



Motley crew: The Dead Weather band (from left) Jack Lawrence, Alison Mosshart, Jack White and Dean Fertita

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HIT COLLECTION

JACK White is a collector. At his home in Nashville, he collects taxidermied birds, a certain brand of clock and old scissors from his days as an upholsterer.

And although he loves vinyl records, producing a lot through his label Third Man records, he doesn't collect music.

"I don't collect music and records because that's really dangerous for me. If I start doing that you'll never see me again," he says.

"It would be something that I could become extremely obsessive over and it would hurt my songwriting and my creativity and I would end up emulating and trying to think of things that were done, and I don't want to express myself like that."

Jack White also collects musicians. And the White Stripes frontman, who also heads The Saboteurs (called The Raconteurs in the US) has put together another collection of talented people for his latest band, The Dead Weather.

The Dead Weather come to Australia this month, a year after they first performed in Nashville.

The band features Alison Mosshart of The Kills on vocals, "the best female front-person out there today"; Dean Fertita of Queens of the Stone Age on guitar and organ - "we go back so far I can't even remember"; Jack Lawrence from The Saboteurs on bass - "I met Jack at an old drag queen bar in Detroit, playing bass

like I've never heard anyone else"; and Jack White on drums and vocal.

"I haven't been a drummer in a band since I was a teenager," White says.

"The four of us have been in a lot of bands.

"I was playing shows with Dean Fertita in bowling alleys in Detroit 10 years ago, and I was playing festivals with Alison in Europe in 2002. We just have a long history together.

"But we never really realised that the four of us in a room - it got really inspiring to do something we've never done before and some really heavy music that pushes us in ways that we didn't think we could do."

White says the chemistry of the band is so strong that they even had to start recording their sound checks so they didn't lose any of the great material they were coming up with.

They released their first album, *Horehound*, mid last year, and already have a second album due for release in April.

The motley crew can often be seen in the pool halls of Nashville, where the population of musicians is so thick that the public tend to leave them alone.

And in Nashville, White can also occasionally be seen behind the counter at his shop Third Man records, the storefront for his label.

Although the label is less than a year old, they've already put out more than 25 records, including music and spoken word, on digital and vinyl. White admits he's a sucker for the romance of the old medium.

"Of course, everybody should be. How can you not? If you're not attracted to vinyl it's because you never took a record out of the sleeve and put the needle on it yourself. Once you do that you'll never compare the two."

The name Third Man has a deep meaning for White. He has a strong connection to the number three, which he has talked about in many interviews, but it was also the name of his upholstery shop in Detroit.

"A lot of that had to do with

It got really inspiring to do something we've never done before

there were two other upholsterers who lived on my block in Detroit," he says.

"There was the guy next door, Brian Muldoon, and at the end of the block there was an old German upholsterer named Klomp, so I was the third one on my block, which was a pretty rare occurrence in space time.

"I don't think that has ever happened before. I don't know why that actually happened, there was just some sort of chain of events so I became Third Man upholstery."

"The number three has deep meaning to me - I've talked about it a lot in interviews before. It's hard to talk about, it's very close to my heart. I revolve most of the things I do around that number."

So, perhaps it's a lucky sign that The Dead Weather is his third famous band.

"I think it's a sign of freedom for me," he says.

"I'm a fortunate boy to be able to do what I want to do when I want to do it, and that's inspiring to me."

"I've been lucky not to be digging ditches, for one, and number two, to not have to stay in one musical mode for 20 years to keep myself afloat."

"I'm lucky that I don't have to keep coming up with tricks for my hit band to stay alive."

The Dead Weather play The Tivoli on March 23; ticketek.com.