

## Go Metric

January 03, 2011

### Ten Reasons Why "Brian Wilson: Songwriter, 1962-1969" Should be the Last Beach Boys Documentary You Ever Need to Watch



by Gary Pig Gold



1. Veteran SoCal socio-musical historian Domenic Priore, sitting alongside a tiki totem beneath a strategically placed orange branch, more than ably launches our story over a wealth of Eastmancolor'd freeway and beach footage, drawing, as only he can, that all-important connection from *Gidget* to Dick Dale all the way to teenage Brian's Hawthorne, California music room.
2. We see some *very* cool vintage Four Freshmen footage, and the undeniable influence that quartet's equally cool jazz vocal stylings had on Brian and his Boys, explained to us by none other than First Lady of the Wilsonian Bass Guitar, Carol Kaye.
3. Next, back-to-back clips of Chuck Berry serenading "Sweet Little Sixteen" at *The TAMI Show* and the young B. Boys themselves belting out their just-released "Surfin' USA" in full deck-swabbing gear illustrate, as thousands of words over the years have til now failed to, why CHUCK'S name is the one listed as composer of the latter hit.
4. Similarly, *Inside The Music of Brian Wilson* author Prof. Philip Lambert takes to the piano to juxtapose Phil Spector's "Be My Baby" with Brian's equally ingenious "answer" song "Don't Worry, Baby" ...as Phil's former Wrecking Crewman (and Brian's drummer of choice) Hal Blaine gets a little *Prison Wall* of Sound joke in at his ol' [...typepad.com/.../brian-wilson-songwri...](http://...typepad.com/.../brian-wilson-songwri...)

boss' everlasting expense.

5. We get to hear lots of fly-on-the-acoustic-tile recording studio chatter, stretching all the way back to the making of that very first Beach Boy record "Surfin" itself. Not to mention, I'm afraid, a terrifying example of father / manager / producer [sic!] Murry "I'm a Genius Too" Wilson putting the psychological screws into Brian's brain at the infamous "Help Me, Rhonda" vocal session (which ended at least one person's career).
6. Why, we even get to hear *Winterreise* by Franz Schubert and Robert Schumann's *Dichterliebe* used in the very same sentence as *Pet Sounds* !
7. Three Dog Night tripper Danny Hutton, however, has an even better word for this all: "Marijuana!!"
8. Original Beach Boy David Marks talks about all the treble Capitol Records liked to put on the band's Fender guitars, while current Beach Boy Bruce Johnston talks about all the *trouble* Capitol Records liked to put Brian Wilson through whenever he dared stray from his original musical sun-n-fun formula.
9. Which reminds me: Brian's most note-worthy by far collaborator Van Dyke Parks is shown in the old Tower Records parking lot off Sunset Strip circa 1976 in an attempt to explain why Mike Love never could get a lyric such as "Over and over the crow flies uncover the cornfield" in to his head, let alone out of his mouth.
10. And, as if the Seventies weren't cruel enough already to all concerned, we end with lifelong Beach Boy friend, confidante, and concert promoter Fred Vail still, forty years later, shedding a righteous tear recalling how he failed to get the band's "Add Some Music To Your Day" single added to a powerful East Coast radio station playlist back in the daze because, he was told, "The Beach Boys aren't *hip* anymore."

Needless to say said program director – not to mention his station (and Top 40 radio in general) – is long long gone, Fred for one survives to tell this and many other poignant Beach Boy tales and, of this there can be NO doubt, Brian Wilson's magical melodies are poised to enter their second half-century of faithful, never disappointing service to one and all.

This magnificent 190-minute, two-DVD package, and the fine cast of musicians, historians, and Wilson pals and players therein, do a most remarkable job in explaining to us exactly why. It should indeed be considered Required Viewing by *all* who still love to add good vibes to their days.

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**Brian Wilson - Songwriter 1962 - 1969**

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