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Good vibrations: 'Brian Wilson: Songwriter' DVD a fascinating look at his work

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The career of Brian Wilson remains one of the most incredible chapters of rock music. Now, a two-DVD documentary, "[Brian Wilson: Songwriter, 1962-1969.](#)" to be released Nov. 23, takes a through look at that career through people who have worked with him.

Interviewed in the two-DVD set are fellow Beach Boys Bruce Johnston and David Marks, Wrecking Crew (and session musician) members Carol Kaye and Hal Blaine, Beach Boys manager Fred Vail, producers Russ Titleman and Bill Halverson, and Wilson family friends Billy Hinsche (Dino, Desi and Billy) and Danny Hutton (Three Dog Night). The documentary also adds comments from music critics and authors, including Dominic Priore and Peter Ames Carlin, who have written about the group and Wilson.

The film, which ranges from the Beach Boys' beginnings through "Friends," has a thorough discussion of the "Smile" debacle and includes archival video footage of the "Smile" sessions with some audio originally heard on bootlegs.

Bruce Johnston says in the film that the "Smile" album self-destructed in an atmosphere of paranoia and pressure Wilson encountered from Capitol Records and his fellow Beach Boys. Hal Blaine comments about Wilson putting a piano in a sandbox. "It was his house and his sandbox," he says.

The vintage footage here also includes Wilson's great live rendition of "Surf's Up" from the Leonard Bernstein CBS special in which Bernstein praised Wilson as one of rock's great composers.

The years covered by the documentary are some of his best work and is interspersed with Beach Boys music, both live and studio, throughout. Most of the Beach Boys video footage will have been seen by collectors, but there's quite a bit here and it's put in context of Wilson's career.

For anyone interested in his work, ["Brian Wilson: Songwriter, 1962-1969"](#) is a gold mine of information, video footage and music.