

Exactly 20 years since their first gig, LOS PLANTRONICS - releases concept album "*SURFING TIMES*" on May 8th 2015!!

A "**Global Surf-Orchestra-A-Go-Go**" experience; featuring jaw-dropping *wild* guitars, exotic organs, swooping strings, outlaw bandido brass, blasting sax, savage jungle drums, sizzling percussion, weird melodies, and most of all: - intoxicating moments where *raw passion & personality* meets a *red hot production!* *Surfing Times* (a adventures surf-related concept album), - is a head spinning trip from berzerk surf to crooning mariachi tunes; - there are instrumentals & vocals alike in a program that will just wipe you out! **Surf Psychosis & Mariachi Madness?? AMEN!!!**



CounterCulture: SURF INSTRUMENTALS - "one of the coolest and smallest subgenre ever!" - Julian Cope.

On "**Surfing Times**", the Oslo based raucous 9-piece orchestra are using their surf foundation for exploration - seeking unknown destinations. The result is a magical musical ride, *from* the "roots of surf"; - wild 50's rock'n'roll, instrumental nuggets & frantic R&B, *via* the Surf-Age, 60's garage & Tex Mex, *to* a place where surf meets psych, latin-exotica & hot swinging movie soundtracks. And there's even a mariachi version of Gene Clarks masterpiece *So You Say You Lost Your Baby* in there! **It's sort of a soundtrack to a *psychedelic exploitation surf movie set in Mexico.***

The Concept:

Los Plantronics wouldn't be able to play like an authentic surf band even if they wanted to, but when artist **Johnny Stingray** (uk) send them an amazing period piece of art* (*Rick Griffin-isque*), they used about 3 seconds to decide that this should be the artwork for a new album. They even decided to keep the title, *Surfing Times*, as well. The only thing they now had to do was to record 12 songs that would fit inside the cover (hence motto: "**What you see is what you get**") which makes the whole process totally reverse to a normal recording process. The band really put their heart & soul into it; sat down on their Mexican beach blanket and re-arranged six tunes from the golden area and wrote six new ones to fit the project.

* As seen in the book *SURF GRAPHICS*

The Recording:

While recording an album full of instrumental surf rock style guitar, that's not only a three chord album, but has some more substance to it, and is musically different than most music out there, you need a certain production. To achieve the authentic tribal sound, meanwhile, the band moved to a small cabin in the middle of the woods with 20 degrees below on the outside while recording live to 2,5" tape at **Snaxville Recordings** (which is possible as far as you can get from any surf environment). Snaxville is small studio in a barn in Skogbyda somewhere between Oslo and Sweden where engineer and vintage whizz **Henrik Maarud** is manning the equipment (see artists: *Amund Maarud, The Grand, Morudes etc.*).

Mixing and additional recordings was done at **Amper Tone Studio** (Oslo) by **Bård Ingebrigtsen**, on a desk from 1973 preferably used by *ABBA, Keith Richards, Joey Ramone, Joan Jett, Black Keys, Yo La Tengo, etc.*

Mastering by **Brian Lucey** at **Magic Garden Mastering** (*Dr. John-Locked Down etc.*)

A creative storm was brewing and the effect is stunning, -if you're in the mood for traveling to Trashville and get yourself lost in some surfadelic twang!!

TRACK by TRACK commentary:

1. From Mecca to Mescalito – Gypsy-Surf/World-Surf instrumental

- The first; should be well known to all - the latter; is a place in a Hunter S. Thompson novel. Sort of a road-trip from one part of the world to another, featuring Spanish guitars, Middle-East scales, exotic organ, brass, sitar and a big-score western theme with strings in the middle.

2. Moon Dawg – Trad. Surf instrumental

(The Gamblers, 1960)

- Often said to be the world's 1st surf recording, a year before surf music's "official birth", and Leon Russel is said to be the piano player on the original version. A surf classic done by Davie Allan & The Arrows, Challengers, Rhythm Rockers, Tornados, Hollywood Tornados, Beach Boys, Ventures etc.

3. Mary Lou – RnB, vocals by Slim Slammer

(a Modern recording by Young Jessie, 1955)

–A mighty fine R&B tune which where decomposed and recomposed to a *wicked* fuzz monster meets The Champs featuring an ecstatic sax and blistering guitar solos by guitar-viritous Amund Maarud, add full throttle vocals by Mr. Slim Slammer and you're getting there. *The result is miles away from any recorded version!*

4. Golden Dawn Surf Patrol – Tijuana Surf instrumental

– Blending Surf-Psych with Tijuana Brass & flamenco orchestra sounds. Title inspired by surf crime novel "Dawn Patrol" by San Diego based writer Don Winslow.

5. El Jeffe – Garage Fuzz instrumental

- Mexican slang for Boss and originally a *fuzzed-out* tribute to the late Link Wray.... Also used to describe monster waves, *hence* surf movie "Chasing Mavericks".

6. So You Say You Lost Your Baby – Mariachi-Tex Mex, vocals by Lars Erik Larsen

(Gene Clark with the Gosdin Brothers, 1967)

– A remake of a haunting pop psych gem; – a crooner style Mexican ballad with horns, strings, ¾ beat and some delicate guitar work.

7. Zapatista Surfista - Gypsy-Surf/World-Surf instrumental

- Exotic like a Ganimian & The Orientals tune & at times sounding more or less like a Jewish wedding orchestra!

8. Shawnee – Sax/Swing instrumental

(The Premiers, 1962)

–Originally a rockabilly sax instro, but spiced up with Billy Mure-*ish* super-sonic guitars, a swing beat & some seriously honkin' brass. **Couriosa:** Link Wray (RIP) was a *one-lunged* half-Shawnee Indian.

9. Red Hot – Garage/Surf/Rockabilly, vocals by Slim Slammer

(Sun recordings by Billy "The Kid" Emerson, 1955 & Billy Lee Riley, 1957)

–Another re-arranged oldies gone raw! Sort of The Wailers/Sonics with a New Orleans flavor. *Dig the organ!*

10. Montezumas Revenge (Les Seduction Tropical) – Exotica/Soundtrack instrumental

- An trippy instrumental; lush & sweet! Featuring jungle sounds, Hammond organ, freaky guitars, singing-saw, roaring brass etc. *The result is sort of Martin Denny meets Tropicalia!*

11. "T" for Terror – Psycho-Boss instrumental

-The soundtrack to a late nite Drive-in movie. Think "Ventures-In Space" or Joe Meek, or simply Duane Eddy *twanging* on mexcaline! *In memory of The Grippers*

12. Shortnin Bread pt. II – Surf-Trash, vocals by Signor Havn

(Often labeled as a Traditional, but written around 1900 by James Whitcomb Riley)

– done by The Andrew Sisters, Collins Kids, Mississippi John Hurt, Jim Thaxter & the Travelers (*pre-Trashmen*), The Ready Men, The Cramps, Beach Boys etc. Rumors say Brian Wilson is obsessed with the song.

Shortnin' Bread Pt. 1 had a totally different mix (done by Bård Ingebrigtsen) and vocals by Slim Slammer. Part 1 was released as a 7" gatefold-singel in Feb.2015 and as a video as well.

Shortnin' Bread Pt. 2 is pure demented surf trash ala The Novas-The Crusher.

BACKGROUND

Surfing: “.....it is generally acknowledged that the sport of surfing was spawned in the South Pacific more than four thousand years ago. A causal pastime, ancient surfing was accomplished – prone or on one’s knees – on any available floating device. It was not until around 1000 ad that surfers in the Polynesian archipelago of Hawai’i perfected the art of standing while riding waves. The sport of surfing was introduced to the West in 1779 by the writings of Lieutenant James King, member of the British expedition, led by Captain James Cook that landed on the island in the previous year” – *Extract from the book SURFING/Taschen*

Surf as Music: “The new music was loud, vulgar, primitiv, primeval, sexual, and sensual. It celebrated itself and the environment. Spawning rock’n’rolls first generation of lead guitarists, it detonated music’s first great electronic revolution and set the stage for a future in which rock’n’roll would be dominated by the electric lead guitar. When local surfers embraced it as an expression of their experience, it became surf music” – *from the book SURF BEAT.*

Nowadays people surf World Wide and as far north as in the Arctic Circle (see *Lofoten, Norway* under), which is as far as it possible gets from its origins in The South Pacific.



(Pic from National Geographic)

Signor Havn has been the bands visionary since 1995. He has absolutely no classically training what so ever, but a childhood love was his father’s records collections; finding joy listening to Duane Eddy *twang*, the coolness of Lee Hazlewood productions, Herb Alpert & The Tijuana Brass, Western themes, Beach Boys, Elvis, T.Rex, K-Tel comps, Exotica, the guitar instros of The Shadows & the rough sounds of The Kinks. With *Surfing Times*, -Los Plantronics are following in tradition, but are always bringing their own set of rules to the table.

Surf is all about freedom,- as on sea - as on stage. And like their hero, **Link Wray** (and many surf-related artists and soundtracks from the 60’s), they share instros and vocals alike.

Los Plantronics surf sect cast:

Eivind Staxrud - (electric lead guitar & flamenco guitar)

Kjetil Jakobsen aka Slim Slammer - (“Lucha Libre” mask, standup drum kit, percussion and lead vocals)

Lars Erik Larsen - (bass & Fender VI bass, sitar, backing vocals & lead vocals on “So You Say”)

Didrik Lund- (piano, electric-piano, organ, Hammond organ, Theremin-effects, spaghetti western whistling & perc)

Bendik Brænne - (alt-sax, baritone-sax, horn arranger, flute, piano, harmonica, percussion, and vocals)

Signor Havn - (fuzzy & crunchy guitar, concept maker, sound-effects, vocals & percussion)

Tijuana Brass: Eivind Solheim & Sindre Blostrupmoen (trumpets) and Hans Foyrn Friis (trombone)

Special Guests: Amund Maarud - guitar / Henrik Maarud – percussion / Christian Spro (Sweden/Dogs) – guitar / Burt Rocket (Mobsmen/Seid) – guitar, organ & Moog effects / Mari Persen - strings / Marita Vårdal Igelkjøn (Stein Torleif Bjella) - accordion, percussion, singing saw & bird-calls / Bård Ingebrigtsen – percussion, Stylophone & bird-calls

The buzz: - *vintage sounds mixed with contemporary “Global-Surf-Orchestra-A-Go-Go”*

The truth: - *surf as a foundation for further exploration, - Have “Twangy” Guitar, Will Travel!*

File under: - *Vikings invading Mexico!*

PS! For the name of Los Plantronics tailor: - sorry, we can’t help you! Mariachi suits where bought while touring Mexico.