

# STARS & BAAS

**What is "Freak The Sheep"?** The administering of psychoactive substances to our ruminant woolly income earners? Maybe. In Auckland it's a two hour fix of indiginous music, Monday nights on BFM (though soon this will change to the original Wednesday from 8-10pm). For the past six years it's been hosted by Lisa Van der Aarde and she's given the show her mark of integrity and experimentation.

Sometime last year it was suggested to Lisa that *Freak The Sheep* might have enough material for a compilation cassette of the bands and artists who submit their demos and unreleased material to the show. Bands that performed live regularly, but had neither the backing nor clout to release their material through established channels. Lisa thought this was a good idea and mentioned it to Mr Flying Nun, Roger Shepherd. Roger thought "Why just a cassette? Why not a record (remember them?) and compact disc." *Freak The Sheep I* was born. That was August 1991.

A little late — damned record companies, damned economy — comes *Freak The Sheep II*. More stylistically comprehensive, it includes: from the deep south, Axel Grinders, Cyclops, Into The Void and Swim Everything. The North Island (with the greater population) contributes Blue Marbles, Book of Martyrs, Gestalt, Head Like A Hole, Leaders of Style, Lushburger, Tinnitus and Queen Meanie Puss.

What about this second album, Lisa?

"I wasn't aiming for anything commercial because I believe people need music that maybe you need to listen to more than once. In my mind I'd already chosen the songs I wanted but some bands were

keen to record new ones. Some did. Cyclops, especially for the album, and Book of Martyrs too.

"Gestalt are maybe the newest band. I've heard Dave Graham over a couple of years and I think he's a talented, talented songwriter. This too is especially recorded for the compilation. It's got sheep in it. Isn't that nice? With Head Like A Hole, I saw them a few times last year and was really impressed. But they've taken off. They're majorly popular. Them and Leaders of Style are maybe the most commercial tracks. That's why they're at the start. I wanted a broad range of stuff."

So much for the album. What about your show?

"It's based around new stuff. New bands, new demos, new releases. I don't play lots of old stuff, much as I'd like to. I always play a new band at least once. I'm always talking to new bands, finding out what's going on but it's really flexible. If people ring up and want to hear something that's not a problem. I like to know what the audience wants. The audience seems to be loyal. I get feedback from some people, I'd like more.

"Lots of schoolkids listen. They're hearing their friends and the bands get such a thrill to hear themselves. I think the appeal is playing a broad range of music. I hope that I do. I've played everything but I guess the show slants towards the alternative. But I juggle it, mix it up as much as possible."

So how do you feel about the state of local music in general and what can bands do about it?

"Lots of bands get to a certain level but maybe 'cos what they're doing is a bit weird they can't go anywhere else and it's annoying. There are limitations.

It's often the same audience to see lots of bands. But publicity comes into it. In a situation where there's two or three gigs in one weekend people have to make a choice. Times are hard too and gigs have been suffering, and [as for] putting on a tour... But if you can cover costs you're okay. Taking music around the country is important."

Could bands do more? "Probably. They could use the media more. It's available to them, in limited ways. Student and [w] radio. Either 91 or 89FM want demos. Print media, get your gig on all the gig guides. Sometimes bands just don't. Maybe they don't know how. It's also how motivated a band is. They've got to have some get up and go. Motivated bands are very organised like the Nixons, Dirtbox, Figure 60. It depends too on how far the band wanna go. Why don't they send the demos round the country? We are in a recession but we're apathetic. No one having any money does make it harder but I do think bands should think about doing more for themselves."

We'd better get back to the subject. *Freak The Sheep II* has spurred on the bands involved. Swim Everything can't make the gig but they'll be touring in October. Into The Void would have, probably drunk themselves to death but have got it together for the gig — the formal launch of the album.

That's on September 17th at Don't Tell Mama in Karangahape Road. Bands playing are Tinnitus, Leaders of Style, the Blue Marbles, Gestalt and Into The Void (yay!).

So, will there be a *Freak The Sheep III*?

Definitely.  
**BARBIE**



Holland is a long way from the Manawatu,

## LUNG IN EUROPE AND THE US

where Palmerston North based power grungers Lung have recorded two albums in the past couple of years. Guitarist Dave White spent some time here in Europe in 1989 and, while in England, managed to organise the production of the Live Stomach CD for the Clear (as they then were). Then came a name change and a new album *Cactii*. Now they're back in Amsterdam, the city which inspired Dave to call their label Yellow Bike Records. As I speak to him, Dave has just finished sound checking for the night's gig at club Korsakoff. It's the first night before a continental audience. He's not too daunted by the prospect.

"Coming to Holland after Brooklyn was like walking into your aunty's living room. When we arrived here we were absolute wrecks, but we've had a few days to recover." The hour and a half set time is the only thing worrying him tonight. "In America we never played for more than a half an hour. They have huge lineups — about five or

six bands — it's best to play in the middle. If you play first, then there's no-one there; and if you play at the end then everyone has gone home. Fortunately we booked through these people called Rave. They were enthusiastic enough to get us on to some good bills. They even gate-crashed some for us — so we ended up staying longer than we had planned. Maxwell's was the highlight though. It was with

Pavement — their homecoming gig after touring over here."

Tonight, it's Lung by themselves. Dave is worried whether the PA is going to do his guitar justice. He grumbles to the others about the lack of "digitals" on the desk. Being a three piece makes Lung a compact touring unit. They've never had need for a manager so the only thing they have to worry about is paying the soundman. "Look at him," Dave indicates a guy of about twenty, looking pretty cool. "Until a month ago, he'd hardly been outside Palmerston, now he gets more attention than any of us. In the States, they treat musicians pretty well. We went into this bar and got free drinks from the barmaid until four in the morning. We weren't even playing there — it was just because we were musicians from overseas."

But they didn't just come over to play rock stars. They've got a record to promote and without the comfort of record company support, they know it's all down to their own efforts. It's the height of the summer holidays over here and venues in Holland and Germany are paying good performance fees. If they keep their expenses down then the band will be able to make a modest profit on the tour. But it's the record sales that are the icing on the cake. *Cactii* is being distributed in England and Germany by an outfit called Plastic Head Records and they've already managed to sell more in both of these countries in two months than in eight months in New Zealand.

Lung have also managed to get their video (produced in Auckland by Axeman Stuart Palge) screened on MTV in Europe. It's more than TVNZ ever did and every little bit helps in a market this big. At Korsakoff tonight the crowd is a pretty healthy size by New Zealand standards. They respond to the music but the rules of music appreciation are different over here. As soon as Lung finish, the DJ puts on a Led Zeppelin song and then plays some Yes. It's hard to see where Lung fit in where "alternative" club patrons jive to the sounds of 70s supergroups. The Dutch leg of the tour is to be followed by a stint in England and then Germany and Belgium. Dave White is keeping his eyes on the prize.

"We're on a mission really. Baiter Space started it — showing that New Zealand music doesn't have to sound like the Chills."

**MATTHEW TETLEY-JONES**

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## ANONYMOUS GURU

BORINGHIPPILOVESHIT TOUR

SEPTEMBER

Thursday 17th - Ali Baba's

WELLINGTON

Friday 18th - Swan Hotel

MOTUEKA

Saturday 19th - Happy Sam's

TAKAKA

Sunday 20th - Cactus Club

NELSON

Wednesday 23rd - Staffords

TIMARU

Thursday 24th - Penguin Club

OAMARU

Friday 25th - Crown Hotel

DUNEDIN

Saturday 27th - Dux Delux

CHRISTCHURCH

Sunday 28th - Led Zebra

NELSON

OCTOBER

Thursday 1st - Ali Baba's

WELLINGTON (With Nixons)

Friday 2nd - Superliquorman

PALMERSTON NORTH (With

Nixons)

Saturday 3rd - White Hart

NEW PLYMOUTH

Thursday 8th - Shakespeare's

NAPIER

Friday 9th - Albion River Bar

GISBOURNE

Saturday 10th - Guru's

HAMILTON

Sunday 11th - Croc's

TAURANGA

Friday 16th - Dog & Trumpet

AUCKLAND

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