



# Records

## Frankie Goes To Hollywood Welcome to the Pleasure Dome

### Zang Tuum Tumb

Four years ago Paul Morley wrote a chapter entitled 'Glam: The Very Dream Of Smartness' for Tony Stewart's book on rock 'n' roll style, *Cool Cats*. In that chapter, he redefines for himself the concept of glam. Glam, he tells us, is "an ultimate appreciation of the human condition", "the finest possible image of what rock 'n' roll can be", "decisive criticism of emotional, political and philosophical doddiness" and "when the shapes you throw and the clothes you wear don't contradict your moral and emotional commitment".

Quentin Crisp is Glam God, he says, and Marc Bolan, the Sex Pistols, Captain Beefheart, Bryan Ferry, the Velvet, Bette Midler, David Bowie, Iggy, Tim Buckley and Howard Devoto are among those to get the thumbs up. Duran Duran, Queen, Spandau Ballet, Adam Ant, Slade, Sweet and especially the likes of Yes, Genesis and Deep Purple get a trashing, get the picture?

In a way the whole Frankie thing can be traced to the frustration of journalist Morley venting itself through manager/svengali/publicist Morley. His predictions of four years ago have proved unquestionably accurate — the big figures in the pop world today are the hopeless, graceless wallyness of Duran Duran, the passionless, toryst MOR of Spandau Ballet and the come-lately Brit-valley-girl triteness of Wham. The oases are Boy George (who's looking a little grey these days) and ... Frankie Goes To Hollywood.

While most other acts are spectacularly likely, Frankie were most unlikely. 'Relax' wasn't the cuddly bisexuality of George, it was the seamy side of gayness. The genius of it was that getting a pop song banned on the radio was the way to make it succeed — Frankie

had an instant profile. It was a risk, of course, but *nothing venture, nothing win*.

It should be stressed here that Frankie weren't "created" — they'd already achieved a modicum of success in their own right and the personalities projected are their own. They have also created, with the considerable help of producer Trevor Horn — Frankie Music, something more than the sum of its influences. It's a weird mix of solid prole rock, shameless appropriation of black musical styles, the spirit of gay disco and the big swirl of Phil Spector.

Which brings us to *Welcome To the Pleasure Dome*, a double album, no less, and caringly packaged.

The front cover is a witty Picasso-style steal, while the large illustration inside is similar, but with a dash of Paul Klee thrown in. And what's that there? A huge phallus with sperm climbing out the top? Good on Frankie for steadfastly refusing to clean their act up! The two inner sleeves are full of reading — as elegantly put together as the Frankie advertisements have been. You even get a chance to order souvenirs ("with a difference"): the Jean Genet boxer shorts, the Kurt Weill sweat shirt, the sophisticated Charles Baudelaire sweat shirt ... All the Frankies are pictured and given a chance to deliver a message to the lucky fan. It's all superb.

But, I hear you say, what about the music? The music? Okay. Side one takes the form of a two-part, rambling preamble to the record. It works rather well as that, but it's not really the record, is it? Side two bears more mixes of 'Relax' (which I've never been at all struck by in a musical sense), 'War' (a smart choice for a cover, performed with some spunk) and 'Two Tribes' (which bustles along nicely enough in any mix) — but they can hardly be considered the album, can they? Side three is covers of 'Ferry Cross the Mersey', 'Born To Run', and 'San Jose'. The version of 'Born to Run' is enjoyably straight but can that be considered the album? I think not. The last song on the side, 'Wish the Lads Were Here' is a nice, evasive little tune than ducks in and out of Horn's production.

So it's side four that must be considered the record's musical nub. And unfortunately, it doesn't



Car Crash Set's Trevor Reekie and Sharon Tuapawa.



Madonna

quite make it. Choosing a ballad like 'The Power Of Love' for the next single was a lovely move but Holly Johnson's singing doesn't quite carry it. (Actually, in several parts of this album he sounds like a paler version of our own Graham Brazier, circa his solo album. Strange but true!) Nothing's actually bad, of course, but you don't get excited about albums that "aren't bad."

This must be balanced against the fact that as a whole this album is a wondrously stylish thing. Quentin Crisp's famous comment about the difference between style and fashion is appropriate here: when Frankie do it, it's style — when everyone else falls over themselves to copy it, it's fashion.

Frankie's hype has been like no other — all the cards are on the table and it's more an invitation to become part of a media experience than an attempt to sell records. But when it comes down to it, is it music that counts? Whether you're prepared to forgive Frankie's imbalance of style over content can only be up to you. Have fun.

### Russell Brown

#### Car Crash Set No Accident Reaction

It would be bloody easy to write off the Car Crash Set and the fact that many people do made me all the more determined to approach this with an open mind (never mind a clear head). As me Mum says, "You've got to give credit where credit is due."

The Car Crash Set blitz the opposition on at least four counts.

Firstly, while the lyrics here might be short of perfect, the band does have some half decent songs about *real* things, not dumb ditties about electrodes or pop boys. In short, they are quite clever.

Secondly, they honestly believe in what they are doing, no flag of convenience here — well I hope not anyway. Thirdly, they have matured considerably, not only in content and arrangement, but in production, which here is successfully fat. Which brings me to number four, *soul* at last translated onto record.

And what if someone were to say New Order? Well, I suppose they occasionally crop up in various guises on this record, but it would be irresponsible to suggest a direct steal (a little poaching maybe ...). Even on 'Justice', a track which does sound a little familiar, they manage to protect their own identity, they still sound like themselves.

And at last Nigel Russell is beginning to sound like Nigel Russell. His strangely charismatic voice now lends itself well to the songs, as best demonstrated on 'Scarred' and 'Your Eyes'. The single 'Breakdown' is really only spoiled by length and the wonderful 'Those Days' remains one of their finest moments. (A while ago I would have called it *the* finest.)

Yes, I too had some doubts about the whole idea of Car Crash Set, but it doesn't do these days to be too narrow-minded. If someone's got half a dozen or so good tunes the least we can do is give them a listen. Try this for starters, it's done me the world of good.

### Alister Cain

### Floy Joy Into the Hot Virgin

Taking their name from a great Supremes song, this super-hip trio of the Ward brothers (ex-Clock DVA) and lovers/soul singer Carol Thompson, delivers the goods on this impressive debut album.

Produced by Ze Records' Don Was, from down-home Detroit, this is a hot dance mix with quirky snatches of Arabian and Afro-American musical forms.

The first track, 'Burn Down A Rhythm', sets the pace with its funky bassline and mutant sax, but the best track is the soulful torch song 'Until You Come Back to Me', which puts pretenders like Sade to shame.

Other tracks that attract are the fun Motown workout 'Operator Operator', 'Baby You Know I ...' and the title track.

Trust me — it's one of the best of the year.

### Kerry Buchanan

#### Alison Moyet Aif CBS

Alison Moyet, alias Alf, is one of the few human voices to emerge from the synthesiser craze. Ex-Depeche Mode Vince Clarke and his bank of clever, melodic keyboards gave her the break via Yazoo and her soul did the rest.

As an apprenticeship Yazoo was the perfect training ground, as it gave her the confidence to sing and write without the shelter and convenience of a full-blown band. So from a two-piece to her present individual status was a relatively

short step.

Still, it takes guts and that's what Alf's all about. Moyet wasn't only the voice behind Vince Clarke — if you check the credits you'll see that as a writer she more than complemented the partnership. So on 'Love Resurrection', 'Honey For the Bees' and 'Twisting the Knife' she reeks confidence and the songs strut with an instrumental depth and resonance that Vince's keyboards never quite reached in Yazoo.

If you're looking for classics then 'All Cried Out' is where you start; condensed for seven-inch release, the song in its album format is a stunner, a velvet glove of caress then wallop. It will become a standard. 'For You Only' and 'Invisible' follow the same lead, sinewy, supple ballads that ooze class and 'Where Hides Sleep' is the perfect wistful, contemplative plea to end the album.

Alf is a strong, sure-footed debut from a woman who could be this generation's Dusty Springfield.

### George Kay

#### Madonna Like A Virgin Sire

File this one next to your copy of *Golden Hits of the Shangri-Las* (what do you mean you haven't got one?) because Madonna sounds like a modern version of the white girl group singers of the 60s. She has that teen tremour in a voice that searches for some soul sophistication but doesn't quite make it.

But it's that "girlie" quality that makes the album work so well, with the title track, 'Shoo-Bee-Do' and 'Pretender' being great modern pop songs with just the right mixture of joy and angst. Her version of Rose Royce's 'Love Don't Live Here Anymore' is a standout and comes close to the transcendent original.

In charge of production is Mr Nile Rodgers, perfecting his new white soul style with a great drum sound from Tony Thompson and a sense of space that lets everything flow.

Pity Madonna didn't try the Shangri-Las' 'Remember (Walking in the Sand)'. It would have made this a perfect album.

### Kerry Buchanan

"Have you heard about..."




**COSSACK**  
VODKA

# CONGRATULATIONS

HERBS & BILLY CHRISTIAN ON YOUR FINE ALBUM "LONG AGO."

WE'RE PROUD  
TO SUPPORT FINE N.Z. MUSIC  
AND FINE N.Z. MUSICIANS.  
OF TODAY - AND TOMORROW.



 The School of Creative Musicians  
THE HOTTEST SUPPORT ACT IN TOWN.  
1<sup>st</sup> TERM '85 STARTS JAN 28<sup>th</sup> PH: 768-115

## NEW AT KINGSLEY SMITHS the OSCar digital synthesiser



Features:  
• analogue and/or digital voicing • 24 harmonic waveform construction • 36 sound memory location • fully programmable • powerful dual VCF • monophonic/duophonic operation • versatile performance controls • 1500 event sequencing • 12 sequences and 10 sequence chains • MIDI — In, Out and Thru • MIDI channel assignment • tape dump & load.

We think the OSCar is amazing, and so do the UK music press: "The OSCar has the lot" *International Musician* ... "bloody brilliant" *Music UK* "Stunning" *Sounds* ... and so do Ultravox — they've bought 3.

Available exclusively from  
Send SAE for details to ...

**KINGSLEY SMITH MUSIC SHOP**  
26 Customs St. Auckland. 793-139