

Thunder Bay Source

The Joys take on new moniker

Written by Linda Maehans

Anyone who likes the contagious energy of a band that, as soon as it begins to play, has everyone up dancing and jumping around won't want to miss a trio of shows coming up at Scuttlebutt's.

They're called The Joys and for good reason. Actually, the band from southwestern Ontario currently on tour and coming here to share their glee has just gone through a slight name change, and there's good reason for that too.

Formerly known as POPJOY, they're a rapidly rising pop-rock phenomena right across Canada thanks to their energetic, irresistible sound and stage presence. But as they drive their talent ever forward into more original waters, it seemed only fitting for a name change to reflect the exciting new directions their music is taking. Hence the switch from POPJOY just this week to The Joys.

Any way one refers to them, the foursome has much to be proud of in the world of entertainment.

They grab and wow young audiences on university, college and high school campuses across the country, they've produced a couple of CD's and last year at the London Music Awards they won "Favorite Pop/Rock Band" of 2004. They were also nominated by Canadian Campus Entertainment for "2004 Entertainer of the Year".



L-R - Mike Mckyes, Sarah Smith, Shawn Smith & Glen "Archie" Gamble

So it's easy to anticipate what the temperature of the room might be next Thursday, Friday and Saturday night. As one entertainment reviewer put it, the place is "instantly 15 degrees hotter".

The Joys' drummer, Glen Gamble (a.k.a. Archie) chatted with Thunder Bay's Source from a hotel room in Timmins on the way to Thunder Bay. Right off the top he expanded on the name change.

"Well, the band has been together about four years and the only original remaining member is Sarah Smith (lead vocals). So, after a few member changes we've finally evolved into this line up which is one that's not going anywhere (else), meaning we are, you know, the final lineup of this band."

Gamble said it took him, singer (Smith), guitarist Michael McKyes, and bassist Shawn Smith (no relation to Sarah) awhile to make the natural changes every good band goes through on the road to success, “but now that we’ve got that, it’s onward to bigger and better things!”

Gamble himself has been keeping the beat alive for a couple of decades. He said he knew a long time ago what he wanted.

“Sure, yeah, I think from about the age of nine or ten I knew I wanted to be a drummer. I was always a big dreamer, wanting to, you know, be a “rock star” and be in a band. That evolved into becoming a musician and I consider myself very fortunate to be able to do that. I’ve been playing for a living for 20 years now. Actually I’ve been in Thunder Bay many, many times with various other bands over the years.”

The Joys tour extensively year round, playing over 200 gigs in clubs and on campuses, so that doesn’t leave much time for day jobs (as if they would want that anyway!) Gamble said at this stage of the game The Joys consider themselves “extremely lucky to be making a full-time living making music and now we’re trying to move that on to the level of careers.”

Gamble was asked where and how he and the others get their energy, and so much of it that, as mentioned, the collective temperature on floors rises dramatically as soon as the show starts.

“Well, it’s an amazing feeling for us because the original version of this band started out as a cover band, going out to play cover music to, you know, make people happy, give them a good time and fill up the dance floor. We’ve managed to retain that but we’ve reached a balance with cover music and our own original stuff. And, the way we deliver the songs seems to be working because people like to dance and shake their (tails) at our show and just have a good time!”

Gamble said the band quickly gages the mood and vibe of a room and, after warming everyone up with lots of “good time party music” the audience is more than ready to receive the “original stuff we throw at them. Luckily for us it’s been the same acceptance as they show for the cover tunes.”

Gamble was candid about the essence of The Joys. “It’s all about having a good time, you know, forget about the (crap) that happens, say at your job or you know, you might hate your Boss or whatever, but then you come to a Joys show and you can start to rock and roll!”

The confident drummer had some advice for kids maybe dreaming of rock stardom. He summed it up in two simple words, “be persistent.”

Gamble continued, “and you have to be in it for the right reasons. If you’re into music to become famous or to make lots of money, um, don’t hold your breath ‘cause it’s a long hard road. But if you’re into music because you love performing and enjoy playing live, then by all means chase your dream. And don’t ever give up.”

So rock on with The Joys at Scuttlebutt’s on April 28th, 29th, and 30th.

Readers can also check out their website at www.thejoys.ca, and maybe hear a sneak preview on “Demolition Sessions”, their latest CD just out.