

*This is Frank's third album (after 'Colours' and 'Geographic').*

*There is a certain 'maturity' to this album, with a darker and more sophisticated feel than the previous two. For this reason, it took longer for the tracks to work their magic on me, but this is definitely another great album from Frank. The production and sound quality is as fantastic as ever.*

### **Track 1 - Docking**

A space station wakes on detection of an incoming craft. Waves of sound build higher, bringing Stearns' 'Planetary Unfolding' to mind. We get our first taste of acoustic instrumentation later in this track, with some expert guitar work over gentle sequencers. This track reminds me of something, but I can't quite put my finger on it. Maybe Ennio Morricone's 'Chi Mai'.

### **Track 2 - The Drift**

A mellow late-evening feel with electric piano, faded guitar notes and bell-trees. Very well controlled dynamics and tension make this track a classic. It's dark, yet strangely positive, too.

### **Track 3 - Home by the Sea**

An altogether brighter feel on this track. Opens with some lovely acoustic pipes over rolling surf and electronic bass. Has a South Sea Islands feel. Warm and summery. Could be used as an theme to the BBC 'Holiday' programme.

### **Track 4 - A State of Mind**

I was originally very surprised to hear real vocals on this. Worry not, though; It's not a song as such, it just uses little phrases almost as instruments. The closest track I can think of to compare this with is Vangelis's 'Song of the Seas', and in my book that's a pretty big recommendation. Fave track of the album currently.

### **Track 5 - Where the Stars Shine Bright**

This has a piano-bar-lounge feel about it which ain't my cuppa char. Initially I thought "Ohmigawd, Frank's lost it!". I had to suspend judgement for a few spins, and now I find it pleasant enough, but still not one to make me rush out and buy the album.

### **Track 6 - Guitars**

As the title suggests, the accent here is definitely on spanking the old plank (of the Spanish variety). Another candidate as theme tune for the 'Holiday' show, or a current affairs programme. An uptempo tune somewhat reminiscent of Sky.

### **Track 7 - Churches**

Initially the vibe and the sounds bring classic Floyd to mind, particularly 'Shine On...'. Lead synth is VERY close to Rick Wright's mid-'70s Minimoog work. As the track progresses, we also hear references to Vangelis' 'Heaven and Hell' and Yes circa 'Awaken', with shades of more modern Dave Gilmour. A stonker, perhaps a little marred by the fact that it settles down at the end, rather than heading for an orgasmic finale full of huge organ chords and rippling Wakemanesque arpeggios.

### **Track 8 - Hymn**

There's no getting away from it - as soon as people hear this they're going to say "1492". That said, it's a lovely track in the style of Vangelis' soundtrack masterpiece and it has Frank's unique fingerprint on it. There are maybe traces of Rick Wright's piano work to be heard here, too.

### **Track 9 - Landfall**

At last! I was starting to get worried that there wouldn't be an all-out stomper on this album. The gentle introduction hardly hints at the barrage of drum loops and jubilant theme which follow. Kinda like modern TD, but with much more focus in the melodic dept (ie using single notes instead of vague chord inversions).

### **Track 10 - Beauty**

There's a definite Mike Oldfield vibe to this one. Layers of piano arpeggios bring the

original 'Tubular Bells' to mind. Of course, the sound quality and playing is much better than little Mikey boy could manage back in them days !

### **Track 11 - Epilogue**

A floaty, inconclusive end to the album. It's similar in many ways to 'Dreamworld' from 'Geographic'. Perhaps it's a deliberate ploy of Frank's to leave albums sort of 'dangling' until the next one comes along. Dunno. Anyhow, this should please fans of Vangelis' more sentimental side.

### **Summary:**

At the moment I still prefer 'Geographic', but it'll be interesting to see how this one wears with time, as it grows on me more with each listening - always a good sign.

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"Docking", the third album written, performed and produced by Frank Van Bogaert, has just been released by Groove Unlimited. IMHO, it contains some of the most beautiful music that this artist has written to date. When one considers the mood of his previous works, the new one is certainly more intimate, more mature. You'll find less folk and ethnic influences this time, as well as a little more piano, and also guitars. Of course, the electronic sounds continue to be the stars (as usual) but the melodies and sound effects give us a different range of experiences. We have a complex sonic architecture now, and there are a couple of themes which sound specially well. The CD has 11 tracks, 11 themes with a warmth of sound rarely seen within these types of music. Van Bogaert is one of the most respected European electronic musicians. Thanks to his technical background he has engineered all the album. With "Docking", and with all its melodic and emotional content, he has shown that he has mastered all the intricacies of this difficult business.

[MANUEL MONTES / Amazing Sounds](#)

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Frank Van Bogaert has been compared to Vangelis, Enigma, and others, showing his versatility as an electronic musician with a flair for melodic and dramatic touches. "Docking" continues that trend, serving up several musical selections in a variety of styles. The title tracks opens with Van Bogaert in Berlin school mode, more so than I've heard before. His sense of melody and composition come through, but the strong sequencing are what stand out. "The Drift" moves more toward the emotive music fans have probably come to expect. It unfolds carefully and beautifully. After a few minutes of perfect restraint, he unleashes the pent-up energy with powerful, majestic drums which come crashing in full force. After a minute, spent, they are gone again. "Home by the sea" blends light flutes with bongo drums. The percussion increases, and then an unusual lead line asserts itself - I swear it's a cross between a Japanese koto and Jamaican steel drums. The light lead lines, dramatic drums and sweeping strings again beg Vangelis comparisons, from "Voices" or perhaps "Oceanic." Hushed whispers add an ethereal tone to "A state of mind." As on past releases, the emphasis is on a variety of ethnic sounds, with tight, detailed compositions. His musicianship is superb, precise and yet full of feeling, as exemplified by his piano playing on "Where the stars shine bright" and "Beauty." The buzz I keep hearing is that this guy could find mainstream popularity, and "Docking" does nothing to dispel that notion. "Guitars" is light, bouncy, and effusive, full of infectious toe-tapping energy - although it really doesn't seem to have any guitars in it, go figure. Each track, most of them simple one word titles, has its own little space

to tell its story, to unfold its unique set of sounds. Van Bogaert brings such a variety of sounds into play, and yet retains a strong musical cohesiveness throughout. As well received as his previous two releases were, this one takes a quantum leap forward. Well done.

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Believe the hype. This is far and away the best album from keyboard player Frank Van Bogaert. Moving deftly from Berlin-esque thumpers to dramatic melody-driven numbers to a wider assortment of keyboard-oriented songs, Docking is a treasure trove of songs rich with emotion and impact.

The album opens with the faintly Berlin-school title track, filled with classic Tangerine Dream-like swirling layers of synths and synth arpeggios.

Frank has always had a knack for opening his albums with the really good stuff. This is no exception. Sequenced beats, strong drum rhythms and synth strings all drive the neo-romantic melody forward at an insistent pace. The beat dominates this song and, as such, it's a natural for cruising or movement. The next cut, "The Drift," is the opposite, comprised of delicate synth-bell notes and accompanying keyboards, weaving a sweetly sad but strongly appealing number. As different kinds of keyboards enter the song, I was reminded of Christopher Franke's wonderful Pacific Coast Highway.

Docking (not just on this number) has that same self-assured sense of moving between musical modes. Swaying guitar-like sounds on this song elicit a vague sense of the islands. Which leads us into the next song, "Home by the Sea." Ushered in by the sounds of waves on the beach, and the deep resonating beat of a bass, the track offers the juxtaposition of spacy synth effects and lilting wooden flute. Exotic percussion and layers of lush keyboards enter the mix and the song builds momentum as it becomes an emotional powerhouse.

That's the key to appreciating Docking. Obviously, Frank has put a lot of himself into this music. It has that "feel" to it. Some albums just have a certain vibe that translates into the recordings being personal statements.

This is one of those albums. The pounding drums on this track are meant to punctuate the emotional impact of the song. The drums positively thunder in one's headphones! The next track features a vocal refrain set against a series of synth effects, slow tempo rhythms, and lush synth strings. It's probably the centerpoint (emotionally) of the album. While not truly a "vocal" cut, the vocals are what drives the song forward. "Each day, we have, a state of mind" states the singer (Frank?). Layers of keyboards, some sounding like Mediterranean string instruments, join together with other rhythms and melodies to weave together a very powerful musical statement. Only extremely cynical hearts will be unfazed by the crescendo of this track.

Docking is full of pleasant moments, some of them really fiery. For example, the full-on assault of Spanish-flavored guitar on "Guitars" mixed with rhythms and a keyboard hook to die for. I defy you to not want to play this song over again once that keyboard refrain surfaces. And that's nothing compared to the highly infectious

rhythms. This one gets in your bloodstream. Better watch that speedometer if you play this while driving!

Yes, there are some cuts that draw the frequently-mentioned comparisons between Frank and Vangelis, e.g. "Hymn." But Frank has always been a real original. Even on this cut, his more spacy synth effects counter-balance the romantic keyboards and layered choruses which earmarks the song as uniquely his. To me, the appeal of Frank's music on Docking is the diversity of approaches he takes while maintaining a warmth and an emotional richness that is frequently lacking in some electronic keyboard music. Even when he embellishes a song with a wash of synthetic EM, there is always an undercurrent of humanity that brings the listener back to an emotional response. "Epilogue," the album closer, is a good example. Sounding a little like something from Chariots of Fire, it is brimming with joy and elation but also other emotions as well. This is all despite it being overtly electronic at times. While these statements make the comparison to Vangelis more (not less) marked, it does not negate the fact that Frank Van Bogaert is an artist who brings a lot of himself and his talent to the plate. In the case of Docking, he has hit one out of the park. This is a great CD and I think it's the best work he's done by far. Highly recommended!

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## KEYBOARDS 08/02

###Electrodrom###

FRANK VAN BOGAERT  
Geographic/Docking

"Geographic": Groove Unlimited GR 024, 12 Tracks, 2:16 bis 7:35, gesamt: 62:00;

"Docking": Groove Unlimited GR-043, 11 Tracks, 3:06 bis 7:10, gesamt: 61:18;

Bezug: Groove Unlimited, PO Box 2171, NL-8203 AD Lelystad, Email:

sales@groove.nl, Homepages: [www.groove.nl](http://www.groove.nl), [www.frankvanbogaert.com](http://www.frankvanbogaert.com)

Verehrter Herr Vangelis, Sie werden sich fragen, weshalb Ihnen ein Rezensent schreibt, der es sich mit Ihnen seit seiner Würdigung Ihres, sorry, unterirdischen Langspielwerks "Oceanic" (KEYBOARDS 01/97) wohl für immer verscherzt hat. Nun, Ihr (zur Zeit) Ex-Fan lebt in der Hoffnung, dass Ihnen doch noch einmal etwas Besseres gelingt als synthetische Zuckerwatte. Da aber auch Großkünstler wie Sie mitunter der Anregung bedürfen, auf dass stockende kreative Säfte wieder fließen, erlaubt sich der Autor dieser Zeilen, Ihnen zwei bereits anno 2000/2001 publizierte, leider erst kürzlich in seinen Besitz gelangte Alben ans Herz zu legen, auf denen Ihr belgischer Kollege Frank van Bogaert, seines Zeichens Komponist und Engineer, exemplarisch vorführt, wie Vangelissche Hymnen klingen müssen, wenn sie die KEYBOARDS-Qualitätskontrolle ohne Beanstandung durchlaufen wollen. Ihrer Beachtung empfohlen seien insbesondere Bogaerst Kompositionen "Geographic" und "Geographic Part II" (Album: "Geographic"; Tracks 1, 9). Triggert das was bei Ihnen, fließt's schon wieder? Das wünscht sich: Ihr AP. Sehr geehrter Herr Oldfield! Bitte seien Sie einem - nach Ihrer elektro-akustischen Zumutung "Tres Lunas" (KB 07/02) - Auf-immer-und-endgültig-Ex-Fan nicht gram, dass er obiges Schreiben nicht an Sie, sondern an die Konkurrenz adressiert hat. Auch Ihnen hätte der Electrodromteur ein Reinhören in "Geographic" und "Docking" gegönnt; doch hat er mittlerweile alle

Hoffnung aufgegeben, dass Ihnen je wieder ein Stück gelingt, das es mit Bogaerts Wahnsinnsnummern "Guitars" und "Churches" (Album: "Docking", Tracks 6, 7) aufnehmen kann. Adieu!

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### **FRANK VAN BOGAERT - DOCKING**

This release delivers 61 minutes of powerful electronic music.

Dense electronics and demonstrative keyboards rule this music, although other instruments are equally present. Basslines rumble in the mix. Defiant percussion elevates the tunes far beyond standard electronica. Spanish guitar injects a romantic edge to the music's massive nature. Effects and treatments are hiding everywhere.

But it is van Bogaert's almost symphonic application of rich keyboards that dominate the music, whether they are pounding with relentless fury, or drifting with cloudlike quality. His melodies have a bigger-than-life feeling, generating quite an uplifting, inspirational response in the audience.

Confined to shorter compositions, averaging between three and eight minutes, each song's presence is supercharged by compression.

While showing deep influences such as Vangelis, Tangerine Dream, and Deep Forest, van Bogaert has developed an extremely cinematic aspect with his dynamic music.

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