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The group continues to record material and tour with regularity. Their 2007 album *Here & Now* was a collaboration with a new generation of musicians who credited the band as an influence. America won a Grammy Award for Best New Artist at the 15th Annual Grammy Awards. The group has been inducted into the Vocal Group Hall of Fame and received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

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### History


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While their fathers were stationed at the United States Air Force base at RAF South Ruislip near London in the mid-1960s, Beckley, Bunnell and Peek attended London Central High School at Bushey Hall where they met while playing in two different bands. Peek left for the United States for an abortive attempt at college during 1969. Soon after his return to the UK the following year, the three began making music together. Starting out with borrowed acoustic guitars, they developed a style which incorporated three-part vocal harmony with the style of contemporary folk-rock acts such as Crosby, Stills & Nash.

Eventually, the trio dubbed themselves America, chosen because they did not want anyone to think they were British musicians trying to sound American.[1] They played their first gigs in the London area, including some highlights at the Roundhouse, Chalk Farm where Pink Floyd had played at the beginning of its career. Through Ian Samwell and Jeff Dexter’s efforts they were eventually contracted to Kinney Records (UK) in March 1971 by Ian Ralfini and assigned to the UK Warner Brothers label.

Their first album America (1971) was recorded at Trident Studios in London and produced by Ian Samwell, best known for being Cliff Richard's lead guitarist as well as writing Richard's 1958 breakthrough hit "Move It". Jeff Dexter, Ian's roommate, co-produced the album and became the trio's manager. Dexter also gave them their first major gig, December 20, 1970, at "Implosion" at the Roundhouse, Chalk Farm, as the opening act for The Who, Elton John, Patto and The Chalk Farm Salvation Army Band & Choir for a Christmas charity event. Although the trio initially planned to record the album in a similar manner to The Beatles' Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, America convinced them to perfect their acoustic style instead.

The debut album America was released in 1971 to only moderate success, although it sold well in the Netherlands, where Dexter had taken them as a training ground to practice their craft. Samwell and Dexter subsequently brought the trio to Morgan Studios to record several additional songs. One of them was a Bunnell composition called "Desert Song", which Dexter previously demoed during studio rehearsals in Puddletown, Dorset at the home of Arthur Brown. The song had its public debut at The Harrogate Festival, four days later, to great audience response. After several performances and a TV show it was re-titled "A Horse with No Name". The song became a major worldwide hit in early 1972. It sold over one million copies, and was awarded a gold disc by the R.I.A.A. in March 1972.[2] America's debut album was re-released with the hit song added and quickly went platinum. The album resulted in a second major chart success with Beckley's "I Need You", which peaked at No. 9 on the U.S. charts.[3]

After their initial success, the trio decided to dismiss Samwell and Dexter and relocate to Los Angeles, California. The recording of a second album was delayed by the relocation as well as an injury to Peek's arm. Deciding not to replace Samwell, the group opted to produce the album by themselves. The trio began their move away from a mainly acoustic style to a more rock-music-oriented style with the help of Hal Blaine on drums and Joe Osborn on bass. Peek began to play lead electric guitar on more tracks and the group expanded from an acoustic trio to embrace a fuller live sound, adding Dave Dickey on bass and Dave Atwood (who'd played as a session musician on their debut album) on drums. By the beginning of 1973, Atwood had been replaced by Dickey’s friend, Willie Leacox, who, like Dickey was formerly of the group Captain.

America's second album, Homecoming, was released in November 1972. Awarded a gold disc in December 1972, the million sales figure was confirmed by the R.I.A.A. in 1975.[2] The group reached the top 10 again with Bunnell's "Ventura Highway".[3] Other singles, including Peek's "Don't Cross the River" and Beckley's "Only in Your Heart", were only modestly successful, but the group still won a Grammy Award for Best New Artist of 1972.

The group’s output grew increasingly ambitious. Their third offering, Hat Trick, was released in October 1973 following several months of recording at the Record Plant Studios in Los Angeles. Again self-produced, the album featured strings, harmonicas, an eight-minute title track, and tap dancing. Beckley, Bunnell and Peek were once again joined by Blaine on drums, while Osborn was replaced by their touring bassist, David Dickey. The album was not as successful as Homecoming (1972), featuring only one modestly successful single, "Musk rat Love" (No. 67 in the U.S.), penned by Texas folk singer Willis Alan Ramsey. A Captain & Tennille version of the song would reach the top 10 in late 1976.

George Martin years (1974–1979)
After the disappointing commercial performance of the album *Hat Trick* (1973), America chose to enlist an outside producer for their next album. They were able to secure the services of producer George Martin and recording engineer Geoff Emerick, who played a major role in shaping the sound of The Beatles. Sessions took place at AIR Studios in London.

The resulting album, *Holiday*, was released in June 1974 (by this time the group had consciously begun naming their albums with titles starting with the letter "H"). With Martin's guidance, the album's style was very different from America's first three efforts, as he enhanced America's acoustic sound with strings and brass.

During an early 1975 tour of Europe, bassist Calvin "Fuzzy" Samuels (formerly of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young and Manassas) was called to fill in for Dickey, who was not available.

The trio soon found themselves in the Top Ten once again with the first single from *Holiday*, the Bunnell-penned "Tin Man", which reached No. 4, featuring cryptic lyrics set to a Wizard of Oz theme. "Lonely People" (a song written by the newly wed Dan and Catherine Peek[4]) followed "Tin Man" into the top ten in early 1975, becoming Dan Peek's only credited song to reach there, peaking at No.[5].

Martin worked with the trio again for their next LP, *Hearts*, recorded in Sausalito, California and released in March 1975. America scored its second chart topping success with Beckley's "Sister Golden Hair" in mid-1975, a song which featured a memorable opening guitar riff admittedly inspired by George Harrison's "My Sweet Lord" and frank relationship lyrics inspired by Jackson Browne.[5] The follow-up single, Beckley's ballad "Daisy Jane", also scored among the Top Twenty shortly after.[3] Peek's reggae-influenced "Woman Tonight" was a third success (number 44 in the U.S.) from the album towards the end of the year.[3]

Warner Bros. released a compilation of America's best-known tracks in December 1975, *History: America's Greatest Hits*, which went platinum. Martin, who produced the album, remixed those tracks which were culled from the group's first three albums.[6]

During early 1976, the group recorded its sixth studio album at Caribou Ranch near Nederland, Colorado, inspiring the album's title, *Hideaway*, which Martin produced. Released during April 1976, it saw the band's popularity severely faltering, as the two singles, "Today's the Day" and "Amber Cascades", only managed to reach number 23 and 75 (respectively) in the *Billboard* charts.[3] Songs like "Jet Boy Blue" and "Don't Let It Get Yu Down" received a lot of airplay on FM Stations.

Martin's implementation of more complex instrumentation on America's albums proved somewhat overwhelming to the band on stage, often compelling them to switch from instrument to instrument during songs.[5] For their 1976 tour, the group expanded their stage line-up to include Jim Calire on keyboards and sax and Tom Walsh on percussion so that they could more comfortably perform Martin's arrangements[5]

Martin and the trio went to Hawaii during late 1976 to work on the group's seventh studio album. The album was recorded in a beach house on the island of Kauai. The album, *Harbor*, released in February 1977, continued the trend of decreasing sales for the group. It was their first album that failed to score either platinum or gold, and all three of its singles failed to chart.

In May 1977, Dan Peek left the band. Peek recently had renewed his Christian faith after years of recreational drug use and had begun to seek a different artistic direction from Bickley or Bunnell; the break with the band was amicable.

Peek contracted with Pat Boone's Lamb & Lion Records, and issued his first solo album, *All Things Are Possible*, in 1978. The album, produced by Chris Christian, was successful, and Peek became a pioneering artist in the emerging Christian popular music genre. The title track entered the *Billboard* pop charts during the autumn of 1979, peaking at number 7.[6]

Meanwhile, Bickley and Bunnell decided to continue as America, ending their contract with Warner Bros. with the release of their first concert LP, *Live*, during October 1977. Recorded at the Greek Theater in Los Angeles, the performance featured a backing orchestra conducted by Elmer Bernstein. The concert was recorded shortly after Peek left the group. The album was only mildly
successful on the popular charts; whereas all of their previous albums, even *Harbor*, had at least made the Top 30, *Live* just barely inched into the top 130.[7]

### Capitol years (1979–1985)

After more than two years without new studio material, Beckley and Bunnell presented the group's new style with a cover of *The Mamas & the Papas*' "California Dreamin" in March 1979. It was featured on the soundtrack for the 1979 movie *California Dreaming*. Although the movie was unsuccessful and the soundtrack was issued by an obscure distributor known as American International, the single reached No. 56 on the charts.

America's first studio album without Peek, *Silent Letter*, was released in June 1979 on their new label, Capitol Records. The album, once again produced by George Martin, was recorded in Montserrat in the West Indies with the members of the live band: David Dickey, Willie Leacox, Michael Woods, Jim Calire and Tom Walsh. The group began to utilize songs from other songwriters as they sought to increase their commercial success. The album scored no higher than No. 110 on the charts, leading Bunnell sarcastically to dub the album *Silent Record*. During the latter part of 1979, Calire and Walsh were dropped from the on-stage line-up. Session bassist Bryan Garafalo replaced Dickey in 1980 and Bradley Palmer took over from Garafalo in 1981.

America continued to evolve as the 1980s began. For their next album, *Alibi*, released in August 1980, Beckley and Bunnell sought fresh personnel in the form of producers Matthew McCauley and Fred Mollin. They also employed players from the West Coast, such as the Eagles' Timothy B. Schmit, Leland Sklar and Steve Lukather, to help improve their sound. *Alibi* eschewed the strings and brass of a typical George Martin project in favor of a more popular-rock style. It also became the third studio album in a row without a successful single in the United States, although Beckley's "Survival" scored the top of the charts in Italy. The album's sales maximized at No. 142.

America's next album, *View from the Ground*, released in July 1982, saw the group finally score another commercial success. The album, recorded under the working title *Two Car Garage*, featured a number of songs produced by the duo themselves. As with *Alibi* (1980), Beckley and Bunnell brought in a number of high-profile musicians, including the Beach Boys' Carl Wilson, Toto's Jeff Porcaro, Christopher Cross and Dean Parks. But it was former Argent guitarist Russ Ballard who had the greatest effect on the group's fortunes. Ballard produced and played all of the instruments and sang most of the background vocals on a song he crafted especially for the band, called "You Can Do Magic". The song rose quickly through the pop charts, and scored as high as No. 8 on the *Billboard* pop singles chart for a number of weeks during October 1982, the band's first major success in seven years. Following "Magic" was the single "Right Before Your Eyes", an homage to silent movie actors better known to listeners as "Rudolph Valentino" due to its memorable refrain. Written by Ian Thomas (brother of comedian Dave Thomas of *Strange Brew* fame), and produced by Bobby Colombo, the single barely missed a spot in the Top Forty during early 1983. Although *View from the Ground* failed to achieve gold-rated sales, it scored as high as No. 41 on the album charts, a significant improvement over the previous few releases.

Having had success with Ballard, Beckley and Bunnell asked the former Argent performer produce their next album, *Your Move*, in its entirety. In the end, Ballard wrote most of the songs and performed most of the instruments in addition to his production duties. For the most part, Beckley and Bunnell were singers on an album that Ballard had crafted for them, although they did contribute some material of their own. On one track, Bunnell decided to rewrite Ballard's lyrics, and the successful song "The Border" was the result. Set to the backing of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the saxophone work of Raphael Ravenscroft, the single scored No. 33 on the charts in August 1983. "The Border" was much more successful on the adult contemporary charts, where it scored No. 4 (even besting "You Can Do Magic"). It also made No. 24 on the Dutch Top 40. A second single, Ballard's "Cast the Spirit", failed to chart. The album itself, released in June 1983, was reasonably successful at No. 81, but something of a disappointment, when compared to its predecessor.

America's work was also featured on several soundtracks during this period. Beckley and Bunnell provided vocals to several Jimmy Webb compositions for the film *The Last Unicorn* in 1982. The soundtrack became popular in Germany, and the group frequently plays its title track, when touring in that country. America also recorded "Love Comes Without Warning" for the 1984 Steve Martin comedy *The Lonely Guy*. 
Dan Peek emerged from several years of musical obscurity during May 1984, releasing his second solo Christian album, *Doer of the Word*, on Home Sweet Home Records. Once again produced by Chris Christian, the album's title track featured Beckley on backing vocals. Peek would issue two more solo albums over the next few years: *Electro Voice* (1986) and *Crossover* (1987).

Meanwhile, America opted for a decidedly different style from its previous offerings for its twelfth studio album, *Perspective*, released in September 1984. Ballard was out, and synthesizers and drum machines were in. Several different producers, including Richie Zito, Matthew McCauley, and Richard James Burgess, helped create an electronic popular style, that was very common during the 1980s, but drastically different from America's usual style. "Special Girl", the album's first single, was culled from hired songwriters and failed to make the charts. The next single, "Can't Fall Asleep to a Lullaby", was co-written by Bunnell, Journey's Steve Perry, Robert Haimer, and Bill Mumy, the latter of *Lost in Space* and *Babylon 5* fame. Although neither track was played on popular radio, both did achieve minor success on the adult contemporary charts. The album peaked at No. 185 during a three-week stint on the charts in October 1984.

Their mainstream commercial success over, Beckley and Bunnell ended their Capitol contract with *In Concert*, released in July 1985. The concert was recorded at the Arlington Theater in Santa Barbara, California, on June 1, 1985. *In Concert* became the first America album to miss the charts entirely.


Beckley and Bunnell spent the latter half of the 1980s focusing on their live show, performing well over 100 times a year around the world. While America remained a hot ticket on the touring circuit, they were unable to land a recording contract in the years after they left the Capitol label.

By the early 1990s, the development of compact discs led to the reissuing of many older popular albums, providing acts like America with revived sales. During 1991, America was able to offer four new tracks as part of a collection issued by Rhino Records called *Encore: More Greatest Hits*, which was designed to complement the group's original 1975 retrospective.

America's resurgence caught the eye of Chip Davis of American Gramaphone Records, who signed the group to his label. In May 1994, America released its first new studio album in a decade, *Hourglass*. Produced primarily by Beckley and Bunnell, with help from Hank Linderman and Steve Levine, the album featured an eclectic group of songs. Despite garnering generally positive reviews, the album was a commercial failure.

During 1995 Beckley delivered his debut solo album. Entitled *Van Go Gan*, the album experimented with various styles and sounds. Comedian Phil Hartman (who during his career as a graphic artist had designed several America album covers) was featured as the voice of a televangelist preacher on "Playing God". Although it was named as one of the Top Ten Music CDs of the year in Japan in 1995, the album wasn't released outside Japan until four years later[8]

America fans were also treated to a concert album in 1995. Released by the King Biscuit Flower Hour Records, Inc., the concert was actually taken from a 1982 installment of the King Biscuit Flower Hour radio show. Known as *In Concert* (not to be confused with the 1985 Capitol release of the same name), King Biscuit experienced modest success with the album (though America themselves did not: it failed to break the charts).

This success resulted in a new record deal with King Biscuit's subsidiary label, Oxygen Records. After rumors that Steely Dan producer Gary Katz would produce the project came and went, the album eventually reached stores in September 1998. The new album, entitled *Human Nature* after the name of Beckley's home recording studio, was accompanied by a modest commercial blitz. The first single, Beckley's "From a Moving Train", featured a strongly acoustic style. The track received considerable airplay and moderate success in adult contemporary formats. Reports claimed that the song was a major success in the popular charts in Spain. A second attempt at a single in "Wednesday Morning" was somewhat less successful. The album failed to garner the sales that Oxygen was expecting, and America was once again without a record deal.

**New millennium (1999–2006)**
The next few years saw the group's catalog expand with a number of side projects, reissues of older albums on CD, and several major retrospective releases. In July 2000, Rhino released *Highway: 30 Years of America*, a three-CD box set which included 64 remastered tracks spanning the group's career. Included were a handful of alternative mixes and demos such as an early take of a stripped-down "Ventura Highway".

A year later, in August 2001, Rhino released a trimmed-down single disc compilation, *The Complete Greatest Hits*, which assembled all of the group's 17 charting *Billboard* singles. The disc also included two newly recorded songs, "World of Light" and "Paradise". Peaking at No. 152 on the *Billboard* album charts in October 2001, *The Complete Greatest Hits* was America's first charting album since *Perspective* in 1984.


As part of a contemporary trend of recycling oldies recordings to create new hits, Janet Jackson's 2001 single "Someone to Call My Lover" sampled the "Ventura Highway" guitar riff and rose to No. 3 on the *Billboard* pop charts.

In October 2002, the group released its first Christmas album, *Holiday Harmony*. Produced by Andrew Gold, the album received positive reviews for its imaginative blending of elements of classic America tunes into familiar holiday standards. Included were three new tracks, including a Bunnell-penned ode to "Ventura Highway" called "Christmas in California", featuring Beckley on lead vocals. One month later, America released a live album, *The Grand Cayman Concert*. Recorded the previous April in the Cayman Islands, the concert featured just Beckley and Bunnell on acoustic guitars, a throwback to the earliest days of their career. Included were their most familiar songs along with a few which were almost never performed live, such as "Wind Wave" and "Pigeon Song". Both albums failed to chart.

After this, the band ceased recording and concentrated on their consistently lucrative touring schedule.

In early 2003 Bradley Palmer left the touring band after twenty two years and was replaced, first by Chas Frichtell, then by Trent Stroh, until Richard Campbell (formerly toured with Three Dog Night, Natalie Cole and Dave Mason) came in permanently.

Record labels occasionally offered new DVDs, such as a re-release of America's 1979 concert film, *Live in Central Park*, a 2004 concert at the Sydney Opera House, and a 2005 show at the Ventura, California Concert Theater joined with Stephen Bishop and Andrew Gold directed by Sheldon Osmond. Also in 2005, America appeared on the PBS concert series *SoundStage* with long-time friend Christopher Cross and a guest appearance by rock photographer Henry Diltz on banjo.

In April 2006, after a few solo concerts, Beckley released his third solo album, *Horizontal Fall*, which was largely ignored by both critics and buyers. His 2011 follow-up, *Unfortunate Casino*, met a similar fate.

**Recent activity (2006–present)**

As the second half of the first decade of the 2000s began, the group remained very much active and popular in the nostalgia concert circuit. Though the group had occasionally issued new material on minor labels, their offerings had been largely ignored by the greater commercial music industry and record-buying public.

However, a fateful connection would provide a sudden and unexpected change in fortune for the group. Around 2005, Beckley began correspondence with Adam Schlesinger of the independent rock music group Fountains of Wayne. Beckley had been a fan of the 2003 Fountains of Wayne album *Welcome Interstate Managers*, and Schlesinger turned out to be a fan of America's work. The exchange of songs between the two resulted in them recording a few tracks together. The recordings came to the attention of SonyBMG's new Burgundy Records label, which was impressed both by the quality of the material and by...
the possibility of pairing America with other independent artists. The company contracted America to record a new album with Schlesinger and his musical partner, James Iha, formerly of The Smashing Pumpkins, at the production helm. Entitled Here & Now (2007), it would be America's first major-label studio album since Perspective in 1984.

The recording sessions at Stratosphere Sound in New York City, which ran through July, attracted a number of notable guest musicians, including Ryan Adams, Ben Kweller, Stephen Bishop, Rusty Young, and members of the groups Nada Surf and My Morning Jacket.

In an effort to aim the album toward both younger and older audiences, the label decided to bundle the new album with a second disc comprising live performances of every track from History: America's Greatest Hits, previously recorded at XM Radio as part of XM's Then Again...Live series, recorded with longtime America drummer Wil Leacox, guitarist Michael Woods and bassist Richard Campbell. In the run-up to the album's scheduled release on January 16, 2007, America attracted publicity unknown to it since the early 1980s. The release itself was well received by critics, and Here & Now went all the way to number 52 in the Billboard charts.[7]

In addition to receiving growing support from a new generation of musicians, America finally began to receive acclamation from the entertainment industry. In 2006 America was inducted into the Vocal Group Hall of Fame.[9] On February 6, 2012, the group was given a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for their contributions to music at 6752 Hollywood Boulevard.[10] [11] As of late as 2009, America performed over 100 shows per year[12]

America's follow-up to Here & Now (2007) was released on July 26, 2011. Entitled Back Pages, the album was a collection of twelve tracks covering songs from artists ranging from Bob Dylan and Joni Mitchell to Adam Schlesinger and the Gin Blossoms. Released on the E1 Music label, the album was produced by Fred Mollin, who had originally worked with America 31 years before on Alibi. The album was recorded in Nashville, Tennessee with the help of a number of studio musicians. The release of Back Pages was briefly overshadowed by the publicity surrounding the sudden death of founding member Dan Peek on July 24, 2011.

In February 2014 lead guitarist and background vocalist Michael Woods (Woodz) announced his retirement from the band, due to ill health. His replacement was Nashville musician Bill Well.

In March 2014 long-time Beach Boys and Brian Wilson vocalist/guitarist Jeff Foskett subbed for Beckley at some concerts and longtime drummer Wil Leacox retired from the band in July 2014 and was replaced by former Reel Big Fish drummer Ryland Steen.

In November 2014, America recorded a live performance at Infinity Hall in Hartford, CT for Connecticut Public Television that was subsequently aired nationwide in June 2015, and afterwards streamed online.[13]

During the late summer of 2015, guitarist/keyboardist Andy Barr, from the group Cobra Starship, came in for Worrell, who had a broken wrist. After healing, Worrell returned to the group until leaving for a solo career in October 2016. Barr then joined America permanently.

**Dan Peek**

From the time Dan Peek left the group in May 1977, and up until his death in July 2011, speculation abounded as to whether he could or would return to the fold. On Peek's 1978 solo debut album, All Things Are Possible, Beckley and Bunnell sang back-up vocals on the track "Love Was Just Another Word". According to Peek and Bunnell, in 1983, Peek even joined the group onstage to perform a few songs during a concert at the Greek Theater in Los Angeles. On Peek's 1984 follow-up album, Doer of the Word, Beckley provided prominent backing vocals on the title track. In November 1999, credible rumors began to spread, that unreleased demo recordings from the early 1980s featuring Beckley and Bunnell collaborating with Peek would be released on CD sometime in early 2000. No such recordings have been released to date.
The questions about a possible reunion of the original trio began not long after Peek left the group. When asked about the prospects for a reunion in the early 1980s, Beckley and Bunnell stated, that they were happy for Peek in that he had found a new life and a new direction, but that it was unlikely there would be a reunion. "All things are possible, like [Dan] says", Beckley told radio host Lew Irwin in 1982, but "it just doesn't seem in the cards." Within a few years, however, Peek had begun to entertain just such thoughts publicly. "Like they said and like I said, all things are possible", Peek told interviewer Steve Orchard in 1985. "I really have my fingers crossed. I would love to get back together [with them] and do some things."

Although Beckley and Bunnell had over the years become increasingly firm in their position, that a reunion with Peek was unlikely, and could in fact be counterproductive, record companies tried to persuade them to change their minds. Bunnell noted to Steve Orchard in 1998, that "[w]e had a few labels say that they would be interested in recording us if we would bring Dan back or if we could put together the original trio." Beckley and Bunnell chose to maintain their decision to remain a duo.

In 2000, Peek began posting a number of weekly "episodes" to his website relating to his experiences prior to and during his years in America. Peek raised a few eyebrows both for his candid discussion of his experiences with drugs and religion and for his observations of Beckley and Bunnell. Eventually, Peek compiled the material into a book entitled *An American Band*, which was released in late 2004.

Certain sources have suggested erroneously that a reunion with Peek actually did occur. A *Rolling Stone* rock music discography book, printed during the mid-1990s, contained an apocryphal entry for America stating, that Dan Peek had reunited with Beckley and Bunnell for a tour in 1993 with the Beach Boys. This misinformation has been so widely disseminated, that the Australian rock journalist and historian Glenn A. Baker erroneously assumed this to be true in an interview question posed to Beckley and Bunnell on the *Live at the Sydney Opera House* DVD.

Furthermore, during an interview airing on June 7, 2010 on the *Steel Pier Radio Show with Ed Hurst* airing on WIBG Radio, Peek was asked about the reunion prospects and more or less ruled them out. The last song Peek recorded was "Kiss Me On the Waves" (2011) with the Spanish band Etcetera, as guest singer. The song was written by Guillermo Albelo and included in the album *Steps On the Water*.

Continuous speculations of Peek reuniting with America finally came to an end when Peek died in his home in Farmington, Missouri of fibrinous pericarditis on July 24, 2011, at the age of 60.[14]

### Personnel

**Current members**

- Gerry Beckley – lead and backing vocals, keyboards, guitars, bass, harmonica (1970–present)
- Dewey Bunnell – lead and backing vocals, guitars, percussion (1970–present)

**Former members**


**Current touring musicians**

- Richard Campbell – bass, vocals (2003–present)
- Ryland Steen – drums, percussion (2014–present)
- Andy Barr – guitars, banjo, keyboards, backing vocals (2016–present)

**Former touring musicians**

- David Dickey – bass, backing vocals (1972–1980; died 2016)
- David Atwood – drums, percussion (1972–1973)
- Calvin "Fuzzy" Samuels – bass (1975; substitute for Dickey)
Discography

- **America** (1971)
- **Homecoming** (1972)
- **Hat Trick** (1973)
- **Holiday** (1974)
- **Hearts** (1975)
- **History: America’s Greatest Hits** (1975), compilation
- **Hideaway** (1976)
- **Harbor** (1977)
- **America Live** (1977), live
- **Silent Letter** (1979)
- **Alibi** (1980)
- **View from the Ground** (1982)
- **Your Move** (1983)
- **Perspective** (1984)
- **In Concert** (1985), live
- **Encore: More Greatest Hits** (1991), compilation
- **Hourglass** (1994)
- **In Concert** (1995), live
- **Horse with No Name** (1995), live
- **Human Nature** (1998)
- **Highway** (2000), compilation
- **The Complete Greatest Hits** (2001), compilation
- **Holiday Harmony** (2002)
- **The Grand Cayman Concert** (2002), live
- **America & Friends Live at the Ventura Theatre** (2006), live
- **Here & Now** (2007)
- **Live in Concert: Wildwood Springs** (2008), live
- **Hits: 40th Anniversary Edition** (2011)
- **Back Pages** (2011)
- **Lost & Found** (2015)
- **Archives, Vol. 1** (2015)
- **An Introduction To : America** (2017), compilation

References

13. "America - Infinity Hall Live Season 04 Episode 01" (http://ihlive.org/videos/america/)

**External links**

- Official America Homepage
- Photos of America – Gerry and Dewey
- Official America page at Burgundy Records
- Official America fan page
- America Blog page
- Live Concert Recording of America at the Blossom Music Center, Ohio on September 5, 1982
- Official America Facebook Page


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Bob Seger

Robert Clark Seger (/ˈsiːɡər/, born May 6, 1945) is an American singer-songwriter, guitarist and pianist. As a locally successful Detroit-area artist, he performed and recorded as Bob Seger and the Last Heard and Bob Seger System throughout the 1960s. By the early 1970s, he had dropped the 'System' from his recordings and continued to strive for broader success with various other bands. In 1973, he put together the Silver Bullet Band, with a group of Detroit-area musicians, with whom he became most successful on the national level with the album Live Bullet (1976), recorded live with the Silver Bullet Band in 1975 at Cobo Hall in Detroit, Michigan. In 1976, he achieved a national breakout with the studio album Night Moves. On his studio albums, he also worked extensively with the Alabama-based Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section, which appeared on several of Seger's best-selling singles and albums.

A roots rocker with a classic raspy, shouting voice, Seger wrote and recorded songs that deal with love, women and blue-collar themes and is an example of heartland rock. Seger has recorded many hits, including "Ramblin' Gamblin' Man", "Night Moves", "Turn the Page", "Still the Same", "We've Got Tonight", "Against the Wind", "You'll Accompany Me", "Shame on the Moon", "Like a Rock", and "Shakedown", which was written for Beverly Hills Cop II (1987). Seger also co-wrote the Eagles' number-one hit "Heartache Tonight", and his iconic recording of "Old Time Rock and Roll" was named one of the Songs of the Century in 2001.

With a career spanning six decades, Seger continues to perform and record today. Seger was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2004 and the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2012.[1][2][3][4] Seger was named Billboard’s 2015 Legend of Live honoree at the 12th annual Billboard Touring Conference & Awards, held November 18–19 at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York.

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Background information

| Birth name | Robert Clark Seger |
| Born       | May 6, 1945, Detroit, Michigan, U.S. |
| Genres     | Rock, heartland rock, roots rock, rock and roll, pop rock, hard rock |
| Occupation(s) | Musician, singer-songwriter |
| Instruments | Vocals, guitar, piano |
| Years active | 1961–present |
| Labels     | Hideout, Cameo, Capitol, Palladium |
| Associated acts | Glenn Frey, Eagles, Frankie Miller, Shaun Murphy, Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section, Little Feat, Kid Rock, Grand Funk |
Seger was born at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Michigan[5] the son of Charlotte and Stewart Seger. At age five he moved with his family to Ann Arbor. He has an older brother George.[6]

Seger's father, a medical technician for the Ford Motor Company, played several instruments and Seger was exposed to music from an early age.[6] Seger was also exposed to frequent arguments between his parents that disturbed the neighborhood at night.[6] In 1956, when Seger was 10 years old, his father abandoned the family and moved to California.[6] The remaining family soon lost their comfortable middle-class status and struggled financially.[6]

Seger attended Tappan Junior High School, (Ann Arbor, Michigan) (now Tappan Middle School) and graduated from Pioneer High School in 1963 (at the time it was known as Ann Arbor High School). He ran track and field in high school. Seger also went to Lincoln Park High School for a year.

As far as his early musical inspirations are concerned, Seger has stated, "Little Richard— he was the first one that really got to me. Little Richard and, of course, Elvis Presley."[7] "Come Go with Me" by The Del-Vikings, a hit in 1957, was the first record he bought.

**Regional favorite: 1961–1976**

**The Decibels and The Town Criers**

Bob Seger arrived on the Detroit music scene in 1961 fronting a three-piece band called the Decibels. The band included Seger on guitar, piano, keyboards, and vocals, Pete Stanger on guitar, and H.B. Hunter on drums. All of the members attended Ann Arbor High. The Decibels recorded an acetate demo of a song called "The Lonely One", at Del Shannon's studio in 1961. As well as being Seger's first original song, "The Lonely One" was Seger's first song to be played on the radio, airing only once on an Ann Arbor radio station.[6][8]

After the Decibels disbanded, Seger joined the Town Criers, a four-piece band with Seger on lead vocals, John Flis on bass, Pep Perrine on drums, and Larry Mason on lead guitar. The Town Criers, covering songs like "Louie Louie", began gaining a steady following. Meanwhile, Seger was listening to James Brown and said that, for him and his friends, Live at the Apollo was their favorite record following its release in 1963. Seger was also widely influenced by the music of The Beatles, once they hit American shores in 1964. In general, he and local musician friends such as future Eagle Glenn Frey bought into the premises of 1960s pop and rock radio, with its hook-driven hits; he later recalled himself and Frey thinking at the time, "You're nobody if you can't get on the radio."[9]

**Doug Brown & The Omens**

As the Town Criers began landing more gigs, Bob Seger met a man named Doug Brown, backed by a band called The Omens. Seger joined Doug Brown & The Omens, who presumably had a bigger following than the Town Criers. While Doug Brown was the primary lead vocalist for the group, Seger would take the lead on some songs—covering R&B numbers.[6] It was with this group that Seger first appeared on an officially released recording: the 1965 single "TGIF" backed with "First Girl", credited to Doug Brown and The Omens. Seger later appeared on Doug Brown and The Omens' parody of Barry Sadler's song "Ballad of the Green Berets" which was re-titled "Ballad of the Yellow Beret" and mocked draft evaders. Soon after its release, Sadler and his record label threatened Brown and his band with a lawsuit and the recording was withdrawn from the market.[10]
While Bob was a member of The Omens, he met his longtime manager Edward “Punch” Andrews, who at the time was partnered with Dave Leone running the Hideout franchise, which consisted of four club locations from Clawson to Rochester Hills, where local acts would play, and a small-scale record label. Seger began writing and producing for other acts that Punch was managing, such as the Mama Cats and the Mushrooms (with Frey). Seger and Doug Brown were then approached by Punch and Leone to write a song for the Underdogs, another local band who recently had a hit with a song called "Man in the Glass". Seger contributed a song called "East Side Story", which ultimately proved to be a failure for the Underdogs.[10]

The Last Heard

Seger decided to record "East Side Story" himself, and officially left the Omens (though he did retain Doug Brown as a producer). As Bob Seger and the Last Heard, Seger released his version of the song with Hideout Records in January 1966, and it became his first big Detroit hit. The single (backed with "East Side Sound", an instrumental version of "East Side Story") sold 50,000 copies, mostly in the Detroit area, and led to a contract with Cameo-Parkway Records though the name "The Last Heard" originally referred to the collection of Omens and Town Criers who recorded "East Side Story" with Seger, it soon became the name of Seger's permanent band, which consisted of former Town Crier Pep Perrine on drums, Carl Lagassa on guitar, and Dan Honaker on bass. Following "East Side Story", the group released four more singles: the James Brown-inspired holiday single "Sock It to Me Santa", the Dylan-esque "Persecution Smith", "Vagrant Winter", and perhaps the most notable, "Heavy Music", released in 1967. "Heavy Music", which sold even more copies than "East Side Story", had potential to break out nationally when Cameo-Parkway suddenly went out of business. It was actually a top 100 hit in Canada, where it topped out on the national RPM charts at #82; in the US, it just missed the Hot 100, peaking on the "bubbling under" chart at #103. The song would stay in Seger's live act for many years to come.

The Bob Seger System

After Cameo-Parkway folded, Seger and Punch began searching for a new label. In the spring of 1968, Bob Seger & the Last Heard signed with major label Capitol Records, turning down Motown Records, who offered more money than Capitol. Seger felt that Capitol was more appropriate for his genre than Motown.[6]

Capitol changed the name of the band to The Bob Seger System. In the transition between labels, guitarist Carl Lagassa left the band and keyboard player Bob Schultz joined. The System's first single with Capitol was the anti-war message song "2 + 2 = ?", which reflected a marked change in Seger's political attitudes from "The Ballad of the Yellow Beret". The single was again a hit in Detroit and hit number 1 on radio stations in Buffalo, New York and Orlando, Florida[11] but went unnoticed almost everywhere else, and failed to chart nationally in the US. The single did, however, make the Canadian national charts, peaking at #79.

The second single from The Bob Seger System was "Ramblin' Gamblin' Man". It was a major hit in Michigan and it also became Seger's first national hit, peaking at #17. The song's success led to the release of an album of the same title in 1969. The Ramblin' Gamblin' Man album reached #62 on the Billboard pop albums chart. Glenn Frey (later in the Eagles) had his first studio gig singing back-up and playing guitar on "Ramblin' Gamblin' Man"[12]

Seger was unable to follow up this success. For the next album, singer-songwriter Tom Neme joined The System, ultimately writing and singing the majority of the tunes featured, for which the group was heavily criticized. The album, called Noah (1969), failed to chart at all, leading Seger to briefly quit the music industry and attend college. He returned the following year and put out the System's final album, 1970's Mongrel, this time without Tom Neme. Bob Schultz left the band as well, being replaced by Dan Watson. Mongrel, with the powerful single 'Lucifer', was considered to be a strong album by many critics and Detroit fans, but failed to do well commercially.

Solo

After Mongrel (1970) failed to live up to the success of Ramblin' Gamblin' Man (1969), The System dissipated. For a short period of time following the breakup, Seger had ambitions to be a one-man act.[13] In 1971, Seger released his first solo album, the all-acoustic Brand New Morning The album was a commercial failure and led to Seger's departure from Capitol Records.[8][14]
Seger, having regained an eye for bands, began playing with the duo Teegarden & Van Winkle, who in 1970 had a hit single with "God, Love and Rock & Roll". Together they recorded Smokin' O.P.'s (1972), released on Punch Andrews' own Palladium Records. The album mainly consisted of covers, spawning a minor hit with a version of Tim Hardin's "If I Were a Carpenter" (#76 US), though it did feature "Someday", a new Seger original, and a re-release of "Heavy Music". The album reached #180 on the Billboard 200.

After spending the better part of 1972 touring with Teegarden & Van Winkle, Seger left the duo to put together a new backing band, referred to as both My Band and the Borneo Band, made up of musicians from Tulsa, Oklahoma. Jamie Oldaker, Dick Sims, and Marcy Levy were all members of My Band before joining Eric Clapton's backing band. In 1973, Seger put out Back in '72, recorded partly with the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section, a renowned group of session musicians who had recorded with the likes of J. J. Cale and Aretha Franklin. According to Seger, there was a financial misunderstanding with the musicians: they offered to record him "for $1500 a side", which he took to mean $1500 per album side. When he found out that they meant $1500 per song, he left after recording three songs but resolved to work with them in the future. Back in '72 featured the studio version of Seger's later live classic "Turn the Page"; "Rosalie", a song Seger wrote about CKLW music director Rosalie Trombley (and which was later recorded by Thin Lizzy); and 'I've Been Working', a song originally by Van Morrison, a strong influence on Seger's musical development. Despite the strength of Seger's backup musicians, the album only reached #188 on the US charts and has since faded into obscurity. Even so, Back in '72 and its supporting tour mark the beginnings of Seger's long-time relationships with future Silver Bullet Band saxophonist Alto Reed, powerhouse female vocalist Shaun Murphy, and the Muscle Shoals Rhythm Section. Over the tour, My Band would prove to be unreliable, which frustrated Seger. By the end of 1973, Seger had left My Band in search of a new backing band. Throughout 1974-75, Seger continued to perform in local venues around his hometown while known as the Bob Seger Group including one renowned concert in Davisburg, MI called the 'Battle of the Bands'.

The Silver Bullet Band

In 1974, Seger formed the Silver Bullet Band. Its original members were guitarist Drew Abbott, drummer and backup-singer Charlie Allen Martin, keyboard-player Rick Manasa, bass guitarist Chris Campbell, and saxophone player Alto Reed. With this new band sitting in occasionally, Seger released the album Seven (1974), which contained the Detroit-area hard-rock hit "Get Out of Denver". This track was a modest success and charted at #80 nationally.

In 1975, Seger returned to Capitol Records and released the album Beautiful Loser, with help from the Silver Bullet Band (with new keyboardist Robyn Robbins replacing Manasa) on his cover of the Tina Turner penned "Nutbush City Limits". The album's single 'Katmandu' which was featured in the 1985 movie Mask starring Cher (in addition to being another substantial Detroit-area hit) was Seger's first real national break-out track since 1969 "Ramblin' Gamblin' Man". Although it just missed the US Pop Top 40 – peaking at #43 – the song received strong airplay in a number of markets nationwide including Detroit.

In April 1976, Seger and the Silver Bullet Band released the album Live Bullet, recorded over two nights in Detroit's Cobo Arena in September 1975. It contained Seger's rendition of "Nutbush City Limits" as well as Seger's own classic take on life on the road, "Turn the Page", from Back in '72. It also included his late 1960s successful releases – "Heavy Music" and "Ramblin' Gamblin' Man". Critic Dave Marsh later wrote that "Live Bullet is one of the best live albums ever made ... In spots, particularly during the medley of "Travelin' Man"/"Beautiful Loser" on side one, Seger sounds like a man with one last shot at the top." An instant best-seller in Detroit, Live Bullet began to get attention in other parts of the country, selling better than Seger's previous albums, getting progressive rock radio and album-oriented rock airplay, and enabling Seger to headline more shows. Yet still, Seger had a popularity imbalance. In June 1976, he was a featured performer at the Pontiac Silverdome outside Detroit in front of nearly 80,000 fans. The next night, Seger played before fewer than a thousand people in Chicago.

Seger finally achieved his commercial breakthrough with his October 1976 album *Night Moves*. The title song “Night Moves” was a highly evocative, nostalgic, time-spanning tale that was not only critically praised,[18] but became a #4 hit single on the *Billboard* pop singles chart as well as a heavy album-oriented rock airplay mainstay. The album also contained "Mainstreet" (written about Ann Arbor's Ann Street),[9] a #24 hit ballad that emphasized Seger's rock credentials as well as guitarist Pete Carr's haunting lead guitar. The album also featured the anthem "Rock and Roll Never Forgets". *Night Moves* was Seger's first top ten album in the *Billboard* album chart, and as of 2006 was certified at 6 million copies in the United States alone – making it the biggest-selling studio album of his entire career. Furthermore, it activated sales of Seger's recent back catalog, so that *Beautiful Loser* (1975) would eventually sell 2 million and *Live Bullet* (1976) would go on to sell some 6 million copies in the United States. Indeed, *Live Bullet* stayed on the *Billboard* charts for 168 weeks and it remains one of the ten best-selling live albums of all time.

The following year, original Silver Bullet drummer Charlie Allen Martin was hit by a car from behind while walking on a service road, and was left unable to walk. David Teegarden, drummer for Seger on the *Smokin' O.P.'s* (1972) album, replaced him. Despite the loss, Seger followed up strongly with 1978's *Stranger in Town*. The first single, “Still the Same”, emphasized Seger's talent for mid-tempo numbers that revealed a sense of purpose, and reached #4 on the pop singles chart. "Hollywood Nights" was an up-tempo #12 hit rocker, while "We've Got Tonight" was a slow ballad that reached #13 on the Hot 100. (The latter became an even bigger hit when country music superstar Kenny Rogers and pop singer Sheena Easton teamed up for a 1983 treatment of it that topped *Billboard's* Country and Adult Contemporary charts.) "Old Time Rock and Roll", a song from George Jackson and Thomas E. Jones III that Seger substantially rewrote the lyrics for,[9][20] was not a big pop hit initially, but achieved substantial album track airplay. Moreover, it would later become one of Seger's most recognizable songs following its memorable Tom Cruise-dancing-in-his-underwear use in the 1983 film *Risky Business*. Indeed, it has been ranked the second-most played Jukebox Single of all time, behind Patsy Cline's "Crazy".[9] The iconic recording of "Old Time Rock and Roll" was named one of the Songs of the Century in 2001. (Seger has ruefully remarked that not taking one-third writing credit on his recording was "the dumbest thing I ever did" financially.[9])

Seger also co-wrote the Eagles' #1 hit song "Heartache Tonight" from their 1979 album *The Long Run;*[9] their collaboration a result of Seger's and Glenn Frey's early days together in Detroit.

In 1980, Seger released *Against the Wind* (with ex-Grand Funk Railroad member Craig Frost replacing Robyn Robbins on keyboards) and it became his first and only #1 album on the *Billboard* album chart. The first single "Fire Lake" featured Eagles Don Henley, Timothy B. Schmit, and Glenn Frey on backing vocals and Muscle Shoals guitarist, Pete Carr, on 12-string acoustic. Fire Lake reached #6 on the Hot 100, while the title song "Against the Wind" reached #5 as a single and even crossed over to the Top 10 on *Billboard's* Adult Contemporary chart. "You'll Accomp'ny Me" became the third hit single from the record, reaching #14. *Against the Wind* would also win two Grammy Awards. As of 2006, both *Stranger in Town* and *Against the Wind* had sold over 5 million copies each in the United States.

The live 1981 album *Nine Tonight* encapsulated this three-album peak of Seger's commercial career. Seger's take on Eugene Williams' "Tryin' to Live My Life Without You" became a Top Five hit from *Nine Tonight* and the album would go on to sell 4 million copies.

Seger released the acclaimed *The Distance* in the final days of 1982. During the recording of this album, Silver Bullet guitarist Drew Abbott left the band due to his frustration with Seger's frequent use of session musicians in the studio, and was replaced by Dawwayne Bailey. After the album's release, David Teegarden also left the band due to internal conflict, and was replaced by ex-Grand Funk drummer Don Brewer. Critically praised for representing a more versatile sound than that of his recent material, *The Distance* spawned numerous hits beginning with Rodney Crowell's "Shame on the Moon". It was the biggest hit of the Silver Bullet Band's entire career, hitting #1 on the Adult Contemporary chart and holding at #2 for four consecutive weeks – behind Patti Austin and James Ingram's "Baby, Come to Me" and Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean" – on the Hot 100. It also crossed over to #15 on *Billboard*'s
Country Singles chart. The follow-up single, "Even Now", just missed the Top 10 and "Roll Me Away" peaked at #27. The driving album track "Making Thunderbirds" was a popular music video filmed in Detroit and well-received on MTV. Seger's multi-platinum sales dropped off at this point, with The Distance peaking at #5 and selling only 1.9 million copies in the United States. (This album was belatedly released on 8 track tape; Capitol reportedly had no plans to do so, but Seger, guessing that a good many of his fans still had 8 track players in their vehicles, prevailed upon the label to release the album in that discontinued format as well.)

In 1984, Seger wrote and recorded the power rock ballad "Understanding" for the film soundtrack Teachers. The song was another Top 20 hit for Seger in late 1984. In 1986, he wrote and recorded "Living Inside My Heart" for the film soundtrack of About Last Night....

Seger was no longer as prolific and several years elapsed before his next studio album, Like a Rock emerged in the spring of 1986. The fast-paced "American Storm" was another Top 20 single aided by a popular music video featuring actress Lesley Ann Warren, and "Like a Rock" followed, reaching #12 on Billboard's Hot 100. Later, it would become familiar to many Americans through its association with a long-running Chevrolet ad campaign (something Seger explicitly chose to do to support struggling American automobile workers in Detroit)[21] Seger's 1986–1987 American Storm Tour was his self-stated last major tour, playing 105 shows over 9 months and selling almost 1.5 million ticketsLike a Rock reached #3 and eventually sold over 3 million copies although it has never been certified above platinum.

On March 13, 1987, Bob Seger & the Silver Bullet Band received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for their contributions to the music industry at 1750 Vine Street.[22][23][24] The following year Seger's "Shakedown", a somewhat uncharacteristic song off the 1987 film Beverly Hills Cop II's soundtrack, became his first and only #1 hit on the pop singles chart. The song had originally been intended for Seger's fellow Detroiter Glenn Frey, but when he lost his voice just prior to the recording session, Frey called in Seger to take his place. Seger changed the verses of the song but kept the chorus the same. The song earned Seger an Academy Award nomination as co-writer in the Best Original Song category the following year.

**Later years: 1988–present**

Bob Seger's next record was 1991's The Fire Inside, at a time when glam metal, grunge and alternative rock were taking the forefront. His new music found little visibility on radio or elsewhere. The same was true of 1994's It's a Mystery, although the album was certified gold (500,000 copies sold). However, in 1994, Seger released Greatest Hits; the compilation album was his biggest-ever record in terms of sales, selling nearly 10 million copies in the United States as of 2010. Seger did go back on the road again for a 1996 tour, which was successful and sold the fourth-largest number of tickets of any North American tour that year. (Seger was once known for his concerts in small venues, as witnessed with his appearance at the 18th Amendment in Omaha, Nebraska.)

Seger took a sabbatical from the music business for about ten years to spend time with his wife and two young children. In 2001 and 2002, Seger won the prestigious Port Huron to Mackinac Boat Race aboard his 52-foot (16 m) sailboat Lightning. He subsequently sold the boat. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame on March 15, 2004. Fellow Detroiter Kid Rock gave the induction speech and Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm proclaimed that date Bob Seger Day in his honor. In 2005, Seger was featured singing with 3 Doors Down on the song 'Landing in London' from their Seventeen Days album.

Seger's first new album in eleven years, titled Face the Promise, was released in 2006. In its first 45 days, it sold more than 400,000 copies.[25] The album sold over 1.2 million copies, returning Seger to platinum status and staying on the Billboard chart for several months. His supporting tour was also eagerly anticipated, with many shows selling out within minutes. Showing that Seger's legendary appeal in Michigan had not diminished, all 10,834 tickets available for his first show at Grand Rapids' Van Andel Arena sold out in under five minutes; three additional shows were subsequently added, each of which also sold out.

In 2009, Seger released a compilation album titled Early Seger Vol. 1, which contained archival material from the 1970s and 1980s, including some fully or partially re-recorded tracks from his albums Smokin' O.P.'s (1972) and Seven (1974) and some never-before-released songs.[26] The album was initially only available for purchase at Meijer stores and then later for download at BobSegecco.[27] Seger contributed piano and vocals on Kid Rock's 2010 album Born Free. Seger staged a successful arena tour.
during 2011, accompanied by the release of a two-CD compilation album, *Ultimate Hits: Rock and Roll Never Forgets*. On May 28, 2011, Michigan Governor Rick Snyder proclaimed that date as Bob Seger Day for his more than 50 years of sharing his celebrated musical talents with fans all over the world.

On December 30, 2011, before a sell-out crowd at the Mandalay Bay Resort Arena in Las Vegas, Seger closed another successful tour. On October 30, 2011, he told AnnArborcom director Bob Needham he was returning to the studio to complete another new album for release in the fall of 2012, followed by another supporting tour.

On June 14, 2012, Seger was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame. On January 10, 2013, Seger announced another tour in the US and Canada.

Seger performed a duet of "Who'll Stop the Rain" with John Fogerty on Fogerty's album *Wrote a Song for Everyone*, released in 2013. Seger’s latest studio album, *Ride Out* was released on October 14, 2014. *Ride Out* was accompanied by a highly successful arena tour of the United States and Canada.

On December 22, 2016, Seger performed "Heartache Tonight" as the Kennedy Center honored the Eagles. A few weeks later, on January 18, 2017, Seger gave away the single "Glenn Song" on his website as a tribute marking the one year death of Eagles founding member Glenn Frey, with whom Seger was close friends. Starting on August 24, 2017, Seger embarked on a 32-city *Runaway Train* tour that was originally scheduled to conclude on November 17, 2017 in Chicago. This tour included a show on September 22, 2017 at The Palace of Auburn Hills (Michigan), which was the last event to be held at that venue. The same day, Seger announced his new studio album, *I Knew You When*, and released "Busload of Faith", a cover of the Lou Reed song from the 1989 album *New York*, as the first single taken from the album. *I Knew You When* is scheduled for release on November 17, 2017, which would have marked the last day of Seger’s *Runaway Train* tour. However, due to “an urgent medical issue with his vertebrae,” all concert dates starting September 30 had to be postponed. Of the 32 scheduled tour dates, Seger could complete 13 and had to postpone 19.

**Bob Seger Day**

Lincoln Park declared Nov. 17, 2017 “Bob Seger Day” in the city. Mayor Thomas Karnes called Seger the voice of the city for their generation. Seger attended school there in his youth and had performed at the city's bandshell in the 1960s.

**Personal life**

Seger's first marriage in 1968 lasted for “one day short of a year”. He had a long-term relationship with Jan Dinsdale from 1972 until 1983. In 1987, he married actress Annette Sinclair and they divorced one year later. He married Juanita Dorricott in 1993, in a small private setting at The Village Club, in Bloomfield Hills; they have two children. Seger lives mainly at his home in Orchard Lake Village, Michigan a suburb of Detroit. He owns a condo in Naples, Florida.

Politically, Seger has characterized himself as a centrist: “[I'm] right down the middle”, he remarked. He supported Democrat Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election. He tackled antiestablishment themes in early songs such as "2+2=?" (1968) and "U.M.C. (Upper Middle Class)" (1974), according to Brian McCollum of the *Detroit Free Press*. On his 2014 album *Ride Out*, he addressed topics such as gun violence, and wrote "It's Your World" about climate change. On the subject, he said, “There are a lot of culprits in climate change, and everybody’s responsible, myself included. Nobody gets a free pass on this one. We got to change our ways and change them fast.”

**Discography**

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See also  
- List of people from Ann Arbor

Notes

16. Mentioning Frankie Miller, covering Miller’s song “Ain’t Got No Money” on Stranger in Town album, and also Graham Parker, John Fogerty and Bruce Springsteen Seger has remarked: “There’s a whole little clique of male vocalists. We’re just sort of all connected. I think everlast one of us has a connection with Van Morrison.”[7]


25. According to Soundscan.


**External links**

- Official website
- Bob Seger on IMDb
- Bob Seger biography by Stephen Thomas Erlewine, discography and album reviews, credits & releases at AllMusic.com
- Bob Seger discography album releases & credits at Discogs.com
- Bob Seger albums at Spotify.com

The Beach Boys are an American rock band formed in Hawthorne, California, in 1961. The group's original lineup consisted of brothers Brian, Dennis, and Carl Wilson; their cousin Mike Love; and their friend Al Jardine. Distinguished by their vocal harmonies and early surf songs, they are one of the most influential acts of the rock era. The group, led by their principal songwriter and producer Brian, pioneered novel approaches to popular music form and production, combining their affinities for jazz-based vocal groups, 1950s rock and roll, and black R&B to create their unique sound. He later arranged his compositions for studio orchestras and explored a variety of other styles, often incorporating classical or jazz elements and unconventional recording techniques innovative ways.

The Beach Boys began as a garage band managed by the Wilsons' father Murry, with Brian's increasingly sophisticated songwriting and recording abilities dominating their creative direction. Emerging at the vanguard of the "California Sound", they performed original material that reflected a southern California youth culture of surfing, cars, and romance. After 1964, they abandoned the surfing aesthetic for more personal lyrics and multi-layered sounds. In 1966, the Pet Sounds album and "Good Vibrations" single raised the group's prestige to the top level of rock innovators and established the band as symbols of the nascent counterculture era. Following the dissolution of the group's Smile project in 1967, Brian gradually ceded production and songwriting duties to the rest of the band, reducing his input because of mental health and substance abuse issues. The group's public image subsequently faltered, and despite efforts to continue their psychedelic ventures and reclaim their hippie audiences, they were dismissed as an embodiment of the values and outlooks shared by early 1960s white, suburban teenagers.

The continued success of their greatest hits albums during the mid 1970s precipitated the band's transition into an oldies act, a move that was denigrated by critics and many fans. Since the 1980s, much-publicized legal wrangling over royalties, songwriting credits and use of the band's name transpired. Dennis drowned in 1983 and Carl died of lung cancer in 1998. After Carl's death, many live configurations of the band fronted by Mike Love and Bruce Johnston continued to tour into the 2000s while other members pursued solo projects. Even though Wilson and Jardine have not performed with Love and Johnston's band since their one-off 2012 reunion tour, they remain a part of the Beach Boys' corporation, Brother Records Inc.

The Beach Boys are one of the most critically acclaimed, commercially successful, and widely influential bands of all time. The group had over eighty songs chart worldwide, thirty-six of them US Top 40 hits (the most by an American rock band), four reaching number-one on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. The Beach Boys have sold in excess of 100 million records worldwide, making them one of the world's best-selling bands of all time and are listed at No. 12 on Rolling Stone magazine's 2004 list of the "100 Greatest..."
Artists of All Time. In 2017, a study of AllMusic’s catalog indicated the Beach Boys as the 6th most frequently cited artist influence in its database. The core quintet of the three Wilsons, Love and Jardine were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1988.

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## Formation

At the time of his sixteenth birthday on June 20, 1958, Brian Wilson shared a bedroom with his brothers, Dennis and Carl – aged thirteen and eleven, respectively – in their family home in Hawthorne. He had watched his father, Murry Wilson, play piano, and had listened intently to the harmonies of vocal groups such as the Four Freshmen. After dissecting songs such as “Ivory Tower” and “Good News”, Brian would teach family members how to sing the background harmonies. For his birthday that year, Brian received a reel-to-reel tape recorder, he learned how to overdub, using his vocals and those of Carl and their mother. Brian played piano with Carl and David Marks, an eleven-year-old longtime neighbor, playing guitars they had each received as Christmas presents.
Soon Brian and Carl were avidly listening to Johnny Otis' KFOX radio show.[7] Inspired by the simple structure and vocals of the rhythm and blues songs he heard, Brian changed his piano-playing style and started writing songs. His enthusiasm interfered with his music studies at school. Family gatherings brought the Wilsons in contact with cousin Mike Love. Brian taught Love's sister Maureen and a friend harmonies.[7] Later, Brian, Mike Love and two friends performed at Hawthorne High School.[10] Brian also knew Al Jardine, a high school classmate. Brian suggested to Jardine that they team up with his cousin and brother Carl. Love gave the fledgling band its name: "The Pendletones"[11] a portmanteau of "Pendleton", a style of woolen shirt popular at the time and "tone", the musical term. Though surfing motifs were prominent in their early songs, Dennis was the only avid surfer in the group.[12] He suggested that the group compose songs that celebrated the sport and the lifestyle that it had inspired in Southern California[6][13][nb 1].

Jardine and a singer friend, Gary Winfrey, went to Brian to see if he could help out with a version of a folk song they wanted to record – "Sloop John B". In Brian's absence, the two spoke with his father, a music industry veteran of modest success. Murry arranged for the Pendletones to meet his publisher, Hite Morgan.[6] The group performed a slower ballad, "Their Hearts Were Full of Spring", but failed to impress Morgan. After an awkward pause, Dennis mentioned they had an original song, "Surfin". Brian finished the song, and together with Mike Love, wrote "Surfin' Safari".[13] The group rented guitars, drums, amplifiers and microphones, and practiced for three days while the Wilsons' parents were on a short vacation.

In October 1961, the Pendletones recorded the two surfing song demos in twelve takes at Keen Recording Studio.[13][nb 2] Murry brought the demos to Herb Newman, owner of Candix Records and Era Records, and he signed the group on December 8, 1961.[13] When the boys eagerly unpacked the first box of singles – released both under the Candix label, and also as a promo issue under X Records (Morgan's label) – they were shocked to see their band had been renamed as the Beach Boys. Murry Wilson learned that Candix wanted to name the group the Surfers to directly associate them with the increasingly popular teen sport. But Russ Regan, a young promoter with Era Records – who later became president of 20th Century Fox Records – noted that there already existed a group by that name, and he suggested calling them the Beach Boys.[13]


Beach-themed period

"I Get Around" (1964)

An excerpt from Brian Wilson and Mike Love's "I Get Around" that demonstrates Love's iconic nasal delivery and a surf-rock-styled guitar solo played by Carl Wilson. "I Get Around" became the band's first US number one charting song.[16]

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Released in December 1961, "Surfin" soon aired on KFWB and KRLA, two of Los Angeles' most influential teen radio stations. It was a hit on the West Coast, going to number three in Southern California, and peaked at number 75 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart. By the final weeks of 1961 "Surfin" had sold more than 40,000 copies.[17] By this time the de facto manager of the Beach Boys, Murry Wilson landed the group's first paying gig (for which they earned $300) on New Year's Eve, 1961, at the Ritchie Valens Memorial Dance in Long Beach,[13] headlined by Ike & Tina Turner. In their earliest public appearances, the band wore heavy wool
jacket-like shirts that local surfers favored before switching to their trademark striped shirts and white pants. Murry effectively seized managerial control of the band, and Brian acknowledged that he “deserves credit for getting us off the ground ... he hounded us mercilessly ... [but] also worked hard himself.”

In the first half of February 1962, Jardine left the band and was replaced by Marks. The band recorded two more originals on April 19 at Western Studios, Los Angeles: “Lonely Sea” and “409”. They also re-recorded “Surfin’ Safari”. During early 1962, Morgan requested that some of the members add vocals to a couple of instrumental tracks that he had recorded with other musicians. This led to the creation of the short-lived group Kenny & the Cadets, which Brian led under the pseudonym "Kenny". The other members were Carl, Jardine, and the Wilsons' mother Audree.

On June 4, the Beach Boys released their second single "Surfin' Safari" backed with "409". The release prompted national coverage in the June 9 issue of Billboard. The magazine praised Love's lead vocal and said the song had strong hit potential. On July 16, 1962 – after being turned down by Dot and Liberty – the Beach Boys signed a seven-year contract with Capitol Records based on the strength of the June demo session. This was at the urging of Capitol exec Nick Venet who signed the group, seeing them as the "teenage gold" he had been scouting for. By November, their first album was ready – Surfin' Safari, which reached 32 on the US Billboard charts. Their song output continued along the same commercial line, focusing on California youth lifestyle.

In January 1963, three months after the release of their debut album, the band began recording their sophomore effort, Surfin' U.S.A., a breakthrough for Brian, who began asserting himself as songwriter and arranger. The LP was the start of Brian's penchant for doubletracking vocals, a pioneering innovation. Released on March 25, 1963, Surfin' U.S.A., met a more enthusiastic reception, reaching number two on the Billboard charts. This propelled the band into a nationwide spotlight, and was vital to launching surf music as a national craze. Five days prior to the release of Surfin' U.S.A., Brian produced "Surf City", a song he had written for Jan and Dean. "Surf City" hit number one on the Billboard charts in July 1963, a development that pleased Brian but angered Murry, who felt his son had "given away" what should have been the Beach Boys' first chart-topper.

At the beginning of a tour of the Mid-West in April 1963, Jardine rejoined the Beach Boys at Brian's request. Although he had started playing live gigs again, Brian soon left the road to focus on writing and recording. The result of this arrangement produced the albums Surfer Girl, released on September 16, 1963 and Little Deuce Coupe, released less than a month later on October 7, 1963. This sextet incarnation of the Beach Boys did not extend beyond these two albums, as Marks officially left the band in early October because of conflict with manager Murry pulling Brian back into touring.

Around this time, Brian began using members of the Wrecking Crew to augment his increasingly demanding studio arrangements. Session musicians that participated on Wilson's productions were said to have been awestruck by his musical abilities. The band released a standalone Christmas-themed single, "Little Saint Nick", in December 1963, backed with an a cappella rendition of the scriptural song "The Lord's Prayer". The A-side peaked at No. 3 on the US Billboard Christmas chart.

Following a successful Australasian tour in January and February 1964, the band returned home to face the British Invasion through the Beatles appearances on The Ed Sullivan Show. Also representing the Beatles, Capitol support for the Beach Boys immediately began waning. This caused Murry to fight for the band at the label more than before, often visiting their offices without warning to "twist executive arms." The band finished the sessions on February 20, 1964 and titled the album Shut Down Volume 2. "Fun, Fun, Fun" was released as a single from the album (backed with "Why Do Fools Fall in Love") and was a major hit. The LP, while containing several filler tracks, was propelled by other songs such as the melancholic "The Warmth of the Sun" and the advanced production style of 'Don't Worry Baby'.

We all studied in conservatories; we were trained musicians. We thought it was a fluke at first, but then we realized Brian was writing these incredible songs. This was not just a young kid writing about high school and surfing. —Hal Blaine, session drummer
Brian soon wrote his last surf song in April 1964. That month, during recording of the single "I Get Around", Murry was relieved of his duties as manager. Brian reflected, "We love the family thing – y’know: three brothers, a cousin and a friend is a really beautiful way to have a group – but the extra generation can become a hang-up." When the single was released in May of that year, it would climb to number one, their first single to do so, proving that the Beach Boys could compete with contemporaneous British pop groups. Two months later, the album that the song appeared on, All Summer Long, reached No. 4 on the Billboard 200 charts. All Summer Long introduced exotic textures to the Beach Boys’ sound exemplified by the piccolos and xylophones of its title track. The album was a swan-song to the surf and car music the Beach Boys built their commercial standing upon. Later albums took a different stylistic and lyrical path.

Before this, a live album, Beach Boys Concert, was released in October to a four-week chart stay at number one, containing a set list of previously recorded hits and covers that they had not yet recorded.

Today! and Summer Days

In June 1964, Brian began recording the bulk of The Beach Boys’ Christmas Album with a forty-one-piece studio orchestra in collaboration with Four Freshmen arranger Dick Reynolds. Released in December, it was divided between five new, original Christmas-themed songs, and seven reinterpretations of traditional Christmas songs. It would be regarded as one of the finest holiday albums of the rock era. One single from the album, "The Man with All the Toys", was released, peaking at No. 6 on the US Billboard Christmas chart. On October 29, the Beach Boys performed for The T.A.M.I. Show, a concert film intended to bring together a wide range of hit-making musicians for a one-off performance. The result was released to movie theaters one month late.

By the end of the year, the stress of road travel, composing, producing and maintaining a high level of creativity became too much for Brian. On December 23, while on a flight from Los Angeles to Houston, he suffered a panic attack only hours after performing with the Beach Boys on the musical variety series Shindig! In January 1965, he announced his withdrawal from touring to concentrate entirely on songwriting and record production. For the rest of 1964 and into 1965, Glen Campbell served as Wilson's temporary replacement in concert, until his own career success pulled him from touring with the group in April 1965. Bruce Johnston was asked to locate a replacement for Campbell; having failed to find one, Johnston himself became a full-time member of the band on May 19, 1965, first replacing Brian on the road and later contributing in the studio, beginning with the vocal sessions for "California Girls" on June 4, 1965.

After Brian stopped touring in 1965, he became a full-time studio artist, showcasing a great leap forward with The Beach Boys Today!, an album containing a suite-like structure divided by songs and ballads, and portended the Album Era with its cohesive artistic statement. During the recording sessions for Today!, Love told Melody Maker that he and the band wanted to look beyond surf rock and to avoid living in the past or resting on their laurels. The resulting LP had largely guitar-oriented pop songs such as "Dance, Dance, Dance" and "Good to My Baby" on side A with B-side ballads such as 'Please Let Me Wonder" and "She Knows Me Too Well". Today! established the Beach Boys as album artists and marked a maturation in their lyric content by abandoning themes related to surfing, cars, or teenage love. Some love songs remained, but with a marked increase in depth, along with introspective tracks that would be more common in future songs.
accompanied by adventurous and distinct arrangements. While the band's contemporaries grew more intellectually aware, Capitol continued to bill them as "America's Top Surfin' Group!" expecting Brian to write more surfing material for the yearly summer markets despite his disinterest.

In June 1965, the band released *Summer Days (And Summer Nights!!)*. The album included a reworked arrangement of "Help Me, Rhonda" which became the band's second number one single in the spring of 1965, displacing the Beatles' "Ticket to Ride". "Let Him Run Wild" tapped into the youthful angst that later pervaded their music. In November 1965, the group followed their US number-three-charting "California Girls" from *Summer Days (And Summer Nights!!)* with another top-twenty single, "The Little Girl I Once Knew". It was considered the band's most experimental statement thus far, using silence as a pre-chorus, clashing keyboards, Moody bass and vocal tics. The single continued Brian's ambitions for daring arrangements, featuring unexpected tempo changes and numerous false endings. Perhaps too extreme an arrangement to go much higher than its number 20 peak, it was the band's second single not to reach the top ten since their 1962 breakthrough.

Capitol demanded a Beach Boys LP for the 1965 Christmas season, and to appease them, Brian conceived *Beach Boys' Party!* a live-in-the-studio album consisting mostly of acoustic covers of 1950s rock and R&B songs, in addition to covers of three Beatles songs, Bob Dylan's "The Times They Are a-Changin'', and idiosyncratic rerecordings of the group's earlier hits. In December they scored an unexpected number two hit (number three in the UK) with "Barbara Ann", which Capitol released as a single with no band input. Originally by the Regents, it became one of the Beach Boys' most recognized hits.

**Pet Sounds**

In 1966, the Beach Boys formally established their use of unconventional instruments and elaborate layers of vocal harmonies on their album *Pet Sounds*. It is considered Brian's most concise demonstration of his production and songwriting expertise. With songs such as "Wouldn't It Be Nice" and "Sloop John B", the album's innovative soundscape incorporates elements of jazz, classical, pop, exotica, and the avant-garde. The instrumentation combines found sounds such as bicycle bells and dog whistles with classically inspired orchestrations and the usual rock setup of drums and guitars among others, silverware, accordions, plucked piano strings, barking dogs, and plastic water jugs. For the basic rhythmic feel for "God Only Knows", harpsichord, piano with slapback echo, sleigh bells, and strings spilled into each other to create a rich blanket of sound. Released in May, *Pet Sounds* peaked at No. 10 in the US and No. 2 in the UK. This helped the Beach Boys become the strongest selling album group in the UK for the final quarter of 1966, dethroning the three-year reign of native bands such as the Beatles. Met with a lukewarm critical reception in the US, *Pet Sounds* was indifferently promoted by Capitol and failed to become the major hit Wilson had hoped it would be. Its failure to gain a wider recognition in the U.S. combined with Capitol's decision to issue *Best of The Beach Boys* in July dispirited Brian, who considered *Pet Sounds* an extremely personal work. Some assumed that the label considered the album a risk, appealing more to an older demographic than the younger, female audience the Beach Boys built their commercial standing on. *Pet Sounds* sales numbered approximately 500,000 units, a significant drop-off from the chain of million-selling albums that immediately preceded it. *Best of The Beach Boys* was quickly certified Gold by the RIAA.

*Pet Sounds* is considered by some as a Brian Wilson solo album in all but name, as other members contributed relatively little to the compositions or recordings. Influenced by psychedelic drugs, Brian turned inward and probed his deep-seated self-doubts and emotional longings; the piece did not address the problems in the world around them, unlike other psychedelic rock groups. As Jim Miller wrote of the album's tone, "[It] vented Wilson's obsession with isolation cataloging a forlorn quest for security. The
"Good Vibrations" (1966)

"Good Vibrations" was the Beach Boys' third single to top the Billboard Hot 100. The song proliferated a wave of pop experimentation with its rush of riff changes, echo-chamber effects, and intricate harmonies.

Pet Sounds was massively influential upon its release, vaunting the band to the top level of rock innovators. It is one of the earliest rock concept albums, one of the earliest concept albums of the counterculture era, and an early album in the emerging psychedelic rock style signaling a turning point wherein rock, which previously had been considered dance music, became music that was made for listening to. In 2016, The Guardian's Barbara Ellen reflected that the album was "hailed as a revolution in harmonies and production techniques ... Wilson single-handedly reinvented the album as the in-depth illumination of an artist's soul, kicking open a creative fire-door, liberating the album to exist as a self-contained art form on a par with literature, theatre, art, cinema, dance... anything the artist desired." Reflecting on the album on its 50th anniversary, PopMatters' Danilo Castro added:

The resulting recordings were colossal achievements, as conventional instruments seamlessly meshed with glockenspiels, ukulele, Electro-Theremin, bongos, and harpsichords. ... His insistence upon exact musical cues, unconventional structure, and experimental trickery made for a final product that radiates originality. ... Praised by every rocker from the Beatles to Bob Dylan, the latter who said Wilson's left ear should be donated to the Smithsonian, the Beach Boys were suddenly spearheading the pop revolution. ... Since that day in May... Pet Sounds has become a pillar of pop excellence. ... it's restructured the landscape of modern music in its image.

In The Album: A Guide to Pop Music’s Most Provocative, Influential, and Important Creations, author James Perone championed the album for its complex orchestrations, sophisticated compositions, and varied tone colors, calling it a remove from "just about anything else that was going on in 1966 pop music." In 1976, journalist Robin Denselow wrote: "With the 1966 Pet Sounds album... Wilson had become America's equivalent of the Beatles with his ability to expand the limits of popular taste." Paul McCartney named it one of his favorite albums of all time on multiple occasions, calling it the primary impetus for the Beatles' album Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band (1967). In 2003, Pet Sounds was ranked second in "The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time" list selected by Rolling Stone, behind only Sgt. Pepper. In 2004, the album was acknowledged as an important historical and cultural work by the Library of Congress.

"Good Vibrations" and Smile

Seeking to expand on Pet Sounds' advances, Wilson began an even more ambitious project: "Good Vibrations". Like Pet Sounds, Brian opted for an eclectic array of instruments rarely heard in pop music. Described by Brian as a "pocket symphony", it contains a mixture of classical, rock, and exotic instruments structured around a cut-up mosaic of musical sections represented by several discordant key and modal shifts. It became the Beach Boys' biggest hit to date, and a US and UK number one single in 1966. Coming at a time when smacked of song cycle pretensions, was streaked with regret and romantic languor.
when pop singles were usually made in under two hours, it was one of the most complex pop productions ever undertaken, and the most expensive single ever recorded to that point. The production costs were estimated between $50,000 and $75,000, with sessions for the song stretching over several months in at least four major studios. According to Domenic Priore, the making of "Good Vibrations" was unlike anything previous in the realms of classical, jazz, international, soundtrack, or any other kind of recording.

The single was an unequivocal milestone in studio productions and continued in establishing Brian as an extender of popular tastes. To the counterculture of the 1960s, "Good Vibrations" served as an anthem. Rock critic Gene Sculatti prophesied in 1968, "[It] may yet prove to be the most significantly revolutionary piece of the current rock renaissance." Its instrumentation included Paul Tanner's Electro-Theremin, a manually-operated oscillator with a sound similar to a theremin, which helped the Beach Boys claim a new hippie audience. Upon release, the single prompted an unexpected revival in theremins while increasing awareness of analog synthesizers, leading Moog Music to produce their own brand of ribbon-controlled instruments. Reflecting on this period in 1971, Cue magazine wrote: "In the year and a half that followed Pet Sounds, the Beach Boys were among the vanguard in practically every aspect of the counter culture – psychedelia, art rock, a return to roots, ecology, organic food, the cooled-out sound – anticipating changes that rock didn't accomplish until 1969–1970. The group established a short-lived film production company, called Home Movies, during this time. It was supposed to have created live action film and television properties starring the Beach Boys. However, the company completed only one music video, for "Good Vibrations", though various other psychedelic sequences and segments exist.

Brian met lyricist and musician Van Dyke Parks while working on Pet Sounds. A year later, while in the midst of recording "Good Vibrations", the duo began an intense collaboration that resulted in a suite of challenging new songs for the Beach Boys' forthcoming album Smile, intended to surpass Pet Sounds. Recording for the album spanned about a year, from 1966 to 1967. Wilson and Parks intended Smile to be a continuous suite of songs that were linked both thematically and musically, with the main songs being linked together by small vocal pieces and instrumental segments that elaborated upon the musical themes of the major songs. Surviving recordings have shown that the music incorporated chanting, cowboy songs, explorations in Indian and Hawaiian music, jazz, tone poems with classical elements, cartoon sound effects, musique concrète, and yodeling.

In October 1966 interviews, Brian touted the album as "a teenage symphony to God". His spiritual aims were made explicit in the album's musical contents and lyrics, which also included existential angst, the exploration of human innocence, and the philosophy of childlikeness. Parks has stated: "At the same time, he didn't want to lose that kind of gauche sensibility that he had. He was doing stuff that nobody would dream of doing," citing an instance when Brian instructed a banjo player to play only one string, a "gauche" style of playing that "just wasn't done."

Smile would go on to become the most legendary unreleased album in the history of popular music. In the decades following its non-release, it became the subject of intense speculation and mystique. Many believe that, had the album been released, it would have substantially altered the group's direction and established them at the vanguard of rock innovators. Writing about the album for the 33½ book series, Luis Sanchez stated: "If Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys were going to survive as the defining..."
force of American pop music they were, Smile was a conscious attempt to rediscover the impulses and ideas that power American consciousness from the inside out. It was a collaboration that led to some incredible music, which, if it had been completed as an album and delivered to the public in 1966, might have had an incredible impact.[121]

If released when intended, composer Frank Oteri believes the album would have been the first piece of album-oriented rock. Its cover artwork, now considered iconic, depicted an illustration of a store selling smiles, also would have been among the earliest covers by a popular music group to feature original, specifically commissioned artwork rather than a photograph of the performers.[122]

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, bootlegs from its recording sessions leaked, inspiring many attempts to reassemble the album, and ultimately becoming a progenitor for indie rock.[122]

Many factors combined to put intense pressure on Brian Wilson as Smile neared completion: his mental instability, the pressure to create despite fierce internal opposition to his new music, the relatively unenthusiastic response to Pet Sounds in the United States, and Carl Wilson's draft resistance. Furthermore, Wilson's reliance on both prescription drugs and amphetamines exacerbated his underlying mental health problems. Comparable to Brian Jones and Syd Barrett, Brian Wilson's use of psychedelic drugs led to a nervous breakdown in the late-1960s. As his legend grew, the Smile period came to be seen as the pivotal episode in his decline, and he became tagged as a drug casualty.[122]

1967–1977: fluctuating leadership

Smiley Smile and Wild Honey

Some Smile tracks were salvaged and re-recorded in scaled-down versions at Brian's new home studio. Along with the single version of "Good Vibrations", these tracks were released on the September 1967 album Smiley Smile, which elicited positive critical and commercial response abroad, but was the first real commercial failure for the group in the U.S.[124]

Compounding the group's recent setbacks, their public image took a cataclysmic hit following their withdrawal from the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival[100] for the reason that they had no new material to play while their forthcoming single and album lay in limbo.[125] Their cancellation was seen as "...a damning admission that they were washed up [and] unable to compete with the new music."[126] This notion was exacerbated by Rolling Stone writer Jann Wenner, who in contemporary publications criticized Brian Wilson for his oft-repeated "genius" label, which he called a "promotional shrug" and an attempt to compare him with the Beatles.[126]

While being interviewed in August 1967 for the aborted live album Lei'd in Hawaii, Brian stated: "I think rock n' roll—the pop scene—is happening. It's great. But I think basically, the Beach Boys are squares. We're not happening."[127] Former band publicist Derek Taylor later recalled a conversation with Brian and Dennis where they denied that the group had ever written surf music or songs about cars, and that the Beach Boys had never been involved with the surf and hot rod fads, as Taylor claimed, "...they would not concede."[128]

As a result of their initial target demographic and subsequent failures to blend with the hippie movement, the group was viewed as unhip relics[129] even though they had once been, as biographer Peter Ames Carlin wrote, "the absolute center of the American rock 'n' roll scene,[130] a time when they had ushered the psychedelic era.[131][132] In early 1969, Brian proposed that the group change their name from "the Beach Boys" to "the Beach", reasoning that the band members were now grown men. Going to the effort of acquiring a contract that would declare a five-way agreement to officially rename the group, Stephen Desper reported, "They all just kind of shrugged and said, 'Aw, come on, Brian, we don't wanna do that. That's how the public knows us, man. And that was it. He put the paper on the piano and it stayed there until I picked it up and took it away.[133]

In 1966, the group had filed a lawsuit in the Los Angeles Superior Court against Capitol Records for over two million dollars, which briefly severed their relationship with the label. At this time the Beach Boys’ management (Nick Grillo and David Anderle) created the band's own record label, Brother. One of the first labels owned by a rock group[134] The initial output of the label, however, was
limited to *Smiley Smile* and two resulting singles from the album[^135]

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<th>When we did <em>Wild Honey</em>, Brian asked me to get more involved in the recording end. He wanted a break. He was tired. He had been doing it all too long. —Carl Wilson[^136]</th>
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After the cancellation of *Smiley Smile*, some of its tracks continued to trickle out in later albums often as filler songs to offset Brian's unwillingness to contribute.[^137][^nb 6] *Smiley Smile* was followed up three months later with *Wild Honey*, featuring mostly new songs written by Wilson and Love, including the number-nineteen single "Darlin'*. The album fared better than its predecessor, reaching No. 24 in the U.S. Wenner responded to the new album with more optimism, remarking two months later that “[in] any case it's good to see that the Beach Boys are getting their heads straight once again.”[^139]

### Friends and 20/20

After meeting Maharishi Mahesh Yogi at a UNICEF Variety Gala in Paris, France on December 15, 1967, Love, along with other high-profile celebrities such as Donovan and the Beatles traveled to Rishikesh in India during February and March 1968.[^140][^141] The following Beach Boys album *Friends* (1968) had songs influenced by the Transcendental Meditation taught by the Maharishi. The album reached No. 13 in the UK and 126 in the US, the title track placing at No. 25 in the UK and No. 47 in the US, the band's lowest singles peak since 1962. In support of the *Friends* album, Love had arranged for the Beach Boys to tour with the Maharishi in the U.S., which has been called "one of the more bizarre entertainments of the era.”[^142] Starting on May 3, 1968, the tour lasted five shows and was cancelled when the Maharishi had to withdraw to fulfill film contracts. Because of disappointing audience numbers and the Maharishi's withdrawal, twenty-four tour dates were subsequently canceled at a cost estimated at US$250,000 (approximately US$1,630,000 today) for the band.[^141][^143] This tour was followed by the release of "Do It Again", a single that critics described as an update of the Beach Boys' surf rock past in a late 1960s style.[^144] The single went to the top of the Australian and UK single charts in 1968 and was moderately successful in the US, peaking at No. 13.[^145]

For a short time in mid-1968, Brian Wilson sought psychological treatment in hospital.[^146] During his absence, other members began writing and producing material themselves. To complete their contract with Capitol, they produced one more album. *20/20* (1969) was one of the group's most stylistically diverse albums, including hard rock songs such as "All I Want to Do", the waltz-based "Time to Get Alone", and a cover of the Ronettes' "I Can Hear Music".[^147][^148] The diversity of genres have been described as an indicator that the group was trying to establish an updated identity.[^149] The album performed strongly in the UK, reaching number three on the charts. In the US, the album reached a modest 68.

In spring 1968, Dennis began a strained relationship with musician Charles Manson, which persisted for several months afterward. Dennis bought him time at Brian's home studio where recording sessions were attempted while Brian stayed in his room.[^150] Dennis then proposed that Manson be signed to Brother Records. Brian reportedly disliked Charlie, and so a deal was never made.[^151] Without Manson's involvement, the Beach Boys did record one song penned by Manson: "Cease to Exist", rewritten as "Never Learn Not to Love". The idea of the Beach Boys recording one of his songs reportedly thrilled Manson, and it was released as a Beach Boys single. After accruing a large monetary debt to the group, Dennis deliberately omitted Manson's credit on its release while also altering the song's arrangement and lyrics.[^152] This greatly angered Manson.[^153][^154] Growing fearful, Dennis gradually distanced himself from Manson, whose family had taken over his home.[^155] He was eventually convicted for murder conspiracy; from there on, Dennis was too afraid of the Manson family to ever speak publicly on his relationship, let alone testify against him.[^156][^157]

On April 12, 1969, the band revisited their 1967 lawsuit against Capitol Records after they alleged an audit undertaken revealed the band were owed over US$2,000,000 (US$13,060,000 today) for unpaid royalties and production duties.[^159] The band's contract with Capitol Records expired on June 30, 1969, after which Capitol Records deleted the Beach Boys’ catalog from print, effectively cutting off their royalty flow.[^159][^160] In November 1969, Murry Wilson sold Sea of Tunes, the Beach Boys’ catalog, to Irving Almo Music, a decision that, according to Marilyn Wilson, devastated Brian.[^161] In late 1969, the

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[^nb 6]: See "[^135]


[^136]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/other-high-profile-celebrities-such-as-donovan-and-the-beatles-traveled-to-rishikesh-in-india-during-

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[^140]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"all-i-want-to-do"

[^141]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"i-can-hear-music"

[^142]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"never-learn-not-to-love"

[^143]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"cease-to-exist"

[^144]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"do-it-again"

[^145]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"time-to-get-alone"

[^146]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"i-can-hear-music"

[^147]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"all-i-want-to-do"

[^148]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"never-learn-not-to-love"

[^149]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"never-learn-not-to-love"

[^150]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"i-can-hear-music"

[^151]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"do-it-again"

[^152]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"cease-to-exist"

[^153]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"do-it-again"

[^154]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"time-to-get-alone"

[^155]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"i-can-hear-music"

[^156]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"never-learn-not-to-love"

[^157]: https://www.brianwilsontours.com/about/"cease-to-exist"
Beach Boys reactivated their Brother label and signed with Reprise. Around this time, the band commenced recording a new album. By the time the Beach Boys tenure ended with Capitol in 1969, they had sold 65 million records worldwide, closing the decade as the most commercially successful American group in popular music.[92]

### Sunflower, Surf's Up, So Tough, and Holland

In 1970, armed with the new Reprise contract, the band appeared rejuvenated, releasing the album *Sunflower* to critical acclaim in the UK but indifference in the US.[149] The album features a strong group presence with significant writing contributions from all band members.[149] Brian was active during this period, writing or co-writing seven of the twelve songs on *Sunflower* and performing at half of the band's domestic concerts in 1970. *Sunflower* reached number 29 in the UK and number 151 in the US, the band's lowest domestic chart showing to that point.[163]

After *Sunflower*, the band hired Jack Rieley as their manager. Under Rieley's management, the group's music began emphasizing political and social awareness.[164] During this time, Carl Wilson gradually assumed leadership of the band and Rieley contributed lyrics. On August 30, 1971 the band released *Surf's Up*, named after the Brian Wilson/Van Dyke Parks composition "Surf's Up". The album was moderately successful, reaching the US top 30, a marked improvement over their recent releases. While the record charted, the Beach Boys added to their renewed fame by performing a near-sellout set at Carnegie Hall, followed by an appearance with the Grateful Dead at Fillmore East on April 27, 1971. The live shows during this era included reworked arrangements of many of the band's previous songs.[165] A large portion of their set lists culled from *Pet Sounds* and *Smile*, as author Domenic Priore observes, “They basically played what they could have played at the Monterey Pop Festival in the summer of 1967.”[166]

Johnston ended his first stint with the band shortly after *Surf's Up*’s release, reportedly because of friction with Rieley. At Carl's suggestion, the addition of Ricky Fataar and Blondie Chaplin in February 1972 led to a dramatic restructuring in the band's sound. The album *Carl and the Passions – "So Tough"* was an uncharacteristic mix that included two songs written by Fataar and Chaplin.

For their next project the band, their families, assorted associates and technicians moved to the Netherlands for the summer of 1972. They rented a farmhouse to convert into a makeshift studio where recording sessions for the new project would take place. By the end of their sessions, the band felt they had produced one of their strongest efforts yet. Reprise, however, felt that the album required a strong single. This resulted in the song "Sail On, Sailor", a collaboration between Brian Wilson, Tandyn Almer, Ray Kennedy, Jack Rieley and Van Dyke Parks featuring a soulful lead vocal by Chaplin.[167] Reprise subsequently approved and the resulting album, *Holland*, was released early in 1973, peaking at number 37. Brian's musical children story, *Mount Vernon and Fairway (A Fairy Tale)*, narrated by Rieley and strongly influenced by Randy Newman's *Sail Away* (1972), was included as a bonus EP.[168] Despite indifference from Reprise, the band's concert audience started to grow.
The Beach Boys in Concert, a double album documenting the 1972 and 1973 U.S. tours, was another top-30 album and became the band's first gold record under Reprise. During this period the band established itself as one of America's most popular live acts. Chaplin and Fataar helped organize the concerts to obtain a high quality live performance, playing material off Surf's Up, Carl and the Passions and Holland and adding songs from their older catalog. This concert arrangement lifted them back into American public prominence. In late 1973, the 41-song soundtrack to American Graffiti was released including the band's early songs "Surfin' Safari" and "All Summer Long". The album was a catalyst in creating a wave of nostalgia that reintroduced the Beach Boys into contemporary American consciousness.[169] In 1974, Capitol Records issued Endless Summer, the band's first major pre-Pet Sounds greatest hits package. The compilation surged to the top of the Billboard album charts and was the group's first multi-million-selling record since "Good Vibrations". It remained on the charts for two years.[170] Capitol followed with a second compilation, Spirit of America, which also sold well. With these compilations, the Beach Boys became one of the most popular acts in rock, propelling themselves from opening for Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young to headliners selling out basketball arenas in a matter of weeks.[171] Rolling Stone named the Beach Boys the "Band of the Year" for 1974.[172]

Rieley, who remained in the Netherlands after Holland's release, was relieved of his managerial duties in late 1973. Chaplin also left in late 1973 after an argument with Steve Love, the band's business manager (and Mike's brother).[172] Fataar remained until 1974, when he was offered a chance to join a new group led by future Eagles member Joe Walsh.[172] Chaplin's replacement, James William Guercio, started offering the group career advice that resulted in his becoming their new manager.[172] Under Guercio, the Beach Boys staged a highly successful 1975 joint concert tour with Chicago, with each group performing some of the other's songs, including their previous year's collaboration on Chicago's hit "Wishing You Were Here".[172] Beach Boys vocals were also heard on Elton John's 1974 hit "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me". Nostalgia had settled into the Beach Boys' hype; the group had not officially released any new material since 1973's Holland. While their concerts continuously sold out, the stage act slowly changed from a contemporary presentation followed by oldies encores to an entire show made up of mostly pre-1967 music.[172]

15 Big Ones and Love You

Recorded in the wake of California Music's demise, a supergroup that would have involved Brian Wilson, Bruce Johnston, and record producer Terry Melcher,[173] 15 Big Ones (1976) marked Brian's return as a major force in the group.[170] The album included new songs by Brian, as well as cover versions of oldies such as "Rock and Roll Music", "Blueberry Hill", and "In the Still of the Night". "Rock and Roll Music" peaked at No. 5 in the U.S.[145] Brian and Love's "It's O.K." was in the vein of their early sixties style, and was a moderate hit. The album was publicized by an August 1976 NBC-TV special, simply titled The Beach Boys. The special, produced by Saturday Night Live (SNL) creator Lorne Michaels, featured appearances by SNL cast members John Belushi and Dan Aykroyd.[174]

The album was generally disliked by fans and critics upon release.[175] During its sessions, Brian's production role was belittled as group members overdubbed and remixed tracks to fight against his desire for a rough, unfinished sound.[176] Carl and Dennis disparaged the album to the press while Brian admitted, "[Undoubtedly] the new album is nothing too deep", but remained hopeful that their next release would be on par with the group's "Good Vibrations".[175]

For the remainder of 1976 to early 1977, Brian spent his time making sporadic public appearances and producing the band's next album Love You (1977), a quirky collection of 14 songs mostly written, arranged and produced by Brian. Brian revealed to Peter Ames Carlin that Love You is one of his favorite Beach Boys releases, telling him "That's when it all happened for me. That's where my heart lies."[177] Love You peaked at No. 28 in the UK and No. 53 in the US and developed a cult following regarded as one of the band's best albums by fans and critics alike, and an early work of synthpop.[16]
Referring to "naysayers" of the album, the underground fanzine Scram wrote, "Fuck [them] ... [the album showcases] a truly original mix of humor and sadness. The original numbers always dance just a step away from the cliché, dealing with simple lyrical themes that make you wonder why they had never been explored before."[178] The A.V. Club – considering the album in "the same vein" as Tonight's the Night (1975), Pussy Cats (1974), The Madcap Laughs (1970), and Barrett (1970) – described Love You as: "something almost desperately optimistic ... Wilson sings frayed songs about roller-skating, road-tripping, and Johnny Carson – like a frazzled man sitting in a corner chanting 'calm blue ocean' over and over. It's a beautiful, noisy, funny, heartbreaking work of art – one not for everybody, yet vital for anyone who wants to understand Wilson's overall worldview."[183]

After Love You was released, Brian began to record and assemble Adult/Child, an unreleased effort largely consisting of songs written by Wilson from 1976 and 1977 with select big band arrangements by Dick Reynolds.[182] Though publicized as the Beach Boys' next release, Adult/Child caused tension within the group and was ultimately shelved.[182] Following this period, his concert appearances with the band gradually diminished and their performances were occasionally erratic.[183]

### 1978–present

#### Internal divisions and personal struggles

The internal wrangling came to a head after a show at Central Park on September 1, 1977, when the band effectively split into two camps; Dennis and Carl Wilson on one side, Mike Love and Al Jardine on the other with Brian remaining neutral.[184] Following a confrontation on an airport tarmac, Dennis declared to Rolling Stone on September 3 that he had left the band: "It was Al Jardine who really knifed me in the heart when he said they didn't need me. That was the clincher. And all I told him was that he couldn't play more than four chords. They kept telling me I had my solo album now [Pacific Ocean Blue], like I should go off in a corner and leave the Beach Boys to them. The album really bothers them. They don't like to admit it's doing so well; they never even acknowledge it in interviews."[185]

Dennis started to withdraw from the group to focus on his second solo album entitled Bambu. The album was shelved just as alcoholism and marital problems overcame all three Wilson brothers.[187] Carl appeared intoxicated during concerts (especially at appearances for their 1978 Australia tour) and Brian gradually slid back into addiction and an unhealthy lifestyle.[188] Love remembered: "We were in Australia, and the Wilsons were upset that some of us were not trying heroin with them. That was a division. ... Brian, Carl and Dennis were into one lifestyle, whereas myself and Al Jardine and Bruce Johnston were not."[189]

The band broke up for two and a half weeks, until a meeting on September 17 at Brian's house. In light of a potential new Caribou Records contract the parties negotiated a settlement resulting in Love gaining control of Brian's vote in the group, allowing Love and Jardine to outvote Carl and Dennis Wilson on any matter.[186][nb 7]

The Beach Boys' last album for Reprise, M.I.U. Album (1978), was recorded at Maharishi International University in Iowa at the suggestion of Love.[190] Dennis and Carl made limited contributions; the album was mostly produced by Jardine and Ron Altbach, with Brian credited as "executive producer". M.I.U. was largely a contractual obligation to finish out their association with Reprise, who likewise did not promote the result.[191] The record cemented the divisions in the group. Love and Jardine focused on rock and roll-oriented material while Carl and Dennis chose the progressive focus they had established with the albums Carl and the Passions and Holland.
After departing Reprise, the Beach Boys signed with CBS Records. They received a substantial advance and were paid $1 million per album even as CBS deemed their preliminary review of the band’s first product, L.A. (Light Album) as unsatisfactory. Faced with the realization that Brian was unable to contribute, the band recruited Johnston as producer. The result paid off, as “Good Timin’” became a top 40 single. The group enjoyed moderate success with a disco rerecking of the Wild Honey song “Here Comes the Night”, followed by Jardine’s “Lady Lynda”. The album was followed in 1980 by Keepin’ the Summer Alive, with Johnston once again producing. Dennis was absent for most of this album.

In 1981, Carl left the touring group because of unhappiness with the band’s nostalgia format and lackluster live performances, subsequently pursuing a solo career.[187] He stated: “I haven’t quit the Beach Boys but I do not plan on touring with them until they decide that 1981 means as much to them as 1961.”[192] He returned in May 1982 – after approximately 14 months of being away – on the condition that the group reconsider their rehearsal and touring policies and refrain from Las Vegas-type engagements.[193]

From 1980 through 1982, the Beach Boys and The Grass Roots performed Independence Day concerts at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., attracting large crowds.[194][195] However, in April 1983, James G. Watt, President Ronald Reagan’s Secretary of the Interior, banned Independence Day concerts on the Mall by such groups. Watt said that “rock bands” that had performed on the Mall on Independence Day in 1981 and 1982 had encouraged drug use and alcoholism and had attracted “the wrong element”, who would steal from attendees.[195] During the ensuing uproar, which included over 40,000 complaints to the Department of the Interior, the Beach Boys stated that the Soviet Union, which had invited them to perform in Leningrad in 1978, “…obviously … did not feel that the group attracted the wrong element.”[195][196] Vice President George H. W. Bush said of the Beach Boys, "They're my friends and I like their music.”[195] Watt later apologized to the band after learning that President Reagan and First Lady Nancy Reagan were fans.[197] White House staff presented Watt with a plaster foot with a hole in it, showing that he had "shot himself in the foot".[198] The band returned to D.C. for Independence Day in 1984 and performed to a crowd of 750,000 people.[199]

Deaths of Dennis and Carl

In 1983, tensions between Dennis and Love escalated so high that each obtained a restraining order against each other. With the rest of the band fearing that he would end up like Brian, Dennis was given an ultimatum after his last performance in November 1983 to check into rehab for his alcohol problems or be banned from performing live with them. Dennis checked into rehab for his chance to get sober, but on December 28, 1983, he fatally drowned in Marina del Rey while diving from a friend’s boat trying to recover items that he had previously thrown overboard in fits of rage.[200] Despite his death, the Beach Boys continued as a successful touring act.[201]

On July 4, 1985, the Beach Boys played to an afternoon crowd of one million in Philadelphia and the same evening they performed for over 750,000 people on the Mall in Washington. They also appeared nine days later at the Live Aid concert. That year, they released the eponymous album The Beach Boys and enjoyed a resurgence of interest later in the 1980s, assisted by tributes such as David Lee Roth’s hit version of “California Girls”. “Getcha Back”, released from the album, gave the group a No. 26 single in the U.S. Following this, the group put out Rock ‘n’ Roll to the Rescue (U.S., No. 68) and a cover of the Mamas & the Papas “California Dreamin’” (U.S., No. 57).[145] In 1987, they played with the rap group The Fat Boys, performing the song “Wipe Out” and filming a music video. It was a No. 12 single in the U.S and a No. 2 rank in the UK.[202]

By 1988, Brian had drifted from the Beach Boys and released his first solo album, Brian Wilson. During this period the band unexpectedly claimed their first U.S. No. 1 hit single in 22 years with “Kokomo”, which had appeared in the movie Cocktail, and soon became the band’s largest selling single of all time.[203] They released the album Still Cruisin, which went gold in the U.S. In 1990, the band gathered several studio musicians and recorded the Melcher-produced title track of the comedy Problem Child. The album Summer in Paradise had no new contributions from Brian because of interference from caretaker Eugene Landy.
A lawsuit was filed by Brian in 1989 to reclaim the rights to his songs and the group's publishing company, Sea of Tunes, which he had supposedly signed away to his father Murry in 1969. He successfully argued that he had not been mentally fit to make an informed decision and that his father had potentially forged his signature. While Wilson failed to regain his copyrights, he was awarded $25 million for unpaid royalties. With Love and Brian unable to determine exactly what Love was properly owed, Love sued Brian in 1992 winning $13 million in 1994 for lost royalties. 35 of the group's songs were then amended to credit Love.

In 1993, the band appeared in Michael Feeney Callan's film The Beach Boys Today, which included in-depth interviews with all members except Brian. Carl confided to Callan that Brian would record again with the band at some point in the near future. A few Beach Boys sessions devoted to new Brian Wilson compositions occurred during the mid-1990s, but they remain largely unreleased, and the album was quickly cancelled because of personal conflicts. In February 1996, the Beach Boys guested with Status Quo on a re-recording of “Fun, Fun, Fun”, which became a British Top-30 hit. In June, the group worked with comedian Jeff Foxworthy on the recording Howdy From Maui, and eventually released Stars and Stripes Vol. 1 in August 1996. The album consisted of country renditions of several Beach Boys hits, performed by popular country artists such as Toby Keith and Willie Nelson. Brian, who was in a better mental state at the time, acted as co-producer.

In early 1997, Carl was diagnosed with lung and brain cancer after years of heavy smoking. Despite his terminal condition, Carl continued to perform with the band on its 1997 summer tour while undergoing chemotherapy. During performances, he sat on a stool and needed oxygen after every song. However, Carl was able to stand when he played on “God Only Knows”. Carl died on February 6, 1998, two months after the death of the Wilsons' mother, Audree, leaving Brian, Jardine and Love as the three remaining original members.

**Band split and name conflicts**

Following Carl's death, the remaining members splintered. Love and Johnston, occasionally with David Marks, continued to tour together, initially as "America’s Band", but following several cancelled bookings under that name, they sought authorization through Brother Records Inc. (BRI) to tour as "The Beach Boys" and secured the necessary license. In turn, Jardine left the band and began to tour regularly with his band “Beach Boys: Family & Friends” until he ran into legal issues for using the name without license. Meanwhile, Jardine sued Love, claiming that he had been excluded from their concerts. BRI, through its longtime attorney, Ed McPherson, sued Jardine in Federal Court. Jardine, in turn, counter-claimed against BRI for wrongful termination. BRI ultimately prevailed. Love and Johnston continued to tour as “The Beach Boys” with supporting musicians.

Brian Wilson sought treatments for his illnesses that aided him in his solo career. He toured regularly with his backing band consisting of members of Wondermints and other LA/Chicago musicians. Marks also maintained a solo career. The surviving group members appeared as themselves for the 1998 documentary film Endless Harmony: The Beach Boys Story, directed by Alan Boyd. Following the success of 1997's The Pet Sounds Sessions, many compilations were then issued by Capitol containing new archival material: Endless Harmony Soundtrack (1998), Ultimate Christmas (1998), and Hawthorne, CA(2001).

In 2004, Wilson recorded and released his solo album Brian Wilson Presents Smile, a reinterpretation of the Smile project that he initiated with the Beach Boys 36 years earlier. That September, Wilson issued a free CD through the Mail On Sunday that included Beach Boys songs he had recently rerecorded, five of which he co-authored with Love. The 10 track compilation had 2.6 million
copies distributed and prompted Love to file a lawsuit in November 2005; he claimed the promotion hurt the sales of the original recordings.[210] Love's suit was dismissed in 2007 when a judge determined that there were no triable issues.[211]

On June 13, 2006, the five surviving Beach Boys (Wilson, Love, Jardine, Johnston, and Marks) appeared together for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of *Pet Sounds* and the double-platinum certification of their greatest hits compilation, *Sounds of Summer: The Very Best of The Beach Boys*, in a ceremony atop the Capitol Records building in Hollywood. Plaques were awarded for their efforts, with Wilson accepting on behalf of Dennis and Carl. Wilson began a brief *Pet Sounds* tour with Jardine later that year.[212]

50th year reunion celebration

On October 31, 2011, the Beach Boys released surviving 1960s recordings from *Smile* in the form of *The Smile Sessions*. The album – even in its incomplete form – garnered universal critical acclaim and experienced popular success, charting in both the Billboard US and UK Top 30. The band was rewarded with glowing reviews, including inclusion in Rolling Stone's Top 500 album list at No. 381. *The Smile Sessions* went on to win Best Historical Album at the 2013 Grammy Awards.

In February 2011, the Beach Boys released "Don't Fight the Sea", a charity single to aid the victims of the 2011 Japan earthquake. The single, released on Jardine's 2011 album *A Postcard From California* featured Jardine, Wilson, Love and Johnston.

On December 16, 2011, it was announced that Wilson, Love, Jardine, Johnston and Marks would reunite for a new album and 50th anniversary tour in 2012 to include a performance at the New Orleans Jazz Festival in April 2012.[213] On February 12, 2012, the Beach Boys performed at the 2012 Grammy Awards, in what was billed as a "special performance" by organizers. It marked the group's first live performance to include Brian since 1996, Al since 1998, and David since 1999.[214] The Beach Boys then appeared at the April 10, 2012, season opener for the Los Angeles Dodgers and performed "Surfer Girl" and "The Star-Spangled Banner". In April, the new album's title was revealed as *That's Why God Made the Radio*.[215] The first single from the album, the title track, was released on digital platforms on April 26.[216] *That's Why God Made the Radio* debuted at No. 3 on U.S. charts, making U.S. chart history by expanding the group's span of *Billboard* 200 top ten albums across 49 years and one week, passing the Beatles with 47 years of top ten albums.[217]

Later in 2012, the group released the *Fifty Big Ones* and *Greatest Hits* compilations along with reissues of 12 of their albums. The next year, the group released *Live – The 50th Anniversary Tour* a 41-song, 2-CD set documenting their 50th Anniversary Tour. While there were no definite plans, Brian stated that he would like to make another Beach Boys album following the world tour.[218][219] In August 2013, the group released *Made in California*, a six disc collection featuring more than seven and a half hours of music, including more than 60 previously unreleased tracks,[220] and concluding the Beach Boys’ 50th anniversary campaign.

Resumed band split

Love wrote that on June 1, 2012, he received an e-mail from Wilson's wife and manager Melinda Ledbetter stating "no more shows for Wilson". Love, who is obligated by his license of the Beach Boys name to maintain revenue flow to Brother Records, then began accepting invitations for when the reunion was over.[221] On June 25, Ledbetter sent another e-mail asking to disregard her last message, but by then, Love says, "it was too late. We had booked other concerts, and promoters had begun selling tickets."

The next day, Love announced additional touring dates that would not feature Wilson. Wilson then denied knowledge of these new dates.[222][223] Love writes: "I had wanted to send out a joint press release, between Brian and me, formally announcing the end of the reunion tour on September 28. But I couldn't get Brian's management team on board (Brian himself doesn't make those kinds of decisions)."

In late September, news outlets began reporting that Love and Johnston split from the other 3 members. On October 5, Love responded in a self-written press release to the *LA Times* that the band would return to its pre-50th Reunion Tour lineup with him and Johnston touring as the Beach Boys without Wilson, Jardine, and Marks:
I did not fire Brian Wilson from the Beach Boys. I cannot fire Brian Wilson from the Beach Boys ... I do not have such authority. And even if I did, I would never fire Brian Wilson from the Beach Boys. ... This tour was always envisioned as a limited run ... As the year went on, Brian and Al wanted to keep the 50th anniversary tour going beyond the 75 dates ... However ... we had already set up shows in smaller cities with ... the configuration that had been touring together every year for the last 13 years. Brian and Al would not be joining for these small market dates, as was long agreed upon.

Four days later, Wilson and Jardine submitted a written response to the rumors stating: "After Mike booked a couple of shows with Bruce, Al and I were, of course, disappointed. Then there was confusion in some markets when photos of me, Al and David and the 50th reunion band appeared on websites advertising his shows ... I was completely blindsided by his press release ... We hadn't even discussed as a band what we were going to do with all the offers that were coming in for more 50th shows." Love attributed Wilson's statements in this press release to falsification by his agents, again affirming that the presupposed agreements were "well-documented" and that Wilson had halted further touring dates. On December 13, Wilson and Jardine played a Christmas show at which they performed the Beach Boys Christmas songs. Following this appearance, Wilson announced concert dates featuring himself, Jardine and Marks. Love and Johnston continued to perform under the Beach Boys name, while Wilson, Jardine, and Marks continued to tour as a trio, and a subsequent tour with guitarist Jeff Beck also included former Beach Boy Blondie Chaplin at select dates. Reflecting upon the band's reunion in 2013, Love stated: "I had a wonderful experience being in the studio together. Brian has lost none of his ability to structure those melodies and chord progressions, and when we heard us singing together coming back over the speakers it sounded like 1965 again. Touring was more for the fans. ... It was a great experience, it had a term to it, and now everyone's going on with their ways of doing things.

Biographer Jon Stebbins speculated that Love declined to continue working with the group because of the lesser control he had over the touring process, coupled with the lower financial gain, noting: "Night after night after night after night, Mike is making less money getting reminded that Brian is more popular than him. And he has to answer to people instead of calling all the shots himself." Writer Stacey Anderson called Love's arguments "wholly unconvincing", facetiously summarizing: "He insists that the larger ensemble with Wilson would have overpowered the modest venues he'd already booked; as anyone can infer, this really means he would have lost money by including Wilson.

Jardine, Marks, Johnston and Love appeared together at the 2014 Ella Awards Ceremony, where Love was honored for his work as a singer. Marks sang "409" in honor of Love, and Jardine performed "Help Me Rhonda". They closed the show with "Fun, Fun, Fun". Wilson's long time band associate Jeff Foskett also appeared, but not Wilson. On May 15, 2014 the touring Beach Boys (Love and Johnston) announced a tour celebrating "50 Years of 'Fun Fun Fun'", named for their 1964 single. The tour featured the return of Jeff Foskett, who replaced Mike's son Christian. As of September 2014, Jardine has maintained that a continued reunion with the Beach Boys is "really up to him [Love] ... He claims he didn't, that he fired us after the reunion ... He's a brilliant songwriter, and unfortunately he has brilliant lawyers. We wish him all the best, but doggonit, you know, we’d like to be Beach Boys, too. There you go.

In 2015, Soundstage aired an episode featuring Wilson performing with Jardine and former Beach Boys Blondie Chaplin and Ricky Fataar at The Venetian in Las Vegas. In April 2015, when asked if he was interested in making music with Love again, Wilson replied: "I don’t think so, no," later adding in July that he "doesn't talk to the Beach Boys [or] Mike Love." On July 25, Love said: "If you get Brian and I, we might go to the piano. But with every band there are cliques that are formed with management, wives, agents, publicists – and the tendency is with some people is they tend to lionize or make one person more important than the others. ... the Beach Boys and all these bands that ever existed are a team. I learned as captain of my cross country team that you don put a person down to get their best efforts, you encourage them.
Musical style and development

In Understanding Rock: Essays in Musical Analysis, music theorist Daniel Harrison summarizes:

Even from their inception, the Beach Boys were an experimental group. They combined, as Jim Miller has put it, "the instrumental sleekness of the Ventures, the lyric sophistication of Chuck Berry, and the vocal expertise of some weird cross between the Letterman and Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers" with lyrics whose images, idioms, and concerns were drawn from the rarefied world of the middle-class white male southern California teenager. ... But it was the profound vocal virtuosity of the group, coupled with the obsessional drive and compositional ambitions of their leader, Brian Wilson, that promised their survival after the eventual breaking of fad fever. ... Comparison to other vocally oriented rock groups, such as the Association, shows the Beach Boys' technique to be far superior, almost embarrassingly so. They were so confident of their ability, and of Brian's skill as a producer to enhance it, that they were unafraid of doing sophisticated, a cappella glee-club arrangements containing multiple suspensions, passing formations, complex chords, and bothchromatic and enharmonic modulations.[244]

The Beach Boys began as a garage band playing 1950s style rock and roll,[245] reassembling styles of music such as surf to include vocal jazz harmony, which created their unique sound.[246][247] In addition, they introduced their signature approach to common genres such as the pop ballad by applying harmonic or formal twists not native to rock and roll.[248] Early on, Love sang lead vocals in the rock-oriented songs, while Carl contributed crisp guitar lines on the group's ballads.[249] Miller observed, "On straight rockers they sang tight harmonies behind Love's lead ... on ballads, Brian played his falsetto off against lush, jazz-tinged voicings, often using (for rock) unorthodox harmonic structures."[249] Harrison adds, "But even the least distinguished of the Beach Boys' early uptempo rock 'n' roll songs show traces of structural complexity at some level; Brian was simply too curious and experimental to leave convention alone."[244] This new sound was quickly associated with the Modernism movement blooming in the Los Angeles music scene.[250] Among the distinct elements of the Beach Boys' style were the nasal quality of their singing voices, their use of a falsetto harmony over a driving, locomotive-like melody, and the sudden chiming in of the whole group on a key line.[251]

During their early years, the Beach Boys released music that displayed an increasing level of sophistication, a period where Brian Wilson consistently acted as the group's primary bandleader, songwriter, producer, and arranger for the group's most commercially and critically successful work.[252][64] In a 1966 article that asks "Do the Beach Boys rely too much on sound genius Brian?" Carl responded that every member of the group contributes ideas, but admitted that Brian was majorly responsible for their music.[253] In 1967, Dennis was cited as "the closest to brother Brian's own musical ideals ... He always emphasises the fusion, in their work, of pop and classical music."[254] An appearance by the band on Good Morning America in 1980 was highlighted by journalist Ben Ratliff who explains: "The clip and everything about it – the occasion for its happening, Dennis's shrug, Al Jardine's silence, Carl's gameness, Brian's self-absorption, Mike Love's critical stewardship of the narrative – seems to say a lot, in seven minutes, about who the Beach Boys are and how they worked together.[255]

In early 1964, Brian began his breakaway from beach-themed music.[256] Later in November of the same year, the group expressed desires to advance from the surf rock style for which they initially became known for.[52] New York magazine would later refer to the albums Pet Sounds and Smiley Smile as their "experimental pop phase".[257] The band went on to incorporate many more genres, from baroque pop to psychedelia and synthpop.[258]

Influences
The band’s earliest influences came primarily from the work of Chuck Berry\footnote{8} and the Four Freshmen.\footnote{250} Performed by the Four Freshmen, "Their Hearts Were Full of Spring" (1961) was a particular favorite of the group.\footnote{261} By analyzing their arrangements of pop standards, Brian educated himself on jazz harmony.\footnote{10} Bearing this in mind, Philip Lambert noted, "If Bob Flanigan helped teach Brian how to sing, then Gershwin, Kern, Porter, and the other members of this pantheon helped him learn how to craft a song."\footnote{262} Other general influences on the group included the Hi-Los\footnote{250} the Penguins, the Robins, Bill Haley & His Comets, Otis Williams, the Cadets, the Everly Brothers, the Shirelles, the Regents, and the Crystals.\footnote{263}\footnote{nb 10}

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Though the Beach Boys are often caricatured as the ultimate white, suburban act, black R&B was crucial to their sound.

—Geoffrey Himes\footnote{43}

Carl remembers: "Most of [Mike's] classmates were black. He was the only white guy on his track team. He was really immersed in doo-wop and that music and I think he influenced Brian to listen to it. The black artists were so much better in terms of rock records in those days that the white records almost sounded like put-ons.\footnote{43} Their eclectic mix of white and black vocal groups – ranging from the rock and roll of Berry, the jazz harmonies of the Four Freshmen, the pop of the Four Preps, the folk of the Kingston Trio, the R&B of groups like the Coasters and the Five Satins, and the doo wop of Dion and the Belmonts – helped contribute to the Beach Boys' uniqueness in American popular music.\footnote{266} While the Beach Boys are not often associated with blues, Brian has called this a misapprehension, citing Smokey Robinson and Stevie Wonder as influences.\footnote{267} Regarding surf rock pioneer Dick Dale, Brian clarified that his influence on the group was limited to Carl and his style of guitar playing.\footnote{268} Carl himself named Berry, the Ventures, and John Walker for shaping his guitar style, and that the Beach Boys had learned to play all of the Ventures' songs by ear early in their career.\footnote{269} On Jimi Hendrix and "heavy" music, Brian said he felt no pressure to go in that direction: "We never got into the heavy musical level trip. We never needed to. It's already been done.\footnote{270}

The influence of the Beach Boys' peers combined with Brian's competitive nature drove him to reach higher creative peaks.\footnote{65}\footnote{11} Sometime around late 1963, he heard the song "Be My Baby" (1963) by the Ronettes for the first time, revamping his creative interests and songwriting.\footnote{274} "Be My Baby" is considered the epitome of Phil Spector's Wall of Sound production technique, a recording method that fascinated Wilson for the next several decades.\footnote{275} Brian later reflected: "I was unable to really think as a producer up until the time where I really got familiar with Phil Spector's work. That was when I started to design the experience to be a record rather than just a song."\footnote{276}\footnote{12} Other prominent inspirations for Brian included Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" (1924),\footnote{273} the Beatles' Rubber Soul (1965),\footnote{273} and composer Burt Bacharach.\footnote{281} Brian is quoted: "Burt Bacharach and Hal David are more like me. They're also the best pop team – per se – today. As a producer, Bacharach has a very fresh, new approach."\footnote{281}\footnote{13}

Experimentation with psychotropic substances proved pivotal to the group's development as artists.\footnote{283}\footnote{56}\footnote{284} In December 1964, Brian was introduced to cannabis before quickly progressing to LSD in early 1965. Of his first acid trip,\footnote{285} Brian recalled that the drug had subjected him to "a very religious experience" which enlightened him to indescribable philosophies.\footnote{286} The music for "California Girls" (the first Beach Boys song Bruce Johnston participated in)\footnote{287} came from this first LSD experience,\footnote{285} as did much of the group's subsequent work where they would partake in drug use during recording sessions.\footnote{288}

### Spirituality

The band members often reflected on the spiritual nature of their music (and music in general), particularly for the recording of Pet Sounds and Smile.\footnote{115} Even though the Wilson family did not grow up in a particularly religious household\footnote{289}\footnote{290} Carl was described as "the most truly religious person I know" by Brian, and Carl was forthcoming about the group's spiritual beliefs stating: "We believe in God as a kind of universal consciousness. God is love. God is you. God is me. God is everything right here in this room. It's a spiritual concept which inspires a great deal of our music."\footnote{253} Carl told Rave magazine in 1967 that the group's influences are of a "religious nature", but not any religion in specific, only "an idea based upon that of Universal Consciousness. ... The spiritual concept of happiness and doing good to others is extremely important to the lyric of our songs, and the religious element of some of the better church music is also contained within some of our new work.\footnote{254}

Brian is quoted during the Smile era: "I’m very religious. Not in the sense of churches, going to church; but like the essence of all religion."\footnote{290} During the recording of Pet Sounds, Brian held prayer meetings, later reflecting that "God was with us the whole time we were doing [the] album ... I could feel that feeling in my brain."\footnote{291} In 1966, he explained that he wanted to move into a white
Vocal ability

Brian identified each member individually for their vocal range, once detailing the ranges for Carl, Dennis, Jardine (“[they] progress upwards through G, A, and B”), Love (“can go from bass to the E above middle C”), and himself (“I can take the second D in the treble clef”). He declared in 1966 that his greatest interest was to expand modern vocal harmony, owing his fascination with voice to the Four Freshmen, which he considered a “groovy sectional sound.” He added, “The harmonies that we are able to produce give us a uniqueness which is really the only important thing you can put into records – some quality that no one else has got. I love peaks in a song – and enhancing them on the control panel. Most of all, I love the human voice for its own sake.” For a period, Brian avoided singing falsetto for the group, saying “I thought people thought I was a fairy. ... The band told me, ‘If that’s the way you sing, don’t worry about it.’”

Rock critic Erik Davis wrote, “The ‘purity’ of tone and genetic proximity that smoothed their voices was almost creepy, pseudo-castrato, [and] a ‘barbershop’ sound.” According to Brian: “Jack Good once told us, ‘You sing like eunuchs in a Sistine Chapel,’ which was a pretty good quote.” Writer Richard Goldstein reported that, according to a fellow journalist who asked Brian about the black roots of his music, Brian's response was: “We're white and we sing white.” Goldstein added that when he asked where his inspiration for vocal harmonies had derived from, Wilson answered: ‘Barbershop’. On the group's blend, Carl said: “Michael has a beautifully rich, very full-sounding bass voice. Yet his lead singing is real nasal, real punk. Alan's voice has a bright timbre to it; it really cuts. My voice has a kind of calm sound. We’re big oooh-ers; we love to oooh. It’s a big, full sound, that’s very pleasing to us; it opens up the heart.” According to Carl, it’s “not widely known” that Love also contributed to many of the vocal arrangements; “He would bring out the funkier approaches, whether to go shoo-boobop or bom-bom-did-di-did-did It makes a big difference, because it can change the whole rhythm, the whole color and tone of it.”

From lowest intervals to highest, the group's vocal harmony stack usually began with Love or Dennis, followed by Jardine or Carl, and finally Brian on top, according to Jardine, while Carl said that the blend was Love on bottom, Carl above, followed by Dennis or Jardine, and then Brian on top. Jardine explains, “We always sang the same vocal intervals. ... As soon as we heard the chords on the piano we’d figure it out pretty easily [if there was a vocal move] Brian envisioned, he’d show that particular singer that move. We had somewhat photographic memory as far as the vocal parts were concerned so that [was] never a problem for us.”

Striving for absolute perfection, Brian’s intricate vocal arrangements exercised the group’s calculated blend of intonation, attack, phrasing, and expression. Sometimes, he would sing each vocal harmony part alone through multi-track tape. Jimmy Webb has said, “They used very little vibrato and sing in very straight tones. The voices all lie down beside each other very easily – there’s no bumping between them because the pitch is very precise.”

An original handwritten manuscript of the lyrics to “God Only Knows”
The group's instrumental combo initially involved Brian on bass guitar and keyboards, Carl on guitar, and Dennis on drums. Nine months after forming, they acquired national success, and demand for their personal appearance skyrocketed. Biographer James Murphy said, "By most contemporary accounts, they were not a very good live band when they started. ... The Beach Boys learned to play as a band in front of live audiences", but asserted that they eventually became "one of the best and enduring live bands".

For the recording of the Beach Boys' instrumental tracks, Brian arranged many of his compositions for a conglomerate of session musicians informally known as the Wrecking Crew. Their assistance was needed because of the increasingly complicated nature of the material. As a result, a number of songs do not credit the Beach Boys as instrumentalists, but nearly invariably as lead, harmony, or backing vocalists. It's the belief of Richie Unterberger that, "Before session musicians took over most of the parts, the Beach Boys could play respectably gutsy surf rock as a self-contained unit.

Carl continued to play beside these musicians whenever he was available to attend sessions. In archivist Craig Slowinski's view, "One should not sell short Carl's own contributions; the youngest Wilson had developed as a musician sufficiently to play alongside the horde of high-dollar session pros that big brother was now bringing into the studio. Carl's guitar playing [was] a key ingredient.

It is often erroneously stated that Dennis' drumming in the Beach Boys' recordings was filled in exclusively by studio musicians. His drumming is documented on a number of the group's singles, including "I Get Around", "Fun, Fun Fun", and "Don't Worry Baby."

Brian's experiments with his Wollensak tape recorder provide early examples of his flair for exotica and unusual percussive patterns and arranging ideas that he would recycle in later prominent work. Through attending Phil Spector's sessions sporadically, Brian learned how to act as a producer for records while being educated on the Wall of Sound process. From then on, Brian received some production advice from Jan Berry. As they collaborated on several hit singles written and produced for other artists, they recorded what would later be regarded the California Sound.

Although he was often dubbed a perfectionist, Brian was an inexperienced musician, and his understanding was mostly self-taught. He handled most stages of the group's recording process from the beginning, despite Nik Venet being credited for producing their early recordings. At the lyric stage, Brian usually worked with bandmate Mike Love, whose assertive persona provided youthful swagger that contrasted Brian's explorations in romanticism and sensitivity. Luis Sanchez noted a pattern where Brian would spare surfing imagery when working with collaborators outside of his band's circle, in the examples "Lonely Sea" and "In My Room".

Foreshadowed by Beach Boys' Party! (1965), much of the group's recordings from 1967 to 1970 displayed sparse instrumentation, a more relaxed ensemble, and a seeming inattention to production quality. Brian briefly experimented with musique concrete and minimalist rock approaches to music before retreating to his home recording studio to record "manic" material in the 1970s, enacting syncopated exercises and counterpoints layered on jittery eighth note tone clusters and loping shuffle grooves. During the infancy of Brian's home studio, the group was forced to improvise many technical aspects of recording. In one instance, they used an empty swimming pool as anecho chamber.

After 1967

As instrumentalists

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When Brian abdicated from the group, the other members were forced to take a more active production role.\[100\] This is believed to have faltered the quality of their music.\[41\] Richie Unterberger believes that after the December 1967 release of *Wild Honey*, "the Beach Boys were revealed as a group that, although capable of producing some fine and interesting music, were no longer innovators on the level of the Beatles and other figureheads."\[41\] The album marked the beginning of Carl's increased role as producer, who described it as "music for Brian to cool out by,"\[333\] signaling a mellower approach that pervaded into the 1970s.\[64\] In 1968, Dennis contributed original songs to *Friends*, revealing himself as a broodingly soulful songwriter and singer, while Bruce Johnston devised a moody instrumental, "The Nearest Faraway Place", fo80/20 the following year.\[334\]

*Sunflower* (1970) marked an end to the experimental songwriting and production phase initiated by *Smiley Smile* (1967).\[335\] Of the albums between *Surf's Up* (1971) and *Holland* (1973), Daniel Harrison wrote that they "contain a mixture of middle-of-the-road music entirely consonant with pop style during the early 1970s with a few oddities that proved that the desire to push beyond conventional boundaries was not dead."\[335\] While Harrison adamantly states "1974 is the year in which the Beach Boys ceased to be a rock 'n' roll act and became an oldies act,"\[335\] *Love You* (1977) is perceived by some as an oddity that sounds like no other record in their catalog\[336\] with synthesizer-laden arrangements played almost entirely by Brian.\[187\]

## Legacy

### Cultural impact and influence

Regarded by some critics as one of the greatest American rock groups and an important catalyst in the evolution of popular music, the Beach Boys are one of the most critically acclaimed, commercially successful\[6\][337] and widely influential bands of all time.\[2\] The Beach Boys' sales estimates range from 100 to 350 million records worldwide, and have influenced artists spanning many genres and decades.\[338\] The group's early songs made them major pop stars in the US, the UK, Australia and other countries, having seven top 10 singles between April 1963 and November 1964. They were one of the few American bands formed prior to the 1964 British Invasion to continue their success.\[339\] Among artists of the 1960s, they are one of few central figures in the histories of rock.\[340\]

### Awards and honors

The group routinely appears in the upper reaches of ranked lists such as "The Top 1000 Albums of All Time."\[342\] Many of the group's songs and albums including *The Beach Boys Today!* (1965), *Smiley Smile* (1967), *Sunflower* (1970), and *Surf's Up* (1971) are featured in several lists devoted to the greatest of all time.\[343\] The 1966 releases *Pet Sounds* and "Good Vibrations" frequently rank among the top of critics' lists of the greatest albums and singles of all time.\[343\] In 2004, *Pet Sounds* was preserved in the National Recording Registry by the Library of Congress for being "culturally, historically, and aesthetically significant."\[91\] Their recordings of "In My Room", "Good Vibrations", "California Girls" and the entire *Pet Sounds* album have been inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame.\[344\] On Acclaimed Music, "Good Vibrations" is ranked the third best song of all time, while "God Only Knows" is ranked 21st; the group itself is ranked No. 1 in its 1000 most recommended artists of all time.\[343\]

In 1966, a reader poll conducted by the UK magazine *NME* named the Beach Boys as the world's No. 1 vocal group, ahead of the Beatles and the Walker Brothers.\[345\] In 1974, the Beach Boys were awarded "Band of the Year" by *Rolling Stone*. On December 30, 1980, the Beach Boys were awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, located at 1500 Vine Street.\[346\] The group was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1988. Ten years later they were selected for the Vocal Group Hall of Fame.\[6\][347]
2001, the group received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. In 2004, Rolling Stone ranked the Beach Boys No. 12 on its list of the 100 Greatest Artists of All Time.\cite{348} Brian Wilson was inducted into the UK Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in November 2006.\cite{349}

The Wilsons' California house, where the Wilson brothers grew up and the group began, was demolished in 1986 to make way for Interstate 105, the Century Freeway. A Beach Boys Historic Landmark (California Landmark No. 1041 at 3701 West 119th Street), dedicated on May 20, 2005, marks the location.

### Grammy Awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Nominee/work</th>
<th>Award</th>
<th>Result</th>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>&quot;Good Vibrations&quot;</td>
<td>Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals</td>
<td>Nominated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Best Contemporary (R&amp;R) Recording</td>
<td>Nominated</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Best Contemporary (R&amp;R) Performance</td>
<td>Nominated</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Best Arrangement Accompanying A Vocalist Or Instrumentalist</td>
<td>Nominated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>&quot;Kokomo&quot;</td>
<td>Grammy Award for Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals</td>
<td>Nominated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>&quot;Good Vibrations&quot;</td>
<td>Hall of Fame</td>
<td>Inducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Pet Sounds</td>
<td>Hall of Fame</td>
<td>Inducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>&quot;In My Room&quot;</td>
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<td>Inducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>The Beach Boys</td>
<td>Lifetime Achievement Award</td>
<td>Won</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Endless Harmony</td>
<td>Best Long Form Music Video</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>&quot;California Girls&quot;</td>
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<td>2013</td>
<td>The Smile Sessions</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>&quot;I Get Around&quot;</td>
<td>Hall of Fame</td>
<td>Inducted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Members

**Current**

- Brian Wilson – lead and backing vocals, bass, keyboards (1961–present)
- Mike Love – lead and backing vocals, tambourine, saxophone (1961–present)
- Bruce Johnston – backing and lead vocals, keyboards, bass (1965–72, 1979–present)

**Past**

- Carl Wilson – lead and backing vocals, lead and rhythm guitar, bass, keyboards (1961–98, died 1998)
- Dennis Wilson – backing and lead vocals, drums, keyboards (1961–83, died 1983)
- Blondie Chaplin – backing and lead vocals, bass, rhythm and lead guitar slide guitar (1972–73)
- Ricky Fataar – backing and lead vocals, drums, rhythm guitar, pedal steel guitar (1972–74)

### Timeline
Discography

Studio albums

- *Surfin' Safari* (1962)
- *Surfin' U.S.A.* (1963)
- *Surfer Girl* (1963)
- *Little Deuce Coupe* (1963)
- *Shut Down Volume 2* (1964)
- *All Summer Long* (1964)
- *The Beach Boys' Christmas Album* (1964)
- *The Beach Boys Today!* (1965)
- *Summer Days (And Summer Nights!!)* (1965)
- *Beach Boys' Party!* (1965)
- *Pet Sounds* (1966)
- *Smiley Smile* (1967)
- *Wild Honey* (1967)
- *Friends* (1968)
- *20/20* (1969)
- *Sunflower* (1970)
- *Surf's Up* (1971)
- *Carl and the Passions – "So Tough"* (1972)
- *Holland* (1973)
- *15 Big Ones* (1976)
- *Love You* (1977)
- *M.I.U. Album* (1978)
- *L.A. (Light Album)* (1979)
- *Keepin' the Summer Alive* (1980)
- *The Beach Boys* (1985)
- *Still Cruisin'* (1989)
- *Summer in Paradise* (1992)
The Box Tops

The Box Tops are an American rock band, formed in Memphis in 1967. They are best known for the hits "The Letter", "Cry Like a Baby", and "Soul Deep" and are considered a major blue-eyed soul group of the period. They performed a mixture of current soul music songs by artists such as James & Bobby Purify and Clifford Curry; pop tunes such as "A Whiter Shade of Pale" by Keith Reid, Gary Brooker, and Matthew Fisher of Procol Harum; and songs written by their producers, Dan Penn, Spooner Oldham, and Chips Moman. Vocalist Alex Chilton went on to front the power pop band Big Star and to launch a career as a solo artist, during which he occasionally performed songs he had sung with the Box Tops.

The Box Tops' music combined elements of soul music and light pop. Their records are prime examples of the styles made popular by Moman and Penn at American Sound Studio in Memphis. Many of their lesser known Top 40 hits, including "Neon Rainbow", "I Met Her in Church", and "Sweet Cream Ladies, Forward March", are considered minor classics. As rock critic Lester Bangs wrote in a review of the group's Super Hits album, "A song like 'Soul Deep' is obvious enough, a patented commercial sound, yet within these strictures it communicates with a depth and sincerity of feeling that holds the attention and brings you back often."

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2 Band member history

3 Selected discography
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History
The Box Tops began as "The Devilles" (distinct from The DeVilles (New York band)), who had started playing in Memphis. By January 1967 the group was composed of founding member Danny Smythe (born August 25, 1948, died July 6, 2016), along with newer arrivals John Evans (guitar, keyboards, background vocals), Alex Chilton (lead vocal, guitar), Bill Cunningham (bass guitar, keyboards, background vocal; son of Sun Records artist Buddy Blake Cunningham and brother of B.B. Cunningham Jr., lead vocalist for 1960s Memphis group The Hombres), and Gary Talley (lead guitar, electric sitar, bass, background vocal). They would soon change their name to "Box Tops" to prevent confusion with another band recording at the time with the name "The Devilles".

As the Box Tops, they entered the studio under the guidance of producer Dan Penn to record Wayne Carson Thompson’s song "The Letter". Though under two minutes in length, it was an international hit by September 1967, reaching Billboard's number-one position and remaining there for four weeks. The record, produced by Dan Penn, sold over four million copies, received two Grammy Award nominations, and was awarded a gold disc. On 20–27 October 1967 "The Letter" and The Hombres’ "Let It Out (Let It All Hang Out)" were 1-2 on the WLS (AM) Silver Dollar Survey, marking a rare quinella involving two brothers of the same family (the aforementioned Cunningham brothers), each in a different top 40 act.

The band followed up "The Letter" with "Neon Rainbow", another tune penned by Thompson and produced by Penn. An album called The Letter/Neon Rainbow appeared in November 1967. The Box Tops would actually release three albums over a nine-month period from late 1967 to mid-1968. Some of the group’s instrumental tracks were performed by session musicians like Reggie Young, Tommy Cogbill, Gene Chrisman, and Bobby Womack at American Sound Studio. However, the actual group members performed on a number of their recordings, including "The Letter", and on all live performances.

By January 1968, John Evans and Danny Smythe returned to school, thereby avoiding the draft. They were replaced by bassist Rick Allen (born January 28, 1946, Little Rock, Arkansas) from the Gentrys and drummer Thomas Boggs (born July 16, 1944, Wynne, Arkansas, died May 5, 2008, Memphis, Tennessee) from the Board of Directors.

"Cry Like a Baby" was a million-seller in 1968, peaking at #2 on the Hot 100. It has been covered by the Hacienda Brothers and Kim Carnes. "I Met Her In Church" and "Choo-Choo Train" were smaller hits released later that year. Towards the end of 1968, the band switched producers, with Dan Penn being replaced by the team of Cogbill and Chips Moman. This team was responsible for producing the band's final 1968 hit "Sweet Cream Ladies, Forward March" (which debuted on the Hot 100 on Chilton's eighteenth birthday) and all the band's future releases through 1970.

In the summer of 1969, Thompson's decidedly upbeat "Soul Deep" became the group's final US Top 40 entry, peaking at #3 on KHJ on 30 July and on WLS on 18–25 August and #18 on the Hot 100 in late August. "Soul Deep" was also part of the title of the group's 1996 anthology The follow-up single, "Torn On A Dream", peaked only at #58 on the Hot 100 and was a #29 hit in Canada.

Cunningham left the Box Tops to return to school in August 1969 and was replaced by Harold Cloud on bass. Eventually the group’s tolerance for the disrespect and fleecing they had endured as teen musicians from managers, lawyers, and promoters came to an end.

According to a 2004 article in Puremusic.com by Talley, a December 1969 British tour was cancelled by the band after arriving in London to discover that instead of respecting the rider agreement, the local promoter insisted they play the tour with the opening reggae act's toy drums, public address system amplifiers (instead of proper guitar amplifiers), and a keyboard with a broken speaker.

Finally, in February 1970, the remaining founding members, Talley and Chilton, were ready to move on and disbanded the group. However, the Bell record label kept releasing new Box Tops singles through early 1970, using material that had already been recorded.
"The Box Tops" - Chilton activity (1976)

In 1976, Pickwick Records recorded new versions of "The Letter" and "Cry Like a Baby" using studio musicians, and credited them to The Box Tops, though Alex Chilton was the only group member involved. Both recordings were released in the UK on a various-artists LP set called The Heart Breakers and Tear Jerkers Collection.[8]

Post-Box Tops careers

Each of the original members went on to work in the music industry in subsequent years after leaving the Box Tops. Chilton's career path included work performing with Big Star,[3] Tav Falco's Panther Burns and his solo trio, as well as briefly producing groups like The Cramps. Guitarist Talley went on to work in a variety of styles as a session guitarist and songwriter in Memphis, Atlanta, and Nashville. Artists and producers he has worked with have ranged from Billy Preston, Hank Ballard, Chips Moman, Billy Lee Riley, Billy Joe Royal, Webb Pierce, Waylon Jennings, Tracy Nelson, Willie Nelson, and Tammy Wynette to Sam and Dave's Sam Moore, and others. He recorded two albums for Appaloosa Records with the group Fish Heads & Rice, Certified in 1991, and 4 Heads in 1994.[9] Bassist Cunningham won a spot in the White House orchestra in Washington, D.C., after completing his master's degree in music. During his classical music career, he played with some of the world's best performers; at Cunningham's last public classical music performance, for instance, he performed at the White House with Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman. In the 1980s, he earned an MBA and changed careers. Evans played occasionally in Memphis groups after the Box Tops, while working as a luthier, eventually switching to a computer network administrator career. Smythe performed in Memphis soul and blues groups in the 1970s, later changing to a career in art by the 1980s, but returned to music performance in the 1990s.


There was a one-off Box Tops charity concert in Nashville, Tennessee, at a venue called Ace of Clubs in 1989 for Harold Cloud's family member. The lineup for this show comprised Chilton, Evans, Talley, Harold Cloud (bass), and Gene Houston (drums). At this show the group was also augmented by backup singers Tracy Nelson, Jonell Mosser, and Kim Morrison and a full horn section.

Cunningham next organized a reunion of all the band's original members, including Chilton, in 1996. The group subsequently released a self-produced album of new material recorded at Easley McCain Recording, Tear Off!, and resumed performing concerts internationally. The Tear Off! album included a new original by guitarist Talley ("Last Laugh"); covers of Bobby Womack's "I'm in Love", Eddie Floyd's "Big Bird" (often covered in solo concerts since the 1980s by Chilton), and The Gentrys' "Keep on Dancing"; and a new recording of "The Letter". Other songs on the album reflected the band members' varied soul, novelty, rock-and-roll, and country music influences. B.B. Cunningham Jr. played a guitar on the album version of "Trip to Bandstand", his 1959 Memphis novelty single. The album also featured horn arrangements and performances by The Memphis Horns who subsequently participated in some of the group's concerts. By 2000, John Evans was no longer in the band and was replaced by Nashville session man Barry Walsh. John is employed by the University of Memphis.

In 2001 the group contributed a Blondie cover tune to a various artists collection of "songs you never thought you'd hear" called When Pigs Fly.

Sold-out Box Tops concerts in Germany in 2003 were aired on German radio, and the group's 2005 tour schedule showed a number of American dates planned despite the group members' busy careers outside the band. The Box Tops did their last Memphis concert on May 29, 2009, at The Memphis Italian Festival.

On March 17, 2010, lead vocalist Alex Chilton died of a heart attack.
In mid 2015, Bill Cunningham and Gary Talley teamed up to reform The Box Tops in response to continued requests by fans.\[10\]

On July 6, 2016, Danny Smythe died aged 67.\[11\]

The year 2017 marks the 50th anniversary since The Letter launched to the top of the charts. Cunningham, Talley, and Rick Levy joined the Happy Together Tour performing to sold out shows across the USA, together with Flo and Eddie of The Turtles, Chuck Negron of Three Dog Night, The Association, The Cowsills, and Ron Dante of The Archies.

### Timeline

#### Band member history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1967–1968| • Alex Chilton – lead vocals, rhythm guitar  
           | • Gary Talley – lead guitar, backing vocals  
           | • John Evans – keyboards, backing vocals  
           | • Bill Cunningham – bass, backing vocals  
           | • Danny Smythe – drums, backing vocals |
| 1968–1969| • Alex Chilton – lead vocals, rhythm guitar  
           | • Gary Talley – lead guitar, backing vocals  
           | • Rick Allen – keyboards, backing vocals  
           | • Bill Cunningham – bass, backing vocals  
           | • Thomas Boggs – drums, concussion, backing vocals |
| Sep 1969–1970 | • Alex Chilton – lead vocals, rhythm guitar  
                        | • Gary Talley – lead guitar, backing vocals  
                        | • Swain Schaefer – keyboards, backing vocals  
                        | • Harold Cloud – bass  
                        | • Bobby Guidotti – drums, backing vocals |
| 1996–1999 | • Return of the original lineup  
           | • Alex Chilton – lead vocals, rhythm guitar  
           | • Gary Talley – lead guitar, backing vocals  
           | • John Evans – keyboards, backing vocals  
           | • Bill Cunningham – bass, backing vocals  
           | • Danny Smythe – drums, percussion, backing vocals |
| 2000–2010 | • Alex Chilton – lead vocals, rhythm guitar  
           | • Gary Talley – lead guitar, backing vocals  
           | • Bill Cunningham – bass, backing vocals  
           | • Danny Smythe – drums, percussion, backing vocals  
           | • Barry Walsh – keyboards |
| 2015–present | • Gary Talley – lead guitar, lead and backing vocals  
                     | • Bill Cunningham – bass, lead and backing vocals  
                     | • Rick Levy – rhythm guitar lead and backing vocals  
                     | • Ron Krasinski – drums, percussion  
                     | • Barry Walsh – keyboards |

### Selected discography
Singles
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>US Release Date</th>
<th>A-Side / B-Side Both sides from same album except where indicated</th>
<th>Label &amp; Cat No.</th>
<th>Chart Positions</th>
<th>Album</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1967</td>
<td>“The Letter” b/w “Happy Times”</td>
<td>Mala 565</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
<td>#1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1967</td>
<td>“Neon Rainbow” b/w “Everything I Am”</td>
<td>Mala 580</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
<td>#24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1968</td>
<td>“Cry Like a Baby” b/w “The Door You Closed To Me” (Non-album track)</td>
<td>Mala 593</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
<td>#2</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 1968</td>
<td>“Choo Choo Train” b/w “Fields of Clover” (from Cry Like A Baby)</td>
<td>Mala 12005</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
<td>#17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1968</td>
<td>“I Met Her in Church” b/w “People Gonna Talk”</td>
<td>Mala 12017</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
<td>#41</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 1968</td>
<td>“Sweet Cream Ladies, Forward March” b/w “I See Only Sunshine” (Non-album track)</td>
<td>Mala 12035</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
<td>#29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1969</td>
<td>“I Shall Be Released” b/w “I Must Be The Devil”</td>
<td>Mala 12038</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
<td>#72</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 1969</td>
<td>“Soul Deep” b/w “(The) Happy Song”</td>
<td>Mala 12040</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
<td>#13</td>
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<td>September 1969</td>
<td>“Turn on a Dream” b/w “Together” (from Dimensions)</td>
<td>Mala 12042</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
<td>#36</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 1970</td>
<td>“You Keep Tightening up on Me” b/w “Come On Honey”</td>
<td>Bell 865</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
<td>#74</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 1970</td>
<td>“Let Me Go” b/w “Got To Hold On To You”</td>
<td>Bell 923</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
<td>Failed to chart</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1971</td>
<td>“King’s Highway” b/w “Since I’ve Been Gone”</td>
<td>Bell 981</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>“Sugar Creek Woman” b/w “It’s All Over”</td>
<td>Hi 2228</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
<td>Failed to chart</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>“Hold on Girl” b/w “Angel”</td>
<td>Hi 2242</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 1974</td>
<td>“Willowbee and Dale” b/w “It’s Gonna Be O.K.”</td>
<td>Stax 0199</td>
<td>Cashbox</td>
<td>Failed to chart</td>
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</table>
### Albums

**Original studio albums**
- *The Letter/Neon Rainbow* (November 1967) - US #82
- *Cry Like a Baby* (April 1968) - US #59
- *Non-Stop* (July 1968)
- *Dimensions* (September 1969) - US #77
- *Tear Off!* (1998)

**Compilation albums**
- *Super Hits* (December 1968) - US #45
- *The Box Tops' Greatest Hits* (1982)
- *The Ultimate Box Tops* (1987)

### References


### Other sources


Goldstein, Josh. (September 8–14, 1999.) "Box Bottom." Village Voice.


Smythe, Danny and Evans, John."Box Tops: The Devilles Story" Box Tops official website Accessed June 16, 2005.


**External links**

- Official website
- The Box Tops at DMOZ


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