

# PIPELINE

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## INSTRUMENTAL REVIEW



# LONNIE MACK

Brian Locking   Banned Instrumentals   Classic Surf

## THE TOURMALINERS SURFIN' CHRISTMAS CAROLS

Altered State Of Reverb no #; USA 2020; 29 min

*We Three Kings Of Orient Are / God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen – O'Come O Come Emmanuel / Joy To The World / O Holy Night / O Come All Ye Faithful / Hark The Herald Angels Sing / Greensleeves (Whose Child Is This) / Away In A Manger / The First Noel – Silent Night / We Wish You A Merry Christmas*

Here's one for your Surfer's Christmas List! Our 2019 Album Of The Year winners The Tourmaliners have been picked up by the Altered State Of Reverb label for this seasonal celebration and, whilst the titles may look familiar, the sounds and arrangements are all refreshingly new. Surfari's guitarist Deven Berryhill has managed to add plenty of spark whilst still retaining some tasteful respect for the material.

It really is a surf guitar fan's dream with a great '60s reverb sound to the fore on an album of stylish arrangements. *We Three Kings* is set to a smoothly swinging beat, ear-grabbing bass line and sympathetic rhythm guitar with great whammied chords to allow the lead guitar plenty of space to pick out the melody. Anyone doubting the wisdom of this project will be convinced by this sophisticated opener. *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen* doesn't sound very promising as a title either, but it dispels any doubts as The Tourmaliners launch into it courtesy of the opening riff from *Earthquake*.

Driven on by damped second guitar the lead even borrows a break from *Earthquake* to dive into *O Come O Come Emmanuel* – and it all works so toe-tappingly well. A snappy blast through *Joy To The World* has a tauntily echoed

lead before a *Sleepwalk* introduction heralds *O Holy Night* which is brought to its conclusion very neatly with some subtle background organ. A beautifully delivered *Endless Summer* arrangement of *O Come All Ye Faithful* even includes the clavietta solo – very attractive.

*Hark The Herald Angels Sing* rocks out for two minutes courtesy of a double-picked lead which also enlivens *Greensleeves*, both tracks benefitting from tasty middle-eights. *Away In A Manger* is not the melody I grew up with, presumably there's a different tradition in America, but this one is delivered with just two guitars, or is that a ukelele providing rhythm under the clean, bright lead? A surging rhythm then drives a very upbeat *The First Noel* which builds and builds until a double-picked reverb lead storms into *Silent Night* before ending in unison with chimes for a very seasonal sound.

Finally its *Walk Don't Run* time as The Tourmaliners rock out on *We Wish You A Merry Christmas* in that familiar arrangement. That's quite fitting as this album will surely serve for many years as the surf fans' equivalent of The Ventures' Christmas Album, and it can't get much better than that.

*Alan Taylor*  
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## THE NEPTUNAS

## MERMAID A-GO-GO

Altered State Of Reverb ASR-1003; USA 2020; 37 min

*Billy The Squid's Water Pistol* / *Secret Of The Sea* (v) / *Undersea Grand Prix* / *Till The End Of The Day* (v) / *Shark Tooth Necklace* / *Lord Jim* (v) / *Mermaid A Go Go* (v) / *Nancy Drew's Wetsuit* / *Poupée De Cire, Poupée De Son* (v) / *School Is A Drag* (v) / *The Abyss* (v) / *The Lonely Bull* / *Neptuna Car Wash* (v) / *Hey Jimmy Freek* (v) / *Sorority Stomp* (v)

Back in Pipelines 27-32 we covered the first coming of all-girl guitar trio The Neptunas through their vinyl and CD releases. It's been a long time but now they are back and, not only that, they have recorded under the auspices of Los Straitjackets' Daddy-O Grande, aka Danny Amis. Danny adds baritone guitar and keyboards and is the producer for these recordings. His idea was to take the original lo-fi-ness of the Neptunas' songs and make hi-fi produced songs. "He took our songs farther out than we could imagine" said drummer Laura Bethita Neptuna.

There is a surprising 2:1 ratio of vocals to instrumentals but the only vocal that really works for me is a rather tasty cover of The Kinks' *Till The End Of The Day*. However, the album does get off to a flying start with *Billy The Squid* whose proud theme is enhanced with a verse from Danny's guitar and a touch of mariachi trumpet to give it some spaghetti flavour. Nice one girls. *Undersea Grand Prix* is also underpinned by background horns and they naturally help build their successful cover of *The Lonely Bull* to a climax too. Alan Taylor (alteredstateofreverb.com)