

Something for the Weekend

FRANZ FERDINAND 4.5 Right Thoughts, Right Words, Right Action

We needed time to fix the band

By JACQUI SWIFT

IT has been ten years since Franz Ferdinand emerged with their number three hit *Take Me Out*, a record that launched them to international success.

For album four, they are back to their punchy best, with snappy riffs and poetic lyrics.

Here frontman Alex Kapranos tells *SFTW* about their return, the band being friends again and making some of the most emotional songs of their career.

"We feel closer to how we were as a band before we released that first record than to how things were in the years following it," he said. "A lot of that has to do with being in the public eye. None of us are natural celebrities. Some people have the kind of constitution that can deal with it well, or even crave it, but we don't."

How have you recovered since your nut allergy/anaphylactic shock incident before *Sziget Festival* in Budapest?

I'm fine – a wee bit of a spew and a couple of jabs of antihistamine and I can play any show. I reckon it was the adrenalin of going on stage that sorted me out in the end.

Right Thoughts, Right Words, Right Action is a return to your best. Did you feel that in the studio when you were making the album?

We enjoyed making this record so much, and I reckon you can always hear that in a recording.

It was good to hang out with each other and we could feel it was going to be a good one. None of us said that of course – wouldn't want to jinx it.

It's a simpler, more straight-forward album than *Tonight*. Does it reflect the band being in a good place?

I don't think I realised at the time, but we weren't getting on as well as a band when we made *Tonight*. I guess that's why we needed a bit of time after that LP to work it all out.

In retrospect, it's pretty simple – sort your friendships out and appreciate being in a band, but it's sometimes difficult to see the things right under your nose.

Tell us about the lyric "You know I hate pop music" in the song *Goodbye Lovers & Friends*?

I read a story about the French ex-president Mitterrand's funeral. It was attended by his colleagues, friends, heads of state, his wife, his children and his mistress(es).

It made me think of how, as you disappear from this world



INTERVIEW

EXCLUSIVE

TRACKLIST

1. Right Action
2. Evil Eye
3. Love Illumination
4. Stand On The Horizon
5. Fresh Strawberries
6. Bullet
7. Reason! Animals
8. The Universe Expanded
9. Brief Encounters
10. Goodbye Lovers And Friends

these people who were so much a part of your life are gathered in one place in a way that they never were when you were alive.

What an opportunity to say a few things to them. I started writing down the things that came into my head: Don't get sentimental and invent virtues that I never had, hope you remember every fight, hope you remember that I loved you – and don't play pop music.

As the curtains part and I roll away, I don't need to inflict my musical taste on anyone else for one last time. Tell us about the opening track *Right Action* and the postcard that inspired it?

I like looking at postcards in flea markets. People used to send them the same way we send emails today. Often you get wee

Sunday Morning, one of my favourite films. There seemed to be a touch of fate about it all.

Why did you and Bob decide to go to Orkney when you were ready to start writing again?

We hadn't spoken properly or openly for years and decided to have it all out, so we decided to go somewhere where neither of us had been before and that we both wanted to check out. So we went to Orkney.

It's a pretty cool place. It was strange to be talking about whether we were going to split the band up or not, standing next to a Stone Age settlement, looking out to sea.

The band hit a bad spell prior to making this record. Why and how has making this album rejuvenated the four of you?

Sorting out our friendships is what rejuvenated us, then we made the record. Being in a band isn't any different from any other friendship. If you don't look after it, it'll wither and die.

You need to be honest with each other and you need to look out for each other. The trick to maintaining friendship in a band is to give yourselves a bit of space, so you can have the perspective to appreciate what it is that you like about them.

You have played a number of the new album's tracks live. How have the crowds taken to them?

It's the first time we've played all the songs live before the LP has been released. There's been a trend recently for musicians to guard new material very closely before a release.

It stems from the anxiety that big labels have about leaks. I'm not comfortable with that paranoia. If you've written a song and you want people to hear it, why not play it? Seems crazy not to.

You recently played a special show on *David Letterman* in New York. Is America a good place for Franz?

We've played *Letterman* a few times before, but this was more extraordinary, as we played a full set which included the full new album.

It was at The Ed Sullivan Theatre which has such resonance for a British band. It's where The Beatles went in the early Sixties and brought rock'n'roll back to the place of its birth.

Tell us about the *Passport* edition of the album?

When I was growing up, some of my favourite albums by bands were the recordings they did for radio sessions. live in a studio, often with a small audience or live on air. This version of the LP is a live version with some extra songs recorded live in front of a small audience at Ray Davies's studio. I guess this LP is the one I would want if I were a fan, rather than in the band.



EMILY BURNS

WHERE: London

FOR FANS OF: Lily Allen, Eliza Doolittle, Nina Nesbitt
JIM SAYS: Emily Burns was a new name to me when she introduced herself to me at T In The Park last month. The likeable 18-year-old instantly won me over with her down to earth attitude, and her songs are just as charming.

And despite her English accent, we can claim Emily as Scottish.

She told me: "I was born in Livingston, but my family moved down to Rugby when I was one. T In The Park was the one festival that I really wanted to do because of my connection with Scotland. It was like a homecoming for me."

"I was absolutely thrilled to be asked to do it. It felt like such a reward for all of the work I have been doing over the past couple of years."

Performing on the BBC Introducing Stage, the Beeb's new music platform has been key to Emily's development.

She added: "I uploaded some of my tracks to the BBC Introducing uploader and my local BBC station (Coventry and Warwickshire) started to play me. They invited me down to the BBC Introducing Masterclass at Abbey Road in 2010. The in-house producer, Rob Cass, wanted to sign me to his production company, Cave Productions."

"I've now been working



with them for around two years and I've done some co-writes with some amazing songwriters including Jim Duguid who's written with Paolo Nutini, and wrote Too Close with Alex Clare."

Just the other week, her track *Plasters*, *Glitter* and *Glue* was playlisted on BBC Radio 1.

She said: "I can't thank the team at BBC Introducing enough for their support. It was amazing to hear my track being played to millions of people on Radio 1."

"I've had loads of positive feedback. Greg James mentioned that he had been listening to a few of my tracks and thinks that *Plasters*, *Glitter* and *Glue* is a 'right old gem'."

With her enthusiasm, bubbly personality, and the knack for a great pop song, Emily is a rising star we're going to hear a lot more about in the coming years.

Exciting times are ahead for the talented youngster, who hopes to build on this year's experience at Balado.

She said: "After seeing the headliners' performances at T In The Park I feel driven to be up there one day. I love playing live music and I can't wait to tour, playing my music to people around the world."

MORE: emilyburnsmusic.com

● Jim will be playing Emily Burns on *Indemands Uncut* this Sunday from 7pm, along with an exclusive session from Scots favourites *Glasvegas*. Check it out on Clyde 1, Forth One, Northsound 1, Radio Borders, Tay FM, West FM, West Sound FM, www.indemandscotland.co.uk

BOB DYLAN Another Self Portrait: Bootleg Series Vol. 10 4.5



What is this hit?

NEVER has an album had a rebirth quite like this one. It's the aural equivalent of Lazarus.

When Bob Dylan released *Self Portrait* in 1970, critic Greil Marcus famously declared, "What is this s***?" in *Rolling Stone* magazine.

It came over as a shoddy, unfocused hotch-potch of covers and half thought-out originals given hideous, syrupy overdubs.

Whatever happened to the voice of a generation who gave us *The Times They Are A-Changin'*? Truth be told, it wasn't as bad as people made out but classic albums such as *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde On Blonde* were still fresh in listeners' memories.

Trove

Now thanks to some fruitful digging in dusty old cupboards, the Dylan treasure trove that is the *Bootleg Series* has yielded *Another Self Portrait* (1969-71).

It's a stunning collection of 35 songs from the *Self Portrait* era, unadorned takes of songs nearly ruined for the original release as well as unreleased readings of traditionals and covers of contemporary folk and pop songs.

We find Dylan tapping into the great American songbook he helped shape.

Listen to the way he bends the words of Civil War song *Pretty Saro* or his stirring take on ancient ballad *House Carpenter*.

There's even a great bit of self-penned nonsense, *Working On A Guru*, complete with George Harrison on lead guitar.

For true obsessives, the deluxe version includes a remastered *Self Portrait* and a recording of the singer's historic *Isle Of Wight* festival appearance with *The Band*... his only full live show between 1966 and 1974.

The whole thing's a revelation from start to finish.

SC

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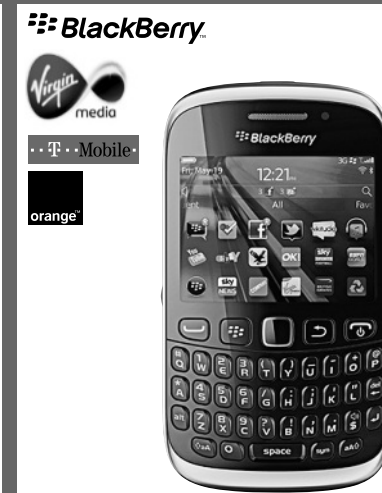
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