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## The New Christs

Gloria

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Almost as staggering as the 2006 reformation of the legendary Aussie rockers **Radio Birdman** is the continued existence of their just-as-good offshoot, the modestly-named **New Christs**. While maybe not quite the second coming that their name suggests, these grizzled veterans can always be relied on for some high-powered rock & roll.

The New Christs were formed by Birdman singer **Rob Younger** all the way back in 1981 for a one-off single ("Face A New God", the sale price of which these days would fund a modest retirement) and then supported **Iggy Pop** on his first Australian tour. By all accounts they blew **Mr. Osterberg**, who admittedly had an inferior band on that jaunt, off the stage; not too surprising, as Younger is one of the most powerful and charismatic vocalists you're likely to hear. He's especially astounding in a live setting; seeing Birdman in 2006, I was amazed to see a guy who looked like my white-haired uncle commanding the stage like a true rock demon.

The current Christs lineup includes **Dave Kettley** on scorching lead guitar, pounding drums (but with that all-important little bit of swing) by **Stuart Wilson**, excellent keyboard and guitar flourishes by **Brent Williams**, and - last but not least - the perfect bass underpinning of **Jim Dickson**, who provided similar services on the last Birdman album *Zeno Beach* and tour. The word "legendary" is a bit inadequate for the lanky Dickson; suffice to say that he played a huge part in getting **The Byrds** off the ground, managing and producing them as well as offshoot **The Flying Burrito Brothers**, and has been involved in music as a bassist and producer ever since.

The album starts off a little bit shakily with the mid-tempo, somewhat dark-hued "Try Something", but moves right up into full-on hi-octane rock mode with "My Existence". After that there's hardly a dull moment, with blazing tunes like "These Reasons", the slightly Western-tinged "The Posse" and the closing "Bonsoir a Vous" that'll fry up your brain before leaving tire marks on your back.

It looks like Birdman have split again following that last album and tour, but if Younger keeps the Christs going it'll be a fine consolation. To paraphrase the New Christs' old album title, they got this!

-Gareth Bowles

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