

Peter Frampton

by Neil Jacobsen

Peter Frampton is a musicians musician. He is a seasoned veteran of the music business with eleven albums to his credit. Of these, three came while he was with the "Herd", four came while he was with Humble Pie and four as a solo act.

Peter Frampton began his musical career in a band called the "Preachers." After the "Preachers" he formed the "Herd." The Herd were one of England's top teenybop bands from 1966-69. In 1969 the band disintegrated and Peter set out to form what became known as Humble Pie. Humble Pie was a hard rocking band that consisted of Peter on guitar and vocals, Steve Marriott on guitar, keyboards and vocals, Greg Ridley on bass and Jerry Shirley on drums. This line up made four albums together, with the last "Rocking the Fillmore," eleating up to gold record and superstar status. At this point Frampton decided to leave Humble Pie and pursue a solo career. The most logical explanation for Frampton's decision to leave, when financial success and critical acclaim was within his grasp, seemed to be the clashes between Peter and Steve Marriott. Marriott appeared to be the dominant figure within the framework of Humble Pie, so Frampton left.

Peter started his solo career with an album titled "Wind of Change." The title exemplified the change in sound from Humble Pie to Frampton as a solo artist. "Wind of Change" was a rather typical album with a basic hard sound. An excellent musical contrast, which Frampton initiates on this album, is his mixture of ballads and mellow tunes, with his distinctive rock sound a characteristic of all Frampton solo albums which starts here, is the superb production, with a heavy accent on his readily recognizable vocals and his superior acoustic/electric guitar playing.

After "Wind of Change" came "Frampton's Camel." Some of Peter's finest musical moments are evident on this album. Three songs stand out here: "I Believe," a beautiful rendition of this Stevie Wonder song with an accent on the high vocal harmonies, "I Got My Eyes On You" and "Do You Feel Like We Do" again both enhanced by the rather

high vocals and harmonies. Peter's recognition as a solo artist came after this album's release.

Frampton's third solo release was "Something's Happening." On this album is Peter's early use of a guitar synthesizer. "Sail Away" remains one of the best songs he's ever recorded. An elaborate mix of sounds for the song include vocal overdubs, guitar synthesizer, various percussive sounds and a haunting high hat tom tom interplay on the drums. Peter's acoustic guitar interludes remain deft and drift throughout the album.

Frampton's musical maturity as a recording artist breaks out on his most recent album "Frampton." This is by far his most ambitious album. On side one in a song entitled "Show Me the Way" Peter extensively uses a talk box. I felt only Jeff Beck was adept at this instrument (as he proved on "Blow by Blow"), but Frampton also makes excellent use of the talk box.

Also on side one is a song titled "The Crying Clown" which is the best ballad he has ever done. The song is an interesting blend of electric piano and guitar but the song is carried by Peter's sincere work.

Side two opens with "Nowhere Too Far For My Baby." This is a typical rocker with an excellent pulsating base guitar enhancing the rhythm section. "Penny for Your Thoughts" is a short acoustic number. It sounds like at least two, possibly three acoustic guitars played separately then dubbed together, but it emphasizes Frampton's precise acoustic guitar playing. The song is reminiscent of "Little Martha" featuring Duane Allman and Richard Betts from the Allman Brothers "Eat a Peach" album. Peter closes out the album with his most pulsating song, "Money." It features his most adept geying found on the album. John Simon's thundering base drum and his tasteful use of the cymbals enriches the overpowering rhythm section on this tune.

Peter Frampton has grown tremendously as an artist. His "Frampton" album proves that. Forthcoming is a double live album on A and M Records. Don't miss it and don't miss Peter Frampton in Concert at Plattsburgh!