

the SNOWDROPPERS



C'mon Johnny -
harden up, son

The Snowdroppers are an enigmatic mix of play and menace: like patting a baby tiger, the smooth purr of Johnny Wishbone's voice in 'Run You Down' could turn into a claw at your neck at any moment,

while songs like 'Good Drugs Bad Women' start with a hand around your throat.

Comprising Johnny Wishbone on vocals and banjo, London on bass, Cougar Jones on drums and Pauly K on guitar, the Sydney quartet hit the festival scene hard last year, travelling to the US as part of the South By Southwest festival ("It was wild. I've never been so drunk in my life," Wishbone recalls), and playing at Byron Bay's Bluesfest and Big Day Out.

With their bowler hats, suspenders and occasional bustin' out in long johns, the band works their 1920s Depression-era vibe with their special blend of blues, honky tonk and rock 'n' roll, occasionally mixing in the finetuned art of piss-taking. Delicate musicians these chaps are not. Hard livin' and passionate (sans the earnestness), they are. If it were possible for **Nick Cave**, **Tom Waits** and **Johnny Cash** to bear each other's children, these fellas would be the poetically destructive progeny.

Currently locked up in their studio in Sydney, the chaps are gearing up for their next album.

LEADER CHEETAH

Leader Cheetah sounds like a bit of a misnomer for this chilled indie foursome hailing from Adelaide.

Rather than fast paced and carnivorous, their sound is far more organic – even bordering on the macrobiotic.

Since Leader Cheetah swept up the indie scene in 2009 with their debut album *The Sunspot Letters*, they have released a second acclaimed album, *Lotus Skies*, and toured with **the Middle East**, **Blitzen Trapper**, **Gomez**, **Elbow** and **Doves**. Their sound has been tagged old-country rock and, while frontman Dan Crannitch admits to being "drawn to a rural



vibe", their sound is far broader. *Lotus Skies* is punctuated with dashes of Spanish guitar and Latin horns, as well as the collaborative efforts of mates Holly Throsby, who lends her vocals to 'Our Love', Tom Spall on violins and Stewart Kirwin on trumpet. So while they could nestle quite comfortably in the folk or country genre, their sound cannot be so easily pinned down.

At the moment the band is working on a third album, between Big Day Out gigs, so keep your peepers peeled and ears open. You'll be hearing lots more from these lads from the Festival State.

SEABELLIES

Auteurs of multi-layered shimmering indie pop Seabellies are putting the finishing touches to a second album after refuelling in Europe for six months.

The band's vocalist and lyrical composer Trent Grenell says that after touring for five years, including stints at LA's famed The Viper Room, the band needed time to regroup musically.

"It gave us a lot of ideas. There's a lot of strange stuff going on in Berlin – people go out on a limb every which way."

Tipped as the Best New Band that Will Break by *QRO Magazine* and comprising a mix of classically trained and self-taught

musicians, Seabellies all play multiple instruments, with strings, percussion, horns and electronica artfully blended to lush effect.

Grenell says the as-yet-untitled follow-up to *By Limbo Lake* is more assured and more adventurous, while still retaining the band's melodic pop sensibility.

They're also working with producers **Tim Whitten** and **Simon 'Berkfinger' Berckelman**.

"We decided to use two opposites," Grenell explains. "They push each other; the traditional way and the wild way." And when push comes to shove, which side do the 'Bellies come down on?

"Usually we go the wild way."

