

# Franz strokes competition

*Bouncing energy Scotsmen's sound*

BY ROBBIE MACKEY  
STAFF WRITER

Bands don't pay their dues any more.

And, frankly, it's all our fault. In today's hot-button world of rock journalism, instantaneous canonization is a far too common occurrence.

If you've got a fresh set of digs and the "it" sound, you've got all you need to impress the pundits and hop on the train to immediate must-hear status. Just look at the current "New York" scene.

In a word, it's omnipresent, saturating the musical landscape so thoroughly that the terms "retro," "revival" and "garage" find themselves at pen's end of nearly every balding rock critic and A & R shark on the block.

As a result, mainstream rags will toss Franz Ferdinand's eponymous debut LP in with the camp of funky post-punk rip-offs that call the Big Apple home or sound like they should.

But in reality, Scotland's dolled-

**MUSICREVIEW**

**FRANZ FERDINAND**  
**FRANZ FERDINAND**

★★★★

up dance-popsters boast a sound that's far more akin to the Britpop of Suede or Blur than the canned sass of Radio 4 or marble-mouthed garage of The Strokes.

"Jacqueline," the album opener, begins with Alex Kapranos' lilting baritone, quaintly peppered by a simple acoustic guitar progression. But in mere seconds, the track bursts into a full-on dance floor sprint stuffed with chiming guitars and the lyrics of a lovesick alcoholic.

"I'm so drunk, I don't mind if you kill me," Kapranos admits, above the herky-jerky gallop of the track's rhythm section.

Merseybeat aesthetics creep in here and there, too, as the choruses of "Tell Her Tonight" and "Cheating on You" blossom into close harmony'd gambols any self-respecting British Invasionist would be proud of.

But with its bony guitar lines and disco-glitz, the lead single, "Take Me Out," is Franz

*Ferdinand's* high point, oozing with the same blatantly sexual majesty that Jarvis Cocker's Pulp perfected in the mid-'90s.

Unfortunately, the latter third of the album sags under the weight of superfluous studio garnish, slower tempos and a curious lack of memorable choruses.

It is here that Franz Ferdinand's sound will undoubtedly be accused of borrowing from the garage-y grandeur of the New York scene.

Indeed, "Darts of Pleasure," originally released on the band's 2003 EP of the same name, comes off as a lackadaisical version of the venomous "This Fire," or — even worse — a cover by the Natural History.

Even so, it's quite apparent that the Glasgow four-piece isn't just the Scottish Strokes. And it definitely isn't the latest assembly line dance-punk outfit.

Filled with hip-shucking odes to love, fame and excess, *Franz Ferdinand* is an electrically elegant, decadently romantic record.

No garage could hold this.

Contact the A&E Editor at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).

# Depp left to hang in spoiled 'Secret'

BY BRIAN MILLIKIN  
SENIOR WRITER

Screenwriter David Koepp isn't a household name, but on paper you'd think he could be.

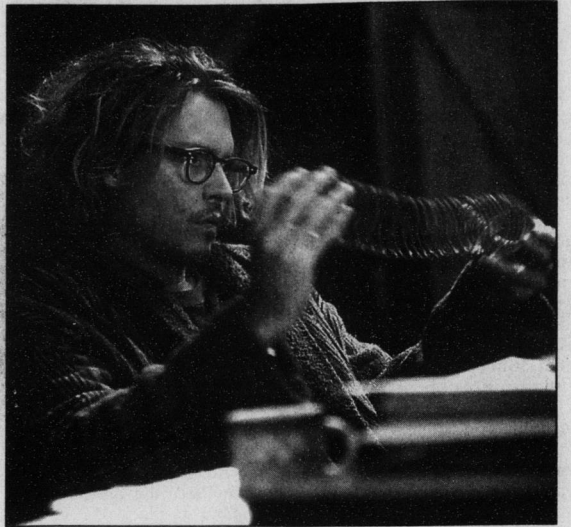
After all, he's responsible for both "Jurassic Park" and "Spider-Man," two of the biggest hits of all time. Add "Panic Room" and his résumé isn't so shabby. (We'll ignore "Stir of Echoes" and the offensive "The Trigger Effect.")

No one will ever confuse these with nuanced masterpieces, but in pure story terms Koepp usually gets the job done, doing a Hollywood writer's invisible dirty work.

"Secret Window," his latest adaptation effort, won't help his case. Koepp also directs the psychological thriller, based on a 1990 Stephen King novella. But as a director he's mediocre, with an above-average visual sense and a penchant for pulp.

True to his roots, Koepp launches straight into the story. It's a refreshing approach at first, after a 2004 filled so far with a narrative-free "The Passion" and 50 bland comedies galore.

The always watchable Johnny Depp plays Mort Rainey, an author holed up in a lakeside cabin six months after splitting with his wife.



COURTESY OF COLUMBIA PICTURES

Johnny Depp is a quirky, sluggish writer who struggles with slickies, among other things, in David Koepp's disappointing "Secret Window."

Rainey immediately gets an unwelcome diversion from his work when he opens his door for John Shooter (John Turturro, doing his best "O Brother, Where Art Thou").

Shooter claims Rainey plagiarized his story, and he wants an uncertain measure of payback. "Secret Window" develops into an entertaining enough thriller from there, paced with an endearing demented and offbeat force.

Depp, a catalogue of gestures and quirks, fits right in. His Rainey is a disheveled, wiry sort of goofball hero. You have to like a guy who, in a dangerous situation, can't escape because his leg is asleep.

Depp is the film's highlight. He's alone on screen for great stretches, and still he captivates. But even his performance can't save the film when it rounds its last few turns. That's where "Secret Window"

**MOVIE REVIEW**

**"SECRET WINDOW"**

★★★

falls apart in excessive absurdity, with its inevitable Big Twist. The ending sucks all the shock and suspense out of the film, twisting "Secret Window" into a psychological character study that it really never was or should've been.

The Big Twist is definitely daring, decidedly unhappy and depth-charge unexpected. But mostly it's just disappointing. And mildly perplexing.

It worked better in the novella, which has more room to operate and which is followed by another story just on the next page.

But on screen Koepp's last act erases all the shock and all the charm of "Secret Window." All we get is an especially awkward silence in the line to escape the theater.

Not even Depp, one of the most winning actors in both America and France, can redeem the film. One wonders if the bitter after-taste will cost Depp the burgeoning, giggling fan base he won with "Pirates of the Caribbean."

As for his own popular breakthrough, Koepp's got to go back to the drawing board. As a writer he committed the cardinal sin: He ruined the ending.

Contact the A&E Editor at [artsdesk@unc.edu](mailto:artsdesk@unc.edu).

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12 MO Raspulina w/ Murder By Death\*\* (\$10/\$12)  
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