

# POLLO DEL MAR

## **Jono Jones:**

I am old enough to recall the first wave but I really first encountered surf music at my local flea market: The Marketts, Surfaris, Herb Alpert and tons of Ventures were available in ragged LP format. Struggling to play guitar competently in a band so long ago, I found the music fun to play and enjoy. I saw the Ventures twice in 1982 as well as the Surfaris, and watching Nokie, Bob, and Mel (Bob Spaulding may have been filling in for Don) changed my life as well as the direction my music would go in.

Pollo del Mar started playing surf music in 1993 and playing live in 1994. We played regularly for almost two decades, playing live at local venues, producing a number of CDs, and touring the U.S. and both Europe and Japan. Surf music has been very, very good to me. By 2012, we wanted to spend more time with our families and I needed to return to graduate school so we called a hiatus.

And it might have ended there if not for the pandemic. Although Ferenc had a similar project, Frankie and the Pool Boys, there appeared to be interest from certain quarters of the surf world in new Pollo del Mar material. Jeff, Jeremy, Ferenc and myself practiced over the summer of '20 and learned a new roster of songs that Ferenc had penned as well as some older material that had never been properly recorded. The darkness of the pandemic was offset by the joy of playing together and exploring our strengths as a band.

## **Jeff Turner:**

It was always easy to fit in with this band. We've been friends for a long time. In the mid-1990s, Pollo Del Mar lost their bass player and Ferenc and his brother Pete asked me to take over. I had known them already from jam sessions for a few years. They were friends of Jeremy. I met Jono at that first rehearsal. After Peter left, Chris joined the group. He was an old roommate I had already known years before. And after that, Jeremy finally joined in 2000, creating the lineup we've had ever since. Jeremy and I already knew each other as family friends back when we were teenagers. One of my first memories of Jeremy was watching him perform with a drum and bugle corps when I was small. Later we had both moved to San Francisco and our families convinced us to meet each other to play music. Jeremy introduced me to Peter and Ferenc in the 1980s. We all got together often to jam. Surf music was just one genre that seemed to work well, since we didn't have a lead singer.

So having joined Pollo Del Mar in the mid 1990s means we've been a group for almost 30 years. Through all issues with school, day jobs, paying the rent, paying the mortgage, girlfriends, wives, and kids, the band has brought with it a chance to have something we could escape to and share together. Most of the time it was really fun!

But we had finally felt our time was done in the early 2010s. Our families needed us more so time together for our band became less and less frequent. We finally decided to take a hiatus.

Fast forward to 2020, we now enjoy getting together to write

new songs, play shows and jam again - just like it all started long ago. It's so great to enjoy the music again and bring Pollo in front of an audience. In addition, we made this vinyl recording of new songs as a token of our appreciation and memories. I really hope you enjoy it! It has been a pleasure to be a part of.

## **Jeremy Rexford:**

I was actually in attendance at PDM's first recording session in the early nineties. I'd been friends with Ferenc and his brother Peter for many years at that point. We had played in a few projects in the late 80's and early 90's together. Jeff, whom I'd known even longer (since high school) was part of those projects as well. I went to a couple of PDM shows in subsequent years as the 90's rolled on.

In 1999, I was asked to sit in as an occasional sub for their regular drummer, Chris. In 2000 PDM had a short tour of SoCal that Chris couldn't do so I was asked to go. It went well and we recorded a few songs immediately upon our return. Shortly thereafter, I was asked to join permanently.

Through the 2000's, we played hundreds of gigs. Mostly in the San Francisco Bay Area and Southern California, but also places as far flung as Texas, Europe and Japan. Many good times and some bad.

After I'd been in PDM for a dozen years as an ongoing thing, we decided it was time for a hiatus. This was driven by many factors spread amongst the members including going back to graduate school in middle age, bad drunken behavior, kids entering high school with tons of activities and parental involvement, etc.

I figured I'd be lucky to play with these guys once every year or so. We played for a few special occasions like band members turning 50, a friend's wedding, and a couple of outdoor parties in 2015 and 2017.

In Fall 2019 we were asked to reconvene as part of KFJC's 60th Anniversary celebration. They put together a live broadcast from Foothill College and we had a lot of fun playing with some of our old friends the Berzerkers and the Insect Surfers. Glasgow Tiki Shakers and the Mermen rounded out the bill for a great day of music honoring the Wave of the West, huge supporters of Surf Music.

Around Springtime, a few months after the KFJC show, we agreed to begin work on a new batch of songs to flesh out a new album around a couple of songs we had recorded a decade earlier. SPRING 2020... PANDEMIC. Our recording plans were put on hold.

Late Summer and early Fall 2020. With safety protocols in place, we set about learning the new songs. After many weeks of practice, we set up the mics and got the tracking done. My work finished, I eagerly awaited the results of the overdub and mixing sessions. Rough mixes arrived in my in-box, and then...

2021 came and went with very little band activity except for our Star Trek video and a performance for a live video webcast.

And now, after waiting for the artwork (an incredible story unto itself!), and our spot in line at the pressing plant, here it is! Enjoy. Thanks to my band mates, our families, friends, and fans. Love, Jeremy

# SPEED OF DARK

**Ferenc Dobronyi:**  
The Speed of Dark song notes

## Side A

**Speed of Dark?** Speed of dark! Where are we going? What is the opposite of the speed of light? Have we gone over the edge, yet? Oh? Really? That long ago? How fast are we traveling right now? Speed of dark. Speed of dark.

In November 2019, I was gifted six songs in one week, the most prolific moment of my life. **Inner Sunset** appeared fully formed, needing only two chords, an E and an F#, (plus the weird chord that is a combination of those two.) I've never written such a simple song, and yet it has so much power. The title refers to a foggy ennui we all feel, and is also a foggy neighborhood in San Francisco.

I was working on a demo when I noticed that the rhythm guitar part had that distinct, behind the groove, Keith Richard's feel. So, Jono tuned a 5-string Telecaster rhythm guitar to an open G, Jeremy switched to a trad grip, and Jeff picked up a short scale bass. I put up a Stones poster that was hanging in my dorm room, circa 1982, for inspiration. I don't think there's ever been a Rolling Stones Surf music tribute, so here's **Surfin' With Keith**. Also, it's probably the first Pollo song you can dance to!

**Wabi Sabi** is a Japanese phrase that refers to finding the beauty in the imperfect, something we've all been asked to do, a lot, recently. It was written in 2004, and had a different title— named after an ice cream bar that has since been canceled. This song has definitely gone through a few rearrangements over the years, and the long psych-workout formed during our rehearsals. Believe me, it's easy to get into a jam, coming out is a whole 'nother story.

Shavasana, the corpse pose, the **Pose of Awareness**. This song was written backwards, the long outro coming from the near dream state that follows awakening. Like a yoga session, the song flows through six different movements, each one building in tension and then releasing, circling back to reinforce strengths, and finding something new in a repetitive motion. This take comes from a 2009 recording session.

## Side B

**The Golden State** was written in or around 2002, when we were recording The Golden State album. It's both a simple and a complex song, and wasn't rehearsed enough to record back then, though we have played it live many times. It was one of the first songs we came back to when we got together during COVID times. Musically, the song celebrates the sounds of California from early 60's Surf, to folk and country rock, to Raga flavored psychedelic mysticism, to hard rock, before returning for a second wave, Surf music revival. It is my hope that this song will be considered for the California anthem, when our great nation-state finally decides to go it alone.

In 2007 or so, Pollo did a short Southern California tour and Jono couldn't join the road show, so Paul Beatie from the Pyronauts filled

in. We learned Paul's masterpiece, **Sifaka**, and kept it in the set. We played it every night on our 2009 European tour, and this version was recorded soon after we got back. Our arrangement is basically the same as the Pyronauts version, but we added some vocal parts that emerged while playing it live.

**Surfacing** was written in 2010 and was rehearsed at that time, so it was quickly resuscitated for the 2020 recordings. The intro is a blending of Link Wray power chords and a James Bond-ish theme melody. The song has a 12/8 sea shanty feel, telling a hopeful story of reemergence, after loss. The arrangement owes a lot to the glam bombast of Mick Ronson's Slaughter on 10th Avenue.

The patron of the misguided, **San Quixote** gives hope to those on a journey but unsure of the destination, for those who tilt at windmills. The music is based on the unusual combination of a A major and F minor. They clash in a brutal way, but a Phrygian modal scale tethers them in a loose, but tight, way. There is one band all the Pollos can agree on, and if Led Zeppelin played Surf music, this might be what it would sound like.

Coming into the final stretch of rehearsals before recording, it was obvious that we needed one more song for the album, an epic. On an intense, smokey, deserted hike to Cathedral Lakes while Yosemite National Park was shut down, a new song emerged from the rhythmic plodding of my steps. **Secrets in a Wooden Rose** was clearly inspired by our version of the Chocolate Watchband's Dark Side of the Mushroom, which we had arranged with a funky, heavy groove. I wanted a song that you could taste and see colors when you heard it. A song that starts tightly wound, with layered staccato parts, and melts slowly like an ego, evolving into a psychedelic smear, a hallucinogenic trip, in real time.

## A true story about the album cover.

Once the album title had settled on "Speed of Dark," the search for a world class artist began. I was talking with a really talented guy I was a fan of, and he had agreed, and asked what I thought the cover should be.

I told him, "I see a rider, headed toward the event horizon at unimaginable speed. In her mind, visions of her own birth, the acceptance of her death and every memory in between, converge. It should have a seventies, pulp science fiction look. It should be bold and sexy." The guy never wrote me back.

Art Bourasseau, MuSick label chief, suggested Dr. Jorge Aldrete, an Argentinian artist living in Mexico City. Aldrete is kind of a big deal (look him up) and I loved his work for Cumbia band Sonido Gallo Negro, another chicken themed group. I contacted him and he was interested. I asked what he needed, and he said that just wanted to listen to the music.

A couple days later, with absolutely no prompting or hints, he delivered the cover you see here. Dr. Aldrete is nothing less than a telepathic mystic, and a brilliant artist.