

# THIN RICKY

**The boys are back but new frontman says he's no Lynott**

By ROISIN GORMAN

**ULSTER rocker Ricky Warwick is on top of the world.**

The musician says going on the road with Thin Lizzy is the biggest gig of his life.

But he's assured fans that although the boys are back in town he's not trying to replace rock legend Phil Lynott. Newtownards man Ricky, now based in LA, played in punk band New Model Army, founded rockers The Almighty and toured with Def Leppard, Sheryl Crow and Bryan Adams.

Despite his success he was still shocked when the call from Thin Lizzy came.

"Outside of family events like the births of my children this is the biggest things that's ever happened to me," says Ricky in an exclusive interview with the *Sunday World*.

"I was a huge Lizzy fan and everyone dreams of singing in their favourite band," says the rocker.

"A lot of people say these are big shoes to fill but that's not what we are trying to do - there is only one Phil Lynott."

He was already pals with original band member Scott Gorham when the new line up was being put together.

**Tribute**

"I had to pick myself up off the floor when the call came. Scott could have gone with someone from a tribute band, but we're not trying to do a tribute band."

"We want to keep the songs true to the original ideals and give Phil Lynott the credit he is due - he was an under-rated lyricist," says the 44-year-old.

"When the guys were picking the 25 or 30 songs for the tour I said pick anything you want. I'm happy with any of them."

Ricky is also baring off any claims that Thin Lizzy shouldn't take to the road without Phil (below), who died in 1986.

The band had split three years earlier after huge hits like *The Boys are Back in Town*, *Jailbreak*, *Johnny the Fox and Live and Dangerous*.

Scott and the band have as much right to play these songs.

The ticket sales for the tour are already going through the roof. People want to see and hear these songs again.

"We want old



**FLYING HIGH:** Rick Warwick on top of a Harland and Wolff crane in Belfast and, below, with his fellow Thin Lizzy members



Lizzy fans to hear them and to get new fans in. And if you don't like it don't buy a ticket," says Ricky.

He'll be back with original band members Scott Gorham, Brian Downey, and Darren Wharton, Belfast guitarist Fivian Campbell of *Whitesnake* and *Sinner* Savage fame, and Marco Mendoza who has also

played with Thin Lizzy and *Whitesnake*. For a six-of-four Ricky, who went solo from The Almighty over a decade ago, the run up to the Thin Lizzy tour next January will see him celebrating his Ulster roots.

He scored a first when he was given permission to record a video for his lat-

est single on top of the Harland and Wolff cranes and the Europa Hotel.

Despite suffering from vertigo Ricky was determined to get to the top of the iconic cranes for the images.

He reckons the lyrics of *The Whiskey Song* swung it for him. It celebrates the workers of the shipyard and Belfast, and will be released as a double A side with his take on *Star of the County Down*, recorded with Israeli artist Izhbar Ashdot, who sang in Hebrew.

"We did it right. We applied for permission and sent the lyrics and the guys in Harland and Wolff got what we were doing and couldn't have been more helpful," says Ricky.

"The *Whiskey Song* is a nod to the shipyard and the rope works and the industry of Belfast. Nathan Connolly from *Snow Patrol* is a mate of mine and I asked him to play on it with me," he says.

The video will be released online in two weeks, followed by the single and a solo tour before his stint with Thin Lizzy.

"I'm the son of a farmer from the Old Belfast Road outside Newtownards and it was always instilled in me that you want something you have to work hard," Ricky says.

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