

Local band finds the joy in music in Forwell Hall

Diana McLay

Interrobang

What's in a name?

Apparently a lot for local rock-delicious Popjoy, who recently changed their name to The Joys to avoid the dreaded pop band label.

"We didn't want our music to be limited to a genre," said Shawn Smith, bassist for the band. "We didn't want to be limited to what we can do."

Although The Joys use some pop-like ploys, such as colourful, eye-catching hair and trendy clothing sponsors, their music is self-described power-punk.

Under their new moniker, The Joys will perform at Farshaw on September 5, but this band is no stranger to the London rock scene. They have been playing in bars like Molly Blossom, Norma Jeans and Max Silvers for the past four years, and after a few membership shuffles, they are sounding better than ever.

Their sound is all over the map, influences of rock, pop, punk and even old-time rock 'n' roll can be heard on stage of any one of their 200 live shows they perform a year.

"Sarah sounds like a new wave Janis Joplin," Smith said about fellow band member, and lead vocalist, Sarah Smith. She is the sole member remaining of the original POPJOY compilation, which is another justification for the name change.

The Joys draw inspiration from bands like The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, Weezer and even No Doubt for both music and style. But the style component comes a little easier these days, considering the band is sponsored by GSUS, a trendy punk-inspired clothing label from Europe. A GSUS executive caught a live performance of the band and, a-la fairy tale, struck a clothing/promotional deal.

"[GSUS] let us stay up to style without spending the cash," Smith said. "It's a partnership, we help them and they help us."

After years of playing bars as

a cover band to sustain the band as a business, The Joys are slowing eliminating the cover songs and replacing them with originals.

With independent sales of Demolition Sessions (2005) and Anyone Who Cares (2003) still breaking 10,000 copies, it's apparent their fans seem to welcome the switch.

The Joys are still very much an independent entity, but when Smith was asked about the bands stance on signing a record deal, his aspirations were clear.

"Of course everyone wants a big record deal, but when it comes time to sign, we won't jump at just any deal," Smith said.

They may not have a record deal yet, but the band did sign on to have their song, "Do I", played during the end credits of the upcoming film Cake, starring Heather Graham and Taye Diggs. Besides surviving through long nights in crammed motel rooms, Smith considers the movie contract to be amongst one of the bands biggest accomplishments.

"My definition of success is being fulfilled in doing whatever you're doing," Smith said. Playing with headliners like Robert Plant, Honeymoon Suite, The Trevs,

Finger Eleven and Kos, is obvious. The Joys should feel a sense of fulfillment.

As for the September 5th performance in Forwell Hall at 9pm, Smith predicts students can expect "one hell of a rock show with four people giving it their all."

The band sells merchandise and posts listings, reviews and news on their website www.thejoys.ca

