

Native Intelligence

ISLAND MUSIC

Tiki, Take Two

When last we heard from smooth operators Perry Coma and Fluid Floyd of the neo-Exotica combo Don Tiki, they were scouring the steamy South Pacific in search of “jungle-ambience” sounds for their next album. Since then, they have been busy lounge lizards indeed, including doing a command performance at the much-lamented closing of Columbus, Ohio’s legendary Kahiki club and putting on a show-room extravaganza—complete with dancing daiquiris—at Honolulu’s own coconut-kitsch palace, the Hawaiian Hut.

And now, their toils have borne passionate fruit with the release of *Skinny Dip with Don Tiki* (Taboo Records). As with the group’s first release, *The Forbidden Sounds of Don Tiki*, the new album is rooted in Exotica—the languid jazz style popularized in the late '50s by the “holy trinity” of Artie, Marty and Les (Arthur Lyman, Martin Denny and Les Baxter). But *Skinny Dip* also branches out into a wider range of styles, from deep Latin grooves to Cab-Callowayish swing to moody vibe rock.

Under the musical mesmerization of keyboardist/arranger Coma (alias top local studio man Kit Ebersbach, who, among many other projects, programs Hawaiian Airlines’ inflight music channels), DT’s “tribe” of top Island talent excels at what Fluid Floyd (a.k.a. adman Lloyd Kandell) calls “the jungle jazz thing.”

“We’re coming from love of a genre that’s often been misperceived as cheesy, but is really wonderfully crafted music,” Floyd purrs. “It’s about playing on in the reverence and reverie of a lost art form.”

The coconut wireless has been buzzing with rumors of a big Don Tiki bash coming up in March. Stay hip on all the Tiki haps at dontiki.com, or (for a good time) call (808) 735-4333. —Derek Ferrar

South Sea swingers Tiki tribalists “Fluid Floyd,” Carlinhos de Oliveira, Sharene Boulos and “Perry Coma” with dancers Lokelani and Alaana. Below: The new album, and scenes from a recent Exotica extravaganza.

