



BOWIE: MAKING ALADDIN SANE + NEW ALBUM

THE HOME OF VINYL

RECORD COLLECTOR

SERIOUS ABOUT MUSIC



**REVIEWED
THE BEST
& WORST
OF 2015**

THE BEACH BOYS

MIKE LOVE - SCORNED GENIUS?

ELECTRONIC ROCK ★ ALAN PARSONS ★ PARLOPHONE ★ SCOTTISH POST-PUNK

**JAMES DEAN IN MUSIC | FLEETWOOD MAC | THE CLASH | GARY NUMAN | ROBERT WYATT
THOR | THE OUTFIT | HEADSPACE | TORTOISE | CROSSFIRES | THE FEELING**

WIN VINYL FROM ANVIL, DEAD KENNEDYS, FIERCE PANDA & INSPIRALS

JANUARY 2016 No 449 £4.40
www.recordcollectormag.com





JUSTICE FOR MR LOVE

Mike Love has long been a hate figure to many fans of **The Beach Boys**. God Only Knows why, wonders broadcaster Iain Lee, who sets out to rebuild the singer's, and, yes, songwriter's reputation. Plus we hear from Mike himself and cast a light on some unheralded corners of the band's remarkable catalogue

The Beach Boys story is pretty clear-cut. Brian Wilson was the musical genius who created amazing, innovative songs of love, joy, loss, innocence and – of course – surf and cars. A soundtrack to summer. The others were his instruments and did their master's bidding. Sometimes. But they often held him back as well.

The tale can be stripped down even further. Brian Wilson was the hero and Mike Love was the villain.

It's a nice narrative, a classic tale and easy

to digest. But for a while now, I've been scratching my head about it and found that the more I look at The Beach Boys' history, the more sympathy I have for Mr Love. He is without doubt one of the most loathed men in rock.

David Crosby, in one of his many recent Twitter outpourings, agreed that Mike Love was "quite possibly" the biggest jerk in rock. I posted the question "Why do you hate Mike Love?" on a Beach Boys message board. Some people roundly told me off for trolling and a lot of people jumped to his defence, but

still pages of vitriol appeared from people quite prepared to be INCREDIBLY RUDE about the LEAD SINGER of their FAVOURITE BAND. Some examples included:

"Mike needs to let go of his ego or perhaps carve it up and share with those less fortunate... there is plenty to go around."

"He is an asshole who arrogantly treats BW like dirt."

So, is this fair? What *has* he done to deserve so much anger and hatred hurled in his direction? I'm have to confess I'm guilty

of buying into this. At the end of one of Brian's *Smile* concerts at the Royal Festival Hall in 2004, if you listen closely to the bootleg, you can hear me shouting "Who Needs Mike Love?" I was wrong. It turns out, we all need Love.

Brian was probably first called a genius in public by Derek Taylor. For those of you who don't know, Taylor was a publicist, an advertising man. He worked with The Beatles, The Byrds and, of course, The Beach Boys. His job was to help bands sell records. He did this by making grander and grander gestures and writing more and more outrageous stuff. Was Brian a genius? Well, that's a question for another day, but it sets out Brian's stall nice and neatly – someone very special, with the rest of the group as his puppets.

Let's go back a bit. While Brian conjured up incredible melodies and was obviously inspired when it came to placing voices in a harmonic mix, he wasn't a consistent lyricist. He occasionally managed to write gold ("Til I Die), but a significant number of his lyrics are uninspired. His best work has always come when he's collaborated.

And while Brian was capable of painting evocative and beautiful landscapes with his music, it was cousin Mike Love who gave us the imagery of Californ-I-A. He put the pictures of the surfers and the girls on the beach in our heads. He was the one responsible for most of us knowing about how hot the Californian girls were and waxing our boards. Sure, it was Dennis's suggestion to sing about the latest fad sweeping along the west coast, but Love managed to turn what is actually a bloody hard sport into a thing of beauty, something we could all aspire to, even if we were completely landlocked.

While Mike is often perceived as just being the Fun, Fun, Fun guy, flippant and light, he could also write lyrics of pure angst and heartbreak. Warmth Of The Sun is a masterpiece of loss and ennui that wouldn't be out of place on *Pet Sounds*: "What good is the night/that grows into day?/I cried when she said/I don't feel the same way."

Bloody hell – so pure, simple and direct. I Get Around may be the upside of teenage life, but those four lines really hit the loneliness and despair that all young people experience.

Good Vibrations is cited as one of the greatest rock'n'roll singles of all time, Brian's creative peak – but again, Mike wrote the lyrics.

The music is fabulous and nuts and bizarre and catchy; but so are the words. They're just the right side of cosmic

psychedelia to appeal to the heads *and* the teenyboppers. That's a fine tightrope to be walking. And damn it, it's one of the catchiest choruses of all time.

The words you sing along to on the radio or in concert, were written by a man considered to be a talentless idiot by a significant number of people. How can that be right? It's undeniable that Love can write lyrics. So why the hatred?

There are a few reasons – and I think most of them are wrong. Let's have a look at the main ones.

Firstly, Love's perceived resistance to *Pet Sounds*. It's hard to find any real evidence that Mike hated *Pet Sounds*. We know that, along with the rest of the band, he was pretty shocked when he first heard the musical tracks. But then so was the rest of the world! As Al Jardine said to Bob Harris in 1974: "It was a whole new horizon for us... we were a surfing group when we left the country... we came back to this new music. It took some getting used to."

It wasn't what *anybody* was expecting. Now, in hindsight, that's what makes it so damned exciting, but what if you've just been thousands of miles away in Japan playing THE HITS to loads of fans. You're buzzing! And then, pretty much as soon as you get off the plane, your songwriting partner tells you he won't be working with you on the next album. "Oh, and by the way, there ain't one nod to sunshine or surfin' on there at all..."

Whether Mike actually told Brian not to "fuck with the formula" is almost irrelevant: one could understand the sentiment. How terrifying to be America's biggest band only to find the boss has decided to completely change direction. And a whole album of stuff



**How terrifying to be
America's biggest band, only
to find the boss has decided to
completely change direction**

Winter Symphonies

Don't label the Beach Boys as good only for the summer months: that's not the whole story, says Jamie Atkins

While hoping that reading about California's favourite sons might go some way to banishing some of those British winter blues, even The Beach Boys haven't always been of the sunniest disposition their whole career. While there's always been a certain melancholy to Brian Wilson's work, on occasion they allowed themselves to let a little more of the dark side into their world. From *Smiley Smile*'s tense, doomy Fall Breaks And Returns To Winter (Woody Woodpecker Symphony), to Brian's *Til I Die* from 1971's *Surf's Up*, more adult concerns crept into the band's work, perhaps most movingly on Dennis Wilson's still-unreleased Carry Me Home, an outtake from the *Holland* sessions.

Similarly, their advancing years saw them broaden their metrological focus with *MIU's* Pitter Patter providing a musical throwback to their early days with the attention shifted to rain, and the charming, unreleased-at-the-time Winter Symphony proving Brian's (with lyrical assistance from sister-in-law Diane Rowell) most successful evocation of the chillier time of year.

Though any festive compilation worth its salt (or grit?) wouldn't be complete without 1964's Little Saint Nick from *The Beach Boys' Christmas Album*, a little digging reveals a wealth of festive tracks recorded for an intended 1977 album *Merry Christmas From The Beach Boys* but unreleased until 1998's *Ultimate Christmas* compilation. Of these, Dennis' Morning Christmas (confusingly, also known as Holy, Holy and Holy Evening) is a typically emotionally draining dirge of a hymn and Child Of Winter gives us a taste of harmless Yuletide fun before it's gatecrashed by a somewhat unsettling Brian Wilson spoken-word section.

Perhaps pre-empting the future plans of a vast portion of their audience, 1979's *LA (Light Album)* featured Goin' South, which could act as the theme song for the Snowbird phenomenon – when retirees in the US choose to fly south for the warmer climes once the Winter snap sets in. It's a soulful song, complimented by a gentle Carl Wilson lead vocal, concluding "The moon shining across the snow, maybe Florida or Mexico is where I oughta go." You can take the boys out of the beach but you can't take the...

written with someone else, when you co-wrote some of the biggest hits – when you were an intrinsic part of the band's success? How could you not be, at the very least, slightly miffed with that?

Pet Sounds, by the standards set by previous BB records, was a disappointment in terms of chart placing. A huge hit in the UK and great reviews, but the album only reached No 10 in the US charts for a week and then experienced a rapid descent. The record was considered a flop, a fact that has been forgotten by many of those who laud it today. So in many ways, Love was right – the formula had indeed been fucked with and the results, in terms of sales, were not great.

But does Love HATE *Pet Sounds*? In all the live recordings I've heard, official and bootleg, he's introduced the *PS* sections with love, awe and respect. For example, on a recording of a 1971 concert, Love describes *Pet Sounds* as "probably our most creative and musical album". He doesn't need to do that, yet he continually does. If he hated it, why doesn't he just do the songs and move on?

Mike has also been criticised for his resistance to *Smile*. This is where having a villain in the story really makes things easier.

Legend has it that Mike hated the nonsensical lyrics of new songwriting partner Van Dyke Parks and also the weird, disjointed music Brian was coming up with. He bullied Brian, which caused the elder Wilson to lose faith and pull the entire *Smile* project, then ultimately retire to his bedroom. It all seems a little bit too simplistic to me.

Now, if you thought the leap from *Surfin'* *Safari* to *Pet Sounds* was huge then blimey,

Smile is in another dimension. You've already seen a sales slump with an experimental album; wouldn't you be terrified that your cushy pop career was coming to an end?

Love famously questioned Parks over the meaning of the words "Over and over the crow cries uncover the cornfield" from *Cabinessence*. Van Dyke shrugged his shoulders and replied, "I don't know what they mean." This story is often told to show Love's disregard for the words. But hang on, he's got to sing this stuff and find the meaning in it, why wouldn't he question it? And while he may have been uncomfortable with the new songs, there is no evidence he refused to participate. He sang everything he was asked to sing. That doesn't sound like major resistance to me.

The real reason *Smile* never happened, in my opinion, isn't Love. It's Brian. Brian Wilson is seriously mentally ill. No one at the time recognised that, they put his idiosyncrasies down to "Oh, that's just Brian being Brian." His money and fame allowed the fracturing of his already weak mental state to go unchecked. That, coupled with LSD and weed, sent this fragile young man, who

really needed the help of a good doctor, way over the edge. *Smile* was a mess from pretty early on and Brian's safety circuit in his head just blew.

But mental illness isn't sexy. It's complex and hard to understand. It needs simplification. We need a bad guy in this story, so Michael Love, I'm afraid it's you. For decades the argument raged about how music history would be completely different if the Boys had managed to release *Smile*. How The Beatles would have realised that the album they were working on, *Sgt Pepper*, was nothing in comparison and they should just give up there and then. It's a nice fantasy, but probably not true. My guess is the world would have gone "huh?", in the same way they did with the single from *Smile*, *Heroes & Villains* (which only reached No 12 in the US, folks) but on a much grander scale. Seriously, since *Smile* was finally given an official release, how many times have you played it? And what have you played more – *Smile* or *Summer Days* (And *Summer Nights*!!)?

Next reason for hating Love – his attitude towards Dennis. They apparently hated each >

Seriously, since *Smile* was finally given an official release, how many times have you played it?



Strange Things Happen

Songs suffering sunstroke

More than any other band of their standing, The Beach Boys' back catalogue is liberally sprinkled with baffling moments of inexplicably poor judgement. From sweetly eccentric to "Dad, you're sat half-naked in the front garden with Bobby Charlton's face painted on your chest – again" levels of lunacy, long-suffering fans tend to regard the band's lapses in taste as part and parcel of their appeal. Hold on tight, Jamie Atkins is your guide for a trip through their decidedly strange side...

HELP Is On The Way (*Good Vibrations: 30 Years of The Beach Boys*, 1993)
Having taken a back seat from the day job, in 1969 Brian Wilson took the next logical step and opened a health food shop, *The Radiant Radish*. It wasn't long before his latest enthusiasm infected his songwriting; this *Surf's Up* outtake sees him lamenting his "triple chin", pondering "whatever happened to my Greek godly frame" and even suggesting that "doughy lumps, stomach pumps, enemas too" were just around the corner before his education in healthy living saved him.

My Solution (unreleased demo, 1970)
It seems a little unlikely that Brian Wilson was a fan of *White Light/White Heat*, but this curio – recorded on Halloween 1970 and recycled for *Happy Days* from his 1998 solo album *Imagination* – calls to mind a spooky version of The Velvet Underground's *The Gift*. Apparently co-written by Love, Wilson, Van Dyke Parks and Jack Rieley, it appears to tell the story of a deranged scientist who formulates a solution to bring peace to mankind, which he tests (successfully) on his unruly pet dog. When a "damsel" appears at his door, he decides that it's time to unleash his solution on humankind, with disastrous results...

Johnny Carson (*Love You*, 1977)
When Capitol heard that Brian was to helm his first full album in a decade it's unlikely they would have expected or wanted the record to be a starkly honest representation of his mental state. Backed by banks of fizzing, cartoon-like synth, Brian's gruff vocals contrasted totally with his often guileless and sometimes flat-out bizarre lyrics. Johnny Carson offered plenty of the latter. It's got to be one of the creepiest tribute songs around, with Brian celebrating the chat-show host's "manly tone" to stabbing, sinister synth lines. Lord knows what the man who inspired it must have thought of it.

Solar System (*Love You*, 1977)
Because just one song from *Love You* wouldn't have done it justice. Allegedly

written after what sounds like a revelatory parents' evening at his daughter's school, it's a rhyming dictionary run-through of the contents of the Solar System according to Prof Wilson: "Then there's the Milky Way, that's where the angels play... If Mars had life on it, I might find my wife on it." It may be nonsensical, but there's something about Brian's intuitive way with a melody and the interplay between Moog parts that makes it irresistible.



Matchpoint Of Our Love (*MIU*, 1978)
While this represents one of the more palatable later Beach Boys' offerings, it's perhaps the best example of Mike Love's superhuman ability to stretch an analogy to (ahem) breaking point. Using the final point in a tennis match as a metaphor for the endgame of a relationship, Love is the gleeful ringmaster of a pun circus: "Early in the game when you broke me like a serve, we shoulda walked off court but we both didn't have the nerve... We volleyed a while with small talk." You don't get that from Joni Mitchell.

Brian's Back (*Endless Harmony OST*, 1998)
We all know that family affairs can be difficult, and that traditionally men have

found it difficult to express their appreciation for one another face to face. That doesn't explain why Mike Love chose to make apparent his admiration for his cousin Brian by composing one of his most mawkish, cringeworthy songs for his unreleased *First Love* album in 1978. The verses recount the band's journey in the most hackneyed way imaginable ("Good Vibrations caused such a sensation, not to mention ol' *Pet Sounds*") before a chorus that very much counted its chickens by joyously celebrating his cousin's return to the band.

Too Much Sugar (*Brian Wilson* reissue, 1988)

Continuing his occasional series of lectures on healthy-living set to song, *Too Much Sugar* sees Wilson extolling the virtues of Jane Fonda workouts, veg and wholegrains, while heroically rhyming "One two three four, kick 'em high" with "Join a gym or visit the Y". It's all set to what sounds like a Casio keyboard stuck on the Oompah Band demo; puzzlingly enjoyable stuff.

The Private Life Of Bill And Sue (*That's Why God Made The Radio*, 2012)
Reality TV is bad, right? The Beach Boys think so from the gist of this unfocused bit of finger-wagging. The thing is, while socially conscious songs are often stark and serious, *TPLOBAS* is the aural equivalent of letting it all hang out poolside in Bermuda shorts, shirt unbuttoned to the naval and shit-eating grin. It's a lift music goes Caribbean, steel drum-festooned slinker that comes complete with a comically classic Beach Boys chorus. *Big Brother*, consider yourself told.

And if that's not got your bizarro senses tingling, try *Anna Lee The Healer*, *Diamond Head*, *Loop De Loop Flip*, *A Day In The Life Of A Tree*, *Mount Vernon And Fairway*, *Honkin' Down The Highway*, *Wrinkles*, *Male Ego*, *Problem Child*, *South America* or Brian's wonderful late-80s tour-de-force *Rio Grande* for size. You'll never look at those clean-cut kids in the striped shirts the same way again.

other. But here's a thing. Dennis was an alcoholic/drug addict. The world tends to admire the outrageous rock stars who imbibe to excess – Dennis, Keith Moon, Ozzy Osbourne. But look at them – dead or a complete mess. Ever tried to work with an alcoholic? I have, and while I have every sympathy for those who suffer from the disease of addiction, they can be a massive pain in the arse. Imagine trying to maintain a multi-million-dollar organisation while one of the members doesn't always turn up for work. And if they do decide to appear, they might not stay onstage for the whole show. They could do a bit/some/none... depends how they feel. And the audience still loves them. It would be enough to drive anyone nuts.

And we *do* all love Dennis, even though he did some pretty lousy things. To spite his cousin, he shacked up with Mike's illegitimate teenage daughter Shawn, who, at 19, had his baby. Now, be honest, that's a low thing to do, but Love kept his head held high. It's difficult not to respect him for that.

Do we think less of Love because he stuck with Transcendental Meditation while our very own Beatles instantly made the Maharishi unhip by walking away from Rishikesh and writing Sexy Sadie? Love has always been a champion of TM, even going so far as to become a teacher of the spiritual meditative practice. And why not – it's helped millions of people. OK, the 1968 Beach Boys/Maharishi tour was an unbelievably bad idea, but once you get past the showbiz façade of the Maharishi, his teachings can be seen as pretty groovy – and useful.

So maybe it was Kokomo which unleashed the hatred. The first number one by the group since Good Vibrations in 1966 (a gap of 22 years), some Brianistas hate it because it was a huge hit that didn't feature Brian and came out at the same time as Brian's first solo album. According to conspiracy theorists, it was Love's cunning plot to sink Wilson's (disappointing) debut long player. Some just don't like the 80s production or the perceived twee-ness of the song. Here, I'll say it: Kokomo is a brilliant record and I love it! There's no need to be embarrassed when it comes on the radio. In an attempt to be cool, I would comically wince when the Boys played it in concert, but I was an idiot. It's a great, uplifting record that takes me back to being 15 and being in love for the first time; the mixture of voices is wonderful and doesn't Carl sound like an angel? It's a good song. It was a hit. Deal with it.

There's no denying, Love and the rest of the band made some pretty poor decisions in the 80s. Ageing men with ponytails, caps covering their bald heads, short shorts, synthesised drums, the *Still Cruisin'* album and only a handful of gems scattered amongst the rubbish. But put it into context.

Very few 60s and 70s acts came through the 1980s with a completely unblemished record. The Stones, McCartney and Johnny Cash all made some absolute musical stinkers,

Lost And Found, You Still Remain There

Beach Boys' gems that are largely unappreciated

While The Beach Boys' output has slowed to a trickle of new releases since the mid-80s, the advent of the CD meant that a slew of material was released from the Capitol vaults on reissues, compilations and boxsets. Unsurprisingly for such a prolific and disjointed band, the excavated material has been plentiful and has varied wildly in quality.

1990s reissues of the 60s Capitol catalogue on "two-fers" (two albums on one CD) saw each pairing of albums (*Pet Sounds* excepted) appended with bonus tracks from the period. Unsurprisingly, it was the later albums that benefitted the most with *Smiley Smile/Wild Honey* featuring the first public airing of some tracks destined for *Smile* along with the mantra-like Can't Wait Too Long; a song that manages to squeeze more invention out of one motif over four linked fragments than most bands manage in an album.

The *Friends/20/20* reissue also came up trumps with Brian's effortless We're Together Again and a Dennis Wilson song previously buried as a B-side, Celebrate The News. It's one of their best songs of the period; its breezy confidence is staggering considering Dennis' first writing and production efforts had been released roughly a year before.

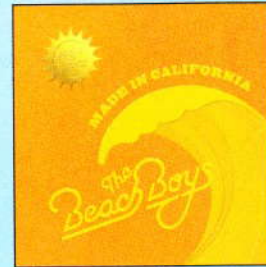
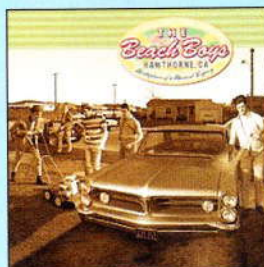
The *Good Vibrations: Thirty Years Of The Beach Boys* boxset was released in 1993 – a five-disc retrospective of the band's career to date. While the headlines were again grabbed by the extra 30 minutes of *Smile* material the box made public, there was plenty elsewhere to treasure. Not least two cuts from another abandoned album, 1977's *Adult Child*, It's Over Now and Still I Dream Of It. Sounding like a couple of attempts to write standards fit for crooners, complete with kitchen-sink orchestration (the former even features the lyric "I'll put a Frank Sinatra album on and cry my blues away"), they're the best of those sessions and offer a tantalising glimpse of what Brian Wilson may have been capable of with the support of the full band.

The soundtrack to 1998's *Endless Harmony* documentary was the next release to tap those vaults with Brian's ecstatic Soulful Old Man Sunshine winning the "How on Earth did this never get released?" prize this time around. It's a finger-clicking, horn-driven, home-studio recorded stormer that showed that Brian hadn't lost his ability to write, produce and arrange insanely catchy pop.

The next anthology release was *Hawthorne, CA: A Musical Legacy*, a two-disc collection of various stereo mixes, a cappella versions and alternate takes that also threw up a subtle Dennis Wilson gem in the subtle, sparse A Time To Live In Dreams. The vocal is among the drummer's most affecting, leaving a deep impression despite the song's brevity.

That leaves the six-disc 50th birthday collection *Made In California*, released in 2013. Again, it's Dennis' contributions that shine – (Wouldn't It Be Nice) To Live Again is a strung-out epic that was inexplicably left off *Surf's Up* in favour of some decidedly dodgy fare (Student Demonstration Time, anybody?) and Barnyard Blues is a loose-goose strut that owes more to the likes of Little Feat than The Four Freshman. We also get a glimpse into what might have been with a couple of Brian songs from aborted sessions for a full-band 1995 album, Soul Searchin' and You're Still A Mystery. While the relatively straightforward former might be familiar from Solomon Burke's superior 2002 cover, it's the latter that really intrigues; a twisting, intricate demonstration of what they could still do if pushed a little.

Throw in the *Pet Sounds* and *Smile* session multi-disc box sets and it's a wonder that there's anything still out there worth releasing. However, those vaults aren't quite emptied yet, there are still some bounty out there for the curious Beach Boys fan to stumble upon: happy hunting! *Jamie Atkins*



as well as some fashion faux pas that they would no doubt have liked to be forgotten.

Love's vocals are often questioned whenever his contribution is discussed. Yes, he can verge on the nasally challenged; and this is highlighted if you are to listen to any live recording from the 80s. I don't know why he chose to sing like that during this period – but it is unfair to judge his entire vocal output on that one mannerism.

In addition to singing lead, Love was also the bass in the vocal mix. Indeed, Mike's bottom register has provided some of the best bass singing in rock. Brian gets the kudos for his delicious falsetto, but when Mike hits those low notes on *Their Hearts Were Full Of Spring* or *I Get Around* or any of their tunes, frankly, it's just incredible. It can be powerful and forceful (*Good To My Baby*), but more often it is a subtle tone that is barely perceptible for the first few listens (*This Whole World*, for example).

Oh, and finally, one of *The Beach Boys* best ballads is a Wilson/Love collaboration. But it's Dennis and Mike. You want to hear just how good a lyricist Michael Edward Love could be? Light a candle, think of the person you love the most in the world and allow yourself to sink into *Only With You* from *Holland*. Magnificent. Simple. Absolutely stunning.

So, thank you Mike Love for making my life – and the world – a much more beautiful place. I can overlook the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame speech (just YouTube it), Wrinkles (DO NOT YouTube it) and the gold turbans. You are a legend and one of the greatest showmen this world has ever seen. Sir, I salute you.



LOVE AND ONLY LOVE...

And now for the man himself. **Mike Love**, The Beach Boys' frontman for more than 50 years, tells Ken Sharp about his memories of The Beatles, touring with the Maharishi and why he called Brian Wilson the "Stalin of the studio"

On his parents...

My mother was incredibly into music. First of all she sang in a trio on the radio on Southern California in the late 30s. I was born in '41. My dad could sing, but it was my mom's side of the family, the Wilsons, that were incredibly musical. I grew up in a home where there was a Hammond organ, a Steinway grand piano and a Lyon & Healy harp. I have two sisters that learned to play the harp – both of them play the harp to this day. There was never a time in my life when music wasn't a huge, dominant part of our existence.

On the lyrics that he sees as his high water mark...

One of the earlier times where I, along with Brian, came up with something that was mystical and transcendental was *The Warmth Of The Sun*. That song was written in the wee hours of the morning on the day President Kennedy was taken to the hospital in Dallas – when he was assassinated. We went to sleep and were woken with that news. So a couple of weeks later when we recorded that song, it was charged with a lot of emotion. We didn't change the words to conform to that horrible event, but the emotion that song is charged with is palpable; just listen to the harmonies. Even as we were writing it, I felt it was mystical; the chord progression and the melody and the harmonies that we came up with were just so beautiful. And the analogy of the warmth of the sun – even if that love was no longer there for whatever reason, at least you had the memory of it. In something hurtful and tragic and disappointing and all that, I was still trying to find the silver lining on the cumulus-nimbus cloud.

On the change in band dynamic after the 1968 album *Friends*, as Brian Wilson's force diminished and the others stepped up their



writing and production duties on *Sunflower*, *Surf's Up* and *Carl And The Passions*...

Well, it became more of a democratic process. I used to refer to Brian as "Stalin of the studio". During the *Pet Sounds* album we'd do like 20 takes on one section of *Wouldn't It Be Nice*. I also called him "dog ears" because he would hear things that ordinary mortal human beings did not. We would do something that sounded perfect to all of us, but he'd have us do it again. He was looking for a different vibe to it. Brian wasn't around as much in the period due to LSD and all that stuff in the *Smile* period.

I think it was natural that each person in the band has things to say musically and it became more of a democratic process on those albums. You know, on the *Keepin' The Summer Alive* album, the title song was written by Carl and Randy Bachman. I love that song, it's a cool song. I also wrote a song called *Goin' To The Beach* for those sessions, but then it was put away and it was never on the album. It's just an example of the over-recording that we did. We might record 15 or 20 songs and only 10 or 12 of them made the album. But it just became a more democratic process and you had everybody contributing.

On misconceptions about the Beach Boys "good time" themes...

I've never been ashamed, or in any way regretful, of doing songs that were fun and about the southern California lifestyle. You'll never hear me say anything negative about it. But that wasn't the only theme we were dealing with. For instance, *Good Vibrations* wasn't a surfing song per se but it was our psychedelic tome for the day and it was pretty avant-garde for its time – and it still is. I couldn't tell you what other song even comes close to it. Even *Rolling Stone* magazine at one time said it was the single of the century. When a record company promotes you as something limited to a particular aspect of your career or musical landscape, it's very limiting.

We brought in Blondie Chaplin and Ricky Fataar who were from South Africa and at the time there was apartheid and The Beach Boys had these South African guys in the band who were brilliant musicians. Ricky is a brilliant drummer and Blondie is a brilliant singer and lead guitarist and we had them in our group. I don't think The Beach Boys have ever been appreciated for our sociological sensitivities. Actions speak louder than words. If you're talking about apartheid and these guys [of mixed-race descent] are from South Africa and there are still issues going on with civil rights in the United States even to this day. We were open enough and inclusive... But I don't think it's ever really been appreciated on a mass level.

On any rivalry with The Beatles in the 60s...

We were very impressed with their popularity and their prolific creativity. They



had the same influences we had: The Everly Brothers, Chuck Berry, Little Richard. But we had The Four Freshmen on top of all of that. So our sound was distinguished by the very sophisticated, refined harmonies and blend that we achieved and that we were obsessed about doing. I don't think there's anybody as well-known for the harmonies and the blend as The Beach Boys. I mean, we were just as impressed as everybody else on the whole wide planet with The Beatles' success. We didn't feel in competition with The Beatles; if there was a rivalry it was a friendly rivalry and a mutual appreciation.

I can remember George Harrison – in a sit-down with him Ringo and Paul – saying: "Well, we were just trying to keep up with The Beach Boys," which was very sweet. But when we went to No 1 in England with *Good Vibrations* in November '66 and were voted the number one band in England and number two was The Beatles – that's gotta get a group's attention. There's nobody that sold more than The Beatles unless it was somebody like Elvis or Michael Jackson, but it's a very rarefied level of success. As far as having the musical integrity and the pride in what we've done and the lasting appeal of our music, I think we're up there with Motown and The Beatles. Motown, the Beatles and The Beach Boys are the three musical forces who are still regarded today in that same light.

On that first meeting with The Beatles on 22 August 1964, backstage at the Memorial Coliseum in Portland, Oregon...

Well, first of all, we talked about cars with George Harrison. You know, George was way into speed, way into cars. Carl had an Aston Martin; in 1965 I had an MGTC, a 1939 Rolls-Royce, a Jaguar sedan and an XKE convertible so I had four great cars – all from England; I was an Anglophile. We all had Rolls-Royces at one time or another. So we're backstage and talking with George Harrison about cars. I also remember one of The Beatles saying they were having vocal problems when they got to a specific part in

She Loves You. One of The Beatles literally said, "My voice won't be great right there so when we get to that part let's shake our heads, our mop tops, the girls will scream and nobody will know the difference." So that was pretty funny. As to The Beatles' show that night, *sometimes* you could hear music with all the screams! It was the height of Beatlemania!

On The Beach Boys' tour with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi in 1968...

My take on it is, it was brilliant to go on a tour with Maharishi because, a) it had never been done, before or since, and b) Maharishi had a great message and a great technique called Transcendental Meditation. The concept was if enough people practised that meditation, the world would be an entirely better place and a more peaceful place, and that idea appealed to me because there are so many heinous things that have gone on in the name of religion or the differences that people fight over – Catholics versus Protestants – it's crazy. So I was interested in anything that could provide an answer to all the problems in society, and at the same time help an individual use more of their creativity and intelligence and create raw energy, which TM does. I still do it today; I did it this morning before I came to the studio today. I do it every day and have since December '67, when we learned from Maharishi in Paris.

So when we went on that tour with Maharishi, I don't think the mass of people really understood. There's the music crowd and then there's the philosophical crowd and they're not necessarily compatible in the same time and place. But irrespective of that, I think it was a great thing to be able to do and Maharishi, I'm sure, appealed to some of the people in the audience, and others, he didn't. But that's the nature of what was going on. It was incredible that we attempted to do it and in fact played several shows with Maharishi before it became obvious that it wasn't a 100 per cent great match at that time. mc