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RABBITING WITH SCOTT

Frightened Rabbit frontman on their hectic year

FRIGHTENED Rabbit singer Scott Hutchison can't wait for Christmas - so he can finally get a chance to put his feet up! The Selkirk group play the ABC next Tuesday as they start to round off a hectic year in which their star has continued to rise.

"To me, Christmas thankfully means a guaranteed bit of time off" he says, speaking from a Dublin hotel, as the band embarked on a run of gigs with American alt rockers Modest Mouse.

"Last year we had to leave on Christmas Day to go touring, but this year we've set it aside as doing absolutely no work at all!"

"We were going to Australia

MUSIC
Jonathan
GEDDES



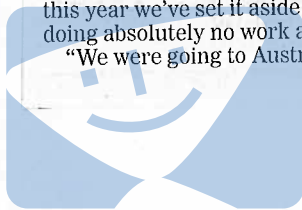
then, which was a silver lining, but it was pretty difficult travelling on the tour bus down to London, to catch a flight out there, for a show two days later. It was all a bit mad."

That Australian trip set the tone for a fine, if extremely busy year for the band. While their second album, the Midnight Organ Fight, was released back

in 2008, it only really peaked this year. And Scott admits the band have been flummoxed by how they've risen in popularity over the past 12 months.

"It's been a great year - I wouldn't have imagined several months ago that we'd be able to sell out a venue like the ABC, it's such a surprise" he says.

"We didn't expect much from this year as we'd planned to set time aside to write the new



Smile
on my mac



■ Scott Hutchison, third from left, brings Frightened Rabbit to the ABC next Tuesday

record and almost lay low. But it's all kept growing, which has been a surprise for us.

"I think the pace of things with us has been gradual, it's been a lot of word of mouth and it reached a peak earlier this year.

"For a lot of bands, it's when the album actually comes out but with us, it's all been organic and natural and on an upwards climb. It's been the best year for us yet and we're appreciating every minute of it."

They're now hoping that next year will prove even better, with their third album, *The Winter Of Mixed Drinks*, slated for release on March 1. *Midnight Organ Fight's* brooding mix of folksy rock and emotive lyrics, heavily inspired by the end of Scott's relationship with his girlfriend, was hailed as one of the best Scottish albums of the past decade and Scott knows anticipation is high for the follow-up.

"We started writing as soon we got off tour, at the end of February and it was a lot more spontaneous when recording it than the last one, as everything was very pre-prepared last time.

"This time we left a lot more room to change things during recording. It was a different experience to before.

"It couldn't be the same as the last record, so it's less in-your-face lyrically. That record reflected a certain point in my life and I thankfully haven't felt that way since.

"So in that sense it's a lot more calmer, a lot more positive. But I still veer towards darkish territory when I write."

However, just because the

record isn't as directly inspired by actual events doesn't mean that Scott's not drawn on his own experiences when writing, while he also feels the new album has more storytelling in it.

"There is a narrative that runs through the record, not like I'm telling a story from start to finish but there is a thread in there.

"The character does go on a journey, in which he goes into the wilderness and isolation. I went to Crail on my own for a month and a half and that's where I did all my writing for the album.

"After the tour, which was

“We've made a few mistakes along the way, but we do what feels natural

so hectic, it was a good way to get back into the right frame of mind. Being alone there was a good kind of madness, and helped a process of seeing how that isolated situation affected me."

The new material has proved so expansive that the band have recruited another member to help, in the shape of Gordon Skene, formerly of *Make Model* and currently with folk-pop act *The Moth And The Mirror*.

It's the latest addition to the growing *Frightened Rabbit* family - the band having initially started with just Scott, then adding his brother Grant on drums, then eventually becoming a four piece with the additions of Billy Kennedy and Andy Monaghan on various instruments.

"There's a lot more going on with the new record, it's more heavily layered than the last one," he says. "We never consider how the live show will be affected so when we finished it we didn't know how we'd do it as a four-piece, as there's a lot going on. The decision was based on wanting to do the material justice and we've known Gordon for a while so he was the obvious choice.

"We've always tried to do what feels right (for the music) at the time and maybe we've made a few mistakes along the way but we do what feels natural."

And while the often morose group's music may bring to mind images of a bleak mid winter rather than sleigh bells ringing, they do anticipate a party atmosphere at the ABC next week, with family and friends cheering them on.

"We're nervous about it!" he says. "If I wasn't nervous there'd be something wrong, but it's good nerves - all my family, and all my pals are going to be there and that's the most nerve-wracking, as you don't want to mess up in front of them.

"I think it'll be a really good atmosphere, with everyone on your side. We'll be having a string section join us for a couple of numbers, so we'll be playing our Christmas song (2007's *It's Christmas So We'll Stop*). But I don't think we'll be doing any Christmas covers on the night as I've got a terrible memory so I can't remember the words to other songs!"

● **Frightened Rabbit, ABC, Tuesday December 22, 7pm, sold out.**