

# Schoolgirl crush

## MUSIC

Harbant Gill

**S**HE trained to be a teacher, but Chrissa Valanti prefers to be the one wearing the school uniform.

Not in any conventional way, mind you. When Valanti slips on that tartan skirt, white shirt and tie, a la Chrissy Amphlett at her provocative best, her aim is to cut loose.

“Chrissy Amphlett — love her, she’s a goddess,” says Valanti of the Divinyls’ lead singer.

“I read her book and she said she put on that schoolgirl dress and it turned her into an animal.

“And it’s true, you become a different person on stage. You lose all your inhibitions and you become wild . . . you don’t care about who thinks what, you just go for it. You become really cheeky.

“I am that anyway, but it made me push my own boundaries to be more theatrical.

“It takes me back to when I was in high school . . . when I was testing my parents. It’s probably that which I draw on.”

The image recently made the builder’s daughter Australia’s new face of Gibson Goddess guitars.

“They said, ‘She’s Greek, Greek goddess’. It just jelled,” says Valanti, who heads off soon for France, Germany and Britain with her new ebony Gibson rhythm guitar, her band and her new CD.

Valanti earned a BA in Darwin and a diploma of education at Adelaide University. She had done six months of teaching before starting a band four years ago.

“My dad was a singer so I started singing at a very young age. He used to take me to weddings and sing and I would sit on his lap and sing,” she says.

“And I always wrote on the guitar and the piano. I’ve never been taught piano. It’s all by ear.”

Tough and sexy as she might come across on stage, Valanti’s songs are quite innocent, she says.

“They are about everything that’s happened to me in life . . . it could be relationships, political,



**Woman in uniform:** Chrissa Valanti and her band are off to Europe. Picture: DARRYL GREGORY

religious,” she says. “What I like is that you can interpret the songs to suit yourself. You can think the song *Go Blind* is, oh my god, about masturbation . . . but it is quite innocent, about two people who make each other laugh.”

Inspired by Kate Bush, Stevie Nicks and Rod Stewart, Valanti is hoping for international fame with a band she says make her laugh until she cries.

They include drummer Alex

Deegan, “rock god” Scott Murphy on lead guitar and Andy Phillis on bass.

“When you go overseas you notice why such good bands come out of Australia, because it’s the toughest ground here,” she says.

“I’ve noticed that overseas everyone loves you and thinks you’re awesome, whereas here you really have to work the crowd.

“There are a lot of good bands in Australia, and we’re one of

them, I reckon. There’s a lot of passion in our music. Everything has got to come from the heart.

“It’s a screaming, angelic and a real devilish sound. It’s awesome live. Wicked.

“A fan at the last gig came up to me after the show and said, ‘Your voice sounds like a kick in the nuts’. I said, ‘Is that a good thing?’ He said, ‘That’s awesome’.”

Chrissa Valanti’s CD *Blow* is out on June 11.