

MEDIA KIT

ROLLING BLACKOUTS COASTAL FEVER

CHEVRON LIGHTHOUSE

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Purveyors of urgent and passionate guitar pop, Rolling Blackouts Coastal Fever are an indie-rock force to be reckoned with. With the DNA of The Go-Betweens baked into their propulsive rhythm section and explosive triple guitars, this equal parts thrilling and wistfully melancholic Melbourne quintet whip up an intoxicating sound that is refreshingly their own.

HOPE DOWNS ALBUM BIO

It's rare that a band's debut album sounds as confident and self-assured as Rolling Blackouts Coastal Fever's Hope Downs. To say that the first full-length from the Melbourne quintet improves on their buzz-building EPs from the last few years would be an understatement: the promise those early releases hinted at has become fully realised here, with ten songs of urgent and passionate guitar pop that elicit warm memories of the Golden Age of Australian and New Zealand guitar bands. But don't mistake Rolling Blackouts Coastal Fever for nostalgists: Hope Downs is the sound of a band finding its own collective voice.

The hard-hitting debut is a testament to Rolling Blackouts' tight-knit and hard-working bonafides: prior to forming the band in 2013, singers/guitarists Fran Keaney, Tom Russo, and Joe White had played together in various garage bands, dating back to high school. "Over the years, we built up our own sound and style, guitar pop songs with bits of punk and country," says Keaney. "Then when we started this band, with Joe Russo [Tom's brother] on bass, Marcel [Tussie, Joe White's then-housemate] on drums, we had this immediate chemistry. We started to let the songs go where they wanted to go."

Hope Downs was largely written over the past year in the band's Brunswick rehearsal room where their previous releases were also written and recorded. The band's core trio of songwriters— Fran Keaney, Joe White, and Tom Russo—hunkered down and wrote as the chaos of the world outside unavoidably seeped into the songwriting process. "We were feeling like we were in a moment where the sands were shifting and the world was getting a lot weirder. There was a general sense that things were coming apart at the seams and people around us were too," Russo explains.

"The songs on this album are like a collection of postcards about wider things that were going on through the lens of these small characters."

The album title, from the Hope Downs mine in Western Australia, refers to the feeling of "standing at the edge of the void of the big unknown, and finding something to hold on to."

Decamping from a Melbourne winter to the warmer climes of northern New South Wales hinterland to drummer Marcel Tussie's hometown in Bellingen, the band worked with engineer/producer Liam

Judson (Cloud Control, Tigertown) to record and co-produce the album over two weeks. “We were right at the foot of this beautiful mountain next to a creek,” says White. “We could play out into the bush through the night.”

“We didn't really want to record in a studio,” says Keaney. “We thought we'd get away up North, somewhere where it was warm, and record the songs live in the same room. We wanted to make sure it sounded like us,” White explains.

And sound like them it does. Skewed guitars, driving beats, and lyrics with gravitas are the backbone of an album that's tinged with a subtle melancholy.

Hope Downs possesses a robust full-band sound that's all the more impressive considering the band's studio avoidance tendencies. If you loved Talk Tight and The French Press, you certainly won't be disappointed here—but you might also be surprised at how the band's sound has grown. There's a richness and weight to these songs that was previously only hinted at, from the skyscraping chorus of ‘Sister's Jeans’ to the thrilling climax of album closer ‘The Hammer’.

The first single ‘Mainland’ follows Tom Russo's pilgrimage to the island of his grandparent's birth, reflecting on his own love and privilege while a refugee crisis unfolds not far away, while second cut ‘Talking Straight’ wonders “where the silence comes from, where the space originates”, and suggests loneliness be faced together.

And then there's the sprawling overture ‘An Air Conditioned Man’, which portrays the slow burning panic of a salaryman and features some beautifully tricky guitar work weaving in and out of frame as well as a surprisingly effective spoken-word section from Tom Russo during its closing moments. “As the world around him gets faker and faker, he realises he's getting further away from the idealism of his youth.”

Indeed, Hope Downs is as much about the people that populate the world around us—their stories, perspectives, and hopes in the face of disillusionment—as it is about the state of things at large. It's a record that focuses on finding the bright spots at a time when cynicism all too often feels like the natural state. Rolling Blackouts C.F. are here to remind us to keep our feet on the ground—and Hope Downs is as delicious a taste of terra firma as you're going to get from a rock band right now.

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