

euphoria. There's real songwriting craftsmanship here, amidst the jangling, keening tangle of guitars and organ creaks from a keyboardist who seems more asleep than attentive.

And, if people could be bothered to look beyond their preconceptions at a band perceived as a 'Sarah Records Act' — the stigmatised label The Orchids are now estranged from — they'd even find the fashionable, as well as the good. 'Frank De Salvo' and 'Coloured Stone' stagger with all the requisite melodic slobbery, right down to the groggy guitar solos passed down through the generations from Neil Young.

Listen without prejudice; The Orchids deserve to be nurtured.

**John Mulvey**

## **THE WOLFGANG PRESS LONDON SUBTERANIA**

IN WEAK times, of strength by the grunge consensus and jackboot-strapped Techno, Wolfgang Press offer a safety valve. Before we all drown in a deluge of decibels from the search for the new Nirvana or have our senses pummelled into submission by faceless technology addicts, these unfairly marginalised groovers show exactly what else is possible if you think.

There's nothing 'difficult' about Wolfgang Press — unless you suffer from tunnel-vision and a closed mind. From the moment the hissing taped reports, culled from JFK assassination footage, crackle into life, to the last dying squalls of manhandled guitars, your attention is grabbed and kept prisoner. Where other groups act out a theatre of cosy indifference, these guys proffer a bewitching spectacle to the ravenous and healthy audience, without having to resort to artiness for its own sake.

And while art might be a swear word, the hybridisation and rule-breaking going on here is nothing to be ashamed of. Deep dub pulses from the rhythm section provide a bedrock for all manner of etching and shading of sound, with Mick Allen's gruff voice in the centre, sometimes screeching, often just plainly speaking.

Annie Anxiety appears for some stinging duets, including a menacing 'Birdy Song' that scares by seeming so pretty and distant; as if heard while sinking into quicksand. 'Mama Told Me Not To Come' is transformed into a death disco ditty while showing that Wolfgang Press understand the rudiments of pop. In fact, only some mid-set caterwauling, with guitars buzzing like hell and the fractured voice distorted, shows up any infallibility, which goes to show that those who've been at it longest are often the most sturdy.

**Dele Fadele**