



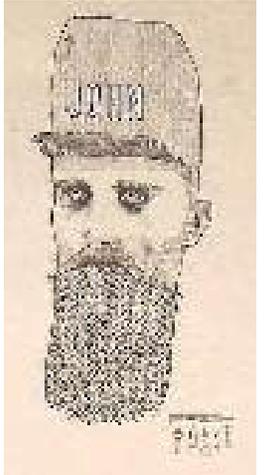
Collabro performing at the Chronicle office
PICTURES: PAUL NORRIS



Album Reviews

OWL JOHN - OWL JOHN

Scott Hutchison of Scottish alt-folk-indie legends Frightened Rabbit flies solo under his new ornithological moniker. As one might reasonably expect from the brains behind such a well-respected outfit as the Frabbits, Owl John's output is assured, intelligent indie rock, just different enough to the band's material to make a worthwhile distinction but not so diverse as to alienate existing fans. It's a tad rockier, while also nurturing a more intimate sound. Stand-out tracks include Los Angeles, Be Kind - a bittersweet ode to Hutchison's adopted home-from-home, barnstorming anthem Red Hand, and the pensive Songs About Roses, which urges a more mindful approach to songwriting. He's clearly taken his own advice, because this album is simply stunning.



9/10

PIXIE LOTT - PIXIE LOTT

From the moment the groove of opening track Nasty kick-starts the album, Pixie Lott has nailed it. Confidence, hooks and flavour ooze from the songs on her self-titled third record as a conglomeration of funk, Motown and pop attack the senses. Break Up Song strips things back with purity and soul, while Kill A Man keeps the tempo moving with good beats, wicked bass lines and hordes of vocals. The colour and voice that protrudes makes this worthy of attention, and an excellent addition to the 23-year-old Kent singer's catalogue. This release is a mess of fun, style, and is often the sound of summer, boasting both good songwriting and flair. It's as if somebody loaded Tinkerbell into a cannon and fired her straight at the sun. Great fun.

8/10

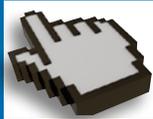
MAGIC! - DON'T KILL THE MAGIC

If you can't buy a reggae album in the summer, when can you buy one? Don't Kill The Magic comes hot off the heels of the Canadian fusion band's chart-topping debut hit single Rude. Summery, upbeat and romantic all in one, the quintet, led by Nasri, fuses together all the best parts of rock, pop and reggae into one album. Rude has been positively received worldwide, but it is One Woman, One Man that is the release's surprise gem. A very modern love tale, that has you drawn in within five seconds, it's the stuff desert island tracks are made of. The thought-provoking How Do You Want To Be Remembered and the punchy Little Girl Big World are also firm favourites. If you love Jason Mraz and a bit of Marley, this will be your album of the year. It's zesty, catchy and full of potential hits.

9/10

home for rising star

What's On
www.chroniclelive.co.uk/whats-on



Video: Watch Collabro perform and chat to us

and features 11 tracks. "The whole thing was natural. The best thing about being in a group is you don't get too overwhelmed," reflects Jamie, who grew up in Washington.

"You all support each other. I know (good childhood friend) Jade found that with Little Mix as well. I know that Jade and I would never have thought we would be in a group. We both thought we would go solo.

"But it has worked out best in the end for both of us as you really get the support from the band members. I have five voices rather than one."

Jamie talks a lot about Jade, with whom he used to perform in his younger days. "I was so proud of her. We are now signed to the same label as Little Mix. When Jade did it I was so proud of her as it's really important to remember everything is happening in London in terms of

recording, but there is so much talent in the North East recently with Jade, Joe McElderry, Perrie (Little Mix) and now me in Collabro. It's phenomenal.

"Ten years ago Jade and I used to sit and chat in the Customs House in South Shields about what we would do in the future. It's nice to be in the ranks with those people who have done well from the North East. I'm proud to be from where I am and I think we have a lot to offer. People sometimes overlook us.

"There's so much talent comes from the Customs House. Jade, Joe and myself are evidence there is a lot to give.

"I've been massively supported by the North East throughout my career. I started singing when I was 13 in a Les Mis production.

"I've done the Customs House, Tyne Theatre,

Theatre Royal, Playhouse Whitley Bay, the People's Theatre.

"There's always been a great amount of support there for me. I actually think we wouldn't have won if we had not had the support we had from the North East.

"We won by a clear margin and I do think that is due to the fact we have such a good community up there who support talent."

After the album release and performance at the Royal Albert Hall, which is part of the BGT winning package, Jamie's thoughts will be on their debut tour and in particular the Newcastle date, with special guest BGT runner-up Lucy Kay.

"I've dreamt of performing there for so long. I've performed there before as part of a school production.

"This is our headline tour and that's a strange thing to think about and we are adding dates all the time as it is going so well.

"I'm trying to convince the boys to do a bit of the Blaydon Races before we come on stage, or maybe The Waters of Tyne!"

