

Poi Dog Pondering Finds New Life With Constantly Changing Line-Up

BY WENDY MITCHELL
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT EDITOR

Frank Orrall probably has said a lot of "alohas" since Poi Dog Pondering formed in 1986, and not just because he's from Honolulu. These "hellos" and "goodbyes" have marked significant changes in Poi Dog Pondering's lineup through the years.

Orrall, 34, is the band's founder and remains the constant in the ever-changing cavalcade of musicians that call themselves Poi Dog Pondering.

"Since inception in '85, the band has slowly gone through changes. It's more organic changes. It's not like after a year, I break it apart. Players end up leaving," Orrall said in a recent phone interview. "What it generally tends to do is just grow ... The band started out as a songwriting vehicle for me, and it has become another animal."

The band's most recent incarnation will perform at Cat's Cradle in Carrboro on Tuesday with Syd Straw. Tickets are \$8.

The latest line-up includes Orrall, Dave Crawford, Susan Voelz, Dag Juhlin, Paul Mertens, Steve Goulding, Brigid Murphy, Tom Ray, Leady Garcia, Arlene Newson and Robert Cornelious.

The tour now encompasses two buses, Orrall said. "I love it. It's really exciting to be on stage with all these players. It's like a complete variance of sound. It runs the gamut from keyboard-based to percussion-based. It's very musically inspiring."

He enjoys the way the band changes all the time. "The more I travel, the more I meet musicians, the more I want to play with them," he said. "It stays fresh—the songs end up totally changing. Different players breathe new life into it."

Even though people usually concentrate on the band's Hawaiian origins, these



Frank Orrall (front in fur hat) of Poi Dog Pondering started the band in 1986 in Hawaii. Orrall now has an instrumental side project, Palm Fabric Orchestra.

different players also offer unique perspectives, Orrall said.

"People always ask us where we're from as though it had any bearing on our sound, but really all the musicians are from all over the place—Louisiana, Texas, Hawaii, Chicago, England.

"It doesn't really matter where we're from. It's just a footnote."

Orrall recently has changed formats even more, with Palm Fabric Orchestra, a side project that concentrates on instrumentals.

The project started with Texas-based avant-garde musician Ellen Folman. Folman built a 100-foot "long-stringed" instrument. The unique instrument makes the drone sound on the end of Poi Dog's *Vola Vola*.

Orrall teamed with Folman, a cellist and a pianist for the project. Poi Dog members also perform. "It includes all members of Poi Dog, but it's different

enough to warrant the different label."

"The next Poi Dog probably won't have instrumentals, because I now have Palm Fabric as an outlet for that," he said. "It's kind of hard to tell where the record's going to go. Some will continue in the dance-groove realm like *Vola Vola*. Some will be more orchestrated."

Another difference is that 1992's *Vola Vola* was released on a major label, and the new album won't be. The band signed with Columbia Records in 1988, but left the label in 1993. "I enjoy the musical process as being more whimsical and less premeditated."

Orrall said that with Columbia, "Everybody had an opinion and everybody was trying to exercise it. It was just tiring being in that situation."

But he said he did enjoy seeing the albums in major markets. "Everybody, whether they admit it or not, enjoys the exposure of a major label."

THURSDAY, APRIL 21

JUNK FLOWER at the Cave. 968-9308.
GROOVE TUBE at Local 506. 942-5506.
PEASANTS OF THE APOCALYPSE, SORRY ABOUT YOUR DAUGHTER AND GRINMAN at the Brewery in Raleigh. 834-7018.
JUPITER COYOTE at Cat's Cradle. 967-9053.
BELLOWS AND STONE at Skylight Exchange. Medical students' reading. 933-5550.
UNC COMPOSERS: UNC NEW MUSIC ENSEMBLE at Hill Rehearsal Hall, 8 p.m. 962-BACH.

FRIDAY, APRIL 22

THURSTON MOORE AND GUESTS at Cat's Cradle. 967-9053.
BUS STOP at the Cave. 968-9308.
GIANT METAL INSECTS, CLAUD NOVA AND TRAGIC STATIC at the Brewery in Raleigh. 834-7018.
SELECTED HILARITY at Skylight Exchange. 933-5550.
CHROME DADDY DISCO at Local 506. 942-5506.
TOM POTTS at Ninth Street Bakery in Durham.
UNC COLLEGIUM MUSICUM at Hill Hall, 8 p.m. Tickets \$5.

SATURDAY, APRIL 23

FLAT DUO JETS at Cat's Cradle. 967-9053.
THE GREEN LEVEL ENTERTAINERS at the Cave. 968-9308.
LASO HALO, WIFFLEFIST, SILICA GEL AND POLYCRAP at the Brewery in Raleigh. 834-7018.
SELECTED HILARITY at Skylight Exchange. Comedy. 933-5550.
SPRINGFEST WITH GRAVITY'S PULL, BUS STOP, SEVENTH TRIBE AND KNOCKED DOWN SMILIN' at Local 506. 942-5506.
PAT HUMPHRIES at Ninth Street Bakery in Durham.
DUKE STRING SCHOOL CHAMBER ENSEMBLE at Baldwin Auditorium, Duke, 7 p.m.

SUNDAY, APRIL 24

RED STAR BELGRADE AND THE FURIES at the Cave. 968-9308.
KARAOKE at He's Not Here. 942-7939.
STAY FREE! SPRING BALL at Cat's Cradle. 967-9053.

Arts & Entertainment Calendar

STAGGER STAGGER CRAWL at Local 506. 942-5506.
JAMICAN AFTERNOON at the Brewery in Raleigh. 834-7018.
JAZZ ON THE LAWN: UNC JAZZ BANDS at Hill Hall. 4 p.m. 962-BACH.



ModernExtension members Richard Patten and Shelley Senterfitt practice for their upcoming performance today and Friday in Memorial Hall.

DUKE COLLEGIUM MUSICUM 8 p.m. Nelson Music Room, Duke campus. Admission free. 660-3333.

MONDAY, APRIL 25

CHAT WITH PAT at the Cave. 968-9308.
JUNIOR BROWN at Cat's Cradle. 967-9053.
OPEN MIKE NIGHT at Columbia Street. 967-9150.
THE WOOGLS, TINSEL AND HOSS at the Brewery in Raleigh. 834-7018.

TUESDAY, APRIL 26

POI DOG PONDERING at Cat's Cradle. 967-9053.
WKNC SMASH HITS SHOWCASE at the Brewery in Raleigh. 834-7018.
CAPSIZE 7 at Local 506. 942-5506.
DOUBTING THOMAS at the Cave. 968-9398.

UNC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA at Hill Hall. 8 p.m. 962-BACH.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27

TRUE AND TRUE at the Cave. 968-9398.
RUBBERMAID, CHEW TOY AND PENDRAGON at the Brewery in Raleigh. 834-7018.
SUPERCHUNK at Cat's Cradle. 967-9053.

ART EXHIBITS

MASTER OF FINE ARTS EXHIBIT in Eaton Gallery April 23 to May 15.

ANSEL ADAMS: IMAGES, IDEAS, ICONS multimedia program combining Adam's photography with performed selections from his letters and "Autobiography" in Hanes Auditorium at 8 p.m. Friday through Sunday.

SURVIVORS' WALL featuring artwork and writing dealing with sexual assault issues in the Union's second-floor gallery through April 29.

A GIFT TO THE NATION: MASTERPIECES OF EUROPEAN PAINTINGS FROM THE SAMUEL H. KRESS COLLECTION at the N.C. Museum of Art in Raleigh through April 24. 57 European paintings from the 16th–19th century. 833-1935.
GLASS ACQUISITIONS at the Ackland Art Museum through May 16. 966-5736.
RINSE AND SPIN at Judges Coffee Roastery and places throughout town through Friday.
Please See CALENDAR, Page 10

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