

# IN MY ROOM

Feuille d'information consacrée à Brian Wilson et aux Beach Boys

Issue n° HS1 - May 2005

## Domenic Priore Talks

Domenic Priore is the ultimate Beach Boys, Brian Wilson specialist. After years of uncertainty not to say impossibility, Smile is now a reality. Various stories surround the Smile myth, so Mr Priore new book is a great chance to get the story straight. Darian Sahanaja was a contributor of Domenic Priore first fanzine, when Smile cult was not so well spread amongst Beach Boys enthusiasts, that to tell the credibility of the writer. So catch the wave and read on....

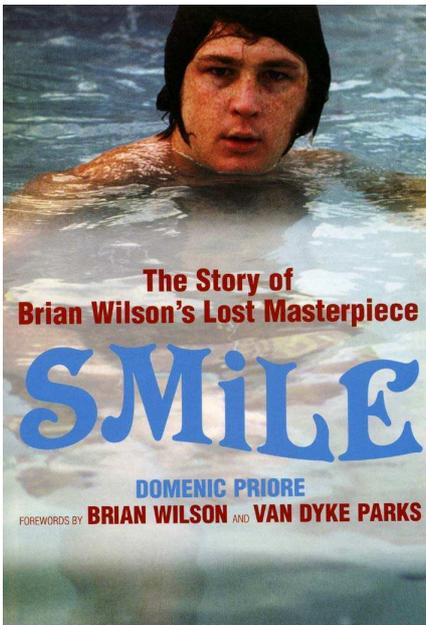
Jean-Emmanuel Deluxe

**How do you introduce yourself for the people who may not have heard about you?**

Author, documentary producer.

**What's your new book on Smile is bringing compared to your previous one according to you ?**

Well, the first one was a collection of original '60s magazine clippings connected by captions and some new texts. It's archival. The new book is the story arc of Smile, and of course this time I had the chance to get an extensive interview with Van Dyke Parks, plus Brian Wilson and Van Dyke Parks writing forewords was a nice thing too. The new Brian Wilson Presents SMiLE album also makes any discussion of 1966/1967 tapes all the more interesting.



**Honestly, what do you think of Smile 2004, compared to the vintage one ?**

I think they did the best job possible, considering that all recordings have suffered since 1966 if you think about it. The important thing is that they nailed down the original ideas and put them in the sequence. Remember, this is the recording of a performance piece, whereas the 1966/1967 tapes are designed for maximum studio effect. The equipment back then was warmer. And remember, as I always say, there were more Beach Boys vocals on the 1966/1967 Smile tapes than there was on Pet Sounds... so the original Smile is thoroughly a Beach Boys thing produced by Brian Wilson. We still need to have an official release of that.

**What's your favorite bits of Smile that didn't make it in the 2004 version?**

I thought that we lost the instrumental textures of "Holidays," "Love to Say Dada" and especially the little section of vibraphone that was so cool in the original "I Wanna Be Around" recordings from 1966. What upsets me is that Beach Boys fans and people feel that everything has to have lyrics or singing, but the original Smile was not conceived that way... instrumental textures were important in conveying the elements, especially. I also think that "Heroes and Villains" is not what the original SMiLE tapes were. There were omissions elsewhere, a bass guitar part here, the bit of "12th Street Rag" that was omitted from "Look" but these are minor complaints, because, remember, the original tapes have all of this anyway, and they should come out on their own.

**Do you have scoops about forthcoming Smile related releases that we may not know ?**

There's no good news on that front. Capitol would rather prepare a 40th Anniversary issue of Pet Sounds than do something new or interesting.

**Is the L.A & California of the Smile era is still possible to reach or it is a dream of the past ?**

This is an unusual question. If you are in East Hollywood, it may seem so. If you are in West L.A., the San Fernando Valley or Orange County, it would seem impossible. You have to understand that the original beauty of the land is still here, we still have the amazing sunsets, great surf at Malibu and Rincon, things like that are still here. I do think that in the Smile era, the emphasis in the music scene was on toppling Puritan and Victorian hang ups from the past, learning how to save the environment, eating healthy and stopping wars. Today, musicians are still into this but more often than not, the music industry promotes artists that, as George Harrison sang about... "Unconsciousness Rules". That is the real problem, there is a huge chasm now between musicians, and the business of selling music.

**What was for you the most amazing/interesting and or heartbreaking meeting/interview you made connected to the Smile book ?**

The incredible thing is that it is still hard to fathom that Smile was finished after so many years of it sitting on the shelf. Van Dyke Parks and I looked at each other outside of his house after the interview was over and we were relaxing, just talking casually... and suddenly, we both asked each other... "did this really happen?" We still can't believe it. With Van Dyke, I know there was a lot of pain involved, and it's very interesting to see the joy in the music fighting to get back on top of that pain and defeat it. It's like watching a flickering light go on, and then it suddenly fills up the room, strong.

**How did you discover the Smile album the first time around ?**

Everybody got his Smile stories!!! Well, first off, I was just enthralled by "Good Vibrations" in 1966. Then in 1971, I started to hear "Surf's Up" on the radio, and it was in that surfing film FIVE SUMMER STORIES, which was very popular here in Los Angeles, everyone I knew was into that movie... and dug the new Beach Boys material in it. Later, when the David Leaf and Byron Preiss books about the Beach Boys came out, I realized that both "Surf's Up" and "Good Vibrations" were part of the same album project, and that alone made me realize then, that this would have to be the best music they'd ever done, this Smile project. That led me to research the rest.

### Edito

Hi Folks,

Here it is : first IN MY ROOM issue in english !  
A very special and ... limited issue with a Domenic Priore's interview. Our man, Deluxe, asked him some questions and ... Domenic Priore answered. That's all, that's it !

Enjoy !

Charlie Dontsurf

The last solo Brian Wilson album was a disappointment compared to Smile 2004, do you think that Brian will work on something greater for the future ?

That's really hard to say. I haven't enjoyed any of Brian Wilson's solo albums except for the first one in 1988. Brian Wilson Presents SMiLE is an exception. The Wondermints are a hip band to be working with, but the team around Brian has turned inspired songs into lightweight products... the sound is far too slick. When Brian recorded those tapes in 1995, there was some raw grit to the recordings, but that got lost when some of those same songs came out on GETTING IN OVER MY HEAD, for example... the final mixdowns and gloss make the work sound weak. I love the original tapes of "Market Place" and "Gettin' In Over My Head," but the tweaking renders the final product as bland.

**Tell us about your new book projects ?**

Well, this year it's SMILE: THE STORY OF BRIAN WILSON'S LOST MASTERPIECE from Sanctuary Publishing. Last year, I wrote the text for an art book called BEATSVILLE which is about the beatnik era of the late '50s/early '60s. That's a great one from Outre Gallery Press, with work from Shag, Mark Ryden, Coop and a bunch of other artists. We also collect all the memorabilia from the period and show that. Then last September, I put the final touches on RIOT ON SUNSET STRIP: ROCK 'N' ROLL'S LAST STAND IN HOLLYWOOD 1965/1966. That, I hope will come out by the end of this year or early next year. Originally, it was signed to Chronicle Books, but we'll see if they're the company to release it or not. They have held it up with silly arguments.... they think that San Francisco was "better" than L.A. during the '60s, and they're totally out of their minds with that one.

**Your best californian related song (Beach Boys & non Beach Boys songs) ?**

I've always been partial to "Good Vibrations" and "Mr. Tambourine Man" at the heart of it. Some of the stuff by the Standells really hits the top for me, you know, "Riot on Sunset Strip" and "Sometimes Good Guys Don't Wear White"... so many things, like the Seeds "Up In Her Room," the FOREVER CHANGES album by Love, and the song "She Comes in Colours" from DA CAPO, and pretty much anything by the Buffalo Springfield. "Rock 'n' Roll Woman" was a huge hit in L.A. and I didn't even know it wasn't a hit elsewhere. I just thought everybody knew that song! I like the ABSOLUTELY

FREE and HOT RATS albums by Frank Zappa & the Mothers of Invention a whole lot... FREAK OUT is so much of a historical document of a moment that I have a hard time separating the music from the history it evokes... so I enjoy the other two a bit more. Some of the Mamas & Papas album songs like "Strange Young Girls" hit me in the same way. "Surf's Up" and "Eight Miles High" are up there too. The Byrds are really my favorite group, outside of the Beatles.

Every art form has its holy grail, those elusive creations around which legends grow. For rock 'n' roll, The Beach Boys' album *Smile* heads that list. Work on the album began on the heels of the group's seminal *Pet Sounds*, when Brian Wilson teamed with Van Dyke Parks to make a 'musical story of America'. But the writing and recording process soon devolved into chaos, capsized by internal fighting and record business chicanery. Tantalizing bits of *Smile* – most notably 'Good Vibrations' – hit the airwaves, but the album, revived by Beach Boys singer Mike Love as a document of 'Brian's madness', was shelved.

In Domenic Priore's brilliant new book, he interviews all the main players and documents every aspect of the *Smile* experience, from its inception in the 1960s to last year's release of *Brian Wilson Presents Smile*, his remarkable and brave attempt to finish what he started 40 years earlier. Featuring detailed accounts of studio work and the triumphant live shows in Europe and the US, exclusive photos from noted *Smile*-era photographer Guy Webster and forewords by Wilson and Van Dyke Parks, Priore's book is the last word on perhaps the finest album ever recorded.

Brian Wilson photo: Guy Webster  
Van Dyke Parks photo: Henry Diltz  
Author photo: Art Fein

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Domenic Priore is the author of *Beatsville*, *Riot on Sunset Strip*, *Rock 'n' Roll's Last Stand in Hollywood*, and *Look! Listen! Vibrate! SMILE!*, and was the primary writer on the documentaries *Hollywood Rocks the Movies: The Early Years* (hosted by Ringo Starr) and *Hollywood Rocks the Movies: The 1970s* (hosted by David Bowie). He lives in Los Angeles.

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# The Witch Hazel Sound

*This world, then the fireworks ...*



**Kevin Coral and The Witch Hazel Sound ... from Cleveland, Ohio**

« ... This world, then the fireworks. One listen and I was blown away. The album took me back to the glorious summer days of Pet Sounds, The Association, The Rascals, Lovin' Spoonful, Lemon Pipers, Mamas & Papas – all those breezy care – free sounds of a 60s generation now weighed down by problems of pensions and prostates. And I mention such dichotomy with good reason. Because The Witch Hazel Sound is also of now, made for a world much troubled and in need of something beautiful. It is the realisation of brilliant musicians of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, enjoying the delight of sound and chordal experimentation, the joys of being touched, tainted and tipped over the edge by the rush of musical discovery. Yes, it surely is an affectionate tribute to the genius of Brian Wilson ... a heavenly mix of the old and the new ... »

**John Howard** (Cover liner notes extract)

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