

The documentary then shifts focus for the next hour from Taylor to a general overview of the Stones during the period. There are long stretches on the influence of Gram Parsons and country music, the Anita Pallenberg vs Bianca Jagger battle of ill wills, the band's decampment to France and Richards' ever-deepening heroin addiction during the *Exile* recordings. Greenfield, who stayed at Richards' Rivera estate, muses that the goings-on reminded him of Somerset Maugham's old line that the "South of France is a sunny place for shady people."

As the timer nears the 99-minute mark conclusion on this DVD, the overview returns to Taylor but doesn't recap his post-Stones career. Contrary to Richards' assertions in *Life*, Taylor has made good music since leaving the band. But it's mostly gone unheard. Taylor told the *Daily Mail* in 2009 that he was broke and hasn't seen a Rolling Stones royalty check since 1982. With his involvement in the *Exile* reissue presumably that's changed. *The Rolling Stones, 1969-1974: The Mick Taylor Years* adds some of the credit he also deserves. (Bill Wasserzieher)

BRIAN WILSON - SONGWRITER 1962-1969 (Sexy Intellectual)

Two thoughts: How inconceivable it would have been in 1962 or '69 to suggest that a documentary film on Bri-Fi's career would ever be made, and what's left unsaid about the man and his music after so much coverage and analysis over the last three decades?

Thankfully, there's plenty to say, and this double-DVD set says lots rather well. Time has lent perspective to the ongoing discussion of his work, and most of the experts, textperts and players providing commentary here really know their stuff—the musicians who abetted Brian now have, after 40-plus years of answering questions, pretty solid takes on why he got them to do what they did on all those classic recordings.

Among the talking heads: David Marks, Bruce Johnston, Carol Kaye and Hal Blaine, Beach Boys booker-manager Fred Vail, Danny Hutton, Russ Titelman, Billy Hinsche, writers Peter Ames Carlin, Anthony DeCurtis and Domenic Priore, and music prof Phillip Lambert. Lambert's invaluable for demonstrating, at the piano, precisely what's so innovative and sophisticated about "Little Deuce Coupe" and other tunes. Priore explains the "ballad suite" on *Beach Boys Today!* as the set-up for *Pet Sounds*, while Brian biographer Carlin explains why he sees "I Get Around" as the precursor to the convention-breaking modular-song approach taken in "Good Vibrations."

Danny Hutton shines fresh light on Brian's mid-'60s compositional technique, a creative strategy we can recognize as being much like that of another immortal of the period. Hutton notes that Brian would typically sit down at the piano and begin playing "Be My Baby" over and over "until he got an idea and gradually turned it into his own thing," which reminds us of Dylan's practice of revisiting traditional folk or older pop tunes as a limbering-up exercise when he starts a writing session.

One of the best things about an in-depth examination of Beach Boys music that is limited to these seven brilliant years is that almost everything gets covered. Want to know how much work went into the *All Summer Long* LP or why *Shut Down Vol. 2* was a rushed project, or the challenges that inspired the great-leap-forward of *Today?* Look no further. If *Brian Wilson Songwriter* isn't the definitive study of

the Hawthorne Mozart, it'll hold the title until something really spectacular drops (like a documentary with full participation from Brian and Mike, which doesn't seem likely).

Much of the concert and prom-film footage will be familiar to any Brian fanatic, but there are bits and pieces of backstage/home-movie material that, in their brevity, only whet the appetite for more.

But that's not really the point: If Wilson partisans needed the ammo to prove that their guy was every bit the match of Mac-Len or anyone, *Brian Wilson Songwriter* supplies it.

I won't spoil it, but the absolute heaviest, most touching sequence takes place on the extras disc, during Fred Vail's recollection of pitching "Add Some Music" to a Top-40 programmer in 1970. The scene is at first devastating, but ultimately it's inspiring—because over time the Beach Boys' music is vindicated and Vail, the fans, Wilson and the world ultimately win big. (Gene Sculatti)

V.A. - A HISTORY LESSON, PART 1: Punk Rock in Los Angeles in 1984 (Historical Records)

While dozens of high-quality books were written about punk rock during the last two decades, I can count the number of worthwhile punk rock documentaries produced during that same period on one hand. Here's another one for the shit pile.

Dave Travis' *A History Lesson, Part 1: Punk Rock in Los Angeles in 1984* features three great bands, the Minutemen, Redd Kross and the Meat Puppets, playing live in Los Angeles at the height of their powers. It also includes a performance by Twisted Roots. Unfortunately, the footage is poorly lit and "guest stars" the backs of the heads of everybody who was standing in front of Dave Travis at these shows. Hilariously, Travis tries to spruce it up by using various cheesy special effects available on early video cameras. The footage doesn't look any better in kaleidoscopic form.

Notwithstanding these serious shortcomings, some of the clips are awesome from a historical perspective. There's a youthful D. Boon dancing a jig while performing "The Big Foist" at the Olympic Auditorium, as well as Bangle Vickie Peterson sitting in on guitar with Redd Kross. Unfortunately, the sound quality of these performances is horrendous. Travis' microphone was so inadequate that the Meat Puppets and Redd Kross performances are unlistenable. The Minutemen and Twisted Roots songs sound a bit better but not enough to inspire repeat viewings.

Perhaps recognizing that better quality footage of all of these bands is available for free on YouTube, Travis has decided to supplement the performances with interviews with a member or members of each band. Sadly, these interviews are dull and pointless. The Kirkwood brothers appear stoned and utterly disinterested. In what epitomizes the far-from-revelatory nature of these interviews, the Kirkwoods admit that they were stoned when they recorded their first record. Then they admit that they were stoned when they recorded their second record. But get this, man: They were on different drugs. Whoah! Paul Roessler also seems to have ingested a lot of pot before his interview. Perhaps he was sitting too close to the Kirkwoods in the green room. Jeff McDonald and Mike Watt are far more animated than Roessler and the Kirkwoods, but their interviews are still short and not particularly interesting or informative.

It's difficult to figure out who the audience for this DVD is. I love Los Angeles punk rock, but I'll never

watch it again. And though it purports to be a history lesson, it's unlikely to generate any new fans with its horrible sound and interviews that tell little or nothing about each band. Save your money and buy *The Decline of Western Civilization, Part 1*, or *Another State of Mind*. (Hunter Bennett)

V.A. - TEEN A GO GO (www.teen-a-go-go.com)

This 80-minute documentary by Melissa Kirkendall examines the outbreak of teenage garage bands that occurred in America in the mid '60s, spurred by the Beatles' first appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show* in February 1964. The film's center stage is the teen rock'n' roll scene of Fort Worth, Texas, which is portrayed as a particularly vibrant microcosm of what was happening in other locations all across the country.

Musicians from all the major Fort Worth bands give their impressions of the period, including the Elite, the Barons, Larry & the Blue Notes, the Jades, the Kandy Kanes, the Cynics, the Mods, and the Novas, along with several groups from other locales such as Eric & the Norsemen from Kansas and the Vipers from Arkansas. Fans, radio personalities, commentators and historians, including Billy Miller and Lenny Kaye, also weigh in with theories about what made the Fort Worth scene so unique.

The hub of the action was the Teen A Go Go, one of several teen clubs in the Fort Worth area where youngsters thronged in the hundreds to see local bands. "It was teenagers just out dancing to live music and having fun and going out to see their favorite bands," explains Larry Roquemore of the Blue Notes. "And each Friday night, or whatever nights these happened, the places were packed. I think it was a dollar a head."

The scene inside the Teen A Go Go is documented on some incredible (but silent) Super 8 footage of the Cynics performing. There are home movie clips of several of the other bands too, either playing onstage or larking around in classic post-*Hard Day's Night* fashion. There's also brief but amazing live footage (with sound) of the Jades onstage doing "I'm Alright," and excerpts of the Five Americans on the *Sump'n Else* TV show. The film also features hundreds of period photos, along with posters, ads and other memorabilia, and there's plenty of the original recordings to soundtrack all of these great visuals.

Teen A Go Go closes out with an amusing clip of the pre-teen Ways from Oregon plodding through a ludicrously naive version of "Long Tall Texan" in their suburban backyard, a perfect summation of the audacious, anyone-can-do-it spirit that was the essence of the teenage garage band phenomenon.

The DVD comes with a bonus CD single featuring two top Fort Worth tracks, "Night of the Sadist" by Larry & the Blue Notes and "One Potato" by the Elite. (MS)

