

I Feel Like Playing

We at Shattered had pretty much given up on Ronnie Wood. In the press for all the wrong reasons, cavorting with young Russians, in and out of rehab, seemingly not knowing whether he was coming or going and worst of all looking for all the world like a bit part player in the Stones, he was on the way out.

But something miraculous has happened. Ronnie is back on track. A triumphant couple of (reformed) Faces gigs, with a tour to come. And now Ronnie has released his sixth solo (studio) album, **I Feel Like Playing**. We can report that it is absolutely excellent: certainly as good as **I've Got My Own Album to Do**, and quite possibly better.

He has assembled a fantastic cast of players, combining some Stones sidemen (Bernard Fowler, Blondie Chaplin, Darryl Jones), some X-Pensive Winos (Ivan Neville, Waddy Wachtel), a fellow Face (Mac), as well as Flea, Billy Gibbon and, crucially important, Slash, who has obviously inspired Ronnie to play his guitar the way he used to do. Listen to their successive solos on *Sweetness My Weakness* and *Fancy Pants* and you will hear what we mean.

Just as Keith benefited from having a collaborator or two in the X-Pensive Winos, so Ronnie's singing, playing and songwriting is all the better from having others around him. The opening track, *Why Do You Wanna Go and Do a Thing Like That For?*, co-written with Kris Kristofferson, is quite superb. A country-influenced song, with some nice slide touches, it is very affecting ("I get wounded and I bleed," Ronnie sings with real emotion).

The album is stuffed with good songs. *Lucky Man* (which is a sort of Seven Days combined with Can't Be Seen), *Tell Me Something*, *Forever*, and, best of the lot, *I Gotta See*, a slow blues with string backing. There is some reggae (*Sweetness My Weakness*) and a really funky cover of *Spoonful*, even though both go on a touch too long.

If Ronnie really has got his act together, it bodes very well for the Stones. Meantime, hats off, Ron - I Feel Like Playing is an absolute triumph.

