

CLASSIC SOUNDS

By Charles Apple | THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Two of the most beloved popular albums of all time were released within 35 days of one another — starting May 16, 1966: 60 years ago.

The Beach Boys Pet Sounds

Sloop John B./Caroline No
Wouldn't It Be Nice/You Still Believe In Me
That's Not Me/Don't Talk (Put Your Head On My Shoulder)
I'm Waiting For The Day/Let's Go Away For Awhile
God Only Knows/I Know There's An Answer/Here Today
I Just Wasn't Made For These Times/Pet Sounds



CAPITOL RECORDS

PET SOUNDS THE BEACH BOYS

RELEASED:
May 16, 1966

The Beach Boys were the biggest California-style surfing-and-car music act in the U.S., famous for hits like “Surfin’ U.S.A.,” “Fun, Fun, Fun,” “I Get Around” and

“California Girls.” The leader — songwriter and producer Brian Wilson — was pushing the boundaries of mainstream pop music with inventive melodies and vocal arrangements.

MAKING THE ALBUM

While the Beach Boys toured the world, Wilson stayed at home

to work on new songs, telling his wife he wanted to make the greatest rock album ever made. He called in an advertising writer who had impressed him at a party — Tony Asher — to help flesh out lyrics, which Wilson often struggled with. “Sloop John B.” was recorded in 1965, but most of the work on “Pet Sounds” was done in late 1965 through April 1966. Like all of Wilson’s work at the time, “Pet Sounds” was released in mono: Wilson was deaf in his right ear.

WHO'S ON IT

Wilson used an enormous array of Los Angeles-based session musicians to record the backing tracks. Glen Campbell — who had been offered and declined a job as a full-time touring Beach Boy — played 12-string guitar. Carol Kaye (bass) and Hal Blaine (drums) were regulars at Wilson’s sessions. Paul Tanner — a former member of the Glenn Miller Orchestra who created an electronic instrument that produced a weird, otherworldly sound — was brought in to play a solo on “I Just Wasn’t Made For These Times.”

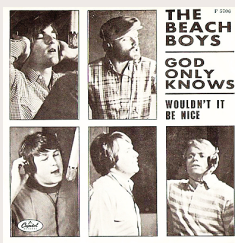
SINGLES



Caroline, No
(Credited only to Brian Wilson)
RELEASED:
March 7, 1966
PEAKED:
#32



Sloop John B
RELEASED:
March 21, 1966
PEAKED:
#3



Wouldn't It Be Nice/ God Only Knows
RELEASED:
July 18, 1966
PEAKED:
#8

COVER ART

The band feeds goats in the children’s petting section at the San Diego Zoo. The photographer was George Jerman, who was also a respected jazz record producer. Absent was Bruce Johnston, who had been a Beach Boy for more than a year but whose contractual obligations meant he couldn’t appear on the front cover.

HOW IT SOLD

“Pet Sounds” peaked at No. 10 on Billboard’s album chart — a bit lower than most Beach Boys albums. Billboard named it the 43rd bestselling album of 1966 but — for reasons lost to time — Capitol Records never submitted the necessary paperwork for it to be certified gold, which should have happened in 1967. It was officially granted both gold and platinum status in 2000.

Sources: “The Making of ‘Blonde on Blonde’ in Nashville” by Sean Wilentz; “Wouldn’t It Be Nice: Brian Wilson and the Making of the Beach Boys’ ‘Pet Sounds’” by Charles L. Granata; “The Beach Boys ‘Pet Sounds’: The Greatest Album of the Twentieth Century” by Kingsley Abbott; “Catch a Wave: The Rise, Fall and Redemption of the Beach Boys’ Brian Wilson” by Peter Ames Carlin; “Thin Wild Mercury — Touching Dylan’s Edge” by Jerry Schatzberg, Rolling Stone



COLUMBIA RECORDS

BLONDE ON BLONDE BOB DYLAN

RELEASED:
June 20, 1966

Bob Dylan was a singer and songwriter who leaped to fame in the 1960s with protest-friendly folk songs like “Blowin’ in the Wind” and “The Times They Are a-Changin’.” In 1965, Dylan broke out of the folk music mold and entered mainstream pop with electric guitar compositions like “Don’t Look Back,” “Subterranean Homesick Blues,” “Mr. Tambourine Man” and “Like a Rolling Stone.”

MAKING THE ALBUM

While Dylan and his stage band found live audiences receptive to his change of musical style — with the notable exception of the 1965 Newport Folk Festival — he reportedly found the transition difficult in the recording studio. In frustration, Dylan began recording in Nashville and then brought in trusted sidemen Robbie Robertson and Al Kooper to complete a new album. The bulk of “Blonde on Blonde” was recorded in February and March 1966. While putting the final touches in April, it became clear to Dylan that he had more material than would fit on a conventional album. Therefore, “Blonde on Blonde” became one of rock music’s first double-disc sets.



COLUMBIA RECORDS

WHO'S ON IT

Kooper had impressed Dylan with his organ playing the year before on “Like a Rolling Stone.” The strange part: Kooper had never played organ before: he was a guitarist who made up the song’s distinctive riff on the spot. Dylan kept Kooper on as sort of a musical director. In addition, Dylan used legendary country musicians Charlie McCoy on guitar and harmonica and Kenny Buttrey on drums. Another session guitarist, Joe South, would go on to write “Games People Play” and “Rose Garden.”

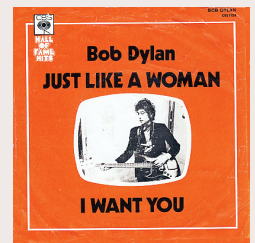
SINGLES



One Of Us Must Know (Sooner Or Later)
RELEASED:
Feb. 14, 1966
PEAKED:
#119



Rainy Day Women #12 & 35
RELEASED:
April 1966
PEAKED:
#2



I Want You
RELEASED:
June 10, 1966
PEAKED:
#20

Just Like a Woman
RELEASED:
August 1966
PEAKED:
#33

Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat
RELEASED:
March 1967
PEAKED:
#81

COVER ART

Photographer Jerry Schatzberg shot Dylan in what was, at the time, the meat-packing district of New York. Several of Schatzberg’s pictures were sharp and in focus, but Dylan preferred this one. Dylan would wear this same coat on the cover of his next two albums. Schatzberg went on to direct the movies “The Seduction of Joe Tynan” and “Honeysuckle Rose.”

HOW IT SOLD

“Blonde on Blonde” reached No. 9 in Billboard’s album charts and was certified gold in August 1967. Billboard named it the No. 73 highest-selling album of 1966.