

Though this LP was released over 4 months ago, it still doesn't rate a spot on the top 100 albums, which is something I see as being very odd. Albums of this quality aren't released too often here in the barren seventies, so I'll try to do my small part in turning people on to it.

The name of the album is Wind of Chance (AM SP 4348) and it's by Peter Frampton. Frampton is a dropout from the Herd, Englands favourite sweethearts around 1967 (roughly equivalent to what the Monkees were here, only a bit more talented). Frampton also did a three year stint with the hard-rocking Humble Pie as their lead guitarist and quit just as they reached their peak in America last X-mas. His worth to that group is easily gauged by a quick listen to Pie's first post-Frampton LP, Smokin. It's a dud.

On "Wind of Change", Frampton finally exercises all his talents that were somewhat overshadowed in Pie by Steve Marriot (Pronounced Superstar). He's enlisted the help of some of Britains most talented side-men and produced a fine LP that maintains its high level of professionalism from first to last cut.

Probably because of the hard-rock saturation Frampton experienced with Humble Pie, all but four of the albums ten songs roughly qualify as soft-rock. The dominance of the softer cuts does not make up for a dull album though, Frampton adding enough bite to his tunes to keep any head from nodding. The tracks are also arranged in such an order as to keep interest constant.

The album opens with "Fig Tree Bay", a number using leslied guitar to lay down watery Hendrix-like chords in back of Frampton's haunting vocal.Orchestration is used effectively here coupled with a simple organ fill played by Frampton. The drumming is fine both here and throughout the LP by Mike Kellie, who's played with everyone from Spooky Tooth to Joe Cocker.

The album's title cut is performed by Frampton, Andrew Bown (also an ex-Herd member) and Frank Corillo. The three gentlemen easily do the job of a symphony orchestra, with Frampton's dulcimer and Harmonium effectively replacing all strings and keyboards. Bown's fuzz bass performs the function of horns in the chorus and gives the added punch needed to that rising section of the song. Frampton, incidentally plays drums on this, which is among the albums best songs.

Frampton doesn't start rocking till the fourth track, but he more than makes up for the waiting. Frampton's treatment of the Stone's "Jumping Jack Flash" challenges the original while using entirely different techniques. The melody is played as single notes as opposed to the Stone's use of chords, but every bit as rauncous as Jagger and company. The vocal is a growl rather than the intensified Jagger purr but remains earthy clear through.

One of the high points of the tune is Frampton's use of the Rolling Stone's own Jim Price to supply brass which is an intricate part of the song here.

"Flash" has three separate guitar breaks and this gives people like me ample opportunity to disect Frampton's ability on guitar. The first break is a light, jazzy thing played over a simple organ arrangement (the organ is uncredited, so I assume it's Frampton). The second break is where Frampton pays homage to the Stones by working on the possibility of creating a break out of earthy, distorted chords. Towards the end of this solo Frampton picks up a cathy riff which is reinforced by Prices' brass section and the song ends after Frampton's third break, a high speed, distantly echoed solo. I've always admired Frampton's skill in using high speed breaks to a songs best advantage. Whereas flash guitarists like Alvin Lee and Jimmy Page use speed for speeds sake, Frampton always creates his solos with an ear to the basic melody no matter how fast the notes are spit out. More power to him.

Another high point of the album is a dirty little ditty from side one called "It's a Plain Shame". It's similar to many of Humble Pie's 'hot 'n' nasty" punk-sex-rockers with Frampton's snarling double tracked vocal bringing up images of Steve Marriot.

She's like to taste me, She'd like to waste me
She's like to see me sky high

Frank Corillo, who plays second guitar on a lot of this album, lays down fine rhythm lines here that equal if not surpass what Marriot offered for fuel in Humble Pie.

She said, I know it's late too,
But I'd really like to mate you,
On your guitar
Let's get arrested, Wanna be molested,
Who cares how old you are.

This is the cut on the album that shows most potential as a single if programming directors don't notice the lyrics.

The albums second side is strong with "All I wanna do", a moving guitar dominated piece that contains some guitar intercourse similar to Hookfoot's finest moments.

The album ends with Frampton's superstar number, "Alright". With side-men Ringo Starr (who's he?), Klaus Voormnan and Billy Preston, Frampton lets you know from the opening notes that this is no weak cut. Tension is kept strong throughout, particularly by Preston's organ and piano and the tension is the main reason the tune works. Frampton plays a gutsy break taken directly from the melody line and the song fades out with Frampton, Bown and Corillo singing their sweet little hearts out on the chorus.

So, Peter Frampton has recorded one of the strongest albums of the past summer and there only remains two things for you people to do, buy the record and vote NDP on October 30.

By

STAN TWIST

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