

THE BIG DISH KING TUT'S WAH WAH HUT, GLASGOW

UP and coming for about as long as it takes your average Reich to be down and going, The Big Dish have, over the last five years, proved to be something of a jagged peg trying to squeeze into a velvet-line hole. That is, a four piece, all hands on board, let's-do-the-show-right-here rawk ensemble, just like mama used to make, who are itching to breathe the rarefied air normally gulped by high-concept arena entities like Springsteen and Phil Collins.

Not for The Big Dish a rider of dry roasted peanuts and Babycham at the Central College of Electrical Engineering. The winsome pop anthems of vocalist and songwriter Stephen Lindsay have, since the debut album "Swimmer" through "Creeping Up On Jesus" and the new collection "Satellites", always focused on the upward curve of innocence into experience, the shackles of smalltown life melting and dispersing in the glare of billboard neon, and the band are in no hurry to distance themselves from harbouring similar aspirations.

Certainly, the new single "Miss America" ("She'll be the queen of something or other someday / A beauty in every way but one way") lodging itself at the tail end of the Frisky Forty can't have blunted their appetite or discouraged eastwest Records who've ploughed several king's ransoms and a sheik's entertainment allowance into ensuring that The Biggies strut stadium very soon.

So, if a musical genre must place a primacy on the grandly meaningless gesture, on platitude and crass emotional manipulation, if a genre has to orchestrate us as consumers, then Lindsay's lads and lassies are as welcome to the glittering prizes as any of the epsilons currently prominent. The new material on show tonight has been pruned accordingly, the nance-rock trappings of old supplanted by muscular choruses and chunky riffing. Good luck to 'em.

But this wouldn't be the Maker without salutary warnings about pop as a learned response that can serve as a bona fide meal ticket until dotage. Bare-toothed greed and avaricious ambition are fine in their place, but the Dish seem to be a little programmatic in their planning. I mean, like, what's wrong with enjoying the ride?

ALLAN BROWN