



Pond hard at work recording album number six

Pond

The space cadets from Oz fashion a more focused sonic adventure for the follow-up to 'Hobo Rocket'

18

Pfff... I can't imagine the word 'mature' being applied to anything any of us do," snorts Pond frontman Nick Allbrook. "I spent half an hour watching *Adventure Time* in Spanish last night, then I ate Oreos until I felt sick."

The bendy-limbed singer has, probably deliberately, misunderstood a question about the Australians' new album, 'Man It Feels Like Space Again'. There have been mutterings about the record marking a more grown-up direction for the psych-dunked space cadets.

"Musically mature?" Nick repeats. "Well, OK, yes, this album is going for something more personal and not striving to emulate another genre or hero, which is what we were all about early on: being an artifice of something. We're becoming more ourselves."

A preview listen confirms this. It's a cleaner, more immersive and considered record than their 2013 cluster-bomb of a fifth album, 'Hobo Rocket', but the cosmic guitar/synth slaloms on the likes of 'Medicine Hat' and 'Sitting Up On Our Crane' are still unmistakably Pond.

"For 'Hobo Rocket', we were into brutality and unhinged psychedelic aggression instead of wearing gold jackets and having

drum machines and actually taking time to construct something," says Nick. "This is more thought out," adds bandmate Joe Ryan. "It has more care put into the recording."

Recorded in Melbourne earlier this year, the album is still a typically Pond-like pinball ping between genres, despite having more focus than its hyper-aggressive predecessor. There's slippery, Sly Stone-like funk ('Outside Is The Right Side'), brain-stretching guitar squalls (the Dennis Wilson-influenced 'Sitting Up On Our Crane') and in 'Zond', a song that sounds like The Strokes' 'Reptilia' fed through Wayne Coyne's ears.

This melding of influences is, in part, down to the fact that most of the members of Pond are prolific songwriters. Nick and Joe admit this can cause a rather "hectic" atmosphere. "It's like getting five primary school children to draw a picture with the

same pen at the same time," says Nick. "You take away all their ADHD medication and give them a bag of Fantales [Australian sweets], and if one of them is not allowed to hold the pen for a second they get in a mood."

"But that's chemistry," adds Joe. "Chemistry is kind of all we've got going for us."

And there it is – the classic Pond self-deprecation that also saw Nick tell *NME*, around the release of 'Hobo Rocket', about his chronic lack of confidence as a singer, and how the band "don't deserve" the success of long-time friends and collaborators Tame Impala. Nick left live touring duties with Tame to concentrate on Pond before 'Man...' was recorded, but has it helped his mental focus? "Not really, no," he sighs. "There's always a lot going on in anyone's head. I don't think it matters, what you're doing on the outside. If you're paranoid, whether you're sitting at home scratching your ballbag all day or

whether you're actually doing a lot, you're still going to be freaking out about something."

There'll be plenty of time for smoke-hazed tourbus analysis of that next year for Pond. We've got a feeling this next space adventure might be a long one. ■ JAMIE FULLERTON

▶ THE DETAILS

▶ **TITLE** Man It Feels Like Space Again

▶ **RELEASE DATE** January 26, 2015

▶ **LABEL** Caroline

▶ **RECORDED** Unnamed studio in Melbourne

▶ **TRACKS** Waiting Around For Grace, Elvis' Flaming Star, Holding Out For You, Zond, Heroic Shart, Sitting Up On Our Crane, Outside Is The Right Side, Medicine Hat, Man It Feels Like Space Again

▶ **NICK ALLBROOK SAYS** "This album's actually quite good. We've got an album title, 'Excalibur', reserved for when we make a shitty album and we're past our prime and everyone should stop listening to us. It'll be terrible."

"IT'S LIKE GETTING FIVE ADHD KIDS TO DRAW A PICTURE WITH THE SAME PEN AT THE SAME TIME"
NICK ALLBROOK

