

Site Search

On Sale Today!

Complete Home Theater **From \$999** Stereo **From \$239**




web magazine for music, audio & home theater more hi-res disc reviews than any other publication

Home
SACD/Hi-Res
Audio News
Component
Special Features
Classical
Classical Reissues
DVD/Blu-ray
Dual Disc
Pop/Rock/World
Jazz CDs
Editorial
Reviews Index
Audio Links
Past Issues
Reader Feedback
Register to Win
Site Map
Best Discs of Year

DVD & Blu-ray Video Reviews

Brian Wilson, Songwriter 1962-1969 (2010)

This documentary offers a fascinating look at an American musical icon.

Published on November 30, 2010



"Jacobs's account is a real game-changer..."
-BBC MUSIC
AVAILABLE NOW



Der Ring des Nibelungen
4 Blu-ray Discs for same price as DVD Box

Brian Wilson, Songwriter 1962-1969 (2010)

Disc One (Chapters): Surf's Up; The Beach Boys; California Dreaming; A Wilson Production; The Wall Of Sound; The British Invasion; The End Of Summer
Disc Two (Chapters): Today; The Mid-Sixties; Pet Sounds; Capitol Punishment; Wilsons; Smile; The End Of An Era
Studio: Sexy Intellectual (2 DVDs) [Distr. by MVD]
Video: 1.33:1 Color
Audio: English DD Stereo 2.0
Extras: Interviews: Bruce Johnston, David Marx, Carol Kaye, Hal Blaine, Fred Van, Russ Titelman, Bill Halverson, Billy Hinsche, Danny Hutton, Peter Ames and




PentaTone classics
for the best classical SA-CD.
[click here](#)



SWEET DESIRE



20
exceptional year:
now 20% off

Staff Bios
John Sunier Bio

Advertise with us?**many others****Length: 180 minutes****Rating: ******

The story of Brian Wilson is well documented. His meteoric rise to fame as the genius behind the rise of the Beach Boys is well documented. Family issues, drug addiction, bouts with depression and a life of excess developed the blueprint for a cautionary tale. However, what can never be debated or trivialized is the significance of his musical contribution. Both the compositional depth and vocal arrangements for the Beach Boys revolutionized popular music. Utilizing the basic guitar-driven format of classic rock and roll, Wilson developed the West Coast sound, replete with spacey effects and jazz arranged vocals. At the height of popularity, the Beach Boys released *Pet Sounds*, considered to be among the greatest recorded pop achievements. Unfortunately, the mantle of success would disintegrate. The Beach Boys maintained a credible viability as a live act, and Wilson returned to launch a modest solo career. However, the promise of a dazzling, post-*Pet Sounds* future receded into darkness.

Brian Wilson Songwriter 1962-1969, a two-disc DVD, is a chronicle of the artistic, musical narrative of a visionary. The directors have chosen to concentrate on the details of songwriting, recording and performance, rather than reiterate the dramatic story lines. The "unauthorized" DVD opens with a touching studio performance of "Surf's Up" (from the once-scrapped project, *Smile*). Interviews detail the influences (Chuck Berry, Four Freshmen, guitar driven surf music), that inspired the genesis of the Beach Boys. The documentary never bogs down as there is quintessential performance footage ("Surfin' USA", "Little Deuce Coupe", "Fun, Fun, Fun"). Wilson appears to be a happy, centered artist. Soon, the issues with his domineering father, and his decision to model himself after Phil Spector (producing other artists and spending inordinate time in the studio), elevated his craft, but at a steep personal cost. Specific attention is paid to the technical innovations of the compositions. The arrival of the Beatles (also, great footage from the *Ed Sullivan Show*) put American popular music on the spot. Brian Wilson would be the individual who picks up this gauntlet.

Disc Two starts with the narrative of the enigmatic band leader at his best...in the studio. Interviews with members of the legendary Wrecking Crew studio band attest to the brilliance of Wilson as a composer and arranger. At the same time, he would stop touring and begin a perilous slide into drugs and emotional despair. Among the highlights of the documentary are musicians trying to articulate the connections between Brian Wilson songs and other music. Carol Kaye demonstrates, in an engaging interchange, the bass line similarities between "California Girls" and "Tumblin' Tumbleweeds".



Copyright © Audiophile Au
All rights Reserved

Ads by Google

**Philadelphia
Coupons**

1 ridiculously huge coupon a day. It's like doing Philly at 90% off!

www.Groupon.com/Philac

Bing™ Music

Search and Play Full Songs for Free on Bing. Downloads, Lyrics & More.

bing.com/music

**Entertainment
Business**

Artist Relations, Tour Management, Studio Management, PR, Marketing...

www.FullSail.edu

**Philly 1-Day
Coupons**

Up to 90% off the best stuff to do! Restaurants, spas, events and more

www.LivingSocial.com

A fitting apex of the story is the recording of *Pet Sounds*. While elevating the Beach Boys to superstars, the band, and label (Capitol Records) clashed with their leader over the abandonment of the "formula". *Pet Sounds* did not achieve significant commercial success, but the subsequent release of "Good Vibrations" as a single reinvigorated the label, anticipating the *Smile* album. Sadly, it would be decades before its delayed release. As the decade ends, Brian Wilson and The Beach Boys would fade into relative obscurity.

Brian Wilson Songwriter 1962-1969 is a fascinating career retrospective (at least the early part) of a musical genius. The DD 2.0 audio is excellent. Even the early mono recordings sound crisp. The footage is plentiful and the voice-overs are not intrusive. The bonus features, by contrast, are underwhelming. Analytical discussions (most notably in the interviews) provide valuable insights into the most essential part of this tale, the music itself. It is unfortunate that neither Wilson nor members of the original Beach Boys contributed to the film. But the legacy of this phenomenon speaks volumes.

-- Robbie Gerson

[Email your Opinions](#) on this article to AUDIOPHILE AUDITION!

[Email this page](#) to a friend. View a [printer-friendly version](#).

[Ads by Google](#) [Music Studio](#) [The Beach Boys](#) [Music Producer](#) [Jazz Music](#)