

empire

CALENDAR



Despite its overwhelming propensity for producing dim-witted, redneck *Chainsaw-Massacre* style clod-hoppers, Texas has also spat forth some of rock & roll's finest extremists. From the severe 1960s psych-intensity of underground acid heads the 13th Floor Elevators to the sublime, bluesy pummeling of ZZ Top to the insane, howling-through-a-megaphone noise assault of the Butthole Surfers—the Lone Star state has definite-

ly come through for fans of FTW rock overkill.

One of the more recent additions to this pantheon of misfits is Denton-spawned, Austin-based combo, the Riverboat Gamblers, a drastically effective punk rock wrecking crew who, in just a few years time, have carved a magnificent swath of beer-soaked damage across the country. The Gamblers' brand of acro-sonic mayhem, first captured on 2001's self-titled debut and showcased, with devastating effect on their current *To the*

Confusion of Our Enemies, is a natural fact demonstration of punk-garage fetishism, one put across with a furioso focus and savagery that locks down onto their MC5-Ramones-fueled groove so completely, it sounds as if it would take a rescue crew using the jaws of life to pry them off. Lead howler Mike Wiebe comes on like a natural disaster, rocking, reeling and, where possible, literally hanging from the ceiling, and his equally out of control band mates follow every demented twist with emphatic, untamed

rock & roll kapow. Such frantic zeal, of course, is exactly where it's at, and The Riverboat Gamblers have staked a splendidly undeniable claim. (Jonny Whiteside) **IE**

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