A few years ago, FM radio fans were surprised to hear a little ditty titled "Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick" creeping in between Styx and the Cars. That curious song was the work of Ian Dury, also known for "Sex & Drugs & Rock 'n' Roll." Shortly thereafter, Chas Jankel left the Blockheads to strike out on his own. As his second solo album shows, he hasn't strayed too far.

Many of the songs sound similar to the material Ian Dury recorded when Jankel was in the Blockheads. That's not very surprising; Jankel co-wrote many Blockheads songs (including "Rhythm Stick" and "Sex & Drugs"). Dury returns the favor by co-writing five of the eight cuts that really stand out because of their cleverness. The most arresting song is "Glad to Know You." The low point is probably "3,000,000 Synths," which goes on for too long and sounds like the bad parts of the disco version of "War of the Worlds" (remember that one?). That same hit-or-miss approach to albums made a fairly big star of Ian Dury. Perhaps it will work for Chas Jankel as well.

Tom Anderson