

Beach Boys into Transcendental Meditation; Influential in Their Lives and Their Music

by Greg Fuller
Guest writer

The Surf's up again for the Beach Boys, starting with a 13-day tour of the USA. The Big Rock group of the middle '60's who told it like it was with such hits as Fun Fun Fun, Little Deuce Coupe and Good Vibrations are at it again. The five man group consisting of Mike Love, Carl and Dennis Wilson, Al Jardine and Bruce Johnston recently performed at the Warner Theatre here in Erie. The following interview was conducted at the Holiday Inn Downtown, three hours before curtain.

Jack O'Brien Can you give me a definition of what transcendental meditation is, why you're using it, and how you got into it?

Mike Love Transcendental meditation is very simply a technique or action of the Maharishi's analogy of the bow and arrow, drawing the arrow back is the source of all energy and intelligence, and letting the arrow go out into the activities of the relative world that we see, the material world in itself. By drawing the arrow back, so to speak, and taking an inward dive you'll be coming out into activity with just a few minutes in the morning of meditation gives you enough bloodrich, so to speak, to carry out your day's activities so much more easily.

TV 24 Can you briefly explain why transcendental meditation differs from the traditional Zen or some of the Hindu methods of meditating?

Carl Wilson I really don't know the difference. Speaking for myself, it's a simple technique and very relaxing. It calms me down very deeply and gives me energy.

TV 24 Do you do that Om bit and the Yoga position?

Carl Wilson No, I do not do the Om bit.

TV 24 It's just all mental; strictly mental, is that it?

Carl Wilson Well, you're given a technique. It's very simple, not tricky or weird or strange or anything, it's very, very simple.

Mike Love Yes, it's very simple and because of its simplicity, it must be taught scientifically and systematically and it's taught with a procedure. There is actually a seven-step procedure to learn. First step is an introductory lecture that is

given by the Maharishi. Then a preparatory talk in which they go into more detail, then the initiation, which means to begin, you meditate and then three days of checking. This is to insure the person gets the technique... and is off on the right foot, so to speak, and if he has any questions. It's very simple and it only takes an hour or an hour and a half for four days, until the person has completely mastered the technique, and you're really on your own from there on out.

Greg Fuller What do you think about today's so called "Jesus Freaks?" and their movement?

Carl Wilson I think that their awareness of Christ consciousness is a great thing, although I don't think that most people are aware of Christ as a state of mind. They're into Christ more as a personality, and of course Jesus Christ was way, way beyond personality.

Greg Fuller What do you think of today's music as opposed to maybe five years ago?

Carl Wilson It really is evolving, and is really better.

Greg Fuller Do you think it is getting easier and more melodic?

Carl Wilson I think it's getting more musical, yes, and more melodic. It's getting more everything, we've been through stages over the last several years; folk and hard rock and sort of a combination of those things. Now music is sort of just blending in, you know, all those different styles are indications of...

Mike Love Perhaps the expanse of consciousness and awareness that grows in mankind in general, which is the reflection of their consciousness, and expression of their consciousness is also expanded.

Greg Fuller Does your transcendental meditation influence your music?

Carl Wilson It would influence everything you do because it covers everything you see.

TV 12 Don't you still get a tremendous response from your audience for your old songs?

Carl Wilson Yes, that's right.

Mike Love Definitely. The beautiful aspects of nostalgia and the truths that we were expounding in the sixties, two, three and four like Fun Fun Fun and Don't Worry Baby,

Good Vibrations and things like that. Those are very enjoyable to people in that they are related to good memories and good times. We're still saying, "Have a good time," but now the issues are just a little broader, you know. Pollution has gotten to a point where it's just a little ridiculous — both self-pollution, and air and water. The war is on all levels, you know, so we are hoping to see a lot of our records get involved and make people aware of the issues.

Ray Geiger What's your reaction to the fans' almost favoritism to the nostalgia, rather than the new stuff?

Carl Wilson I don't know. I don't know how to give an accurate answer at this time, because our new record is essentially a new record as of now. I think in several months to a year it can be gaged more accurately. I think as those songs become familiar to the people and they get to recognize these songs I think that ten we'll know more about these new songs.

Mike Love I think that people want to hear new things all the time. That way there's a top ten that changes every couple weeks. People are always searching for something new, something better to enjoy. I think our album reflects a newness and our own personal enjoyment of whatever we have found beautiful lately in life. That's why our album is in the thirties and going upwards on the charts.

TV 12 Do you have a new single?

Carl Wilson Yeah, we do. I think it will be out in a week or two.

Jack O'Brien All right, you guys did some symbolic stuff, like your graphics were symbolic and the title, maybe having listened to the album for the last six weeks we've been playing it, and yet I don't really get any transcendental meditation connection. Can you tell me how it has influenced the music?

Carl Wilson Well, the thing is, it wouldn't be, I don't think it's really mentioned in that way. It's really that people that meditate are influenced in all phases of their activities.

Rather it be a photographer or journalist or musician, I think that if you were to listen to an old album, and then the new one you might sense a more maturation from us, and maybe a... a... a... little higher...

Mike Love A critic has said about us that the surf's up and this time the waves are cosmic. I think that because of the virtue of the fact of the issues that we are dealing with, issues like music, our music is expanded by virtue of the fact that each of the individuals in the group have grown in their own musical awareness. For instance, Bruce is a very competent writer and has written some very beautiful things. Alan has written two or three of the songs. On the new "Surf's Up" album, where, as in the past, Brian Wilson had been the overwhelming musical genius, or whatever you want to call him, and I helped complement his music a little — mostly by writing some words, and now the issues that we are dealing with rather than cruising to the hamburger stand, or ah, Be True To Your School or what have you, now they're a little more expansive and more universal.

Jack O'Brien I know for a while there you had your own label.

Mike Love We still do have it...

Jack O'Brien You still have it. Gee, I thought you and the Beatles were keeping Capitol Records alive.

Mike Love That's another story... (laughter)

Carl Wilson Yes, we were very fortunate to sell a lot of records.

Jack O'Brien Have any idea just how many millions?

Carl Wilson 65 Million — somewhere around there.

Greg Fuller Are you guys using a Moog tonight?

Carl Wilson Yes, a small one.

Greg Fuller O.K., another question that's totally unrelated. Is it true that you guys are on a natural food kick — that's sort of the wrong word to use — and is there any reason behind this?

Carl Wilson Yes, that's right, my brother owns an organic food store in L.A.

Bruce But he won't give us a deal... (laughter)

Carl Wilson And Mike, of course, has been a vegetarian for a long time.

Bruce And I'm steaming rice in my room right now.

Greg Fuller Does this sort of thing pick up among you, say

as one gets into, say transcendental meditation, like Mike, do the rest of you eventually get into it or what?

Mike Love Diet has nothing to do with transcendental meditation.

Greg Fuller No, that's not what I mean...

Bruce Are you asking the guys if meditation causes them to improve their health methods?

Greg Fuller No, what I meant was, say, if you got into health food, would the others eventually pick up on this?

Bruce I think that we all influence each other, but I don't think that MEDITATION got to everybody into the health foods because I don't really meditate, but I get into my health. I ride my bike 12 miles a day. See, I dig feeling good, and I don't like to drink too much wine, because I've found I feel better if I feel good in a natural way, and it just makes sense to be healthy because then you can perform better when you're under the pressures of touring.

TV 12 How do you feel about dope?

Mike Love How do I feel about dope? I think it's the most negative thing that you can do to your body. I think it's the equivalent of death. All these hallucinogens or marijuana or whatever you want to say are bad for your nervous system. I haven't touched anything for over three and a half years. I've found I don't need them.

Greg Fuller Just one more question before you go. How long can we expect the Beach Boys to be around?

Mike Love The rest of our lives!

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