



Helen Jones Moss Vale
email helen.jones@yourtimes.com.au

HotRock

Rocking from Bowral to France

With rock-star strut and seemingly boundless energy, Lex Koritni, 22, sweeps into my house as one can imagine he takes to the stage.

Dressed in black, wild hair trussed beneath bandana, brimming with confidence and with the edginess of a young thoroughbred, he is here for our interview, along with fellow 'Koritni' band member and school friend Chris Brown – Southern Highlands boys whose band is making waves in the European rock scene.

Recently returned from a successful European tour promoting their album 'Lady Luck' and dubbed as "a band to see live", the group, which has only been together for eighteen months, received further recognition when 'Lady Luck' was annointed 'Album Of The Month' in January's issue of French 'Rock Hard' magazine.

Growing up in Bowral, Lex and Chris, 24, met as students at Oxley College.

They describe themselves as "ordinary kids who appreciate and value family and music." Intelligent, earnest and articulate, they share a genuine love of music and performance. Chris always loved music, particularly jazz, and grew up playing lots of instruments until he discovered drums, while Lex grew up amidst rock and seems to have been born to perform. In what he considered at the time a musical boot camp, Lex recalls learning instruments from an early age and practicing at least two hours a day by the age of seven. "There was not much choice. It's all I've ever known. It was bred into me and I hated it (practice) 'til I was sixteen or seventeen" when he discovered the "social power" of music and performance. He started to write songs, went straight from school into the music scene in Sydney in 2003 and has not looked back. Chris, meanwhile, boomeranged out of an Arts/ Psychology degree at Sydney University in 2000 to also pursue music.



CHRIS BROWN, LUKE CUERDEN, MATT HUNTER, LEX KORITNI & EDDY SANTACREU

Lex initially joined with Parisian Anthony De Lemos to record the critically acclaimed album 'Green\$Colour' in 2005, but differing priorities meant the partnership soon dissolved. Returning to Sydney, Lex regrouped with Chris Brown on drums and French guitarist Eddie Santacreu, auditioning extensively until they found guitar and bass players Luke Cuerden and Matt Hunter, and 'Koritni' was born. Within three months, the band was cutting their teeth playing 'Green\$Colour' and rock covers across Europe, then came back to Australia and recorded 'Lady Luck' within another breathtaking three months.

Aspiring to play music which embodies Rock 'n Roll, Chris and Lex express the band's desire to "make a difference" and to create durable music of their times rather than performing music from previous generations.

Despite developing their own sound, the band is frequently compared with AC/DC and Aerosmith. Lex's rasping, sometimes gravelly voice is often likened to early mentor Jimmy Barnes, his performance to frontmen David Lee Roth and Axel Rose. Lex takes it all in his stride. "Comparison with AC/DC is unavoidable as in Europe, they are the biggest known band from Australia."

Aspiring to play music which embodies Rock 'n Roll, Chris and Lex express the band's desire to "make a difference" and to create durable music of their times rather than performing music from previous generations. "We're playing good music you can appreciate on the basic level," Lex says. "I write lyrics to sound and feelings, about life and

experiences – from boys' nights out to friends who have died, or another's gambling addiction."

With ages ranging between 22 and 33, the band professes to being cohesive, collaborative, compatible. "It's so much fun, music should be fun!", says Chris. "The band works with different personalities, in the bus, sharing the same room, or on stage - there is no avoiding each other. Everybody speaks their minds, we share standard social behaviour, we're switched into each others needs like brothers" adds Lex.

Seasoned performers across Europe, they have only completed an astonishing four gigs in Australia.

"European tours are differently set up" says Chris. Adds Lex, "Music venues in Europe are built specifically for live music and good conditions to play under. You are looked after well. You have a sound check, you are fed, musicians are provided with drinks. Pubs here provide an all purpose venue and you are not well looked after. There is no sound check, no food, you pay for your drinks. Too many bands are accepting poor conditions as there are so many bands within a small market."

Currently in hiatus, band members are working casual jobs until their planned tour which starts in early August with 'gigs' in Sydney, Canberra and then on to Belgium, Holland, France, Switzerland and the UK. Backed by equally supportive parents, Chris and Lex agree that maintaining close relationships with family and friends in the Southern Highlands helps keep them grounded. According to Lex, "We're all arrogant cats, arrogant in the sense of knowing what we are good at. I don't feel this is ever going to change!"

Why should it?

Visit www.koritni.com for more info.



MATT HUNTER, LUKE CUERDEN & LEX KORITNI