

TANGERINE DREAM
ELECTRONIC PIONEERS REVISITED

THE BOX TOPS
ALEX CHILTON'S TEEN POP-SOUL LEGENDS

SHINDIG!

SURF'S UP!

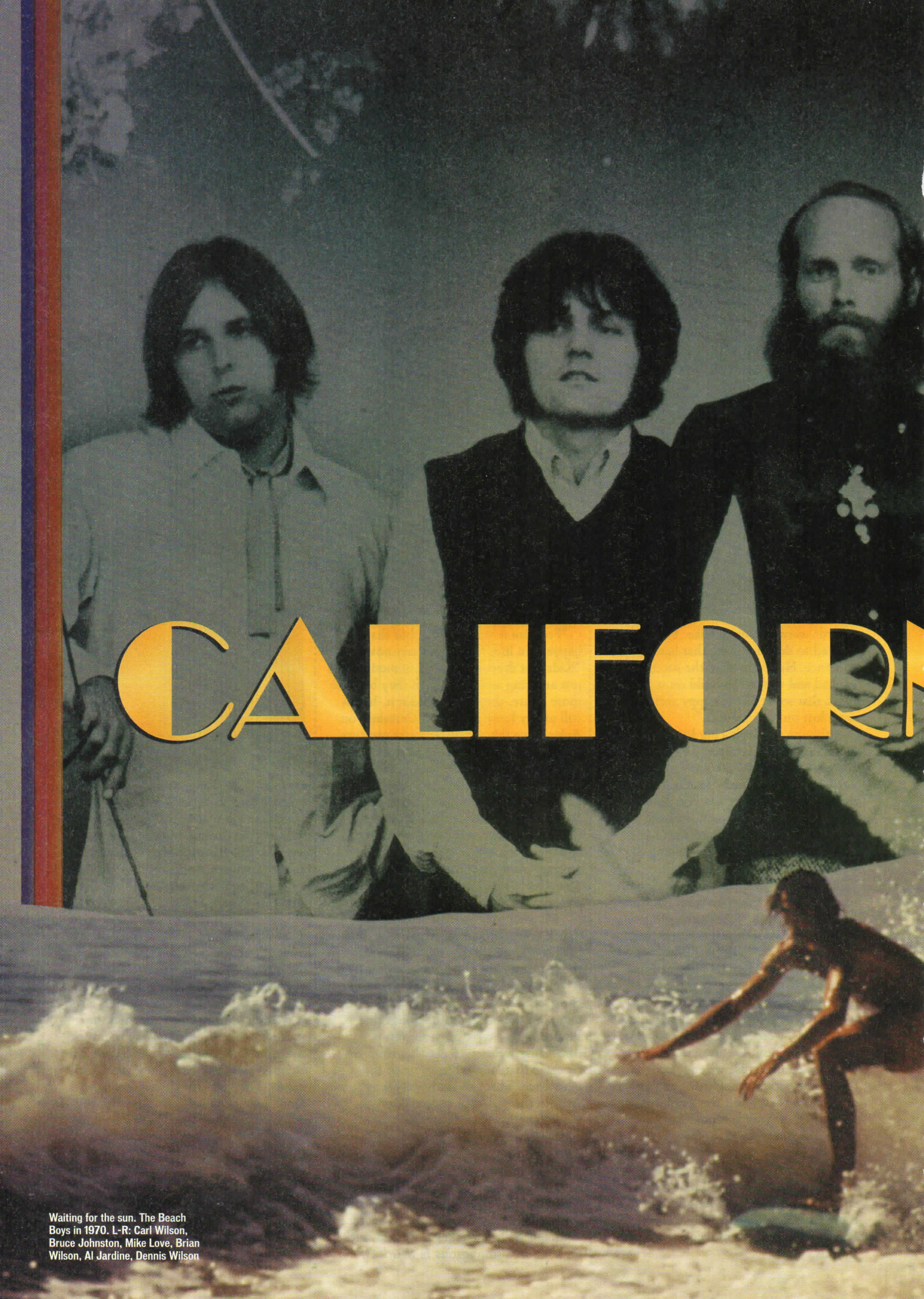
THE BEACH BOYS

BROTHERLY LOVE IN THE '70s

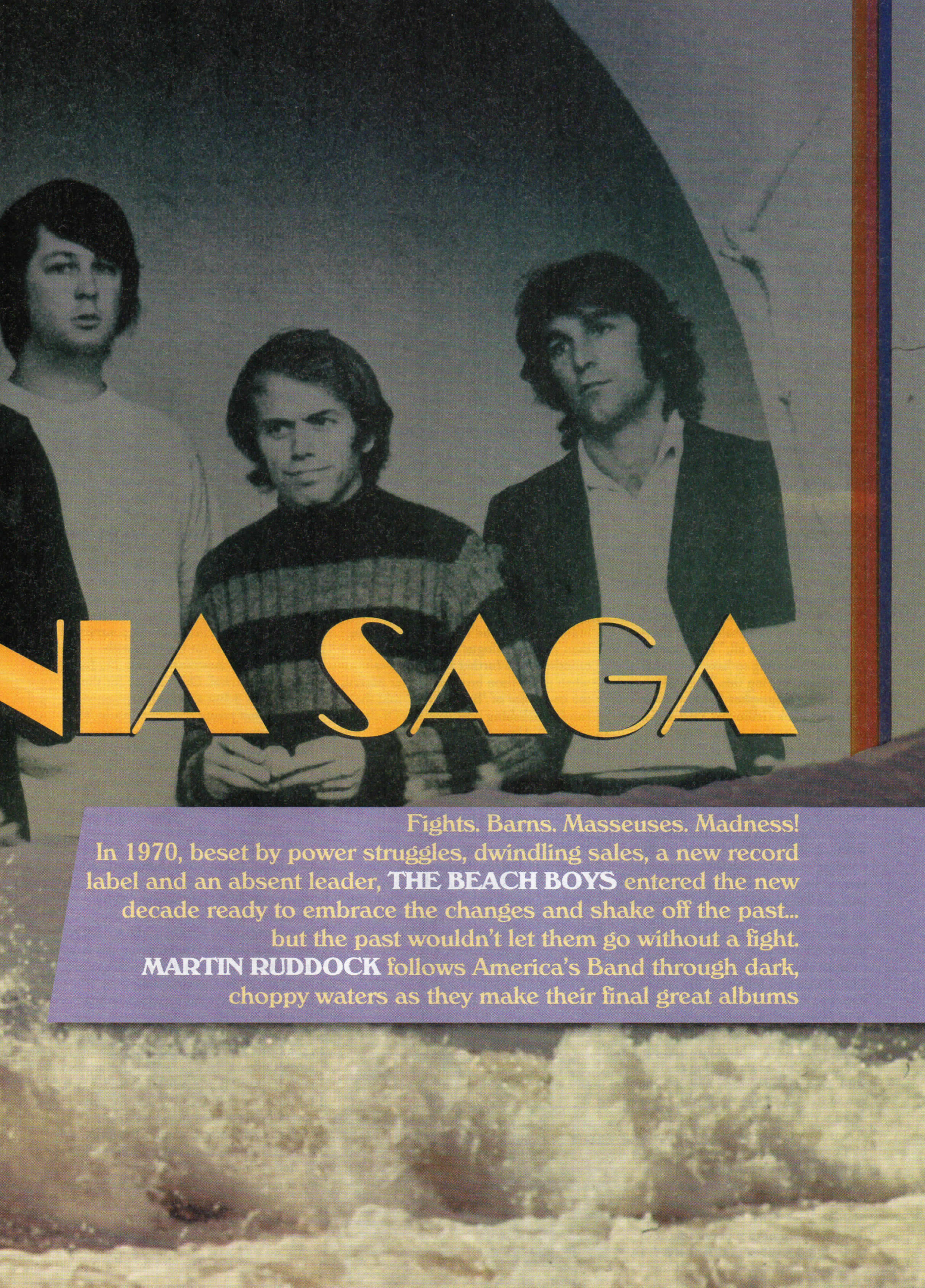
15-track HYPNOTIC BRIDGE sampler!

CHRIS DARROW • STEVEN VAN ZANDT
THE LEFT BANKE • JONATHAN WILSON • KING KHAN

ISSUE 101 • £5.50



Waiting for the sun. The Beach Boys in 1970. L-R: Carl Wilson, Bruce Johnston, Mike Love, Brian Wilson, Al Jardine, Dennis Wilson



NIA SAGA

Fights. Barns. Masseuses. Madness!
In 1970, beset by power struggles, dwindling sales, a new record label and an absent leader, **THE BEACH BOYS** entered the new decade ready to embrace the changes and shake off the past... but the past wouldn't let them go without a fight.
MARTIN RUDDOCK follows America's Band through dark, choppy waters as they make their final great albums

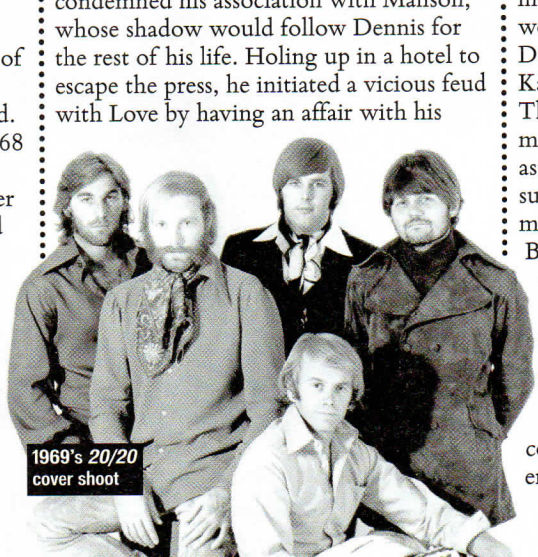
The 24th of February 1971, Carnegie Hall, and The Beach Boys are about to play the longest gig of their career to a full house. A lot is riding on this set – a deep dive into their catalogue spanning their 10-year history. It's a new dawn for "America's Band". After four years of chaos dogged by declining record sales, lawsuits, mental breakdowns and worst of all – irrelevance, this is their moment. Kicking off their two hour set with a driving, kinetic 'Heroes And Villains' the hairy, funky-looking group are pretty much unrecognisable as the "Surfing Doris Days" left behind by the counterculture back in '67. Leader Brian Wilson is absent, barely seen in public since he abandoned his opus *SMiLE* and abdicated his post as genius-in-residence. His brothers Carl and Dennis are here to avenge him, leading the charge of their formidable live assault. Even the lanky, balding figure of Mr 'California Girls' himself Mike Love has the bearing of a hip guru in his robes and beads. The gig is a triumph. With a new, hipper label behind them and a united front surely it was time for "America's Band" to shine, with or without their leader. This is the story of how, out of adversity The Beach Boys made their last great albums.

"I don't see why I should lie and say everything is rosy when it's not." Twenty-Seventh May 1969, and Brian Wilson is talking to *NME*. He's meant to be plugging forthcoming single 'Break Away' and the European tour that the touring line-up of The Beach Boys – his brothers Dennis and Carl, cousin Mike and friends Al Jardine and Bruce Johnston are about to undertake. However, Brian's here as prophet of doom. "We owe everyone money, and if we don't pick ourselves off our backsides and have a hit record soon we will be in worse trouble."

Brian's gloomy pronouncements dogged the band across Europe, forcing an exasperated Bruce Johnston to make a terse statement on behalf of the others. "We're not broke at all," he protested. "It's very upsetting to have spent the whole tour denying this." According to Beach Boys biographer Steven Gaines co-managers Nick Grillo and Fred Vail kept the band afloat that summer through maxing out their credit cards.

For some time, The Beach Boys and Brian Wilson had largely occupied two separate, unhappy worlds. Since Brian's early '67 cancellation of the *SMiLE* sessions things had gone from bad to worse. Brian had a breakdown, his long-standing mental health issues chipped away at by drugs and the pressure the 24-year old had placed on himself. Brian shut up shop, only surfacing for lo-fi sessions in the home studio the band moved into his Bel Air mansion. *SMiLE* would prove to be an albatross for The Beach Boys. The albums that followed, the stoned doo-wop of *Smiley Smile*, chilled garage of *Wild Honey* and mellow *Friends* at least seemed to help the frazzled Brian's mood. However, a further breakdown in June '68 left his bandmates scrambling to fill the void. Dennis had already begun to flower as a writer, and Love and Jardine teamed up to write the bizarre, discordant 'Transcendental Meditation' – inspired by Love's recent initiation into TM. By autumn, at Love's insistence the band had haemorrhaged cash on an abortive joint tour with TM guru the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Carl, the band's de facto front-man began to supervise most of their studio sessions in Brian's stead. By the time the grab-bag *20/20* came out in February '69, it was clear that Brian was barely involved, beyond chastising Carl and Dennis for overdubbing *SMiLE* tracks 'Cabinessence' and 'Our Prayer' in a desperate attempt to pad out the brief album.

Two weeks after 'Break Away' came out, Brian's ominous prediction came true. The Beach Boys' contract with Capitol expired on 30th June after two fractious years of lawsuits and disputes. Never the cosiest of band-label relationships, things had been frosty ever since the costly and much-hyped *SMiLE* failed to materialise. With the contract up and an album in arrears, Capitol bulldozed the band's income by deleting their entire catalogue in the US. A few months later a further blow was dealt when the Wilson brothers' father Murry, the co-author of 'Break Away' sold the band's publishing company Sea Of Tunes to Irving Almo music for $700,000. Brian, already mired in depression and a newfound cocaine habit, became even more withdrawn. His brothers weren't in great shape either. Carl, a conscientious objector had spent two years fighting a draft board determined to post him to Vietnam. Meanwhile, the volatile Dennis found out that his charismatic former buddy "The Wizard", AKA Charles Manson, wasn't just a freeloader with an entourage of nubile young women, but the psychotic ringleader of Hollywood's most notorious murder. The press condemned his association with Manson, whose shadow would follow Dennis for the rest of his life. Holing up in a hotel to escape the press, he initiated a vicious feud with Love by having an affair with his wife Suzanne. Dennis at least succeeded in suppressing the tapes of the recordings made with Manson and his entourage he'd produced at Brian's studio. "We've got several 8-track tapes of Charlie and the girls that Dennis cut… just chanting, fucking, sucking, barking," sneered Love to *Rolling Stone* in '71. "Maybe we'll put it out in the fall. Call it *Death Row*."

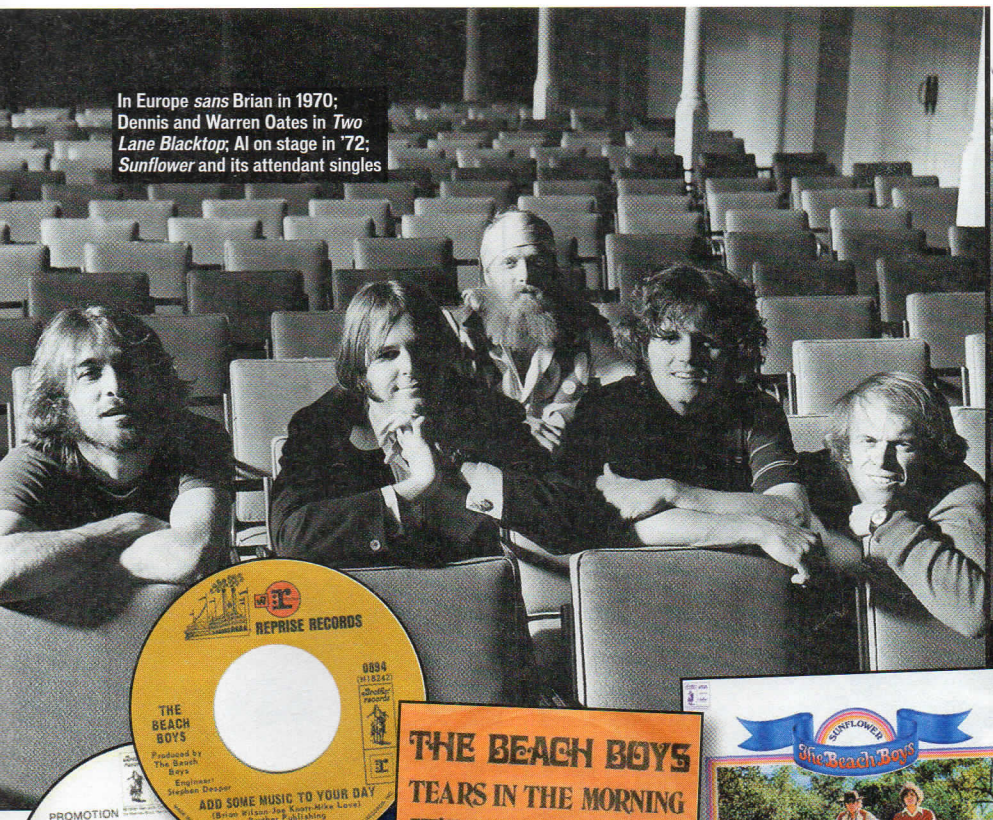


1969's *20/20* cover shoot

There was a light at the end of the tunnel amidst all this chaos and dysfunction. Since January '69, The Beach Boys had been plugging away at a vast portfolio of new material that they hoped would jump-start their flagging career. There was so much that the band were still recycling songs well into the late '70s. Some songs were pegged for a contractual obligation album for Capitol, with working titles *Reverberation* and *The Fading Rock Band Revival*. Others were for the bulletproof debut album they planned to shop around prospective new labels. The most promising contender was Warner-Reprise, after a helping hand from A&R man and Brian's *SMiLE* lyricist Van Dyke Parks. "The Beach Boys were at a very low point of their career," Parks told Scott Keller in '73. "I personally begged Mo Ostin to sign them."

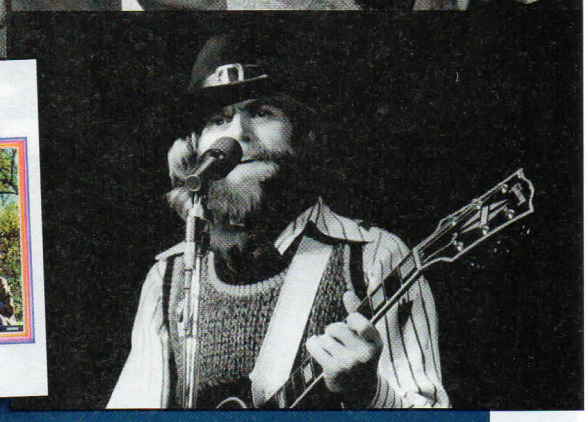
The Beach Boys signed with Warners in December, taking their dormant Brother Records imprint with them. Brian's absence on *20/20* had been noted by Warners – who made his active involvement a condition of the deal. This was easier said than done. Brian was more interested in ventures like an odd spoken word album he was recording with Dennis's songwriting partner Stephen Kalinich, and his new health food store The Radiant Radish. There were rare moments of fevered action, like the astonishing 'This Whole World', a mini-suite impossibly squeezed into under two minutes cut in November '69. Largely, Brian preferred to noodle while the others were out, if at all. Often, the others would flesh out his songs when he lost interest. "We became completers of ideas," Jardine told *Rock Cellar* in 2015.

The new album, a punchy, contemporary-sounding collection initially entitled *Add Some Music* then *Sunflower* was



In Europe *sans* Brian in 1970; Dennis and Warren Oates in *Two Lane Blacktop*; Al on stage in '72; *Sunflower* and its attendant singles





"Warners rejected *Sunflower*, saying they didn't hear a hit single, but released 'Add Some Music To Your Day' as a taster anyway. The dejected band went back to the drawing board"

ready to go by February. There was melodrama (Johnston's 'Tears In The Morning'), driving hot rod rock (Jardine's 'Suzie Cincinnati'), amiable goofing from Brian ('Games Two Can Play' and the daffy 'Good Time') and a featherlight hymn to the power of music in 'Add Some Music To Your Day'. There were some dazzling songs from Dennis – like the soulful ballads 'Forever' and 'Fallin' In Love' and the stunning 'Slip On Through'. A criss-crossing maze of choppy rhythms, cowbells and trippy stereo harmonies bolted to a soulful R&B chorus, it was a perfect calling card for the new Beach Boys.

Warners rejected *Sunflower*, saying they didn't hear a hit single, but released 'Add Some Music' as a taster anyway. The dejected band went back to the drawing board. Sessions were paused as the band hit the road. Brian deputised for Love for a few shows after the singer's freak-out and hospitalisation in the wake of a lengthy TM-influenced fast.

The next few months would see *Sunflower* rejected once again as early '69 tracks from the proposed last Capitol album such as Brian and Love's stunning, spacey 'All I Wanna Do' were flown back in. The studio album for Capitol was then ditched, and the label was given *Live In London* – a December '68 concert tape from the Finsbury Park Astoria instead.

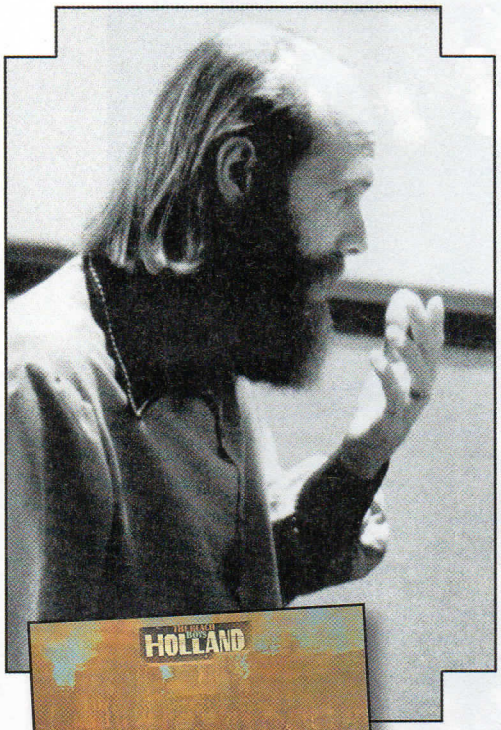
Sunflower was finally completed in early summer with Dennis and Jardine's soul-rock stomper 'It's About Time', and the revival of a curio from the *SMiLE* era. The unfinished 'Cool, Cool Water' was a '67 out-take derived from *SMiLE* track 'I Love To Say Da-Da'. Warners exec Lenny Waronker lobbied for its completion and inclusion on *Sunflower*. After adding new sections, a plinky Moog and a leftover vocal chant, the song and album were finally ready. The band toured without Dennis, absent filming his co-lead role alongside James Taylor in Monte Hellman's hip road movie *Two Lane Blacktop*.

Sunflower came out on 31st August. It did slow business, but reviews were glowing – *Rolling Stone* called it "an album that can stand with *Pet Sounds*". As part of the promotional push behind *Sunflower* Brian, Mike and Bruce had recently done a joint radio interview for KPFK Pacifica with one Jack Rieley, who'd met Brian recently at The Radiant Radish. Rieley, a journalist by trade charmed Brian so much during the lengthy interview that within days he was asked to manage The Beach Boys – to the dismay of long-suffering managers Grillo and Vail. Both would be ousted before long.

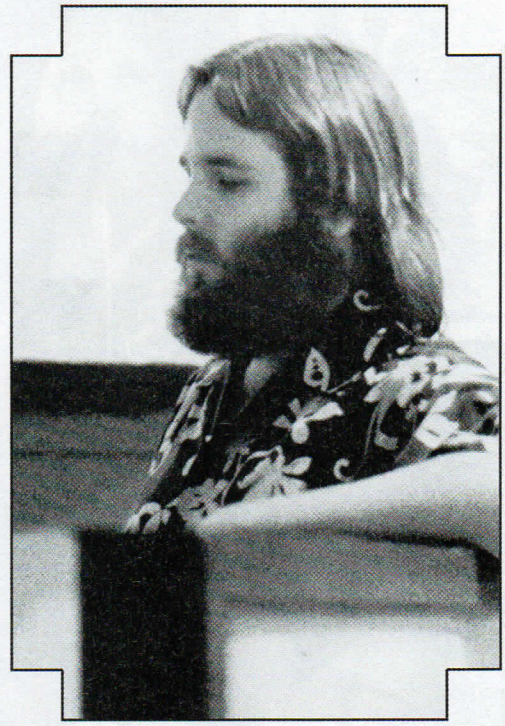
Rieley produced a six-page document outlining his vision for modernising the band. Matching outfits and short sets were out, and Carl was to be appointed official musical director – with Brian given leave to come up with whatever he liked. Rieley quickly won round the Wilsons but the others were more cautious. The Beach Boys fancied Brother as a Californian version of Apple, and wanted to sign more artists, but Rieley called time on that after a Carl-produced album by South African group The Flame (see sidebar).

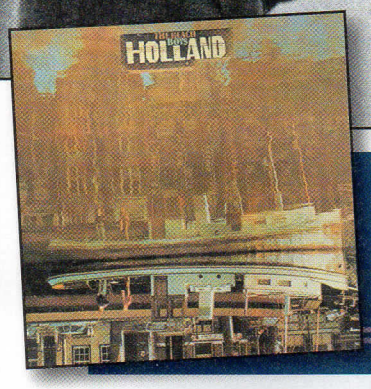
Attention turned to the next album, entitled *Landlocked,* which Rieley was dismayed to find was a mixed bag of leftovers from *Sunflower*. A curious "self-help" direction had emerged on some of the new material with Jardine offering podiatry tips in 'Take Good Care Of Your Feet', and Love advocating a healthy diet in 'H.E.L.P Is On The Way'. Mo Ostin rejected the album with a firm "No way" but there was a mournful folky tune by Jardine – 'Lookin' At Tomorrow' that Rieley thought he could build on.

Annoyed at having sumptuous ballad 'Fallin' In Love' rejected again, Dennis reclaimed it for himself as he began work on his first solo album at Capitol studios in late autumn. The sessions stuttered, but









"Engineer Stephen Moffitt built an entire studio in LA and shipped it to a barn in rural Holland. The airport tarmac cracked under the weight of the gear, which broke down constantly once installed"

maintain harmony within the fractious group. Within weeks Dennis was abruptly out of the band after drunkenly putting a hand through a window, severing nerves and tendons. He was replaced on live drumming duties by The Flame's Ricky Fataar. Barring occasional cameos at live shows, Dennis stayed away, working on his solo album assisted by Daryl 'The Captain' Dragon, a nickname earned due to Dragon's ever-present nautical headwear. By September *Disc & Music Echo* was reporting that Dennis was out for good.

Surf's Up came out in August '71, to mostly positive reviews. The album was still a disjointed grab bag, but Rieley had created an artful illusion of a unified effort – even if The Beach Boys were anything but. Dennis returned, quit and returned again. Brian was busy producing his latest project – wife Marilyn and her sister Diane's new duo Spring. Johnston bitched to the press that the band was becoming cliquey.

With a new single required for '72 Brian was sat down by Rieley for another co-write, but the lead Beach Boy was busy obsessing over a Hollywood masseuse called Marcella. "The only thing I could think of to quell Brian's fixation was to channel it," recalled Rieley. The *Sunflower* out-take 'I Just Got My Pay' was overhauled into a deep-pile, spacey wall of sound entitled 'Marcella' and earmarked for release in the new year.

In early '72 bandleader Carl decided to shake up the band's membership. The Beach Boys had been augmented by sidemen live since '68 and had now swelled to a 14-piece onstage. Ricky Fataar and fellow Flame guitarist/vocalist Blondie Chaplin had both been a particular asset. Carl now made them full members. "The band was rocking much harder than it had in the beginning. We gave them a little more oomph," Chaplin told *Rolling Stone* in 2013.

With the Warners deal up for review, Rieley negotiated a deal on the band's back catalogue going back to '66, after settling out of court with Capitol. As a sweetener, Carl made the surprise announcement that *SMiLE* would finally be completed and released that year. The youngest Wilson had been cataloguing the session tapes for some months.

Warners were so keen that they agreed to Rieley's terms and waved through the next album with the caveat of *SMiLE*'s delivery by May '73. Marking the band's 10th anniversary, *Carl And The Passions – So Tough* (named for Brian and Carl's high school band) had been started in late '71 and the band split into three to complete it. Carl, Fataar and Chaplin worked on Brian's grungy 'You Need A Mess Of Help To Stand Alone' and two soulful tunes by the new recruits. Meanwhile Love and Jardine contributed the odd, gospel-y 'He Come Down' and the serene TM anthem 'All This Is That'. Dennis reluctantly brought two epic ballads from the solo sessions with Dragon. Shortly before release Bruce Johnston left. The bassist was rowing with the others and shunned the sessions. "He may have taken it as a dismissal but that's just too bad because we had tangible gripes about him," shrugged Love to *NME*'s Keith Altham.

Carl And The Passions was released in the US with an unusual free gift – a second disc containing *Pet Sounds*. This gimmick didn't manage to shift many copies of an interesting but rushed album."It was a door-stopper," said Rieley.

At the peak of their powers as a live act, the band blazed a trail across Europe with epic career-spanning shows that spring. There were regular pit stops at their new HQ in The Netherlands – another Rieley idea hatched after a visit in early '72. "I was blissfully naïve about costs," he admitted.

In May '72 the entire Beach Boys entourage – band, wives, girlfriends, pets and staff relocated to Holland. Engineer Stephen Moffitt built a studio in LA and shipped it to a barn in rural Baambrügge. The airport tarmac cracked under the weight of the gear, which broke down constantly once installed. "It was rough being in Holland," said Jardine. "We were working 24/7 in a small home-made studio in a garage next to a cow pasture."

Technical woes aside, the band gelled well in Holland – reinventing their sound with a dash of rustic funk. Fataar and Chaplin brought in a couple of great soulful ballads, while Love and Jardine brought in the atmospheric suite 'California Saga'. Carl and Rieley wrote the stunning 'The Trader', and Dennis mended fences with Love briefly to co-write the tender 'Only With You'. The only problem, as ever, was Brian.

It took four attempts to get Brian



Carl in his beloved Nudie suit, 1973; Riky Fataar and Blondie Chaplin join in '72; Central Park show, '71; Holland and singles; *Rolling Stone* cover, October '71

Wilson to Holland. On arrival he delegated producing duties to Carl, occasionally lying in the booth but mostly staying home, getting stoned and obsessively spinning Randy Newman's *Sail Away*. Brian immersed himself in a musical "fairy tale" he wrote using toy rubber stamps belonging to daughters Carnie and Wendy and took to his Moog. 'Mount Vernon And Fairway (A Fairy Tale)' was presented as a (nearly) complete work to the others. "Nobody was ready for that," said Brian later. *"Nobody."* Rieley was enlisted to narrate the piece, ad-libbing the ending. Everyone agreed that 'Mount Vernon' didn't fit, but Rieley came up with an elegant solution "It seemed to me that song wasn't part of the *Holland* album, yet it was. So putting that song on a seven-inch EP was a no-brainer."

Returning to LA that autumn, The Beach Boys proudly presented *Holland* to Warners, who, in time-honoured fashion, rejected it. However, Van Dyke Parks had an ace up his sleeve, a demo of an unfinished tune co-written with Brian earlier that year, which Warners lapped up. "You could say I did The Beach Boys a nice turn there."

'Sail On Sailor' was a soulful FM update of the band's classic sound. One lyric polish from Rieley later, the nucleus of Carl, Fataar and Chaplin rushed into Village Recorders. The lead vocal eluded Carl, so Dennis tried a single take before splitting for the beach. Chaplin eventually stepped up to provide the mesmeric lead. The album was complete, but 'Sail On Sailor''s inclusion nudged both Fataar and Chaplin's 'We Got Love' and Dennis's devastating Vietnam lament 'Carry Me Home' off the final tracklist. Released on 45 in January '73, 'Sail On Sailor' was a radio hit, but didn't chart. *Holland* followed on 30th January and did middling business.

In March, the band commenced the first leg of a mammoth US touring schedule that spanned most of the year. The shows were triumphs with Dennis attracting cheers for joining Love out front as co-frontman. Love and his younger brother Stephen, the band's newly-appointed assistant manager, couldn't help but notice how well the encores where the band brought out the surfing era hits went down.

In May, The Beach Boys were fined $50,000 by Warners for not delivering *SMiLE*. A month later the Wilson brothers' world was rocked by the death of father Murry – who left a huge void in their lives despite his bullying ways. Only Carl attended the funeral. Dennis began to drink heavily, while Brian went into shutdown. He'd spend much of the next few years in bed self-medicating and feeding his escalating coke habit.

In November, *The Beach Boys In Concert* was released. A stunning double documenting the '72-73 tours, it surprised everyone by vastly outselling both *Holland* and *Passions* and going gold – to the keen interest of Mike Love. A new regime loomed ominously into view by late '73. Rieley, who'd remained in Holland was sacked as manager, replaced by the hard-headed Steve Love. The younger Love made his presence felt by fighting backstage at Madison Square Garden with a disgusted Chaplin, who immediately quit.

As '74 dawned the sun set on The Beach Boys as a creative concern. In trying to escape their past, it had ironically caught up with them in a big way. The harmony and creativity of the *Holland* band was gone, there would be no more albums until '76. After the commercial failure of their Warners era and the costly gamble on *SMiLE*, Dennis was sidelined and Carl's stewardship of the band curtailed. Mike Love seized control, with a new focus on The Road and The Hits. That lucrative but creatively empty mission remains in place decades on, as the ghost ship of The Beach Boys sails remorselessly on undaunted by death and dysfunction, with Love and Johnston at the tiller. "Columnated Ruins, Domino."

With thanks to Craig Williams

1969: I'm Going Your Way is available to stream now

MAGIC TRANSISTOR RADIO

The further adventures of **THE BEACH BOYS** and friends, 1970-73



Lighting the way, The Beach Boys with new signings and future personnel The Flame in 1971; Brian poses with wife Marilyn and Diane Rovell (below)



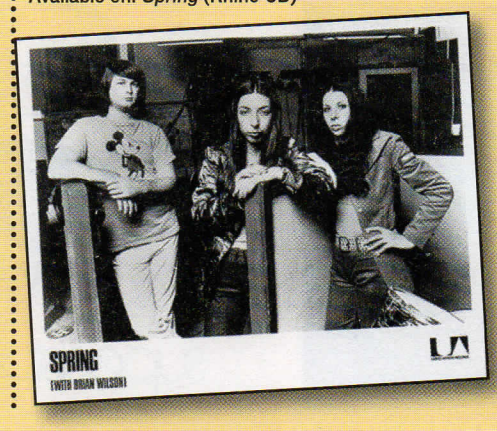
AMERICAN SPRING

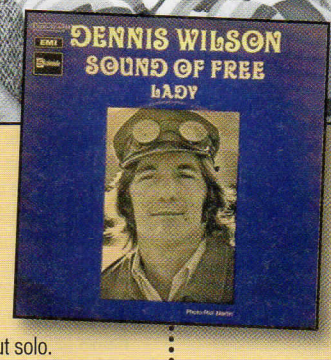
A major distraction for Brian Wilson in 1971-72 for more reasons than one, American Spring evolved from "surfer girl" trio The Honeys, for whom Brian produced and wrote a raft of sides throughout the '60s. By the early '70s The Honeys were dormant after the departure of third member Ginger Blake. Sisters Diane Rovell and Marilyn Wilson were kept busy by The Beach Boys. Marilyn was largely occupied looking after both her young daughters, and husband Brian. Diane acted as Brian's assistant. Both frequently sang back-up in studio.

In '71 the sisters' career was revived when they signed to United Artists, renamed Spring. Their eponymous album, produced by Brian, David Sandler and Steve Desper, was released on UA in '72 and is a homespun, eccentric gem. Featuring a clutch of Beach Boys covers and rarities (the new 'Good Time' was actually a refugee from the *Sunflower* sessions, 'Thinkin' About You Baby', an ancestor of 'Darlin'', was originally cut by The Honeys) amongst songs from the likes of Goffin & King – it's one of the best Beach Boys-related records of the era. The album also features the endearingly weird 'Sweet Mountain', a Brian tune chanted by the sisters over slabs of chunky Moog.

The album was scuppered by various mishaps – the duo was renamed American Spring after a Leicester-based prog outfit also called Spring threatened legal action. A high-profile UK interview with Bob Harris on *The Old Grey Whistle Test* in '72 saw the bemused sisters barraged with questions about *SMiLE* and *Surf's Up* by Harris. There was also Brian's lengthy on-off affair with Diane. There was one last single – 'Shyin' Away' / 'Fallin' In Love' – but American Spring lost momentum after Brian's '73 breakdown and the sisters once more became heavily embroiled in the drama that surrounded The Beach Boys.

Essential Cut: 'Sweet Mountain'
Available on: *Spring* **(Rhino CD)**





DENNIS WILSON & RUMBO

Frustrated at having his songs left off *Surf's Up*, rogue Beach Boy Dennis became the first to strike out solo. Sessions with Rumbo (AKA touring keyboard player Daryl Dragon, with occasional assistance from Carl) kicked off in autumn 1970. The only official single by the duo was 'Sound Of Free' / 'Lady', released in the UK on Stateside in November. The B-side, also known as 'Fallin' In Love' was actually a Beach Boys out-take overhauled and orchestrated by Wilson and Dragon.

The pair continued to work throughout '71 on a stash of songs. "He had no confidence in his own talent and I helped him with that," said Dragon in a '99 interview. The Dennis/Rumbo tracks were occasionally requisitioned by the parent band for their own use. The superb 'Wouldn't It Be Nice To Live Again' became a full Beach Boys effort, but was criminally left on the shelf until 2012. 'Cuddle Up' and 'Make It Good' were lifted direct (and with no other Beach Boy involvement) for *Carl And The Passions: So Tough*. The partnership broke up in '72 after Dragon, who'd been with the band for five years, declined an offer to become a full time Beach Boy. opting to form a duo with girlfriend Toni Tennille, also playing with the band at the time. "They didn't understand that because I was making a lot more with The Beach Boys," said Dragon. "But I believed in Toni and I didn't believe in them. I believed in Dennis..." Dragon's instinct paid off. The Captain & Tennille were soon a huge success, but the keyboardist remained bittersweet about leaving Dennis behind. "They didn't understand him. I felt they didn't realise what he had."

Essential Cut: 'Sound Of Free'
Available on: *The Beach Boys: Made In California* **(Capitol box set)**



THE FLAME

Durban teenagers The Flames might have seemed unlikely bedfellows for a band quite as white as The Beach Boys, but the band's association with Hawthorne's finest began when they befriended Carl Wilson and Al Jardine at a chance meeting at London drinking den The Speakeasy in late 1968.

"They were doing a tour in England and they were looking for acts to sign to Brother Records," recalled singer-guitarist Blondie Chaplin in 2013. Hitting it off with Carl, who dug the band's gutsy, churchy R&B sound, The Flames moved to the states in '70. Signing to Brother Records, the band lost their "s" to avoid confusion with James Brown's Famous Flames.

Their self-titled album, produced by Carl, became the only non-Beach Boys release on Brother (but was distributed, oddly via Capitol rather than Warners). *The Flame*, released in autumn '70 is a little gem, its tight, soulful grooves given a dash of California sunshine and a surprising powerpop flavour by Carl and BB engineer Steve Desper. The Flame toured extensively as support act to their benefactors, and The Beach Boys hosted a showcase for them. However, the band split in early '72 after Chaplin and drummer Ricky Fataar were conscripted into The Beach Boys as full-time members. Chaplin quickly found himself an equal lead singer both live and in studio but moved on in December '73, with Fataar following suit in late '74.

"Ricky Fataar and I didn't feel like we were fully there," says Chaplin. "We thought we were kind of brought in to give the band a harder and funkier edge. If that means being a Beach Boy, fine."

Essential Cut: 'See The Light'
Available on: *The Flame* **(Fallout CD)**