

**DONOVAN FRANKENREITER**  
biography

Once upon a time, mentioning surfing and music in the same sentence conjured up sepia-toned images of the early '60s. But thanks to artists like Donovan Frankenreiter -- who, unlike most of the old-school "surf-rockers," knows his way around a wave as well as he does a fret-board -- those images have been updated radically to focus as much on musical adventure as on the spreading of good vibes.

Over the course of the past half-decade, the California-bred Frankenreiter established himself as one of the more original voices on the acoustic-rock scene, through tireless touring and the innate catchiness of songs like "Free" (which became a Triple-A radio staple upon its release two years ago). But, unsatisfied with simply heading further down that path, he opted to shift gears for *Move By Yourself*, his sophomore outing -- and first for *Lost Highway*.

The brisk 11-track disc is something of a sonic sea change for Frankenreiter. While the sun-kissed openness of his songs is still in full effect, he's now couching those feelings in a whole new set of sounds, from the keyboard-drenched "Let It Go" (which blends Allmans-styled soulfulness with an undeniable pop sensibility) to the low-slung funk grooves of the smoldering title track.

"I listen to so much music, and I pretty much feel comfortable singing all of it, so I didn't want to come across as a guy who does nothing else but sit on a beach with an acoustic guitar, playing around a fire," says Frankenreiter. "The funky stuff, especially, is fun to play -- it really lets me tap into a different part of my personality."

In order to more fully explore different aspects of that personality, the Laguna Beach-based singer-songwriter decided a change of scenery would do him good. After releasing his self-titled debut on Brushfire Recordings -- the label run by longtime friend and collaborator Jack Johnson -- Frankenreiter chose to link with *Lost Highway* for the release of *Move By Yourself*.

"Jack and Mario [Caldato] did a great job on that last record and I had a beautiful time making it. I just felt like I needed to make a change, and there were

definitely no hard feelings involved,” he says. “I wanted to succeed or fail on my own merits and I jumped at the opportunity to be part of a roster like Lost Highway’s.”

Frankenreiter has been moving towards being part of that roster for ages. After establishing himself as one of the most acclaimed free surfers in the world -- a talent that took him halfway around the world before his 16th birthday -- he picked up a guitar in order to master riding a different sort of wave. By his senior year of high school, he was part of a popular live act called Peanut Butter and Jam, in which he learned that taking the stage provided an entirely different sort of pleasure -- for him and his audience.

“The reality is that surfing is my first love,” he admits. “For a long time, it was my life -- I made a living at it starting when I was 16 years old, and it took me all a round the world. But it’s vastly different than doing music. If I call up a buddy to surf, there can be a moment of clarity, but if I get a wave that’s really incredible and try to convey that feeling to someone else, they may not be able to relate. But my wife -- or anyone -- can see me on stage playing and really feel what I’m feeling. It’s magical, there’s so much togetherness.”

Exploring that communal feel was one of Frankenreiter’s primary goals when recording *Move By Yourself*. He’s adamant about crediting his bandmates Matt Grundy (bass), Eric Brigmond (Keyboards) and Craig Barnette (Drums) with helping shape its alternately funky and blissed-out grooves, and equally eager to spread the gospel of the sort of old-fashioned recording process they used in making the disc.

“We recorded at a studio in St. Augustine, and this guy, Jim DiVito, had tons of really old equipment, which was terrific,” recalls Donavon. “He had two inch tape, no click tracks and we had to do things the way stuff had been done before all the modern studio technology was invented. Just seeing the tape roll was fun. That had a lot to do with the way the music sounds.”

Those sounds are undeniably, unabashedly, organic. Acoustic interludes like “Girl Like You (Cali Honey)” exude a back-porch vibe so vivid that it’s easy to imagine the sound of ice swirling around in glasses hoisted by fellow party-goers. And when the volume ramps up to the point where such sounds would be drowned out -- as on the fiery “Fool,” which showcases Frankenreiter’s deft,

bluesy fretwork -- other senses get a workout via the smell of sweat and the feel of heat.

Move By Yourself has no shortage of such sonic mood swings, but there's a definite evenness of spirit. Sure, the disc has its share of assertive moments, but it's hard to miss the delight with which Frankenreiter approaches life, whether he's relating his feelings about his child (as on "These Arms") or simply waking up to greet the new dawn addressed on "Beautiful Day." He's a happy guy, and he's the first to admit it.

"It's a totally positive thing for me," Frankenreiter declares. "I've talked to people who've asked 'why don't you write more depressing songs? Sure, I have bad days like anyone else, but mostly, I feel lucky. When I pick up a guitar, I feel good. It makes me want to open a bottle of wine and have a party, and that's what I'd like people to feel when they listen to my music."