



HITS . . . The Darkness



By **COLAN LAMONT**

**THE Darkness star Frankie Poullain has revealed he ditched his real surname because it didn't sound 'rock star' enough.**

The bassist grew up in Edinburgh and was known as Francis Patterson until he broke through in the music business.

And the 50-year-old thinks the name change has panned out well. He says: "I use my mum's name. Dad left when we were very young."

"So before we got big, I figured my mum deserved some kind of acknowledgement from me."

"Plus, Francis Patterson doesn't sound like a rock star. But I'd say my mum's name does."

The rocker has lived in London for the last 25 years and joined The Darkness in 2000.

Despite plenty of big hit singles, he took a break from the band in 2005, being replaced by Richie Edwards, and then returned six years later.

**'I'm weird uncle in our dysfunctional family'**

Their latest album All The Pretty Girls, below right, came out in July and he's never felt better.

Frankie – who makes up The Darkness with singer Justin Hawkins, guitarist Dan Hawkins and Rufus Tiger Taylor on drums – says: "This is our third album so we're really hitting our stride now."

"We're like a dysfunctional family – Justin is the trophy wife, Dan is the father, Rufus is the adolescent teenager and I'm the weird uncle."

"People seem to be really enjoying the album."

"Overdosing on The Darkness is like overdosing on tiramisu, with all the different flavours and elements."

The band's debut album Permission To Land led to hits such as I Believe In A Thing Called Love and Growing On Me.

And they had a festive No2 in 2003 with Christmas Time (Don't Let the Bells End), being pipped by the downbeat cover of Tears For Fears' Mad World by Gary

# I swapped dull name & rocked into The Darkness

Says bassist

**FRANKIE POULLAIN**

**HOMECOMING**  
... Frankie can't wait to play Scotland on Wednesday



Jules and Michael Andrews. The rockers are led by Justin – known for his falsetto voice – alongside his guitarist brother Dan.

In 2015, drummer Rufus – son of Queen drummer Roger Taylor – was added to line-up of the group but at just 26 years old he is half the age of his bandmates.

Frankie reckons the injection of youth has given the band a bigger fun factor.

He jokes: "With his addition the band is blonder, younger, better-looking and we have a higher sperm count. It takes us back to what we do best, being childish."

"And he was really schooled properly with his background in Queen." But even adding a younger

member won't make the old guard party any harder.

Frankie admits the guys have slowed down a bit in recent years now that they're more experienced.

And he wants to make sure he looks after his health.

**'I'll definitely be enjoying myself in Scotland'**

He adds: "I suppose we come from a generation where those hands hit it hard for 30 years, drinking and smoking and all that stuff. But we cut it back the last few years and we're survivors and eat properly."

"The other big difference is when you're playing a gig to thou-

sands of people, you're not allowed to smoke. The smoking ban has been a huge boost to rock stars."

The Darkness will return to Scotland when they play the O2 Academy in Glasgow on Wednesday.

And Frankie is always happy to come home.

He says: "Scottish gigs always have some of the best audiences. I guess we've not been back in three years and have been doing the album."

"It's the same with every album, you never do it quickly,

they all take a year for writing, a year for pre-production and a year to be remastered."

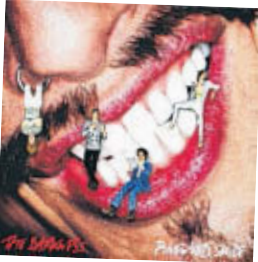
"Most proper rock bands can't rush these things – it has to be done with tender loving care and not factory-produced."

"Now it's nice to be going back to Scotland."

"Friends and family will be there so I'd imagine with a day off the next day I'll definitely be enjoying myself."

● The Darkness play Glasgow on November 29. See [www.thedarknesslive.com](http://www.thedarknesslive.com) for more info.

**colan.lamont@the-sun.co.uk**



**SHAMBOLICS**

**WHERE:** Kirkcaldy, Fife  
**WHO:** Lewis McDonald (vocals/guitar), Darren Forbes (vocals/guitar), Jordan McHatten (bass), Andrew Finlay (drums)

**FOR FANS OF:** The View, The La's, Oasis

**JIM SAYS:** The lads have had an incredible year. They've released a string of well-received singles, and played key festivals including the massive Reading and Isle Of Wight events.

To cap it all, they got the Best Rock/Alternative gong at the Scottish Alternative Music Awards.

That's pretty impressive for a relatively new act. They only got together in late 2015 after a few jams at Eggman Studios in Dunfermline, run by Darren.

Darren said: "We always have a bit bad luck on our side – like vans breaking down and nearly being late and missing big important gigs so, in that sense, it's shambolic... but not musically."

"We focus on writing huge catchy melodies with good lyrics – songs that people can relate to and scream their hearts out to at gigs."

That's helped The Shams capture the imagination, building up an impressive following despite initially not playing their home town. They reckon the Kirkcaldy scene has been a bit bare of late,



**NEW MUSIC**

By **Jim Gellatly**

but hope their success can spur on other local acts. Darren added: "We never played Kirkcaldy for the first year as a band. We just focused on everywhere else. When we eventually played Kirkcaldy for the first time it sold out."

"We recently did two nights there to around 600 people and we're planning another couple of huge nights in February. We're proving to local young bands that anyone can go on to play big festivals or do big tours or support some of their idols regardless of who they are or where they're from. If we can do it then absolutely anyone can."

This Feeling, who run nights at venues across the UK along with stages at major festivals, have

been huge backers. Darren explained: "They've shown support for us very early on in our career and we are forever grateful. We wouldn't have done half the stuff we've already done without them. Long may it continue."

The band have their sights set beyond the UK, and play Berlin and Hamburg in January. Darren said: "Our track Love Collides hit 21 in the German Indie Charts when it was released. Since then we've had a few offers to play a few gigs and tours."

Love Collides came out through Electric Honey Records, the student-run label out of Glasgow Kelvin College that brought us early recordings from Biffy Clyro, Snow Patrol and Belle & Sebastian. It opened a lot of doors – aside from the German success it featured on Virgin Radio, BBC Radio Scotland and Sky Sports.

The latest single Chasing A Disaster is another cracker. I'd imagine these guys have got one heck of a debut album in them. Shambolics play Stereo in Glasgow tonight, and December 22 at PJ Moiloy's in Dunfermline.

**MORE:** [facebook.com/shambolicmusic](http://facebook.com/shambolicmusic)  
● Jim presents a weekly showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio Sundays 2-4pm

**amazingradio.com**  
**jimgellatly.com**



● IT is the row that just keeps giving. We told you about the loot box outrage sparked by EA in Star Wars Battlefront 2 last week, but things have taken a turn for the worse.

They thought they would ease the situation with a statement that revealed a U-turn by removing the chance to spend real money in the microtransaction system.

All good... until gamers spotted that the system could be re-designed and make a return.

Then it was revealed that a similar system in EA's Need For Speed Payback was updated this week to be more gameplay focused.

But there are still some EA games with the same problems and gamers are not happy – especially the FIFA community.

If that wasn't enough, the Belgian Gaming Commission has ruled that the random nature of what was in the add-on boxes mixed 'money and addiction' so were a form of gambling and they want a ban. Belgian Minister Justice Koen Geens added: "Mixing gambling and gaming, especially at a young age, is dangerous for the mental health of the child."

Hawaii then followed suit. Republican politician Chris Lee described it as a 'Star Wars-themed online casino, designed to lure kids into spending money'.

Now it seems that the French Minister are going down the same route and have referred the system to their Gaming Commission. Don't expect the fallout to stop any time soon.

**TOP 5 GAMES THIS WEEK**

- 1 Call Of Duty: WWII
- 2 Star Wars Battlefront 2
- 3 FIFA 18
- 4 Pokemon Ultra Sun
- 5 Pokemon Ultra Moon



● GONG time at the 35th Golden Joystick Awards in London.

Nintendo's The Legend of Zelda: Breath Of The Wild was Ultimate Game of the Year, Nintendo Game of the Year, Critics' Choice and Best Audio. Nintendo also got Studio of the Year.

PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds was Best Multiplayer Game and PC Game of the Year.

Horizon Zero Dawn bagged Best Storytelling and PlayStation Game with Ashly Burch taking The Sun-sponsored Best Gaming Performance and the Breakthrough Award.

Cuphead won Xbox Game of the Year and Best Visual Design.



CAT Quest is bonkers. There, I said it. However, it will put a smile on your face.

It is an offering from Singapore-based firm The Gentlebros and takes a solid 2D world role-player and throws in cats for a purrfect blend of classic RPG play from raiding dungeons to grabbing loot. It's pawsome. OK, I'll stop the puns now.

The tale is set around a land where dragons rule and only the fabled dragon blood warriors could defeat them. But then the warriors disappeared.

You are a young mute tabby who has been left for dead by a mysterious white cat who has also kidnapped your sister.

Luckily, a sprite called Speery saves you and you know how the rest goes – save your sister, free the land from dragons and become a true dragon blood warrior.

It's standard high fantasy fare, but with more cat puns than even I can think of.

The gameplay is mostly fetch quests and to kill monsters, but the missions take no more than 10 minutes so it's short and snappy.

Unlike most RPGs you also don't need to grind to

**Cat Quest**

PS4, Switch, PC and Mobile £19.99

level up – most of the game moves forward with you. There are more than 60 quests and side-quests, but you'll see the credits roll on the main event after about six or seven hours then you can jump back in to complete what you missed.

The combat is real time so it's fast and simple – you attack or dodge while learning the timing of enemies' attacks so there is a tactical slant.

There is a charm to the look as you travel throughout the land and meet a host of feline friends. It is colourful and backed up by a soundtrack that has a Zelda flavour.

Cat Quest may be a little too easy at times and the stripped back combat options and gear system could turn some people off, but it is a perfect fit for younger gamers to get their RPG toes wet.

It is light-hearted and has charm, by the bucket-load. It will leave you feline happy.

★★★★

**STUART CULLEN**



**CALL Of Duty has gone all retro and headed back to its roots.**

**Call of Duty: WWII**  
Xbox One, PS4 and PC £49.99

The mega franchise cut its teeth on World War II in 2003. Now it has returned with all the technological gaming advances we have made in the last 14 years.

The new version provides a campaign which tries to fit in as many key moments as it can from the war – while still delivering a tale of brotherhood and redemption.

Sledgehammer Games haven't held back – it all starts with an epic beach landing and it just builds from there.

There are plenty of highlights so expect some magical slow-mo camera moments.

You are Ronald Daniels, a private in the 1st Infantry Division. This is his tour of Europe – a six-to-seven-hour campaign. It is a solid tale, but never really moves the CoD for-

mula on. The biggest selling point is the multiplayer. It's had a freshen up which mixes things up without too much change.

Play fast, die fast and respawn fast – that's the name of the game. It retains that satisfying loop of past titles with a flavour of games like Kill Confirmed and Capture The Flag.

The new War mode is an interesting addition. It adds a more level-focused vibe where two teams fight through different stages. For example, one team has to escort tanks to a fuel depot then secure a bridge while the other must stop them.

The only issue is that the only available maps at the moment have quite a few bottleneck moments which turn things into disappointing kill boxes. The

final facet is zombie mode. That has also been beefed up with a strong story and a huge map to fight on – it's fun, silly and over the top, but it is a welcome break from the serious tone of the main campaign.

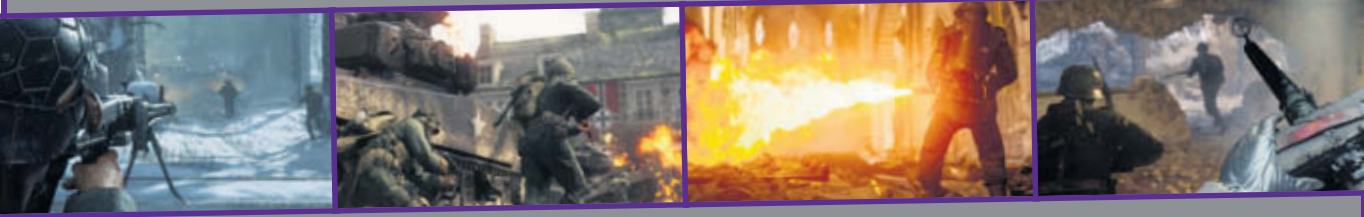
You expect CoD to look good, but the developers have out-done themselves. We reviewed it on the Xbox One X in 4K and it was almost photo realistic at times especially on characters' faces. The soundtrack echoes the sober tone well.

It wouldn't be CoD without some Hollywood talent and Josh Duhamel (Transformers movies) and Jonathan Tucker (Kingdom) are great in campaign while Ving Rhames (Mission: Impossible) and Scot David Tennant (Doctor Who) add character to the zombie tale.

WWII produces a good tale but the finale is a little forced and that is a shame, especially given the subject matter. It all felt a bit on the safe side.

★★★★

**STUART CULLEN**



**DUTCH sales manager Rudy van Buren is the World's Fastest Gamer.**

The 25-year-old saw off 30,000 sim race stars to win McLaren F1 team's eSports challenge. He now has a role as one of the team's official simulator drivers for 2018. The former karter won the

Dutch championship in 2003, but quit the scene when he ran out of cash.

He said "Every boy that starts karting dreams about F1, and at a certain point that dream just vanishes."

"Now by winning World's Fastest Gamer, I can relive that dream."

● Riirichan is a full-time streamer who started in 2014 after being inspired by other shows.

And she admits the experience has helped her battle her shyness. She has also started working with AMD Red Team Plus then with firms such as Overclockers UK, Eclipse Computers, XSplit, ASUS ROG, Cool-

**ON THE STREAM**

erMasterand Noblechairs. She doesn't just focus on gaming as she features cosplay and PC building as well as plenty of chat with fans.

She said: "I love streaming – it's definitely something I'd never thought I'd be doing five years ago, but now, it's my life." See [twitch.tv/riirichan](http://twitch.tv/riirichan) and follow [grlrir\\_senpai](http://grlrir_senpai)