

“FRANK” – Pete Christie – Review

by Beca Fludgate

Take time out to listen to this album, as it deserves “listening” to!

“Frank” is the new album by Pete Christie and it is aptly titled as the songs are frank, honest, real and open up the listener’s heart to issues they may not want to face but really should and will feel better for doing so. Featuring some of Bournemouth’s finest, Pete Christie has produced a great album, which looks as professional as it sounds.

The production, artwork, arrangements, instrumentation, engineering and musicianship from all involved are superb – as are the songs themselves. Ted Wallbridge, Frankie Milner, Aimee Newsome-Stone and Monique Houraghan give excellent harmony vocals with production and engineering by Martin Condon of Active Music. Ted Wallbridge plays drums, except on Monday Morning and Pete Wallbridge is on bass guitar and drums, both of which feature in seductive moments throughout.

Pete’s song writing articulates his emotional journeys with skill and tenderness and the whole feel of the album is soft, mellow, delicate and subtle which complements Pete’s edgy and eloquent vocal. The songs touched me personally on several occasions on an emotional level (yes, I did cry at one point!) as I can relate to the struggles that Pete is writing about as I think most people who listen to it will.

The opening track, “Open Your Heart” is one of my favourites. It opens the album with a very gentle melodic intro and builds slowly into a dedication of love. The middle 8 lifts the song into a new groove, which builds further. The production is sensitive to the song and there is a lovely drum roll at the end with superb ambience and acoustics in the recording.

“Normal Shade of Blue” is a story type song and finds Pete drinking “coffee flavoured water in a service station” – this illustrates the humour that flavours the whole album which although quite intense and dark also lifts the listener with moments of irony and bittersweet analogies. Pete covers a Bob Dylan song called “Not Dark Yet” which is the longest song on the album and has Pete’s only guitar solo on the album. Listening I immediately thought of Clapton and any number of other guitar greats, the playing was so good. “Shattered” has a melancholy intro, which develops into an uplifting riff on the keyboard. It is about a break up and the emotional fall out from it. “My dreams are like broken glass, shattered around my feet” – many of the songs are intensely personal journeys that I could certainly relate to, especially “Waiting in the Wings” which I think every aspiring artist should listen to and learn from - this track also features the Band of the Royal British Legion, Christchurch which adds a whole different feel to this song amongst the others.

Pete’s included on this album one of my favourite songs of his “Easy Come, Easy Go” which I love for its upbeat, up tempo rhythm and honest lyric. “Monday Morning” reminded me of McCartney as the harmonies came in and the bleak but cheeky picture painted of the English weather, English life and English humour. “Making Waves” has a gorgeous opening riff with beautiful guitar arrangements and again is a self-confessional and open song with poetic use of allegory.

“Just A Song” finishes the album and I think it’s Pete’s way of not taking himself too seriously but admitting he has a dream and is not going to give up on it which I found very inspiring – get hold of this album if you can, it’s well worth it.