

The Scotsman
24 December 2009

(37)

MUSIC

FRIGHTENED RABBIT
ABC, GLASGOW
★★★★★

FRIGHTENED Rabbit capped a year in which they progressed from acclaimed hopefuls to your new favourite Scottish band with their biggest Glasgow headline gig to date. To celebrate, someone threw a bunch of flowers at singer Scott Hutchison. "I'm allergic," he quipped, with the air of a man who was abandoning himself to proceedings. The band reciprocated with Christmas CD parcels hidden around the venue.

The Selkirk five-piece aspire to create epic indie-folk soundscapes chiselled from big, throbbing drums, a phalanx of guitars, anthemic backing vocals and a dash of angst – a formula they returned to again and again in their set, even if the notion of a

song got lost in the mix. Their most persuasive, cohesive number is the souped-up folksy sprint *Old Old Fashioned*, supplemented here by the audience singing along to the chords and Arcade Fire-like "oh-ohs".

With their third album, *The Winter Of Mixed Drinks*, due in March, the band debuted a couple of new tracks, *Nothing Like You* and *Living In Colour*, both of which careered along at helter-skelter pace, like a peppier Snow Patrol or a rootsier Biffy Clyro.

As it's Christmas, a Yuletide offering was in order, and here was one they prepared earlier. *It's Christmas So We'll Stop* eschewed sleigh bells and tinsel for a more realistic seasonal meditation – "let the rot stop just for one day" – before they signed off with the rather morose but ardently received *Keep Yourself Warm*.

FIONA SHEPHERD



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