

blond



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Blonde(2016) by Frank Ocean

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Album Review 2024 - History of Rock & Roll

Who is Frank Ocean?

1987 Christopher Edwin Breaux was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. Twenty-five years later, he would become a famous American singer and songwriter and change his name to Frank Ocean. His stage name is inspired by Frank Sinatra's first name and the 1960s film *Ocean's 11*, in which Sinatra was featured.

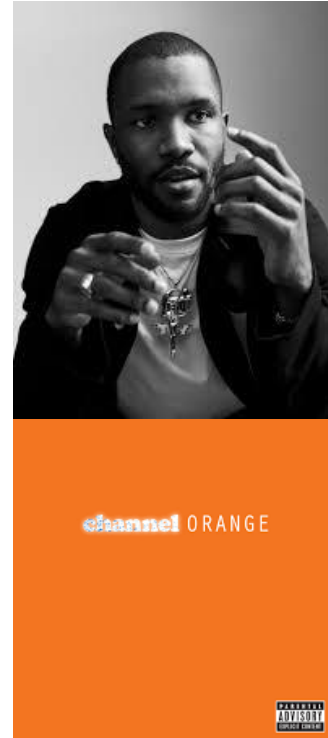
At the beginning of his career, he was a ghostwriter writing songs for artists like Justin Bieber, Beyonce, John Legend, and Brandy until he joined the Los Angeles-based hip-hop collective Odd Future in 2010. A couple of years later, Frank mentioned how "There was a point where I was composing for other people, and it might have been comfy to continue to do that and enjoy that income stream and the anonymity. But that's not why I moved away from school and away from family."

In 2012 Frank released his first studio album called *Channel Orange* after signing with a record producer, from Def Jam Recordings two years earlier. At the 55th Annual Grammy Awards, *Channel Orange* was nominated as the Album of the year and won Best Urban Contemporary Album.

Four years later he released the visual album *Endless*, to "fulfill his contract obligations" with Def Jam. Only one Day later he released his most famous album *Blonde* independently.

In a short time, Frank took over the music market and accomplished great things. 15 of his songs have been on *The Billboard Hot 100* and "four of his releases have received platinum certification by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA)". According to the *Time* Frank Ocean is also one of the world's most influential people.

Since 2017 Ocean has dropped a few singles, has been a photographer for magazines, launched a fashion brand Homer, and started Homer Radio.



About the Album

Frank's follow-up to *Channe Orange*, *Blonde*, was released on the 20th of August 2016 and would become his most famous and successful album.

Previously in 2013, he announced that his second album would be a concept album as well and was teased for July 2015 under its original name: *Boy's Don't Cry*. He recorded the Album in a lot of iconic Studios like Electric Lady (NYC), Abbey Road (London), and Henson Recording (LA).

A few guest features on the album are André 3000, Beyoncé, and Kim Burrell. André 3000's verse on "Solo (Reprise)" was recorded years prior with a different instrumental. He had a few major collaborations with the producers Malay and Om'Mas Keith but there were a lot of other producers working on the album too.

The concept album explores masculinity, emotions, heartbreak, loss, trauma, and identity. It was inspired by Ocean's memories, sexual experiences, and childhood reflections. The narrative style is dreamlike and nonlinear with "atmospheric and layered soundscapes."

Ocean is a fan of The Beach Boys, The Beatles, and Stevie Wonder and was therefore inspired by them and it is said that Brian Wilson was a strong influence on the album.

The sound of the Album is experimental and boundary-pushing, it's categorized as avant-garde soul. The album includes R&B, indie rock, psychedelia, electronica, and minimalistic arrangements and there are techniques used, like varispeed, Auto-Tune, and spoken word elements.

The *Boys Don't Cry* magazine accompanied *Blonde's* release alongside the normal advertisements and posted a letter, in which Frank explained why the album is called *Blonde*. He wrote that he got the idea from a photograph taken by the "photography duo The Collaborationist of a young blonde girl in the back seat of a car."

Blonde was praised for its reflective lyrics and innovative sound that pushed the boundaries of R&B and pop music. It's also acclaimed for its innovation and emotional depth. The album reached number one in several countries. The single "Nikes" sold 275,000 copies in its first week and went platinum. It has won multiple awards, including *Time's* Best Album of 2016 and *Pitchfork's* Best Album of the 2010s.



Nikes

Ethereal and otherworldly, "Nikes" opens the album with high-pitched, distorted vocals that feel distant yet intimate. It sets the exact right tone for the introspective journey of the album. The

Song talks about materialism, loss, and love.

This song is one of my favorites on the album because I think it has a different sound to it, than what you can hear on radio or social media. I also love the slowed-back rhythm and comfortable
vibe of the music.

9/10

[Frank Ocean - Nikes](#)

Ivy

The song features “minimalist production with lush, layered guitar work, which complements the raw emotion of the lyrics.” It feels like an intimate conversation between the listener and the singer and is about heartbreak and regret over a failed relationship. Co-produced by Rostam Batmanglij, this track showcases vulnerability without much instrumentation.

Ivy is at least in my top 3 of this album. I love its themes and think that almost everyone can relate to them at some point in their life. For me, this is one of these songs, where you can just listen and dream.

10/10

[Frank Ocean - Ivy](#)

Pink + White

"Pink + White" is about love, loss, and the passing of time. With orchestral sounds and Beyoncé's background vocals, it feels nostalgic and bittersweet. The song looks back on a past relationship and the fleeting nature of life, mixing simple but powerful lyrics with a dreamy vibe. Produced by Pharrell, it has a relaxed yet emotional feel that sticks
with you.

This is my favorite Frank Ocean Song, or maybe even my all-time favorite song. I connect it to summer and joy, not necessarily because of the lyrics, but because of the memories I made while listening to this track. I can't say one bad thing about it, I love the melodies, I love the lyrics, and I love Beyonce's parts and her laughter at the end of the song. It makes one feel so happy and relaxed.

11/10!!!

[Frank Ocean - Pink + White](#)

Be Yourself

This track is a spoken word interlude, in which Rosie Watson (a friend's mother) leaves a voicemail urging Ocean to remain authentic and cautious with drugs. It's about staying true to yourself and not just doing what other people expect from you.

I did not rate this track, because it is not a song. But I love this message and think it is a great idea to put this into the album.

[Frank Ocean - Be Yourself](#)

Solo

The track features organ-driven production, with Frank's raw lyrics conveying a sense of deep isolation. It captures loneliness as both a burden and an opportunity for self-discovery, offering a moment of catharsis through its emotional depth. It's about the feeling of loneliness, the struggle to find your meaning, and self-reflection.

In my opinion, this is another great song and I especially enjoy the meaning of the lyrics. I think in particular can relate to the struggle of finding your place and meaning in the world. My favorite part of the song is the chorus in which Frank plays with the words *so low* and *solo*.

8/10

[Frank Ocean - Solo](#)

Skyline To

To me this song feels like a haze of memories, capturing the fleeting nature of time and experience. It's not one of my favorite songs, because I feel like it is a little boring but I like to listen to it while doing something else. I do think that the melody is very interesting and comfortable.

5/10

[Frank Ocean - Skyline To](#)

Self Control

This track captures the ache of unrequited love and the emotional toll of a broken connection. The song has a minimal setup, which lets Frank's falsetto shine. The layered outro adds an emotional depth, creating a powerful climax towards the end.

I like this song, but it doesn't stand out to me.

6/10

[Frank Ocean - Self Control](#)

Good Guy

It's the shortest track on the album (1:07), with a simple instrumental vibe. The song feels raw and introspective, keeping it simple but impactful. It is probably the only song I don't like on the album. I think it sounds boring and not finished as if it was not meant to be put out yet.

4/10

[Frank Ocean - Good Guy](#)

Nights

"Nights" covers themes like relationships, struggles, transitions, and personal growth. The song features a notable beat switch halfway through, shifting from a reflective mood to a more hypnotic, electronic sound. It's a fan favorite, symbolizing change and resilience, with the second half carrying a more upbeat, celebratory tone.

I like that the rhythm is a little faster than in most other songs on the album, and think Ocean's vocals are really good in this song.

7.5/10

[Frank Ocean - Nights](#)

Solo (Reprise)

André 3000 delivers a rapid-fire rap verse over minimalist piano. The track is full of raw energy and energy that contrasts with the album's generally subdued tone. It is so different from all the other songs on the album and adds a new depth to Frank's talent.

7.5/10

[Frank Ocean - Solo \(Reprise\)](#)

Pretty Sweet

This song shifts from chaos to a relaxed melody and has an interesting sound to it. I think Frank's vocals are perfect for this song and the kid's voices at the end make it very emotional and also a little scary. I think it was a great idea to make it sound like Ocean is far away from the microphone because it helps to make the somber atmosphere you can hear.

8/10

[Frank Ocean - Pretty Sweet](#)

Facebook Story

"Facebook Story" focuses on how social media affects relationships. It's a spoken word interlude where producer SebastiAn tells a story about a breakup via social media. The track critiques the superficiality of digital connections and their emotional impact. Like "Be Yourself" this is not a real song, so I won't rank it, but I think that this message is spot on and that everybody should care more about what social media is and what it is doing to us.

[Frank Ocean - Facebook Story](#)

Close to You

This is another song I don't like. I think it is the auto-tune that is just not doing it for me, but I like the themes that the song explains: Intimacy, vulnerability, and love.

4/10

[Frank Ocean - Close To You](#)

White Ferrari

"White Ferrari" is all about intimacy, love, and loss. The track is simple and soft, with Ocean's delicate voice leading the way. It also includes a subtle nod to The Beatles' "Here, There and Everywhere." It's a personal and reflective song, making you feel the vulnerability that comes with love and relationships.

This track is another favorite of mine. I love the themes but in particular melody and vocals. I think Frank's vocals accompanied by the guitar sound so relaxing and dreamy. The last part of the song is my favorite. I love the lyrics and the way Frank sings it is so emotional and deep. I think it is a great ending to a great song.

I'm sure we're taller in another dimension
You say we're small and not worth the mention
You're tired of movin', your body's achin'
We could vacay, there's places to go
Clearly this isn't all that there is
Can't take what's been given
But we're so okay here, we're doing fine

Primal and naked
You dream of walls that hold us imprisoned
It's just a skull, least that's what they call it
And we're free to roam

9/10

[Frank Ocean - White Ferrari](#)

Seigfried

Another beautiful song. I love this song and don't think there has to be said much more. It is a song that has to be listened to not talked about.

10/10

[Frank Ocean - Seigfried](#)

Godspeed

"Godspeed" is about letting go, forgiveness, and finding peace. The song has this soulful, gospel vibe with powerful organ chords and beautiful harmonies from Kim Burrell. It feels like a goodbye, giving closure and acceptance to a past relationship. The gospel influence really adds to how emotional and deep it feels.

9/10

[Frank Ocean - Godspeed](#)

Futura Free

"Futura Free" is all about Frank reflecting on his career, fame, and personal life. The vibe is chill and thoughtful, and it ends with a nostalgic interview with his brother. It's like listening to someone's diary, giving you a peek into his life. The song wraps up the album on a super personal note, making you feel like you really get Frank's journey. In my opinion, this is the perfect end to an almost-perfect album. In the end, he presents us with himself and everybody can know who he is.

10/10

[Frank Ocean - Futura Free](#)

Conclusion

I loved doing this project. I loved this album before doing this review but getting to know Frank Ocean so much better and learning about all the different songs helped me understand what Frank Ocean wanted to accomplish with *Blonde* and I think he really did. Every song talks about obstacles most of them everyday situations to which most people can relate. I think the album is one of the best albums of all time and think that it has probably helped many people getting through hard times.

It certainly helped me and therefore will always have a special place in my heart.

Album: 100/10!

