

## Selected Amazon Reviews

### "SMASHING SONGS OF STAGE AND SCREEN"

#### **THE REDNECK JACO**

*5.0 out of 5 stars* **PLEASE keep it together for as long as possible this time, Guys!** Reviewed in the United States on August 18, 2014

At first, I really didn't want to be excited about Big Daddy's "resurrection." fearing, as it turned out quite justifiably, that they'd gone for the "generate some interest by breaking up and then reuniting, half a century or so later"/ big bucks like my other 4 favorite groups seem to have all welcomed in the new millennium: to wit, A) the Rolling Stones (1997's "Bridges To Babylon" to 2005's POS (putrid) "A Bigger Bang", B) Procol Harum (1991's "Prodigal Stranger" to 2003's "The Well's On Fire.") C) Even Fanny, right UP there with the Stones & PH FINALLY released a new-but-still-"greatest-hits"-kind-of-thing with 2003's "First Time In A Long Time - and THEIR previous album was (GASP!) 1974's "Rock 'n Roll Survivors." And D) even the "unbelievably-brilliant-but-we-didn't-know-it-at-at the-time: blame disco!," Mott The Hoople broke up in 1974 after releasing "MTH Live," not to be heard from again till 2009's (!) "Live @ Hammersmith." The Rolling Stones, 8 years between "product"...Procol Harum, 12 years...Fanny (GASP again!) 29 years!...and Mott The Hoople, THIRTY FIVE years! I shall try to refrain further from going into the "band breakup so they can generate more interest with a (GASP! for the final time) inevitable reunion album/CD/tape," whatever.

OK: I have made no question about how, now (brown cow?) "Big Daddy" is right UP there with those "four previously mentioned." And even (sorry to say it, Guys) Big Daddy seems to've pulled a "breakup to generate interest" schtick: THEIR previous product was 2000's "Greatest Hits." SO, when I learned that they were going to pull it together again in 2013, I have to admit that I wasn't altogether happy with the fact that Big Daddy (as such) was now down to 4 guys, the vocalists; but they DID utilize the talents of some former "Daddies" for musicians - and THIS time out, the CD?: "Smashing Songs Of Stage & Screen." Whoop. I mean, with how what was left of Rock and Roll and thoroughly, 100% deteriorated, OK, I can dig them not wanting to work out on the likes of Kurt Cobain, Britney Spears, or (tee-hee-hee) "Lady Antebellum." So Marty the "K," Bubba (AKA Tom Lee) "Donny D" Raymond, and "Lightenin' Bob Wayne decided to trash "Stage & Screen," etc. Ans, as I said "I wasn't altogether happy," I

was WRONG! "Smashing" is freaking, drooling, speaking in tongues, rolling-on-the-floor BRILLIANT, and I'll even have the temerity to compare it - favorably! - with THEIR "Sgt. Pepper" (oh...wait, yeah, OK, BD DID work out on "Sgt. Pepper" in '94), OK, their "Exile On Main St." then. "And Meanwhile...Back In The States," the second album (don't worry....Amazon has it, in all its brilliance, available for "download."

I won't (I already hear you saying "Thank goodness!") babble about the entire CD. Please though let me elaborate on my three fave tracks. #2, they work out on Andrew Lloyd Weber's "Phantom Of The Opera," with new - BRILLIANT!!! - keyboard man, Wayne Peet, playing the intro to Bach's "Tocatta & Fugue In D Minor," then fading and mixing (here's that's adverb again) BRILLIANTLY with Bobby "Boris" Pickett's 1963 gem, "Monster Mash." Needless to say, bass singer, Bubba, is IN HIS ELEMENT here! Marty and the other guys do their absolute-very-best "The Blossoms" imitation, but, really now, Darlene Love is quite conspicuous by her absence. Still: Take it to the top, #1 HILARIOUS!

I ALWAYS wanted Big Daddy to take a shot (with an AK-47 if one was available) to something/anything "disco." Finally, here on, "Smashing," they give both the disco idiom and its primary purveyors, The Bee Gee. their just due on track 5, "Stayin' Alive." Here, they're augmented by Hal Melia, the sax player that was with them till just before their third CD, "Cutting Their Own Groove" (actually, "Whatever Happened" and "Meanwhile" preceded "Groove," but they were albums...as I said, they ARE available as downloads from Amazon) They keep the melody totally intact, but Thank The Lord, they have removed the satanic disco "beat" and that wretched "Oooh-Oooh-Oooh-Stayin' Alive"/falsetto chorus that always made you want to throw a brick at the Bee Gees and Travolta (that last one, I STILL do...the Bee Gees are 75% history now, sadly). "Alive" sounds like that fifties precursor to Frank Zappa - and I mean that, ultimately complimentary in terms of musical satire - The Coasters, they of "Charlie Brown," "Yakkity Yack" and "Little Egypt." Those guys were so wonderful: nascent Rock and Roll was beginning to kill itself by taking itself seriously when suddenly, "Why's is ever'body always pickin' on me?" put some humor back into Rock and Roll.

And finally, track #13, is the abominable "break out the insulin NOW," "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious," a song so insipid, so putrid it almost ("almost" is the operative term there) justifies junk like "Don't Worry Be Happy." "ALMOST" - going no further, except to note lead guitarist Donny D takes the lead (!) vocal this time out, and says what everyone else in the known universe has to say about the song (except, I think, Tim P, an unbelievably insipid little TWERP

who sang the song, against the wishes of 7-pre-teens-stuck-in-a-station-wagon going to the "Y," one Saturday in '65....oh, don't ask) And just as Donny D seems about ready to just flat justifiably give up on the song - here come....Alvin & the Chipmunks to the rescue! And it works!

I can't go further - folks, IMMEDIATELY buy this CD when it becomes available again and I guarantee you that it'll be, "don't touch that, I was listening to it!" on your CD player. And Bubba, Donny D, Marty, and Lightnin,' PLEASE put a band together and TOUR behind "Smashing!"

## **TED QUOCK**

*5.0 out of 5 stars* **Big Daddy--Back and Better Than Ever!**

Reviewed in the United States on August 13, 2014

If you don't have this album yet, what are you waiting for? If you didn't know Big Daddy is alive and well, rejoice and reacquaint yourself with this truly unique and talented group of musicians. If you've never heard of this band (aka Big Daddy 59) before, run—don't walk—to your favorite CD vendor and order any of their albums. I envy you for the treat that's in store for you:

- What Really Happened to the Band of '59?
- Meanwhile ... Back in the States
- Cutting Their Own Groove
- Sgt. Pepper's
- The Best of Big Daddy
- Smashing Songs from Stage & Screen

Hallelujah, Big Daddy is back! The group that perfected mashups before there was such a word—not just a cover band, not simply a parody group, not by any means an oldies group--Big Daddy performs in doo-wop style, usually using the arrangement of a 50s or 60s classic. The combinations are inspired, marrying songs that may not sound alike at all but are similarly constructed (how about Bruce Springsteen's "Dancing in the Dark" set to Pat Boone's "April Love")? Moreover, some numbers cleverly choose songs that are thematically linked ("What Kind of Fool Am I" from "Stop the World--I Want to Get Off" & Ricky Nelson's "Poor Little Fool," "I Could Have Danced All Night" from "My Fair Lady" & Bobby Freeman's "Do You Want to Dance?").

In keeping with their "band that time forgot" mythology, Big Daddy's earliest work focused largely on 80s hits, but they have gradually mined other decades and genres for material, reaching almost into this century ("My Heart Will Go On") and as far back as 1939 ("Over the Rainbow," "Tara's Theme"). I'm pleased to report

that the formula clicks as well as ever, and that the decision to go with movie themes and show tunes helps them bridge generational gaps and appeal to new audiences.

I personally delight in discovering the "Easter Eggs" planted within many of Big Daddy's songs (a personal favorite is the multiple surprises at the end of their version of "Dancing in the Dark"). Some gems from this album:

- "Tara's Theme," a la "Telstar" by the Tornados, ends with snatches of both "Dixie" and "Battle Hymn of the Republic."
- "New York, New York," in the style of "Blue Moon," closes with a roll call of the group's favorite New York doo-wop groups. When somebody wonders out loud "What about the Marcells," he gets shouted down because they hail from Pittsburgh.

There are more surprises, including the fact that this album also samples from novelty acts of the 50s and 60s, including Ross Bagdasarian's David Seville and the Chipmunks and Bobby "Boris" Pickett.

Back to the bottom line, though: if you think doo-wop songs are relics, treat yourself to any Big Daddy album for unimpeachable evidence that doo-wop is alive and well—and timeless as hell!

5 people found this helpful

## **GLORIA BRUNI**

**5.0 out of 5 stars I love it. I also appreciate the ready availability**

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on May 12, 2015

Self-medicating with music works well for me. In that context this CD is a mega-happy pill. It makes me laugh out loud. It is clever and reflects a wide range of talent on the part of the Big Daddy "mashers"... I love it. I also appreciate the ready availability and speed with which it made its way to New Zealand.

## **SEA WASP**

**5.0 out of 5 stars Love it..!!**

Reviewed in the United Kingdom on March 10, 2015

These guys turn unlistenable pop into art. Funny art..!! No way in the world would I ever listen to "Music Of The Night" (or any other Andrew Lloyd Webber bollocks) but when the daddies put a Bobby "Boris" Pickett Monster Mash veneer on it then it becomes an instant classic. Same goes for the

rockabilly take on "Don't Cry For Me, Argentina". The whole album is a gem. If you're a jaded old rocker, give this a listen and I guarantee a wry smile will grace your lips very soon into the music. See if you find some of their other stuff as well..

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