

music**today**

To highlight the pollution of the world's oceans, a San Diego record label combines cool music with a vital message.

ARA JANSEN talks to two surfers and campaigners for cleaner oceans about Music For Our Mother Ocean.

Surfers make **waves** for a pure **ocean**



Beach Boy Brian Wilson, Brian Setzer and Dave Kaplan.

IT COMES as no surprise to Pierce Flynn and Dave Kaplan that two days after they go surfing off the coast of San Diego they might get sick. They know the state of the water is to blame but their love for the waves means they keep going back.

Music and the surf have always held hands, whether it be in the most practical of ways or through spiritual connection. So the friends decided to combine their love for music with the waves and take their message to as many people as possible.

The result is a compilation called Music For Our Mother Ocean or MOM for short. Recently released is the third volume — MOM 3.

It features a broad range of tracks from James Taylor's Gaia to How Strong from the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Pearl Jam's The Whale Song, Brian Setzer

with Brian Wilson doing Little Deuce Coupe and Snoop Dogg with members of Rage Against The Machine (Snoop Bounce).

The tracks are a mix of songs done specially for the album (like the Setzer/Wilson track) and those offered by the artists in an effort to help raise awareness. Surfdog also takes the opportunity to show off some of its own acts like punkers Sprung Monkey (doing a cool cover of Harry Nilsson's Coconut), Gary Hoey and JKay.

In the past the MOM albums have included tracks from bands like No Doubt, Sublime, Blink 182, Jewel, Soundgarden, Counting Crows and Porno For Pyros. Many of them appeared on the MOM albums before their massive international success.

But MOM is far from a charity record. It's a com-

pilation of songs which stand on their own as a collection of listening which also offers a message in a fun way. Music has always been used as a medium for change and Kaplan and Flynn hope these albums can, in a small way, be part of the eco-revolution.

MOM 3 is released through Surfdog Records, Dave Kaplan's label, which for years has carried the Please Help Preserve Our Oceans motto on its releases. The album also carries information about the Surfrider Foundation, a non-profit organisation dedicated to the protection and enhancement of the world's oceans, waves and beaches through conservation, activism, research and education.

Until recently, Flynn was the executive director of this grass roots activist organisation. He has been working with Surfrider for seven years, recently took up a position on its national advisory board and is involved with the group's environmental issues team. He now works as a consultant to Surfdog and did his PhD on surfers as members of a tribe. Flynn and Kaplan are also the executive producers of MOM 3.

"From a Surfrider perspective, being involved in MOM is an education project," says Flynn. "It's fun but we're not bludgeoning people over the head with the message. Putting music with the environment is the perfect way to educate and it rocks at the same time!"

"Surfrider doesn't have money but we do political work. We run a very lean group and we're told that all the time by groups like Greenpeace. We don't spend money taking congressmen out to lunch but we do go and talk to them and make them aware of who we are and what's going on with the waterways and that the ocean is fragile. Water pollution is one of the big three problems in the US."

Surfrider has some 35,000 registered members worldwide but Flynn says that doesn't include all the volunteers who regularly give their

time to help with various events. "For me surfing and music are part of my soul and this is giving back something," he says.

"To me surfing is truly spiritual. There's something larger than oneself. There's a pull. It's bigger than you are and lives in ways larger than us."

Flynn and Kaplan's friendship began when Surfdog put out the soundtrack to the cult film Endless Summer II. The pair became surfing buddies and with Flynn's work with the Surfrider Foundation they realised there was an opportunity to turn the spotlight on to the quality of the water they surfed in.

"We realised there was a chance to do something," says Kaplan. "Whether you surf or not, so many people seek out the ocean. Where do most people go on holiday? To the beach. There's something about being near a body of water that makes you feel rejuvenated. It has some really magical pull and people can feel that."

"We started calling up artists who had a real affinity with the ocean. We started with the surfers, people like Eddie Vedder, Perry Farrell, Chris Isaak and mad surfers like the guys from Smashmouth and skaters like Pennywise. There's a special place for the ocean in the hearts of people like this."

"Even people like Paul McCartney. His son James is a hardcore surfer and he wanted to be involved. He knew about the MOM records and called to see how he could help." Though he didn't have time to record a new track, he gave Surfdog one called Wild Life.

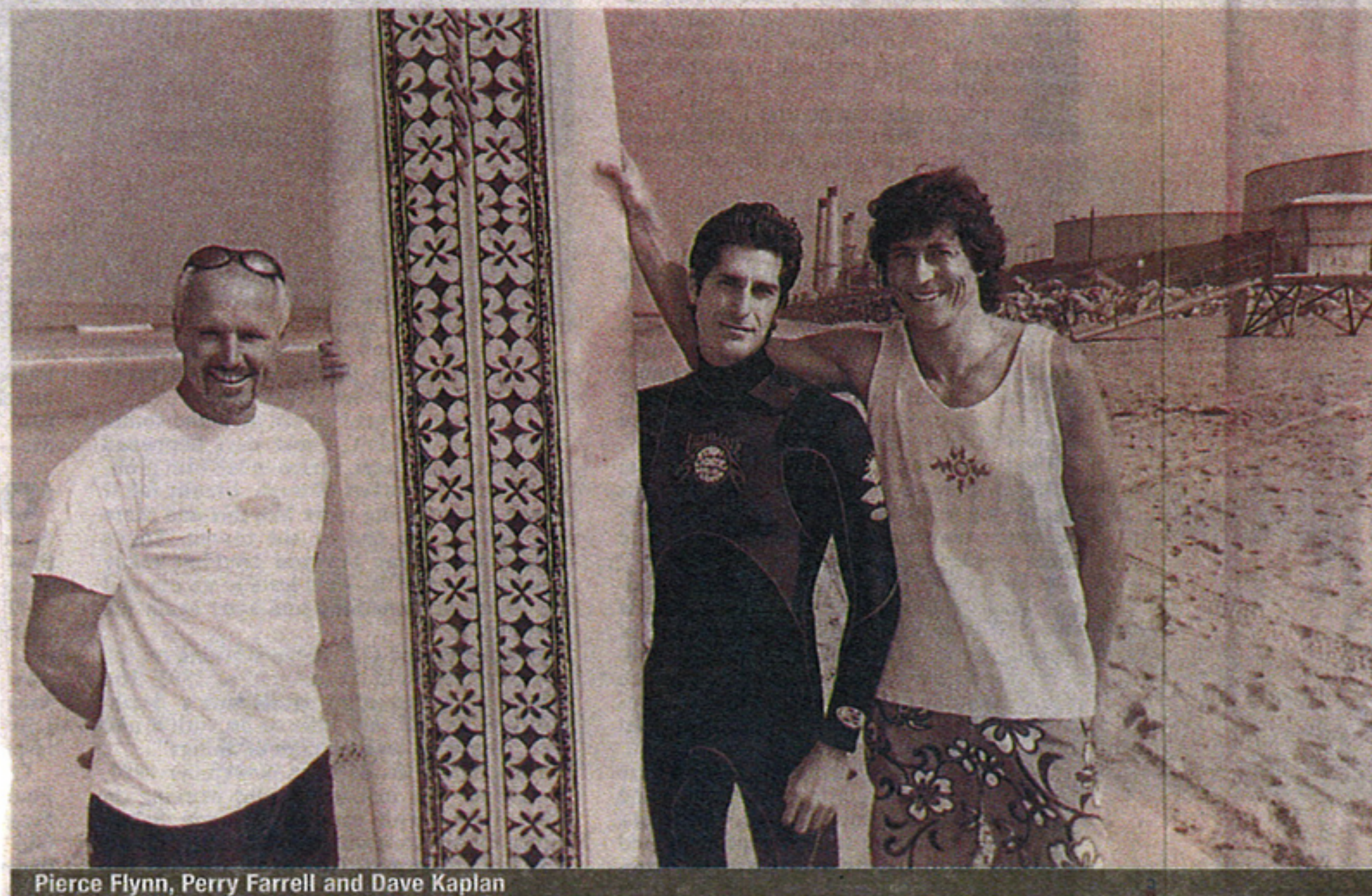
Kaplan also encourages the artists to choose songs which are in keeping with the theme of water and the environment in some way.

"When we start a MOM record, we start from nothing. Yes, it's great exposure for my artists but we also know in the beginning we ring everyone and don't always get a commitment. So it's important to start with something. And people always want to know who else is on the record."

But, luckily for Kaplan, with each MOM released the compilation's reputation grows and more artists are willing to be involved. To date some 60 bands have given their time, blessings and songs to the project.

"We have been really fortunate that people think it's cool and want to be part of MOM. People like Jimmy Buffett wanted so much to be part of the project that he got a truck out on his tour to record a live track, Sea Cruise."

● If you are interested in joining the Surfrider Foundation or getting more information, check out www.surfrider.org.au or www.sdog.com. MOM 3 is out now through Festival.



Pierce Flynn, Perry Farrell and Dave Kaplan