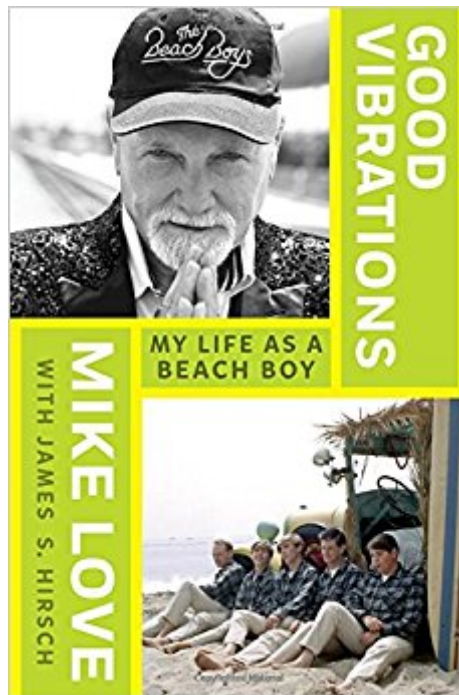




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Good Vibrations: My Life As A Beach Boy



Synopsis

The *New York Times* Bestseller Mike Love tells the story of his legendary, raucous, and ultimately triumphant five-decade career as the front man of The Beach Boys, the most popular American band in history -- timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary of "Good Vibrations." As a founding member of The Beach Boys, Mike Love has spent an extraordinary fifty-five years, and counting, as the group's lead singer and one of its principal lyricists. The Beach Boys, from their California roots to their international fame, are a unique American story -- one of overnight success and age-defying longevity; of musical genius and reckless self-destruction; of spirituality, betrayal, and forgiveness -- and Love is the only band member to be part of it each and every step. His own story has never been fully told, of how a sheet-metal apprentice became the quintessential front man for America's most successful rock band, singing in more than 5,600 concerts in 26 countries. Love describes the stories behind his lyrics for pop classics such as "Good Vibrations," "California Girls," "Surfin' USA," and "Kokomo," while providing vivid portraits of the turbulent lives of his three gifted cousins, Brian, Dennis, and Carl Wilson. His partnership with Brian has few equals in American pop music, though Mike has carved out a legacy of his own -- he co-wrote the lyrics to eleven of the twelve original Beach Boy songs that were top 10 hits while providing the lead vocals on ten of them. The band's unprecedented durability also provides a glimpse into America's changing cultural mores over the past half century, while Love himself has experienced both the diabolical and the divine -- from Charles Manson's "family" threatening his life to Maharishi instilling it with peace. A husband, a father, and an avid environmentalist, Love has written a book that is as rich and layered as the Beach Boy harmonies themselves.

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Customer Reviews

“More than a half-century’s worth of inside information about the Beach Boys.” —The New York Times “[Good Vibrations] is rich with Beach Boys info . . . some meaty insights, new stories even the most diehard Beach Boys fan has never heard, and Love’s own take on much-told tales . . . a crucial addition to the library shelf.” —Bob Ruggiero, Houston Press “Riveting...fascinating...how the music transcended the story and spread California sunshine around the globe.... Love is able to articulate the depth of his feelings for the music in a way that will send fans back to their stereos to crank up ‘Surfin’ U.S.A.’ and ‘Wouldn’t It Be Nice’ and ‘The Warmth of the Sun’ whether they have an ocean handy or not.” —Sarah Rodman, Los Angeles Times “If it’s the jumbo popcorn bag of Beach Boys lore you saltily crave, then Love’s ‘Good Vibrations’ should hold you the length of the circus. In the battle of the Beach Boys memoirs, it’s the better read: lively, informative, thumbtacked with crazy specifics... It’s all here and then some.” —James Wolcott, Vanity Fair “Love transfixes readers with his stories of the rise and fall of the band, his own work as a songwriter, and his deep engagement with spirituality and the ways that it has influenced his music.... [a] sobering look at the ups and downs of a rock and roll band...ends on a note of hope that music can provide harmony in word and spirit for a struggling world.” —Publishers Weekly

Mike Love is a founding member of the Beach Boys, who began in 1961 and stand as the most popular American group in history, with thirteen Gold albums, fifty-five Top 100 singles, and four No. 1 hits. Love continues as the Beach Boys’ lead singer and is the lyricist of their biggest hits. He has received an Ella Award for his songwriting, and, as part of the Beach Boys, he is a member of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame; the Vocal Group Hall of Fame; and has received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award. James S. Hirsch is a journalist and New York Times bestselling author whose books include biographies of Willie Mays and Rubin “Hurricane” Carter and examinations of military issues, the health care system, and global philanthropy. Hirsch won the Christopher Award for *Walk in Their Shoes: Can One Person Change the World?*

I’m not a big fan of ML, in general...He seems very egotistical, always trying to make sure everyone knows he wrote all the lyrics and Brian wasn’t the only genius, and he wrote Kokomo which went to #1 without Brian, and no, he didn’t say “don’t F with the formula” when Brian did pet sounds/smile,

and answers interview questions about "what are your biggest regrets" with instead of some sort of introspective answer it always ends up being some form of "my biggest regret is the Wilson's all did drugs but I didn't", etc etc. That said, the book was surprisingly good...Yes, it had somewhat of a revisionist history, trying to make sure he doesn't come off as a villain, but he was also surprisingly honest about things I thought he might not even mention in the book. Surprisingly self-deprecating at times. At least more than I would've expected from the guy who gave that R & R Hall of fame speech. As a Beach Boy Fan, I couldn't put it down. Was great to hear his perspective on different Beach Boys lore, how he saw things...I wonder how much he wrote and how much James Hirsch just filled in, I would be curious to know that. But overall, as far as readability, I read it all in one sitting and was sad when it was over. (Note: I've read about 3 or 4 Beach Boys books in the last few years, another one that is worth reading [if tabloidy] is "Heroes And Villains" by Steve Gaines. I would put that and this one as the 2 most compelling/fascinating Beach Boys reads...Will be interesting to see how Brian's book is).

Loved the book. Have always loved the beach boys but learned more about all of the ups and downs of this iconic group. It's sad that pride, greed and selfishness crept into this family-group. Appreciate how Mike mostly took the high road and tried to keep peace. Unfortunately it's the outsiders who usually ruin things which is the case with the beach boys. Highly recommend this read.

I wanted to read the biography to see if he was the person I thought he was. After reading I got a better sense of how certain key events and issues 'went down' with the Beach Boys through out their career. Love was on the receiving end of some poor business treatment by the Wilson family. You also get to see how he feels about Brian's wandering after Pet Sounds; as a Brian sympathizer, he definitely abandoned the group with on again off again behavior and simply never made decisions for himself, by himself. Love repeats poor personal decisions throughout his career, but his love for the band and the fans does shine through. It's an insightful read concerning an iconic and influential band and it's members.

Rolling Stone magazine nailed it when they said this book was Love settling scores and nursing grudges, and described it as "petty." Well, it is that, but it is more. Every person has a different perspective, and long time fans of the group will find this behind the scenes book fascinating. Even if you don't find him to be objective. Reading this and Brian's memoir leave you feeling like a juror,

wondering who is closest to telling the truth, even if they both tell it like they think it was. Except for the material on meditation and some of the details of his lawsuits against his band member, it was consistently interesting. I give him credit for keeping the band going over all these decades. I reluctantly went to a concert by the group that has the legal right to the name "Beach Boys" this past summer and, I have to admit, the old guy puts on a good show and it sounded great. I wouldn't want to have Mike as a dinner guest, but I was happy to read his account, from creepy cover to the end.

I am so glad that I never had musical talent and formed a band with my cousin, his brothers and their crazy father. I am in my mid sixties and have loved The Beach Boys for all these years. But, I never had an idea about the back stories about the guys: their talent, touring, in fighting, addictions, etc. Much has been written about Brian Wilson but this book tells another side of the story. And, it helps people understand how other highly talented musicians and athletes are adversely impacted by fame and wealth only to crash and burn. If you are a Beach Boys fan, you will enjoy this book.

I am finding that most people on this site are rating this book by the way they feel about the person. My review is based on the book. I enjoyed reading it. At times I felt like maybe some of this was a bit too much glory for himself I felt other times that maybe just maybe Mike had gotten the crap end of things. All things said though, the book is an enjoyable read. I have met Mike many times over the years and being a "Wilson" person hasn't distracted me from giving this a good review. Pick it up and read it and don't be biased, you might like it.

Conversational, direct and quite informative. I'm pleased that Mike Love is able to set the record straight on some of the cloudy issues surrounding the talented group that is The Beach Boys. Media-making and genius-granting in rock and pop music lean more towards highlighting individuals, and Love does right by applauding some singular performers. But the ensemble that was/is The Beach Boys truly flourished because of the interweaving of talent, voices and, yes, temperaments. You'll come away from this book understanding that and more.

As a long time Beach Boys fan, I am loving this book. Mike Love tells all, without trashing his cousins. I am almost finished with it and I don't want it to end. After each chapter, I want to go through my vast catalog of Beach Boys music and listen to the songs that he refers to, now that I know the stories behind them. I highly recommend this book to any Beach Boys fan.

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