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New Christs shine their light on locals

Chris Regan | 14th August 2009

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Catch the New Christs at The Winsome Hotel, Lismore this Sunday.

FOR those who don't know who Rob Younger is, think Radio Birdman and the New Christs. They were among the most influential bands in the late '70s and early '80s respectively.

The New Christs formed in 1984 for a one-off bedroom recording.

"Yeah, that was it," Rob told Pulse.

"But then Iggy Pop wanted us to support him on his Aussie tour, then not long after it was The Ramones, so we just kept going."

"The name, New Christs, came about at a time when every singer/songwriter – like Bruce Springsteen for one – was branded, the new Dylan. While that would have been a great name, better go with New Christs – to limit the comparison, of course."

While the original Christ was crucified and then resurrected, it is safe to say the band has never gone through a resurrection, nor been crucified.

"We never broke up. It was just that we had so many musicians come and go, I'd hate to count," he laughs.

And which musicians? Members of the Hoodoo Gurus, The Saints and Lime Spiders. That's just the tip of the rock 'n' roll cream to break bread with Rob.

The current line-up, together since 2006, has Jim Dickson on bass, Stu Wilson on drums, Dave Kettley on guitar and Brent Williams on guitar/ keyboards, and has toured Europe three times. It is now promoting their new LP Gloria on a mini-tour of Australia's east coast.

While Rob is happy with the album, the same can't be said for the reviews.

"Not that I give a s**t but [we have gotten] good reviews for introducing new instruments," moans Rob.

"We're not predominately a guitar, bass and drums band. We never have been.

"For Christ's sake, you only have to listen to Heading South from our first album. It had a full brass section. For years, we've had pianos up the backside of songs – not to mention sitars and the kitchen sink."

That's the bottom line with The New Christs, but you will just have to see for yourselves what the whole of Europe has known for decades. The New Christs are still one of the most sought-after acts to tour Europe and have just returned from the Azkena Rock Festival in Spain where they shared the stage alongside Alice Cooper, The Black Crows and The Breeders.

"Yes, we will be bringing the banging rock element of the New Christs to the Winsome, but also the soft cuddly sensitive element we are known for," Rob said.

Is this the Rob Younger of the New Christs I saw all those years ago, back at the premier rock venue the Sydney Trade Union Club?

"Music is so diverse today. It's a nebulous area and I'm no clairvoyant, but rock 'n' roll and its hard core followers never die out."

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