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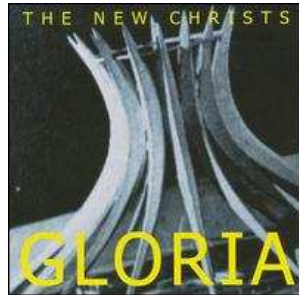
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Wednesday, August 19th, 2009

CD Review: The New Christs, "Gloria"

by [Ken Shane](#)



When discussion turns to the band Radio Birdman, they are invariably described as the "seminal Australian punk group." That's selling them just a little short. Radio Birdman was formed in Sydney in 1974 by Rob Younger and American expatriate Deniz Tek, and they had a huge influence on future generations of Australian indie-rockers, and they also had a major impact on more mainstream bands. Although their legend might not have spread far beyond Australia, many musicians around the world are well aware of their legacy.

When Radio Birdman broke up in 1978, lead singer Younger formed a hard-edged rock band called the New Christs. The band has seen many lineup changes over the years, with Younger remaining the only constant member. The current lineup has been together since 2006, which is something of a record. The band has released six previous albums over the years, the last of which, *These Rags*, was released in 2002. The new album, *Gloria* (Impedance Music), is the first recording by the current lineup.

There is nothing new or groundbreaking about this album. In fact, a lot of it reminds me that of the music that was in the Sydney air when I lived there for three months in 1979. The shadow of Iggy Pop, which has always loomed large over the indie-rock scene in Australia, shows no sign of fading based on the evidence of this album. The music is your basic hard, blues-based guitar, drums, and bass. That's actually a welcome relief after all of the hushed tones I've been hearing from new bands lately, but if you're going to tread the tried and true line, you'd better have the songs to make it seem fresh. In that regard, *Gloria* is about half-successful.

["The Posse"](#) finds Younger ruminating over lost love while Dave Kettley provides a guitar squall, and Stuart Wilson beats the drums like a bad habit. ["Impossible Now"](#) is propelled by a savage riff right out of the Cult handbook from Kettley. Younger provides an accessible chorus that will have the punters singing along while their beer sloshes onto the floor.

I have always been a big admirer of the heart that beats at the center of Australian rock and roll. That heart is beating hard in the New Christs. Of that there can be no doubt. But if it's been seven years since your last album, you've had plenty of time to write an album that's all killer, no filler. *Gloria* is an inconsistent album that's a bit too much of the same thing. Some musical variation, along with more steady songwriting should do the trick next time.

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