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Heroes And Villains: The True Story Of The Beach Boys



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Synopsis

The Beach Boys have been rolling, like the tide their great songs evoke, for more than thirty years, reaching professional peaks and tragic personal depths. In this electrifying account Steven Gaines reveals the gothic tale of violence, addiction, greed, genius, madness, and rock 'n' roll behind the wholesome, surf-and-sun image. Through candid interviews with close friends, family, and the Beach Boys themselves, Heroes and Villains portrays and evaluates all those who propelled the California myth, and the group who sang about it, into worldwide prominence: Murry Wilson, the corrosive father who abused them as children and exploited them as adults; Dennis Wilson, who explored every avenue of excess (including welcoming the entire Manson family into his home) to his inevitable self-destruction; the Wilsons' cousin, frontman Mike Love, whose devotion to eastern religion could not quell his violent temper; the wives (more than ten), mistresses, managers, and producers who consumed huge pieces of the Ã¢â ¬Â•musical pieÃ¢â ¬Â•; and of course, the band's artistic center, Brian Wilson, the mentally fragile musical genius who achieved so much and then so little. With dozens of photos, Heroes and Villains recounts the bitter saga of the American dream realized and distorted and the music that survived.

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Customer Reviews

Gaines's 1986 book follows the rise and tragic fall of a legendary American pop band whose excesses were camouflaged by their wholesome image. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The 25-year history of the Beach Boys has been one of triumph and tragedy. Starting out in 1961 with music that rode the California surfing craze to national popularity, the band projected a cleancut, all-American image. Their sudden success and later fall from popularity resulted in personal and group problems. By the early 1980s the Boys were surviving on nostalgia concert tours. Author Gaines, relying mostly on primary sources, has anecdotally captured all the infighting while dealing deftly with complex business details and treating the songs to thoughtful analysis. Although much of his information is not new (see John Milward's The Beach Boys Silver Anniversary , LJ 8/85) this presentation is vivid and compelling. Photos not seen. Paul G. Feehan, Univ. of Miami Lib., Coral Cables, Fla.Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A depressing read for fans of the Beach Boys' wonderful music. This is essentially a 'tell all'. Steven Gaines relates mostly the sordid side of The Beach Boys story. There is very little detail here covering their recording career. If you like the 'sex and drugs' aspect of rock n roll, this is for you.

The author takes us through the abusive upbringing of the Wilson brothers to the tragic death of Dennis. Every high, every low is chronicled thoroughly. The section about Dennis' involvement with Charles Manson and his 'family' will leave you stunned. It's a wonder he survived that period of his life. Reading about the early breakout success of the Beach Boys is wonderful. They must have felt on top of the world by the autumn of 1962. Wouldn't It Be Nice, God Only Knows, and Good Vibrations are among the greatest pop songs of all time. Read how the classic Beach Boys songs all came together.

This was a book that went for shock value rather than the truth. I have been reading a lot on the Beach Boys since seeing "Love and Mercy" and portions of this book were taken directly from other interviews and some things were just out and out not true. Although the Beach Boys story is in many ways a sad and sordid tale, this book focused on all that went wrong, instead of all the things that went right such the legacy of a catalog of treasured music. The book also spent a great deal of time on Brian and Dennis and barely touched upon the stories of the other group members. If you are going to subtitle your book the true story of the Beach Boys, then it should be about all of them. If any readers are looking for a better balanced book, read "Catch a Wave" or better yet, just listen to their music and enjoy. Heroes and Villains is a great song-sorry it was used for the title of this book.

AAA+Amazing book if you are a Beach Boy fan!

I have always been a huge fan of the music of the Beach Boys and am listening to Disk 2 of the Good Vibrations boxed set as I type this. The problem with trying to learn about the lives of the Beach Boys is that a lot of sources simply gloss over the more distasteful and unsettling details of their lives. I think the DVD "Endless Harmony" is a good case in point. Steven Gaines' book fills in detail on the troubled members of the group. For this reason, I'm glad I read it. Now I'd like to find a more balanced biography of the boys. The book is very readable, although surprisingly disturbing at times. Also, Mr. Gaines seems to treat his informants (Marilyn Wilson, Karen Lamm) in a more favorable light than he does the Wilsons or Loves. He seems to have little interest in writing about Jardine or Johnston, though David Marks is a direct target, which indicates to me that Gaines intended to write only about the muck. Nevertheless, I found the book to be well worth reading, and have a lot more admiration for Brian Wilson now that I have.

Good read

It is a little dated, it was written in 1986, and a lot has happened with there music since then. But as for the book itself, I actually enjoyed it. I am a huge Beach Boys fan and a lot of the stories in it, I already knew, but the way that Gains weaves them together and fleshes them out, it reads like a soap opera about my favorite band! I mean this in a good way. I read the book on the subway going to and from work and I got so wrapped up in it I almost missed my stop. It is a light fun typical "tell all" type of book.

Of America's most beloved surf band.Gaines has unprecedented access to a myriad of individuals whom not only shed light, but also pull no punches as to the wildly excessive and sometimes scary and dangerous lifestyles of each member of the band, and their foibles, relationships, addictions, etc. A highly personal look at the group and the family, especially Dennis.Thoroughly enjoyable from start to finish.

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