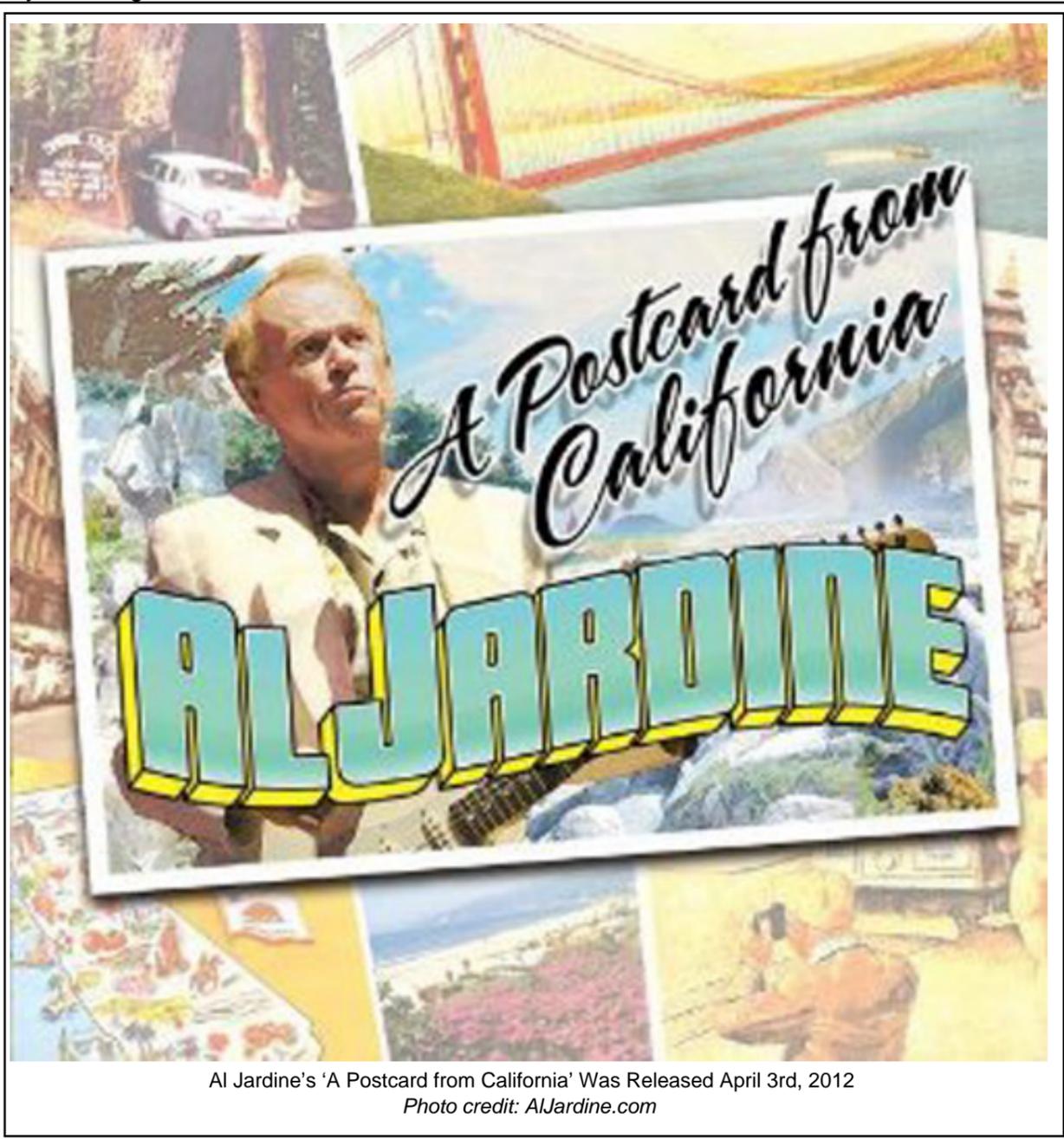


Interview: Al Jardine of The Beach Boys on New Solo Album, 50th Anniversary Band Tour

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on April 11, 2012 - 7:44pm

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CHICAGO – Both rock ‘n roll and the California culture would be completely different without the sound and influence of The Beach Boys. One of the founding members of the legendary band is Al Jardine, who in 1961 was a schoolboy friend of Brian Wilson when he joined the fledgling group. Jardine has released a new solo album called “A Postcard from California” and embarks on a 50th Anniversary Tour with The Beach Boys starting later this month.



Al Jardine's 'A Postcard from California' Was Released April 3rd, 2012
Photo credit: [AlJardine.com](#)

“A Postcard from California” is Jardine’s first solo album, which showcases his personal style combined with the classic renderings of “The Beach Boys sound.” This is a love letter to his adopted state (Jardine was born in Ohio) from someone who contributed mightily to the California dream. Most of the songs were penned by Jardine, and many of his famous friends took part, including Brian Wilson, Mike Love, Neil Young, Glen Campbell, David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Alec Baldwin and John Stamos.

Brian Wilson and Al Jardine can easily be called the first two members of The Beach Boys, it was their friendship and interest in music that started the ball rolling for the band. Jardine sang lead vocal on the 1965 number one song, “Help Me, Rhonda,” contributed the coda song “Sloop John B” on one of the greatest albums of the 1960s, “Pet Sounds,” and helped keep The Beach Boys presence alive during the 1970s

and beyond. The 50th Anniversary Tour kicks off on April 24th in Tucson, Arizona, and comes to Chicago on May 21st.

HollywoodChicago.com: What statement do you make about the unique personality and culture of California in your new album, and how does that relate to what you and the Beach Boys did for the promotion of that personality?

Al Jardine: The statement is purity, harmony and the delivery of a California feeling for those who have never been here before, to experience the first moment of that feeling. That's what my brother and I did when we first came here as immigrants from the East, ran down to the water and actually tasted the ocean. It's a visceral thing, and you get a few moments like that in the album. It takes you down the coast, visiting the cities along the way in a thematic sense. It doesn't get too serious, and if it does, suddenly it breaks into 'Help Me, Rhonda,' so that takes care of that. [laughs] It takes you to another place, and has a little something for everyone.

HollywoodChicago.com: In the press notes you talked about the environmental statement you wanted this album to make. What is the most pressing concern regarding the environment in California, and is there enough concern to keep fighting the businesses and real estate encroachments that want to exploit it?

Jardine: In talking about the ocean – the land is a whole other deal – everybody wants to live next to it and wants to see it. As we surf the waves on top of the ocean, we don't realize that there is stuff going on beneath the surface. It's great to enjoy it in the surfing sense, but I've also become aware of the marine sanctuaries here along the coast, and those are dreadfully underfunded. It's the commercial fishing industries that manage those sanctuaries, and they are a little out of control. They're overfishing, and in some cases commercial vessels are dumping in the water, but mostly it's about the fishing nets.

There are a lot of concerns beneath the waves that have captured my attention, and I put that in the music on the album through the song 'Don't Fight the Sea,' which is the lead-off single, and The Beach Boys join me on that. I think we captured a bit of urgency, now that the polar ice caps are melting and in that result it does become more urgent. I thought, this is the time for that message.

HollywoodChicago.com: What is your personal process as a songwriter. Are you melody first, lyrics later or are you the type to come up with a key phrase that later becomes a song?

Jardine: I'm more of a melody writer, and I like to write choruses first, and then I build around that. In the case of the title song ["A Postcard From California"] it just flowed out as a tribute to Glen Campbell, of all people. I didn't know it when I was writing it, but it triggered a response that Glen had to sing this song with me. We were asking ourselves, what does this sound like, what does it feel like? We don't know, but it does feel very positive and very commercial.

HollywoodChicago.com: Have you spoken to Glen Campbell since the announcement regarding his condition?

Jardine: Yes, but we don't talk about that, we just yak. He's a great yakker. He loves to spin a tale, and he has the greatest one liners in the world. He's still sharp as a tack and musically he's sharper than a tack. He came in and did these songs in one or two takes. He's amazing.

HollywoodChicago.com: In the 50 years you've been in the business, what year or period of years marked the biggest change in how you approached or make music, and how does that change still effect what you do?

Jardine: Wow, that's a heavy question. [laughs] I guess working with Brian Wilson was a major change in my life, and he never fails to amaze me. Even now, while we're recording our new album, our first in many years, he still has that unique faculty of hearing things that the rest of us don't hear. And I learn from that. He's been a musical guru for ions, disappearing and re-appearing so many times I can't tell you. Now he's back again, and I'm getting those 'good vibrations.' [laughs] Not to be silly, but it's pretty wonderful.



The Beach Boys at 50, L-R: Bruce Johnston, Al Jardine, Brian Wilson, Mike Love and David Marks
Photo credit: TheBeachBoys.com

HollywoodChicago.com: You are currently in rehearsals for the 50th Anniversary tour of the Beach Boys. Before you all started up again, what ground rules did you all agree upon, or are you at the point as friends and business partners that rules aren't necessary?

Jardine: There aren't any rules at this point. It's like we picked up where we left off, Brian and Mike are writing some great tunes together, we have an executive producer who is pulling the loose ends together. I have a couple of songs that may appear on the album, Bruce Johnson has written a beautiful song. We are all being very democratic about it. Even David Marks is back on board [he replaced Jardine for a brief time in the early history of the band], if they don't complete this album I'm going to do a couple things with him.

HollywoodChicago.com: I was reading online that you were somewhat of a folk music fan when you hooked up with the Wilsons in Brian's bedroom sessions in Hawthorne, California. How did your interests in that style of music influence the early sound of the band?

Jardine: Well, the 'Sloop John B' was directly a suggestion of mine, I told Brian we can do this three-chord folk song and make it a Beach Boys anthem, by using our style and giving it that impact. And man, did he ever do it. We ended up with a John Philip Sousa arrangement, which when you think about it, was fairly unique for the day. And I still marvel at his ability to interpret things.

HollywoodChicago.com: Speaking of that 'Pet Sounds' period, we know the album gained a huge reputation years after it was release, but at the time what was the marketing strategy for the album, and did it get the push that its revolutionary sound deserved?

Jardine: No. There was no consideration at all, we were just following the purist path, working really hard at making a new, entirely different kind of album. It was a thematic piece, which the label wasn't able to get behind. In my new album, I also developed a theme that runs through the whole album, which feels right throughout the connection of the songs. I hope I don't have to wait thirty years for people to appreciate it, like 'Pet Sounds.' [laughs]

HollywoodChicago.com: Coming off of 'Pet Sounds,' and the band turmoil that followed, in retrospect do you think if circumstances had been different, that the band would have evolved into an even more artistic revolution during some very revolutionary points in American History?

Jardine: We did cut the album 'Smile,' and unfortunately we caved in, Brian caved in emotionally, and wasn't able to complete the task. We basically went back to being The Beach Boys, and started making what I like to call 'home movie' music demos. We started all over. I don't know what would have happened, but if 'Smile' had come out then, it would have been pretty cool.

HollywoodChicago.com: You famously left the band in 1962 after your initial success, only to rejoin a year and a half later. Were you itching to get back or was it Brian's insistence that convinced you to do it again?



The Beginning, L-R – Al Jardine, Mike Love, Dennis Wilson, Brian Wilson, Carl Wilson

Photo credit: TheBeachBoys.com

Jardine: Brian called me, and was very stressed out, and wouldn't be able to tour, and this and that. So he asked me to come back and help. And I did, and here we are 50 years later, but this time the fans called demanding a reunion. I kept saying we were going to do it, and saying it enough times made it happen. You have to keep persevering if you believe in something.

HollywoodChicago.com: There is a lot of legend and conjecture regarding the influence of Murry Wilson in the early days of the band. Since you were there, what do people always get wrong about Murry and at what point did you as a group know that you could get along better without him?

Jardine: I don't think I want to go there...

HollywoodChicago.com: I totally understand, it was a long time ago...

Jardine: He had a big heart, he was just a Dad trying to manage a band. It went sideways because being a manager is a different label and a different job. You can't manage your kids that way, I think that's the biggest misconception right there.

HollywoodChicago.com: Well, you weren't related to the situation like the others, were you able to stay apart from it easier?

Jardine: Oh yeah. [laughs] That was a real mess for them. They had to fire their own Dad, so you can imagine.

HollywoodChicago.com: What do you think is the biggest difficulty in achieving fame at a young age? Is too much freedom and money at that time a hindrance or just part of the process?

Jardine: Someone once told me that everyone loses their first fortune. They just aren't ready for it – mentally, physically and emotionally – you burn out so quickly and you wonder, 'Where did that go? Now I have to start all over again.' That's happened to The Beach Boys about three times, if not four. Experience is the best teacher, I guess. No matter how many business classes you take, you just can't prepare for the pitfalls. You just have to get ready for the ride, man. It's a roller coaster ride of great highs and great lows.

HollywoodChicago.com: You look remarkably the same 50 years after you first hit the scene. To what do you attribute your longevity and motivation to keep producing new work, and keeping fresh your old work?

Jardine: I think it always comes back to the music, if there is a will there's a way. In my case, having been out of the band for ten years, I was missing it. I wanted to capture some of that, and in doing so I was able to get all the people I met over the years and all the good friends I have to step up and add their identity to this beautiful little album. And they were my Beach Boys – friends like David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Neil Young, Glen Campbell, Gerry Beckley and Dewey Bunnell of the group 'America' – celebrating the Pacific lifestyle, a little bit north of Los Angeles, a whole different place then where we used to sing about. It could be quite a trip for people to listen to.

"A Postcard from California," a new album by Al Jardine, also features Glen Campbell, Stephen Stills, David Crosby, Neil Young, Steve Miller, Flea (of the "Red Hot Chili Peppers"), Gerry Beckley & Dewey Bunnell of "America", Alec Baldwin and John Stamos. The single "Don't Fight the Sea" features The Beach Boys – Brian Wilson, Mike Love, Bruce Johnston, David Marks and Carl Wilson. For more information and to purchase the album, [click here](#) [16]. For information regarding "The Beach Boys 50" Tour, [click here](#) [17].



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