , " Hope / This Room " , was re @-@ released by Sonar and Best the next year . After the singles ' success , Sonar invited the band to play a string of European shows in 2003 . Sonar label manager Matthias Bohmbach said he was surprised when one @-@ thousand copies of " Midnight Marauders " sold at a show in Germany . Not wanting a single label to control their work in Europe , the band also partnered with London @-@ based label Kartel in 2003 to handle distribution and promotion in England . From 2003 to 2009 , distribution of the band 's work was handled by The Drop in New Zealand and Australia , by Sonar Kollektiv and Best Seven in most of Europe , and by Kartel in England .

Fat Freddy ? s Drop 's European profile slowly increased between 2003 and the release of their first studio album in 2005 . The BBC 's Gilles Peterson called " Hope " one of the top tracks of 2003 . The band was invited to play at the Cannes Film Festival in 2004 . International DJ Magazine listed Fat Freddy ? s Drop as one of the " top 20 bands to look out for " in 2004 . In what became an almost annual trip , they returned to touring New Zealand and Australia in 2004 , and ? partnering with Sonar Kollektiv ? returned to Europe for an official " Hope for a Generation " tour .

= = = Based on a True Story : 2005 ? 2008 = = =

Fat Freddy ? s Drop 's first studio album in 2005 , Based on a True Story , showcased polished versions of songs the band had developed gradually at live shows over the years ? in some cases going back to 1999 ; the album 's title is a reference to that process . Many Fat Freddy ? s Drop members still played with other Wellington bands while recording Based on a True Story , and scheduling conflicts forced them to record their individual parts at different times to be mixed later . In a later interview , they said it is " healthy for members to be able to do other things , " but they hoped to record the tracks together in the same room on their next album . Replacing Faiumu 's MPC sampler on the album ? and in some live shows afterwards ? were drummer Riki Gooch and bassist Rio Hemopo , who together with Fat Freddy ? s Drop saxophonist Warren Maxwell make up the band TrinityRoots . Also contributing were vocalists Hollie Smith , Ladi 6 , and P Digsss , and Bongmaster guitarist Aaron Tokona . After mixing Based on a True Story for 18 months at his home

studio in @-@ between tours , Faiumu took the album to San Francisco @-@ based Fantasy Studios to be mastered .

Based on a True Story became the first independently distributed album to reach first place in New Zealand record sales directly after release , and is the highest @-@ selling album by a national artist in the country 's history . The Recording Industry Association of New Zealand 's (RIANZ) sales chart listed Based on a True Story as one of the top 40 selling albums for more than two years after its release , and has since been certified nine @-@ times platinum , denoting shipments of 135 @,@ 000 copies . The album 's only single , " Wandering Eye " , spent more than four months on the top 40 selling singles chart . Like Live at the Matterhorn , the album was given no formal promotion or marketing ; its popularity largely due to the band 's reputation in New Zealand . At the 2005 New Zealand Music Awards , Fat Freddy ? s Drop won awards in every category they were nominated : Best Group , Best Album , Best New Zealand Roots Group . They also won the People 's Choice Award in both 2005 and 2006 . Based on a True Story had sold 120 @,@ 000 copies in New Zealand as of April 2009 . The album sold 30 @,@ 000 copies in Europe .

The band continued touring for the next four years while planning and developing a second studio album . They returned to Germany , England , and Italy in 2005 ; returned in 2006 for their European World Cup Tour , and again for a set of shows in 2007 . They also toured the east coast of Australia in 2006 and 2007 . Many band members were fathers by then , a factor increasingly affecting their " touring stamina " . Warren Maxwell left the band in 2007 for family reasons , and was replaced in live performances with Scott Towers . Towers attended the Conservatorium of Music with Maxwell , and was trombonist Joe Lindsay 's tutor there .

= = = Dr Boondigga and the Big BW : 2009 @-@ 2012 = = =

Fat Freddy ? s Drop released their second studio album , Dr Boondigga and the Big BW , in 2009 . The title refers to " the Big Brain @-@ Wash and Dr. Boondigga [who] is some evil creature who ? s trying to sign us to a major label , " according to Faiumu . The band is still independently distributed by The Drop label , and as of 2009 , have handled distribution themselves in Europe . Like Based on a True Story , the album 's songs are polished versions of songs they developed over four years at live shows ; mixed from 2007 to 2009 in @-@ between tours . Unlike their last album , most of it was recorded live in @-@ studio with all band members present . There were some exceptions ; Alice Russell 's duet with Tamaira on the album 's first single " The Camel " was recorded in 2006 when she was in Wellington with The Bamboos .

Dr Boondigga and the Big BW was the highest selling album in New Zealand for five weeks after its release , and the highest selling album there in 2009 . It was listed on the RIANZ top 40 sales chart 38 weeks in total . The album received more international promotion than its predecessor , reaching number 45 in the Australian album chart , and 97th in France . The BBC 's John Lusk called Fat Freddy ? s Drop " New Zealand 's most critically acclaimed band since The Clean " , and lead singer Tamaira , " one of the most soulful singers of his generation . " At the 2009 New Zealand Music Awards the album won the awards Best Producer , and Best Aotearoa Roots Album Dr Boondigga and the Big BW had sold 30 @,@ 000 copies in New Zealand as of December 2009 .

Fat Freddy ? s Drop returned to touring New Zealand , Australia and Europe to promote the new album in 2009 . Three shows on the west coast of the United States , and a show in Canada , were also included in the tour . The only previous time the band had played in the United States was a single performance at a Detroit music festival in 2004 . Before 2009 , the cost of touring in the US , difficulty obtaining visas , and the band 's low profile in North America prevented them from including tour dates there . Band members say they now consider playing together as Fat Freddy ? s Drop their first musical priority , and spend less time playing with other bands .

= = = Blackbird : 2013 = = =

In early 2013 , the band revealed a new album was in the works , and eventually the first single , Silver and Gold was released as a vinyl and free online download . The single received significant

radio airplay following its release . The album , Blackbird was released on the 21st of June in Ireland and in most regions , and on the 24th in others . The album debuted in the number 1 position on the New Zealand album chart and remained in that position for 4 weeks . The band went on a national tour of Australia in late August / early September where they appeared at the Splendour in the Grass festival , and will head to Europe for a string of dates immediately after .

= = Musical style and influences = =

Improvisation , live and in the studio , has been the basis for Fat Freddy 's Drop 's music since the beginning of their career . " Live performance is the most natural state for music , " according to trumpeter Toby Laing . Most songs begin as a rhythm on Faiumu 's MPC , and more sections are progressively added during jam sessions . Songs featured on the band 's albums and singles are versions that have been refined over years of playing them in the studio , live in Wellington , and on tour abroad . Faiumu said that , on their first studio album , it was challenging to fit the long songs the band is used to playing into shorter album @-@ length tracks .

Describing the band , National Public Radio host Guy Raz said , " Take the swagger of Jamaican dub , throw in a little Memphis soul and send it halfway down the globe , and what comes back ? The band Fat Freddy 's Drop . " The band has been categorised under many genres , and members say many of those genres helped shape their musical style : delta blues , jazz , dub , soul , techno , and contemporary rhythm and blues . Musical styles heard while on tour have also shaped their sound ; Dr Boondigga and the Big BW was influenced by contemporary German , Portuguese , and Bhangra music while touring in the years before its release .

Faiumu and other band members say their biggest influence is their home country of New Zealand , and their peers in Wellington 's " small @-@ but @-@ solid " music scene ? Wellington 's population was less than 180 @, @ 000 in 2007 . They feel their music " belong [s] here in New Zealand , you can tell it came from this country . " Fat Freddy 's Drop 's music has been categorised as Aotearoa roots music ? meaning contemporary music inspired by M?ori and Pacific Islander culture , even though they are a mixed @-@ race group . Faiumu is a first @-@ generation Samoan @-@ New Zealander , Tamaira , Gordon and Kerr are native M?ori , and the remaining members are descended from European immigrants .

= = Band members = =

Dallas Tamaira (" Joe Dukie ") ? vocals , guitar (1999 ? present)
Chris Faiumu (" DJ Fitchie ") ? percussion , production (1999 ? present)
Toby Laing (" Tony Chang ") ? trumpet (1999 ? present)
Tehimana Kerr (" Jetlag Johnson ") ? guitar (2000 ? present)
Iain Gordon (" Dobie Blaze ") ? keyboards (2000 ? present)
Joe Lindsay (" Hopepa ") ? trombone , tuba (2000 ? present)
Scott Towers (" Chopper Reedz ") ? saxophone (2007 ? present)
MC Slave - raps (live on stage)
Former members
Warren Maxwell (" Fulla Flash ") ? saxophone (2000 ? 2007)
Tom Bilkey (" Muppet Shorts ") - guitar (1999 ? 2000)
Baxter Perry (" Master Lazy ") - bass (2002 @-@ 2003)

= = Discography = =

Fat Freddy 's Drop have released four studio albums , two live albums , and several singles . Their songs have appeared on compilation albums both in New Zealand and internationally . In 2007 , they released a DVD , Fantastic Voyages Vol . 1 , with live footage from their 2006 World Cup Tour , music videos , and behind the scenes footage .

2001 : Live at the Matterhorn

2005 : Based on a True Story
2009 : Dr Boondigga and the Big BW
2010 : Live at Roundhouse
2013 : Blackbird
2014 : Live in Munich
2015 : Bays

= = Awards = =