



Faith No More

FAITH NO MORE King For A Day,
Fool For A Lifetime (Festival)

Hiding beneath the exterior of these very likeable tunes, which range from the ferocious to the laid back, lie some very sick and yummy minds, especially that of the formerly bouncy and clean cut boy — now turned smooth operator (and he looks like a cross between 'our Kev' from *Coro Street* and Chico) — Mike Patton.

'Get Out' (where Mike worries that he may have lost some of his talent and is maybe a normal boy after all), sick noise ditty 'Cuckoo For Caca' (Mike's glorifying shit again: 'Shit lives forever!'), the sordid sheets of 'Ugly In the Morning', and the enthralling 'Digging the Grave' all stay close to the style Faith No More have coined. Apart from the above mentioned, Faith No More move into a territory that was always on the tips of their tongues, but never consummated (maybe because of the now departed, unco-operative guitarist Jim Martin).

As well as extracting brutal sounds from their instruments, they caress them to produce a smooth, macabre sound, coupled with musical and lyrical capability. 'Evidence' is Faith No More playing in Sade's entrails. 'Star AD' is a rollicking number, that starts off sounding like what *The Professionals* theme tune might have sounded like if Faith No More had done it, with Mike Patton doing his best Tom Jones vocal impersonation, and 'Caralho Voador' is a little smoothy on which Mike rolls (probably) unsavoury Italian dialect of that naughty tongue

of his.

'The Last To Know' is sweepingly majestic, and the closing song 'Just A Man' is a baby rock opera, complete with a gospelish sounding choir, which spoils the gentleness of the otherwise best song on the album. Keeps all the dark places well filled.

SHIRLEY CHARLES

VIOLENT FEMMES Rock!!!!
(Liberation)

After the experimental feast and prophetic title of *New Times*, those who loved the Femmes for familiarity above musical skill may have been biting their fingernails. They need fear no more! The Violent Femmes have not shrugged off their adolescent ideals and penchant for catchy choruses. They've returned to them with a vengeance which could only be beaten by the sheer historical staying power of their old hits.

Take 'Tonight', for example: 'Tonight, I wanna get high / Tonight, I wanna get high / Tonight I wanna get high! High! High! / I don't care if I live or die.' Get the point? Don't ya just know a whole new generation of Femmes freaks are gonna be hollering that at the Town Hall come the year 2000? There's a regular glut of that sort of thing here, including: 'Living a Lie', 'Life is an Adventure' and 'She Went to Germany'.

The weird side has not been completely shelved, as the sometimes painful 'Didgeriblow' is testament to. Take a wild

guess at that song's featured instrument, then imagine it being shoved down Brian Ritchie's throat. The more balladic 'I Wanna See You Again' and the eerie 'Bad Dream' are the true craft pieces of this pack. My penchant for rhymish balance is well appeased with the former's: 'Bring your whips / Bring your chains / We can exchange names.' There's really no telling what these Rock!!!! types get into these days. And you ought to see the cover! Men in frocks. Heavens to Murgatroyd!

BRONWYN TRUDGEON

CHRIS KNOX Songs of You and Me
(Flying Nun)

Yup — another solo record from the man who just doesn't know when to stop reading his press kit. The newie is a double, *Hanging Out For Time to Cure Birth* is the 'You' side, while *A Stranger's Iron Shore* is the 'Me' side.

As usual, the lyric sheet will take you weeks to wade through, more words than your average Mike Leigh film. Knox tries to 'make songs out of speeches' (to paraphrase 'Mirror, Mirror').

On *Duck Shaped Pain* he told us we should all read Faludi's *Backlash*. On *Croaker's* 'Liberal Backlash Angst (thè Excuse)' he told us off for being lazy bastards that won't do anything for change. On *Seizure* he told us 'Honesty is Not Enough' for change. Knox never seems to tire of trying to convert us to his PC world view.

On *Songs of You and Me* his topics include suicide, being crippled and drugs, before he moves into his personal life, which seems to consist of being in love, being fucked up or fucking up relationships — something else he never tires of writing about, though I do wonder if his partner of 15 years is not yet fed up with it.

His lyrics are intelligent (he admits his ignorance), intensely personal and usually avoid the clichéd and banal. What more could you



Chris Knox

want from him?

Musically, he's the Chris Knox we know and love, delicate ballads in 'Brave' and 'Open', the cool pop of 'Mirror, Mirror', which should have been the single, and the fuzz of 'Chemicals Are Our Friends'. He may not know when to stop, but it doesn't matter — it's not time to.

DARREN HAWKES

RADIOHEAD The Bends
(Parlophone)

With 'Creep', Radiohead fashioned one of post-indie's torch songs. Its explosive self-loathing struck the right chord with a disillusioned teenage public, anxious to find an alternative to the awful, endless dance fodder of the *Top Of the Pops* culture.

The success of 'Creep' led to their patchy debut album, *Pablo Honey*, shipping over a million and suddenly the band were confronting a mental block of a second album. Initially, in the studio, *The Bends* was approaching a Stone Roses level of procrastination, so they wiped the sessions, went on the road, then went back in and recorded the album in two weeks.

Ironically, the album has benefited from the fact that the band were sick and exhausted from their tour, because there's a compression, intensity and unity on *The Bends* that *Pablo Honey* scarcely hinted at. The playing and singing has a desperation and on-the-edge feeling — right from the melodic power of openers 'Planet Telex' and the title track, through to haunted, down-beat ballads like 'Nice Dream' and 'Fake Plastic Trees'. So *The Bends* has assurance, depth and menace, from a band that were starting to look like one-hit wonders.

GEORGE KAY

BELLY King
(Flying In)

When you listen to *King* you can easily imagine Belly coming third in a Belly sound-alike competition. Perhaps, after the supernova that was *Star*, we expected too much.

It's not that the album is bad. It's very good. 'Silverfish' is a delicate wee thing, akin to 'White Belly's' best butterfly stomach moments. 'Puberty' attacks like Tanya Donnelly pretending to be her half sister, Kristin Hersh. The title track is sonically structured like running away from a relationship and finding another and then running away from that one and so on. The single, 'Now They'll Sleep', though initially disappointing, is a grower. And Gail Greenwood has settled into her new

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