

Jebo

Monto Water Rats, London

★ When the trip-hop scene emerged out of Bristol it defined the city as a hub for experimentation yet still managed to capture a sound that appealed to the commercial market; it was essentially progressive dance. A decade or so down the line and that desire for taking popular music out of its comfort zone is evident in Jebo, a five-piece progressive classic rock band who blend influences from The Who, Rush and Pink Floyd but who live also portray a popular jazzy rock style akin to Top 40 bands like Maroon 5 and Orson.

Tonight Jebo are here with their new line-up which includes new singer Kevin J Messenger and new bassist Gianfredo Konig; they are also joined by tambourine-toting backing vocalist Emma Whittle who adds a soulful sheen to the whole affair. Five out of the six songs played tonight are taken from Jebo's new album *Settle*

Up Or Settle Down. Although the set is short these Bristolians give it their all seeming to enjoy every second. They start with *Nothing Ever Works That Way* which begins with a waltzy sway steadily building up and bringing in all musicians to flashing lights and guitar solos. This first song is a prime example of Rob Allen's guitar talent; he nimbly peppers the song with riffs and solos working in perfect balance with the keyboard and bass creating a big band sound. It's a beefy start to the set which is tempered by the elegant piano introduction of the second song, *Bring You Down*. Three musicians provide backing vocals lifting the chorus and adding even more weight to Messenger's heady notes.

Things really prog up for *No Angels* whose verse is cheerfully Rush/Kansas. Keyboardist Nick O'Neill switches on the Hammond and takes the song further down memory lane but interestingly, by contrast, the pop style singalong factor gives *No Angels* a new twist. Whittle's powerful crooning on the outro even manages

to give Floyd's *The Great Gig In The Sky* a run for its money. *Threw It Away* is Jebo's only old song of the night; it's pastoral in tone with Messenger hitting the high notes and O'Neill switching to tinkling keys.

The penultimate song of the night is introduced by some lighthearted banter from Messenger who, tongue firmly in cheek, describes this proggy number as "the clincher". *Mr Fortune Teller* sounds like 70s-era Stevie Wonder with its jaunty rhythm, piano stabs and jazzy melodies but Jebo aren't ones to settle for a whimsical mood and the Gilmore-esque spacey delay on *And You Will Rise* sets up a tense climax the show.

It might be a short set, and one that focuses on new material, but the selection of songs tonight is as diverse and engaging as are the band. With Allen's pop insight and Messenger's charisma (not to mention his boyish good looks) Jebo should expect some success in the coming months.

Holly Wright