

ARIA HALL OF FAME
Wednesday 18th July
Plaza Ballroom, Melbourne

Hoodoo Gurus

For two and a half decades the Hoodoo Gurus have consistently been one of the most inventive, lyrically smart and exciting rock 'n' roll bands Australia has ever produced. The strange and enthralling saga of the Hoodoo Gurus began when three relocated Perth musicians - Dave Faulkner, Roddy Radalj and James Baker - teamed up with Sydney-based Kimble Rendall to play a rooftop party in Sin City on New Year's morning 1981.

As Le Hoodoo Gurus the band had released a debut single, 'Leilani'. By the time it was released Rendall had moved on to work in the film industry and was replaced by bassist Clyde Bramley. Baker departed the line-up and Mark Kingsmill took over drumming duties. Radalj started another band and guitarist Brad Shepherd took his place.

From the get go the Hoodoo Gurus created a distinctive distillation of music that was in their respective record collections, creating a fascinating synthesis of The Cramps, T. Rex, Little Richard, The Ramones, Suicide, Gene Vincent, The Flamin' Groovies, Nancy Sinatra, Gary Glitter, Bobby Gentry, The Sonics and a thousand others. They spelt it out in '(Let's All) Turn On', the opening track from 'Stoneage Romeos'.

Already a seasoned live outfit from endless Australian touring, the Gurus found themselves signed to A&M Records in the States and Stoneage Romeos at #1 on the American college radio charts. On the back of this they embarked on the first of countless tours of that, and many other countries. In fact the Gurus have toured internationally literally dozens of times, including repeated sell-outs at 10,000 capacity venues in Brazil. Not bad for a band who cut their teeth in tiny inner-city venues like the Strawberry Hills Hotel and The Vulcan.

A second album, 'Mars Needs Guitars', sent the Gurus career skyrocketing. They now had a burgeoning catalogue of inspired pop/rock'n'roll songs and matched that with an incendiary live show. They toured constantly, radio played the songs, TV screened the videos - it was as well oiled a machine as a band like the Hoodoo Gurus were ever likely to be.

'Blow Your Cool' came out in 1987 and via it the Gurus continued to build their reputation as a live and recording band. After extensive touring for that album Bramley was replaced by Rick Grossman finalising a Hoodoo Gurus line-up that continues to this day.

The albums kept coming - 'Magnum Cum Louder' (1988), 'Kinky' (1991), 'Crank' (1994) and 'Blue Cave' (1996). There are also two double CD compilations - 'Electric Soup/Gorilla Biscuit' (1992) and 'Electric Chair/Armchair Guru' (1997). Did the Gurus break up or take a rest in 1997? It's all semantic but certainly after 16 years of touring and recording - and with more than a million albums sold worldwide - the band were due whatever they decided they wanted.

A revitalised Hoodoo Gurus released 'Mach Schau' in 2004 and hit the road again, playing to an audience comprised of both long-term fans and a new generation who had grown up listening to the parents and elder siblings' records and reminiscences about great gigs they'd seen. The NRL embraced the Gurus using the re-worked 'What's My Scene' (That's My Team) as their promotional theme for the past five years, and along with many live dates and festival appearances such as headlining spots at Homebake and The Big Day Out, the band performed live at the 2005 and 2006 NRL Grand Finals.

Come the early part of 2007 and the Hoodoo Gurus were consistently cited as one of the highlights at the SXSW Music Festival in Austin, Texas. The SXSW performances were part of an extended run of North America and Canadian dates, which were greatly anticipated by a new generation of fans who thought they'd never have the opportunity to see this much-mythologised Australian band perform live.

The Hoodoo Gurus remain as relevant and impassioned about their distinctive brand of rock 'n' roll as at any time in their twenty-five year career. And along the way they've influenced an entire generation of bands which explains why the likes of You Am I, The Living End, Dallas Crane, Grinspoon and many others queued up a few years back to pay tribute to the band's 1984 debut album, Stoneage Romeos. Like wow indeed.



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