



GIRLPOWER RULED New Zealand's music scene in the last 12 months. On top of this trend flew Ladyhawke, alias Pip Brown, whose self-titled album won acclaim, not only here but also across the Tasman and in the UK.

The Masterton-born musician took home six Tuis at the New Zealand Music Awards, won Australian Aria Awards for best breakthrough artist and breakthrough single for *My Delirium* and was nominated in the UK for an NME Award for Best Solo Artist.

She was joined by Gin Wigmore. The songstress, whose quirky voice reminds of the likes of Amy Winehouse and Duffy, released her debut album *Holy Smoke* in September and immediately shot to the top of the charts.

The solo album wasn't Wigmore's only brush with the charts this year. She was the haunting voice in south Auckland trio Smashproof's hit *Brother*.

The song spent 11 weeks on top of the New Zealand charts, breaking a 23-year-old record by clocking up the longest consecutive run at No 1 by a local act on the NZ charts. The record was previously set by the America's Cup-themed single *Sailing Away* by *All Of Us*.

Brother struck a nerve, winning praise for its honesty and relevant lyrics, with lines like: "Man, take away a kid's life, just because he tagged? Damn," referring to businessman Bruce Emery who stabbed 15-year old Pihema Cameron to death.

THIS YEAR New Zealand also continued its long-standing love affair with dub and reggae beats.

While *The Black Seeds'* fifth studio album *Solid Ground* was released in 2008 it carried on to dominate the airwaves early this year.

The band was only challenged by fellow Wellingtonians Fat Freddy's

THE YEAR THAT WAS 2009 : **MUSIC**

Ladyhawke gave us:

GIRL POWER

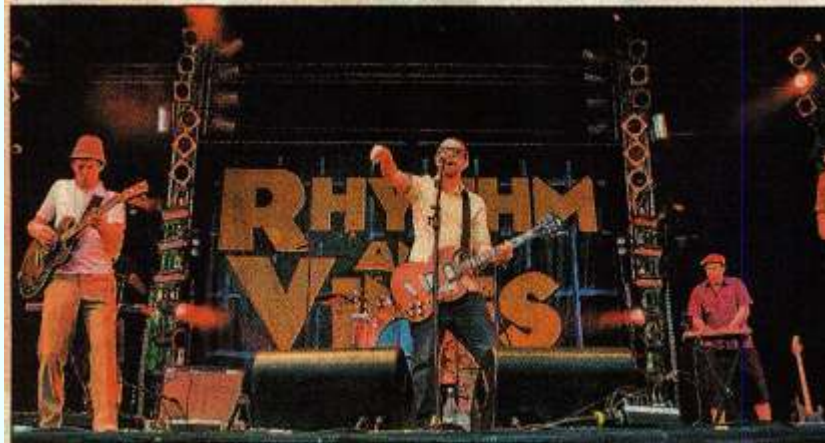


A year of high-flying ladies and urban brothers: This year New Zealand's music scene saw female artists excel, urban hip-hoppers break records and continued its love affair with dub and reggae. **JULE SCHERER** reports.

CUTTING EDGE Ladyhawke, alias Pip Brown.



"The death of Sir Howard Morrison ended a six-decade spanning career . . . he secured a place in the nation's hearts with songs like his 1981 single *How Great Thou Art*."



LASTING APPEAL: New Zealanders continued their love affair with dub and reggae and in particular The Black Seeds, above, and Fat Freddy's Drop, below.



Drop, who released their highly anticipated second studio album *Dr Boondigga and the Big BW* in August.

The album spent five weeks on top of the charts and proved to be the best selling NZ album of the year. More records were only sold by British reality TV sensation Susan Boyle, Taylor Swift and The Black Eyed Peas.

The probably most celebrated reunion of the year was the third incarnation of Barnaby Weir's Fly My Pretties.

The Black Seeds singer brought his collective together once again and included some new talent for *A Story*, like singers Anna Coddington and LA Mitchell.

He also enlisted the help of his father, storyteller Dick Weir. The 16-strong cast played a sold-out tour in May/June and added a couple of encore shows at the end of the year.

Other notable releases by local artists included Lawrence Arabia's *Chani Darling*, Sola Rosa's *Get it Together*, Midnight Youth's *The Brave Don't Run*, The Mint Chicks' *Screens* and Shapeshifter's *The System is a Vampire*.

BUT IT WAS not all happy news. The country had to bid its farewells to music great Sir Howard Morrison.

His death, aged 74, on September 24 ended a six-decade spanning career. Sir Howard started off with

the Howard Morrison Quartet in 1955 and secured a place in the nation's hearts with songs like his 1981 single *How Great Thou Art*.

He was awarded an OBE in 1976, and knighted in 1990.

Another shock for New Zealand's music scene was legendary Flying Nun artist Chris Knox's life-altering stroke in June.

The musician, cartoonist and author was left unable to speak.

Since the late 70s, Knox's can-do attitude had inspired a long list of musicians both here and overseas.

When they heard of his condition, they rushed to assemble a tribute album with cover versions of their favourites of Knox's many songs.

The list of 35 contributors included names like Boh Runga, Don McGlashan, the Finn family, Jordan Luck, The Mint Chicks, Jay Retard, and Yo La Tengo. The first pressing of *Stroke* sold out in weeks.

Knox was also announced as one of five Arts Foundation Laureates.

On the live-music front, the country enjoyed visits from a range of big international artists, most notably a succession of musicians with decade-long careers.

CANADIAN NEIL YOUNG started the musical year with his performance at the Big Day Out. He was followed by Simon and Garfunkel, Alice Cooper, The Who, Leonard Cohen, Lucinda Williams, The Buzzcocks, Pearl Jam and Fleetwood Mac.

Younger music fans celebrated acts like Lady Gaga, the Pussycat Dolls, MGMT and Green Day.

Although the upcoming Big Day Out line-up may miss a really big draw-card, 2010 has already a lot to look forward to.

AC/DC are finally coming to New Zealand in February, Tim Finn, Dave Dobbyn and Bic Runga tour the vineyards, supergroup Them Crooked Vultures have announced gigs, The Pixies are playing in March and there are still a lot more events to come.