with positive energy from a group undoubtedly pleased that patience and persistence has paid off. If you aren't a musician, check out the A-side and wallow in melody. If you are a musician, check out the B-side and experience musical nir-

LUKE CASEY

#### RUMBLEFISH Freaky Dog Live (Wildside)

They could been contenders? Maybe so. For a while there it looked like Rumblefish were walking the path that Push Push took to local metal stardom and the bedroom walls of thousands of teenagers. But the proverbial 'artistic differences' reared its ugly head and now we're left only with this live show. Still, for what it's worth this is a great way to encapsulate what Rumblefish were about.

They had started to head away from the pop funkmetal sound of 'Pull Up To The Bumper' into a nastier and more psychedelic sound that can be heard in all its messy live fury here. Self-penned tracks like 'Psycho Logic' and 'Concrete Soul' have a bit more depth to them and this final version of the band certainly has a nice sound happening. The guitars do the Funkadelic if they had listened to Van Halen thing and Rumblefish had finally found a drummer that could keep up with whatever it was that Si Nicholls did to his bass. The old Rumblefish exuberance is still very much present. A huge version of James Brown's 'Turn Me Loose'—always a high point in the band's live set - is very much present and there's even a version of the Beastle Boys 'Fight For Your Right To Party' that may well top the original in sheer stupidity (especially as it features one of the best recordings of a burp I've ever had the misfortune to hear).

So whether they were bound for greatness or not is up to you to decide but either way, Freaky Dog Live is a cool chunk of NZ

musical history. Sure, it's a little flawed, but so was the whole scene, so this documents the time very nicely. Dumb but fun.

The Crimson Idol (Capitol/ EMI)

Wasp have a long history of exploration into the depths of glam shock rock. Blackie Lawless has now been left to carry the Wasp flag alone and has decided to follow his heart into the arena of the rock opera. Don't laugh too quickly. The story (similar in many respects to Tommy) follows the life of one Jonathan Aaron Steel, a young boy beaten by his parents because he didn't live up to the image of his perfect older brother who dies in a car crash on Jonathan's fourteenth birthday. Heart wrenching stuff. Johnny runs away, buys a guitar and embarks on a journey of sex, drugs and rock and roll, encountering sordid industry characters along the way.

All very epic, but is anyone interested? Blackie Lawless may have exorcised a personal demon but is anyone willing to listen to his undoubtedly heartfelt anguish? The problem being that his whole life is rather ironically similar to the tragic rock opera storyline. Or is that

LUKE CASEY

# **Cunning Stunts** (Amphetamine Reptile)

A slap on a baby's bum and a baby's gutsy screaming starts off this freaked out and very amazing album. This bunch of smart-asses really know how to make a quirky but intensely rocky album. Strains of the Butthole Surfers sometimes show through but otherwise it's basically influence and cliche free. Kind of cow punky at times but the overall feel of weirdness, meowing guitars, spitting harmonicas, spooked keyboard all with a backing of good solid rocking bits - will defi-





Big Daddy and Friends

nitely stop this album from being pushed into the pit of individuals looking for a hot new bit of alternativeness.

Shannon Selberg shows off his very weird and amusing lyrical style throughout and delivers them with gusto, sometimes sounding like he's got a moose up him. Check out 'Terrifique', the all-American song about your parents being killed on TV "I'm decked out in my father's best and the dog's look-ing good in my mother's dress." Poetic. 'Heave Ho' is definitely one of the higher points on the album - they do trumpets and punk in a more crazy and uplifting way than the Chilis will ever do. This album is a long, sick merry-go-round of songs, you'll definitely loose your pop

corn if you listen to it regularly. A delightful mixture of heaviness and weirdness, if you enjoy having your face ground into gravel then you'll love this album. Groovy! And check out the devious spoonerism of the album's title . . . cunning in-

SHIRLEY CHARLES

Thirsty Work (Independent/ Sniper)

Here is the first full length CD from the Nod and a great piece of work it is too. The production and packaging are very good - at last a group with independent business sense as well as good material. Recorded between December 1990 and June 1992, the long hours have

some. This is particularly noticeable on the two great ballads, 'Acid Rain' and 'Twilight'. Personally, I feel the Nod's potential is evident on these tracks and given the humorous nature of the album, they would be wise to develop the more serious side of their character. However, they can be

certainly paid off.

One thing you notice early

on is the quality of the Nod's

musicianship. The guitar play-

ing, courtesy of Glenn Dawson

and lead vocalist Darren

Broughton, is positively awe-

commended for taking on social issues as they do on 'Prob-The Nod deserve high praise

for the care and attention to detail they have put into this fine release. Hopefully the general public will snap up this morsel and be left to enjoy the best (only?) heavy rock release in New Zealand this year. In a language the Nod would appreciate, "cheers, let's have another

LUKE CASEY

#### **BIG DADDY** Sgt Pepper's (Rhino)

Big Daddy consists of eight Californian chaps who like taking a post-modern scalpel to the sacred cows of pop music. For their latest project they've sliced up that ultimate icon of 60s rock albums, reconstructing every track as if it were conceived by a star of a decade or so

Hence the title number is set to the Coasters' 'Poison Ivy' riff. 'Little Help From My Friends' becomes a Johnny Mathis lounge room ballad. 'She's Leaving Home' is treated a la Paul Anka's 'Diana'. And 'A Day In The Life' is lifted directly from the Buddy Holly canon, guitar riffs, vocal tics and all.

While some songs retain the original tune pretty much as is 'When I'm 64' was a campy period piece to start with others are virtually unrecognisable. It's only the lyric that reminds you that 'Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds' wasn't originally recorded by Jerry Lee Lewis the same afternoon he cut 'Great Balls of Fire'.

A couple of times the reworking reveals more than you want it to. The words of 'Within You, Without You' once mixed well in with the sitar drone. Now their daft cosmic pontificating stands exposed in a beatnik treatment of 'poetic' declamation accompanied by bongos, flute and double bass.

It's all pretty hilarious first time out although there's the usual danger of humour wearing thin through repetition. However, most tracks gain a certain musical credibility irrespective of their famous referrents. I'm enjoying this doo-wop 'It's Getting Better' as much as the original (been playing them back to back).

So yeah, sure, Sgt Pepper's Is the work of a bunch of smart alecks. And you bet it's calculatedly pandering to baby boomer nostalgia. But if Dread Zeppelin can mess about with the 70s then there's no reason why Big Daddy can't go further back for the same sort of fun. Relax and enjoy.

PETER THOMSON

## OPUS III

### Mind Fruit (Warners)

If you can imagine Julie Cruise being sent to Sinead O'Conner's hairdresser and then having her ethereal vocals backed by a lighter version of 808 State. you've got a pretty good idea of Opus III. Theirs is a very delicate techno mix. Breathy whispers, echoey synth and inoffensive beats. And just in case you're unsure of their mood. they've included an appropriate poem, the Desiderata, on their CD sleeve - "go placidly amid the noise and haste and remember what peace there may be in silence . . ." How thoughtful of them. 'It's A Fine Day', their perfect techno pop moment, is never really bettered but it doesn't seem that



