

## KEEP TURNING THE PAGES

*Tracey Sargent finds that even after a year on the road The Audreys still make for some compelling reading.*

BY TRACEY SARGENT

The chapters covering the last twelve months in the story of The Audreys have been crammed full of action and adventure. This period has seen the release of their debut album, a seemingly never-ending tour both throughout Australia and overseas, and then to top it all off there was an ARIA win for Best Blues and Roots Album. After all this excitement you would expect Taasha, Tristan, Mikey, Lyndon and Toby to take things a little easier, but it seems that the opposite is true. "Like a lot of bands we have trouble writing on the road, so after a year of constant touring we're looking forward to addressing that balance. When our Sheets to the Wind Tour winds up at the end of June we'll get straight into writing for album number two. We can't wait!"

In their unique sultry-blues style The Audreys weave tales of life, love and longing in a very real way, and it seems that their approach to songwriting is just as fluid. "The core of the song usually develops very late at night and after a whisky or two, in the hands of Taasha and Tristan. If after a couple of weeks it's still boppin' around in their heads they'll bring it to the rest of the band to add their parts and start refining the arrangement. Then it develops a life and just goes on from there".

Balanced against this organic process is the structure of capturing tracks during the recording process, an exercise which can be intensely frustrating and time consuming. However The Audreys seem to have found a way to manage this quest for perfection, "Luckily we have people we trust to rein us in when the time comes. We love playing with the arrangements of the songs to keep them fresh live, but it's a different story in the studio. You have to let things go and accept that the record is just that, a record of the songs as they are at a moment in time. We'll mess 'em up later!"

The Audreys have gained high praise for both their debut album *Between Last Night And Us*, and for their unwavering commitment to live performance, but the band isn't about to let external pressures cloud their creative processes. "We've found it best not to pay too much attention to others, even if they're saying something nice. There's a feeling of expectation out there amongst the

folks who bought our first album, but it's really exciting to know people are going to listen to the next thing we do. We didn't know if anyone was going to hear our first album".

The pursuit of music has given The Audreys the opportunity to travel throughout the world to places like England, France and Russia, allowing them to both see the sights and meet new fans. "We were all really keen travelers before we formed the band and the desire to combine music and travel has been a driving force for all of us. All the overseas touring we did last year reminded us how important it is to make music you can play to people the world over. Plus we got to see Bruce Springsteen in New York...now that's inspiring!"

With the band scheduled to return to Tasmania in June, memories of their last performances are still fresh and fond. "Our club gigs in Tassie were great. We'd wanted to play at the Republic Bar for a while and it proved to be one of our favourite shows. There's a real joy in playing to a small room full of folks who haven't seen us play before. The playfulness and intimacy of a club show can sometimes be lost on the festival stage. That said, however, Marion Bay was a blast and it's hard to top playing on a stage that has a natural backdrop as stunning as that!"

As they prepare for their *Sheets to the Wind* tour, which will be their final jaunt around the country for the year, it's nice to know that their tradition of playing a different cover song at each gig will continue. "We love it when folks request something a little left field. On our last tour we were challenged with some eighties classics, a Sinatra tune, Radiohead and just about everything in between. Many of the tunes were rehearsed on the day of the gig and there's a definite thrill in wondering just how it's going to go. We'll have a shot at almost anything as long as there's a strong melody and resonant lyrics. So far no one has suggested anything really tough like Tool or Napalm Death yet... don't get any ideas now". While death metal may not be the best application of The Audreys talents, creativity will no doubt be richly rewarded.