



Surfaces Is Bringing Their Happy Place to the Masses [Q&A]



Photo: Dan Franco

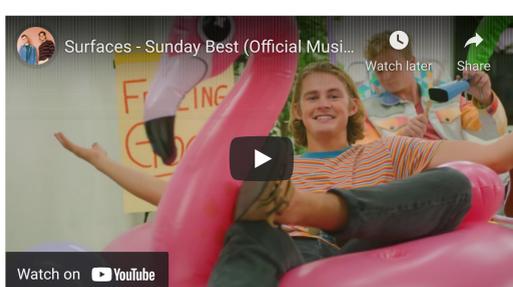
When Colin Padalecki met Forrest Frank on SoundCloud, back in 2016, they had no idea that their whimsical exchange of DMs would evolve into the brotherhood of a lifetime, an ever-growing discography, and a roster spot on one of the hottest independent record labels in the world - 10K Projects.

Since then, the two friends have formed a genre-bending band called **Surfaces** and an audiovisual world of neo-soul, beach-pop, reggae, and gospel music. Or better yet, an imaginary happy place, right smack-dab in the middle of "The Lone Star State," where the two Texans make masterful R&B music with spoken-word lyricism that elevates positive thinking for the soul.

All in all, the guys from Surfaces have been releasing music together for four years now. Thus, with each year comes a brand-new album from the hardworking duo. While Caribbean rhythms and heartwarming subject matter remain notable fixtures of their songwriting, another mainstay is the scenic artwork that's accompanied every album release so far.

Each time that Padalecki creates an official album cover for Surfaces, it's as if he's giving their supporters a behind-the-scenes look at the way in which they find inspiration before a songwriting camp. In many instances, the artwork that he designs serves as a catalyst for the band's recording sessions, because it sets the mood. His graphic illustrations of sunsets, beaches, and waterfronts augment the heartfelt stories that have been told for the duration of four albums now by his bandmate, Frank, whose lyrics and jazz-rap cadences always seem to carry a positive undertone.

The meaning behind his uplifting words stem from a spiritual assertion that was instilled in him from a young age by his family. In fact, his band's biggest hit to date was influenced by his faith. "When I think of the lyrics [from "Sunday Best"]... for me, personally, the only way I've been able to find that kind of complete stress-free lifestyle is through my relationship with God," shares Frank. Of all the songs that have been penned by Surfaces over the past five years, none of the releases contain a single ounce of vulgarity in them. This is a very unique distinction for a secular band - especially one that is part of a record label that's been home to some of the most popular rappers of the SoundCloud rap era.



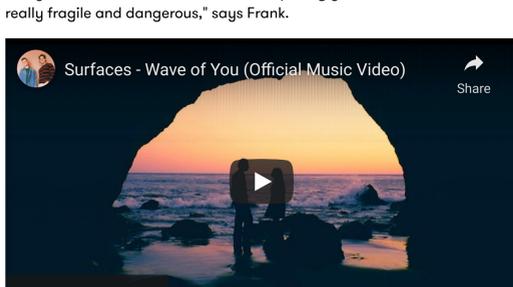
But nevertheless, their working relationship with their record label has actually enhanced their creativity. Because the company's CEO has created a healthy environment for artistic expression, regardless of the genres his artists belong to. "I feel like Elliot [Grainge] runs a really tight family kind of shop. He doesn't have a lot of artists on his roster, but he has a personal relationship with all of us and the other people we work with like Molly, Sam, and our managers. So, [signing with 10K Projects] just made sense," shares Padalecki. "Elliot gave us full creative control, which is truly a blessing when it comes to something like a record deal. At any moment in time, we could just ask him to meet us for lunch and he cares enough about us on a personal level to go do that. He trusts in our decisions when it comes to song making, album choices, and everything. They've been nothing but supportive and we've been nothing but grateful for 10K, it's almost like a family."

Indeed, a stress-free creative space, cathartic chorus lines, and the full support of 10K Projects have proven to be key components in a winning formula that's yielded multi-platinum successes for Surfaces. So, as the old adage goes: If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Which means when it comes to dropping new music, the guys are sticking to what works.

When they made their best-selling album to date, *Where The Light Is*, they recorded the tracks during the day, while the sun was out at Frank's boat house to perfectly capture a positive and happy mood. Catching a vibe in a sunny environment has proven to be tried-and-true method for the band and a blueprint that Colin *Padalecki* wanted to follow during the making of their latest album, *Pacifico*.

"We rented a house in Malibu for about a half a month. It was kind of like this creative camp that we set up and we pretty much woke up every single day in this really gorgeous house with this really gorgeous view of the beach line of Malibu and the sunset peaking over the mountains every single day," says the multi-instrumentalist. "It was just nice to not have to worry about anything with Forrest, his wife, and our creative collaborator Conrad [Public Library Commute]. Nothing felt forced... we were just trying to capture the essence of that trip. The whole album pretty much describes that vacation of ours. And we just tried to capture all aspects of it through sonics."

On April 9, Surfaces introduced their fourth studio album to the world with the lead single called "Wave of You." It's a vibey beach-pop track that explores the depths of a romantic relationship through the eyes of Frank. It also displays his willingness to expose his own real-life experiences. "I think it's really powerful. A relationship can be so powerful and when you're really drawn to someone it's like the tide pulling you into the wave. It's awesome, but it's also really fragile and dangerous," says Frank.



Upon the release of two follow-up singles to "Wave of You," Surfaces officially dropped *Pacifico* on June 25. The new album arrives on the heels of one of the most challenging time periods this world has ever seen. In the wake of a global pandemic, a little bit of sunshine is exactly what the world needs. *Pacifico*, fittingly, is a breath of fresh air for their supporters and a fitting soundtrack for the beginning of summer after nearly a year-and-a-half of worldwide shutdowns.

One of the main aspects of this album that displays the band's growth as musicians are the amount of artist features present. Before the release of *Pacifico*, the only collaboration they ever published was "Learn To Fly" with Elton John. Their collaborative effort with the Rock & Roll Hall of Famer was an absolute banger, but it was never officially featured on an album by Surfaces. Instead, it was published as a one-off single. But this time around, the group teamed up with four collaborators: Public Library Commute, Salam Ilese, Xavier Omär and Quinn XCII.

Their contributions to *Pacifico* have added a whole new element to this delightful collection of sun-soaked music. In fact, the story of how they ended up recording their collaboration with Omär in person is almost as compelling as the story of how the co-founders met each other. "We'd been huge fans [of Xavier Omär] ever since the SoundCloud days. We had a second verse open [for "Come Around"]. So, we DM'd him and said, 'Yo what's up! We're huge fans!' He said he was a big fan of ours too. So, we told him that we'd love to link up and talk about music because we have a song that he might like," recounts Frank. "Then he said, 'Oh cool, but the only thing is, I don't live in L.A., I live in San Antonio.' And we were like, 'Yo, Colin lives in San Antonio [laughs]! So, we basically drove down the street and recorded with him.' It's a fond memory of their first encounter with one of their favorite musicians... and it's strikingly similar to the way that Padalecki met Frank on SoundCloud about five years prior.

"Hearing [Omar Xavier's] melodies recorded at my house brought me back to my high school days of listening to Middle of Things," says Padalecki. "It had a huge impact on me in high school. So, him coming over and hanging out with us like friends, getting lunch with us, and then getting to the music later was really special." While collaborative efforts like "Come Around" and "On Time" have certainly added a new dimension to the songwriting and emotional depth of Surfaces, fans can rest assured that their trademark penchant for feel great grooves remain true all throughout *Pacifico*.

In just five years, the duo behind Surfaces has traveled all over the country. The last time they took the show on the road was during the "Warm Winter Tour" back in 2019. This August, they'll hit the road again for a North American tour called the aptly titled "*Good 2 Be Back Tour*." To the masses they're a homegrown duo that never fails to bring light and positivity to the forefront of their music. But internally... they're just two friends having the time of their lives. And why wouldn't they be? It's not every day that pop icons like Justin Bieber partake in a "Sunday Best" dance craze dedicated to you by your fans on TikTok.

More importantly, it's not every day a pop-rock band comes along and reminds us of Bill Withers, Hall & Oates, Beach Boys and Chance the Rapper all in one breath. "That's pretty good [laughs]. I like that," confesses Frank when the unique comparison was brought to his attention. With the release of *Pacifico*, Surfaces is now four albums deep into a promising career in music. And to think, it all started with a litany of recording sessions at Padalecki's college house in Texas. It appears as though the guys from Surfaces are just as good at building songs as they are at giving form to the happy place from which all of their songs originate.

Pacifico is available everywhere you can stream it.

Author: Miguel Costa

July 1, 2021

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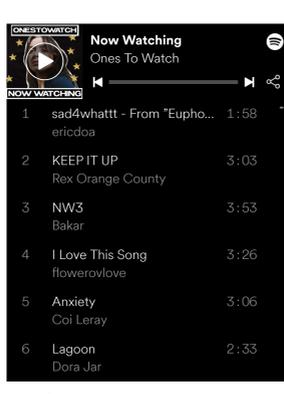


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