

# FRAMPTON

## COMES BACK ALIVE

Big '70s rocker returns Sunday night to Toad's

By Karen P. Kolb

Fourteen years after releasing the most successful live album ever, Peter Frampton found himself feeling a need to reignite his career.

This was 1990, and the desire led to Frampton's reunion with Steve Marriott, a longtime trusted friend and former band mate from the days of Humble Pie.

They started writing again, recorded five songs, got a record deal and tried to form a new Humble Pie-style band.

Then tragedy struck. Marriott, 44, died in a fire at his home in England.

The applause Frampton had been hoping to hear again would unfortunately not be with Marriott. Instead, it happened when he attended a Lynyrd Skynyrd show last November in Los Angeles. At the band's urging, he joined in for a rendition of "The Breeze."

"Three thousand people stood up and gave me that rush up my spine with their applause," Frampton said during a recent phone interview. "The next day, I got offers to play and I called my manager. I got that vibe to play again. ... It was a very good feeling."

A touring band formed by the end of 1991: Bob Mayo on guitar and keyboards, Michael Braun on drums and John Regan on bass. Frampton and this band will per-



form tonight at The Sting in New Britain and Sunday at Toad's Place in New Haven.

"I got stuck trying to rekindle a vibe with this new band," the guitarist, now 41, said. "The death of Steve affected me so much. In effect, I was trying to find someone to fill his shoes. But now was not the time for someone to be able to play and sing like Steve."

Frampton's music soon will return to record stores. A double-CD set with songs dating back to

his first solo LP, "Winds Of Change," will be released in May. It also includes two songs recorded last year with Marriott, one featuring Marriott on vocals.

And a double-CD Humble Pie release and a single CD of material from The Herd — Frampton's first band — will be available this summer.

This isn't to say that Frampton has ever *not* been making music.

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### IN BRIEF

**Who:** Peter Frampton, with Northern Pikes

**When:** 8:30 p.m. Sunday

**Where:** Toad's Place

**Tickets:** \$15.50 advance, \$17 at the door

**Info:** 777-7431

# Frampton: Can't explain success of 'Comes Alive!'

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Never satisfied to stay in one particular type of music, Frampton has shifted from hard rock and rock blues to melodic pop rock.

"I don't feel comfortable in one area," he said. "Acoustic has a different sound. But strap on an electric guitar and all hell breaks loose. I sort of continued Humble Pie stuff ... mainstream rock 'n' roll."

In 1987, Frampton worked with David Bowie on his LP "Never Let Me Down" and then toured with him on the Glass Spider tour.

"I was doing exactly what I wanted to do with that tour," he said. "David and I grew up together. On the local scene, we were playing the same places and my father was David's art teacher. I've known him since I was 11 and he was 14.

"He called me after 'Premonition' was released in 1986 and asked if I'd be interested in working with him. I told him to send me a ticket. I'd been a fan of his for years and always will be.

"But to go out and play together. It's the main thing that gives me the most pleasure — the guitar. It's a luxury, being applauded ..."

If that's the case, Frampton was surrounded by luxury in the mid- to later-'70s after the release of "Frampton Comes Alive!" That double album soared to No. 1 on the charts and sold more than 15 million copies.

And all this at a time when disco was overtaking America and, as Frampton pointed out, "Punk was ready to rear its head in England with the Sex Pistols."

"I don't know why it did phenomenally well," he said of the record, laughing. "I thought it would be my first gold record. The successes of the prior four albums were pretty obvious — the constant touring and great audience reaction. The best of live ... like Humble Pie format."

His follow-up album in 1977, "I'm In You," hit No. 2



UPI/Register file photo

Peter Frampton in 1978, at the height of his fame.

and went triple platinum in sales.

"It was a time when I was on demand for everyone with no regard for my health or sanity," he recalled. "I was in the middle of a hurricane. The amount of media exposure should have been controlled. It was very hard for me to say no to what I'm so lucky to have — the biggest record in its class."

In the '80s, Frampton released six albums and continued his craft. Yet most people only remember "Frampton Comes Alive!"

"The reason I got into the business has stayed the same. I was never driven by money or whatever else comes with the tumultuous success. The sheer enjoyment of playing the songs I wrote, and that people were there to enjoy them, has always been my driving force."

"I'll probably never have an album like that again in my career. But I'm very grateful, very proud."

"To feel frustrated during slow periods ... that's why you're called a star — you have ups and downs."

*Free-lancer Karen P. Kolb writes about rock music for the Register.*