

= Good Vibrations =

" Good Vibrations " is a song composed and produced by Brian Wilson with words by Mike Love for the American rock band the Beach Boys . Released as a single in October 1966 , it was an immediate critical and commercial hit , topping record charts in several countries including the US and UK . Characterized for its complex soundscapes , episodic structure , and subversions of pop music formula , it was the most expensive single ever made at the time of its release . " Good Vibrations " later became widely acknowledged as one of the greatest masterpieces of rock music .

Initiated during the sessions for the album Pet Sounds (1966) , it was not taken from or issued as a lead single for an album , but rather as a stand @-@ alone single , with the Pet Sounds instrumental " Let 's Go Away for Awhile " as a B @-@ side . It was considered for the Smile project , but instead appeared on the album Smiley Smile (1967) . Most of the song was developed as it was recorded . Its title derived from Wilson 's fascination with cosmic vibrations , after his mother once told him as a child that dogs sometimes bark at people in response to their " bad vibrations " . He used the concept to suggest extrasensory perception , while Love 's lyrics were inspired by the Flower Power movement that was then burgeoning in Southern California .

The making of " Good Vibrations " was unprecedented for any kind of recording , with a total production cost estimated between \$ 50 @,@ 000 and \$ 75 @,@ 000 (equivalent to \$ 360 @,@ 000 and \$ 550 @,@ 000 in 2015) . Building upon the multi @-@ layered approach he had formulated with Pet Sounds , Wilson recorded the song in different sections at four Hollywood studios over an eight month period , resulting in a cut @-@ up mosaic of several musical episodes marked by disjunctive key and modal shifts . Band publicist Derek Taylor dubbed the unusual work a " pocket symphony " . It contained previously untried mixes of instruments , including jaw harp and Electro @-@ Theremin , and was the first pop hit to have a cello playing juddering rhythms .

For " Good Vibrations " , Wilson is credited with further developing the use of the recording studio as an instrument . The single revolutionized rock music from live concert performances to studio productions which could only exist on record , heralding a wave of pop experimentation and the onset of psychedelic and progressive rock . It is also frequently cited for its use of theremin , which led to the instrument 's revival and to an increased interest in analog synthesizers . Its success earned the Beach Boys a Grammy nomination for Best Vocal Group performance in 1966 ; the song was eventually inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1994 . It has featured highly in many charts , being voted number one in the Mojo " Top 100 Records of All Time " chart in 1997 and number six on Rolling Stone 's list of the " 500 Greatest Songs of All Time " . The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame included " Good Vibrations " in its list of the " 500 Songs that Shaped Rock and Roll " .

= = Background = =

The Beach Boys ' leader Brian Wilson was responsible for the musical composition and virtually all of the arrangement for " Good Vibrations " . His cousin and bandmate Mike Love contributed the song 's lyrics and its bass vocalization in the chorus . During the recording sessions for Pet Sounds (1966) , Wilson began changing his writing process . Rather than going to the studio with a completed song , he would record a track containing a series of chord changes he liked , take an acetate disc home , and then write the song 's melody and lyrics . For " Good Vibrations " , Wilson explains , " I had a lot of unfinished ideas , fragments of music I called ' feels . ' Each feel represented a mood or an emotion I 'd felt , and I planned to fit them together like a mosaic . " Most of the song 's structure and arrangement was written as it was recorded . Engineer Chuck Britz is quoted saying that Wilson considered the song to be " his whole life performance in one track . " Wilson stated : " I was an energetic 23 @-@ year @-@ old I said : ' This is going to be better than [the Phil Spector production] ' You 've Lost That Lovin ' Feelin ' ' . ' "

= = Inspiration and lyricism = =

Brian explained that the song was inspired by his mother : " [She] used to tell me about vibrations .

I didn't really understand too much of what it meant when I was just a boy . It scared me , the word ' vibrations ' . She told me about dogs that would bark at people and then not bark at others , that a dog would pick up vibrations from these people that you can 't see , but you can feel . " Brian first enlisted Pet Sounds lyricist Tony Asher for help in putting words to the idea . When Brian presented the song on piano , Asher thought that it had an interesting premise with the potential for hit status , but could not fathom the end result due to Brian 's primitive piano playing style . Asher remembers : " Brian was playing what amounts to the hook of the song : ' Good , good , good , good vibrations ' . He started telling me the story about his mother He said he ? d always thought that it would be fun to write a song about vibes and picking them up from other people So as we started to work , he played this little rhythmic pattern ? a riff on the piano , the thing that goes under the chorus . " Brian wanted to call the song " Good Vibes " , but Asher advised that it was " lightweight use of the language , " suggesting that " Good Vibrations " would sound less " trendy . " The two proceeded to write a lyric for the verses , later to be discarded , in what was then the most basic section of the song .

From the start , Wilson envisioned a theremin for the track . AllMusic reviewer John Bush pointed out : " Radio listeners could easily pick up the link between the title and the obviously electronic riffs sounding in the background of the chorus , but Wilson 's use of the theremin added another delicious parallel ? between the single 's theme and its use of an instrument the player never even touched . " At that time , theremins were most associated with the Alfred Hitchcock film Spellbound (1945) , but its most common presence was in the theme music for the television sitcom My Favorite Martian (1963 ? 66) . Britz speculates : " He just walked in and said , ' I have this new sound for you . ' I think he must have heard the sound somewhere and loved it , and built a song around it . "

Brian has credited his brother and bandmate Carl for suggesting the cello as an instrument to use . He also stated that its triplet beat on the chorus was his own idea , and that it was based on the Crystals ' " Da Doo Ron Ron " (1963) , produced by Spector . Alternatively , multi @-@ instrumentalist songwriter Van Dyke Parks says that he suggested having the celloist play triplets for Brian . Parks believes that having Brian exploit the cello " to such a hyperbolic degree " was what encouraged the duo to immediately collaborate on the ultimately unfinished album Smile . At some point , Brian asked Parks to pen lyrics for the song , although Parks declined .

Mike Love submitted the final lyrics for " Good Vibrations " , claiming to have written them on the drive to the studio . Love reacted upon hearing the unfinished backing track : " [It] was already so avant @-@ garde , especially with the theremin , I wondered how our fans were going to relate to it . How 's this going to go over in the Midwest or Birmingham ? It was such a departure from ' Surfin ' U.S.A. ' or ' Help Me , Rhonda ' . " Feeling that the song could be " the Beach Boys ' psychedelic anthem or flower power offering " , he based the lyrics on the burgeoning psychedelic music and Flower Power movements occurring in San Francisco and some parts of the Los Angeles area . He described the lyrics : " ... just a flowery poem . Kind of almost like ' If you ? re going to San Francisco be sure to wear flowers in your hair ' . " Writer Bruce Golden observed :

The new pastoral landscape suddenly being uncovered by the young generation provided a quiet , peaceful , harmonious trip into inner space . The hassles and frustrations of the external world were cast aside , and new visions put in their place . " Good Vibrations " succeeds in suggesting the healthy emanations that should result from psychic tranquility and inner peace . The word " vibrations " had been employed by students of Eastern philosophy and acid @-@ heads for a variety of purposes , but Wilson uses it here to suggest a kind of extrasensory experience .

Capitol Records executives were worried that the lyrics contained psychedelic overtones , and Brian is said to have based the song 's production on his LSD experiences . Brian clarified that the song was written under the influence of marijuana , not LSD . He explained : " I made ? Good Vibrations ? on drugs ; I used drugs to make that I learned how to function behind drugs , and it improved my brain ... it made me more rooted in my sanity . " In Steven Gaines ' 1986 biography , Wilson is quoted on the lyrics : " We talked about good vibrations with the song and the idea , and we decided on one hand that you could say ? those are sensual things . And then you 'd say , ' I 'm picking up good vibrations , ' which is a contrast against the sensual , the extrasensory perception that we have . That 's what we 're really talking about . " Brian claimed in 2012 that the song 's "

gotta keep those good vibrations " bridge was inspired by Stephen Foster . Al Jardine compared the section to Foster 's " Down by the Riverside . " According to Love , the lyric " ' she goes with me to a blossom world ' was originally meant to be followed by the words ' we find , ' " but Brian elected to cut off the line to highlight the bass track linking into the chorus .

= = Recording and production = =

= = = Modular approach = = =

" Good Vibrations " established a new method of operation for Wilson . Instead of working on whole songs with clear large @-@ scale syntactical structures , Wilson limited himself to recording short interchangeable fragments (or " modules ") . Through the method of tape splicing , each fragment could then be assembled into a linear sequence , allowing any number of larger structures and divergent moods to be produced at a later time . This was the same modular approach used during the sessions for Smile and Smiley Smile . To mask each tape edit , vast reverb decays were added at the mixing and sub @-@ mixing stages .

For instrumentation , Wilson employed the services of " the Wrecking Crew " , nickname for the conglomerate of session musicians active in Los Angeles at that time . Most pop singles of the time were typically recorded in a day or two , but production for " Good Vibrations " spanned more than a dozen recording sessions at four different Hollywood studios . It was reported to have used over 90 hours of magnetic recording tape , with an eventual budget estimated between \$ 50 @,@ 000 and \$ 75 @,@ 000 (equivalent to \$ 360 @,@ 000 and \$ 550 @,@ 000 in 2015) , at that time the largest sum ever spent on a single . In comparison , the whole of Pet Sounds had cost \$ 70 @,@ 000 (\$ 510 @,@ 000) , itself an unusually high cost for an album . According to Wilson , the Electro @-@ Theremin work alone cost \$ 15 @,@ 000 (\$ 110 @,@ 000) . It 's said that Wilson was so puzzled by " Good Vibrations " that he would often arrive at a session , consider a few possibilities , and then leave without recording anything , which exacerbated costs .

= = = Development = = =

The instrumental of the first version of the song was recorded on February 17 , 1966 , at Gold Star Studios and was logged as a Pet Sounds session . On that day 's session log , it was given the name " # 1 Untitled " or " Good , Good , Good Vibrations " , but on its master tape , Wilson distinctly states " ' Good Vibrations ' ... take one . " After twenty @-@ six takes , a rough mono mix completed the session . Some additional instruments and rough guide vocals were overdubbed on March 3 .

The original version of " Good Vibrations " contained the characteristics of a " funky rhythm and blues number " and would not yet resemble a " pocket symphony " . There was no cello at this juncture , but the Electro @-@ Theremin was present , played by its inventor Paul Tanner . It was Brian 's second ever recorded use of the instrument , just three days after the Pet Sounds track " I Just Wasn 't Made for These Times " . Brian then placed " Good Vibrations " on hold in order to devote attention to the Pet Sounds album , which saw release on May 16 . More instrumental sections for " Good Vibrations " were recorded between April and June . Brian then forewent additional instrumental tracking until early September , when it was decided to revisit the song 's bridge section and apply Electro @-@ Theremin overdubs .

According to Brian 's then @-@ new friend David Anderle , during an early stage , Brian considered giving " Good Vibrations " to one of the black rhythm and blues groups signed with Warner Bros. Records such as Wilson Pickett , and then at Anderle 's suggestion to singer Danny Hutton . He thought about junking the track , but after receiving encouragement from Anderle , eventually decided on it as the next Beach Boys single . In the meantime , he worked on writing and recording material for the group 's forthcoming album Smile .

The first Beach Boy to hear " Good Vibrations " in a semi @-@ completed form was Carl Wilson , who had previously participated in rough guide vocals with Brian for the initial February mix .

Following a performance with the touring group in North Dakota : " I came back up into my hotel room one night and the phone rang . It was Brian on the other end . He called me from the recording studio and played this really bizarre sounding music over the phone . There were drums smashing , that kind of stuff , and then it refined itself and got into the cello . It was a real funky track . " In 1976 , Brian revealed that before the final mixdown , he had been confronted with resistance by members of the group whom Brian declined to name . The subject of their worries and complaints was the song 's length and " modern " sound : " I said no , it 's not going to be too long a record , it 's going to be just right . ? They didn 't quite understand what this jumping from studio to studio was all about . And they couldn 't conceive of the record as I did . I saw the record as a totality piece . "

The vocals for " Good Vibrations " were recorded at CBS Columbia Square , starting on August 24 and continuing sporadically until the very last day of assembly on September 21 . The episodic structure of the composition was continuously revised as the group experimented with different ideas . Brian remembers that he began recording the " bop bop good vibrations " parts first , and that he came up with " the high parts " a week later . Mike Love recalled : " I can remember doing 25 ? 30 vocal overdubs of the same part , and when I mean the same part , I mean same section of a record , maybe no more than two , three , four , five seconds long . " Dennis Wilson was to have sung the lead vocal , but due to a bout of laryngitis , Carl replaced him at the last minute . In early September , the master tapes for " Good Vibrations " were stolen . Mysteriously , they reappeared inside Brian 's home two days later .

On September 21 , Brian completed the track after Tanner added a final Electro @-@ Theremin overdub . In 1976 he elaborated on the event : " It was at Columbia . I remember I had it right in the sack . I could just feel it when I dubbed it down , made the final mix from the 16 @-@ track down to mono . It was a feeling of power , it was a rush . A feeling of exaltation . Artistic beauty . It was everything ? I remember saying , ' Oh my God . Sit back and listen to this ! ' "

= = Composition and analysis = =

There are six unique sections to the piece , as labelled by music theorist Daniel Harrison :

Verse

Refrain (chorus)

First episodic digression

Second episodic digression

Retro @-@ refrain

Coda

Each section has a distinct musical texture , partly due to the nature of the song 's recording . The track 's instrumentation changes radically from section to section . Music journal Sound on Sound explains : " Typical pop songs of that era (or indeed any era) usually have a basic groove running throughout the track which doesn 't change a great deal from start to finish ... pop records were either guitar , bass and drum combos or traditional orchestrated arrangements for vocalists ? The exotic instruments , the complex vocal arrangements , and the many dynamic crescendos and decrescendos all combine to set this record apart from most pop music . In short , if there 's an instruction manual for writing and arranging pop songs , this one breaks every rule . " For the AM radio standards of late 1966 , the song 's final runtime (3 minutes 35 seconds) was considered a " very long " duration . Wilson is quoted in 1979 :

It had a lot of riff changes ... movements ... It was a pocket symphony ? changes , changes , changes , building harmonies here , drop this voice out , this comes in , bring this echo in , put the theremin here , bring the cello up a little louder here ... It was the biggest production of our lives !

He characterized the song as " advanced rhythm and blues , " while its theremin and cello has been called the song 's " psychedelic ingredient . " In his book discussing music of the counterculture era , James Perrone stated that the song represented a type of impressionistic psychedelia , in particular for its cello playing repeated bass notes and its theremin . Professor of American history John Robert Greene named " Good Vibrations " among examples of psychedelic or acid rock . Stebbins wrote that the song was " replete with sunshine [and] psychedelia . " Uncut wrote that " Good

" Vibrations " was " three minutes and thirty @-@ six seconds of avant @-@ garde pop . " Steve Valdez says that , like Pet Sounds , Brian was attempting a more experimental rock style . It has since been marketed as pop music , " possibly because it comes across relatively innocent compared with the hard @-@ edged rock we have since come to know , " says historian Lorenzo Candelaria . Sound on Sound argues that the song " has as many dramatic changes in mood as a piece of serious classical music lasting more than half an hour " . Tom Roland of American Songwriter described the piece : " with its interlocking segments ? a sort of pop version of the classical sonata , consisting of a series of musical movements " . New York Magazine compared it to " a fugue with a rhythmic beat " . John Bush compared the track 's fragmented cut @-@ and @-@ paste style to 1960s experimentalists such as William S. Burroughs .

According to academic Rikky Rooksby , " Good Vibrations " is an example of Brian 's growing interest in musical development within a composition , something antithetical to popular music of the time . Suppressing tonic strength and cadential drive , the song makes use of descending harmonic motions through scale degrees controlled by a single tonic and " radical disjunctions " in key , texture , instrumentation , and mood while refusing to develop into a predictable formal pattern . It instead develops " under its own power , " and " luxuriates in harmonic variety , " exemplified by beginning and ending not only in different keys but also in different modes . Comparing " Good Vibrations " to Brian 's previous work Pet Sounds , biographer Andrew Hickey has said : " [T] he best way of thinking about [the song] is that it 's taking the lowest common denominator of ' Here Today ' and ' God Only Knows ' and turned the result into an R & B track . We have the same minor @-@ key change between verse and chorus we 've seen throughout Pet Sounds , the same descending scalar chord sequences , the same mobile bass parts , but here , rather than to express melancholy , these things are used in a way that 's as close as Brian Wilson ever got to funky . " Stebbins adds that " unlike Pet Sounds , the chorus of ' Good Vibrations ' projects a definite ' rock and roll ' energy and feel . "

= = = Verses and choruses = = =

" Good Vibrations " begins without introduction in a traditional verse / refrain format , opening with Carl Wilson singing the word " I " , a triplet quaver before the downbeat . The sparse first verse contains a repetition of chords played on a Hammond organ filtered through a Leslie speaker ; underneath is a two @-@ bar Fender bass melody . This sequence repeats once (0 : 15) , but with the addition of two piccolos sustaining over a falling flute line . For percussion , bongo drums double the bass rhythm and every fourth @-@ beat is struck by either a tambourine or a bass @-@ drum @-@ and @-@ snare combination , in alternation . The beat projects a triplet feel despite being in 4 / 4 time ; this is sometimes called a " shuffle beat " or " threes over fours " . The chord progression used is i ? ? VII ? ? VI ? V , also called an Andalusian cadence . Although the verses begin in the minor mode of E ? , the mode is not used to express sadness or drudgery . Occurring at the very end of these verses is a passing chord , D ? .

The refrain (0 : 25) begins in the newly tonicized relative major G ? , which suggests ? III . Providing a backdrop to the Electro @-@ Theremin is a cello and string bass playing a bowed tremolo triplet , a feature that was an exceedingly rare effect in pop music . The Fender bass is steady at one note per beat while tom drums and tambourine provide a backbeat . This time , the rhythm is stable , and is split into four 4 @-@ bar sections which gradually build its vocals . The first section consists of only the line " I 'm picking up good vibrations " ; the second adds an " ooo bop bop " figure ; the third adds a " good , good , good , good vibrations " higher harmony . This type of polyphony (counterpoint) is also rare in contemporary popular styles . Meanwhile , the song transposes up by two whole steps , ascending from G ? to A ? and then B ? . It then returns to the verse , thus making a perfect cadence back into E ? minor . Unusually , when the verse and chorus are repeated , there are no changes to the patterns of its instrumentation and harmony . Normally , a song 's arrangement adds something once it reaches the second verse .

= = = Episodic digressions = = =

The first episode (1 : 41 +) begins disjunctively . The refrain 's B ? , which had received a dominant (V) charge , is now maintained as a tonic (I) . There is harmonic ambiguity , where the chord progression may be either interpreted as I ? IV ? I (in B ?) or V ? I ? V (in G ?) . Biographer Jon Stebbins says that this section " might be called a bridge under normal circumstances , but the song 's structure takes such an abstract route that traditional labels don 't really apply . " A new sound is created by tack piano , jaw harp , and bass relegated to strong beats which is subsequently (1 : 55) augmented by a new electric organ , bass harmonica , and sleigh bells shaken on every beat . This section lasts for ten measures (6 + 2 + 2) , which is unexpectedly long in light of previous patterns .

Another tape splice occurs at 2 : 13 , transitioning to an electric organ playing sustained chords set in the key of F accompanied by a maraca shaken on every beat . Sound on Sound highlights this change as the " most savage edit in the track ... most people would go straight into a big splash hook @-@ line section . Brian Wilson decided to slow the track even further , moving into a 23 @-@ bar section of church organ ... Most arrangers would steer clear of this kind of drop in pace , on the grounds that it would be chart suicide , but not Brian . " Harrison says : " The appearance of episode 1 was unusual enough but could be explained as an extended break between verse and refrain sections . Episode 2 however , makes that interpretation untenable , and both listener and analyst must entertain the idea that ' Good Vibrations ' develops under its own power , as it were , without the guidance of overdetermined formal patterns . Brian ? s own description of the song ? a three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half @-@ minute ' pocket symphony ' ? is a telling clue about his formal ambitions here . " The slowed pace is complemented by the lyric (" Gotta keep those loving good vibrations a @-@ happening with her ") , sung once first as a solo voice , with the melody repeated an octave higher the second time with an accompanying harmony . This two @-@ part vocal fades as a solo harmonica plays a melody on top of the persistent quarter @-@ note bass line and maraca that maintain the only rhythm throughout Episode 2 . The section ends with a five @-@ part harmony vocalizing a whole @-@ note chord that is sustained by reverb for a further 4 beats . Lambert calls it the song 's " wake @-@ up chord at the end of the meditation that transports the concept into a whole new realm : it 's an iconic moment among iconic moments . As it rouses us from a blissful dream and echoes into the silence leading into the chorus , it seems to capture every sound and message the song has to say . "

= = = Retro @-@ refrain and coda = = =

The refrain reappears for an additional five measures , marching through a transpositional structure that begins in B ? , repeats at A ? , and then ends at G ? for an unexpectedly short single measure . There follows a short section of vocalizing in three @-@ part counterpoint that references the original refrain by reproducing upward transposition . However , this time it settles on A ? , the concluding key of the song . By the end of " Good Vibrations " , all seven scale degrees of the opening E ? -minor tonic are activated on some level .

= = Promotion = =

In July 1966 , an ad was placed in Billboard for the Pet Sounds album which thanked the industry for the sales of their latest album , and that , " We 're moved over the fact that our Pet Sounds brought on nothing but Good Vibrations . " This was the first public hint of the new single . Later in the year , Brian told journalist Tom Nolan that the new Beach Boys single was " about a guy who picks up good vibrations from a girl " and that it would be a " monster " . He then suggested : " It 's still sticking pretty close to that same boy @-@ girl thing , you know , but with a difference . And it 's a start , it 's definitely a start . " Newly employed band publicist Derek Taylor is credited for originally coining the work a " pocket symphony " . He promoted the single stating : " Wilson 's instinctive talents for mixing sounds could most nearly equate to those of the old painters whose special secret was in the blending of their oils . And what is most amazing about all outstanding creative artists is

that they are using only those basic materials which are freely available to everyone else . "

To promote the single , four different music videos were shot . The first of these ? with Caleb Deschanel as cameraman ? features the group at a fire station , sliding down its pole , and roaming the streets of Los Angeles in a fashion comparable to The Monkees . The second features the group during vocal rehearsals at United Western Recorders . The third is footage recorded during the making of The Beach Boys in London , a documentary by Peter Whitehead of their concert performances . The fourth is an alternative edit of the third . Brian also made a rare personal appearance on local television station KHJ @-@ TV for its Teen Rock and Roll Dance Program , introducing the song to its in @-@ studio audience and presenting an exclusive preview of the completed record .

= = Critical reaction and sales = =

On October 15 , 1966 , Billboard predicted that the single would reach the top 20 in the Billboard Hot 100 chart . " Good Vibrations " was the Beach Boys ' third US number one hit after " I Get Around " and " Help Me , Rhonda " , reaching the top of the Hot 100 in December , as well as being their first number one in Britain . It sold over 230 @,@ 000 copies in the US during its first four days of its release and entered the Cash Box chart at number 61 on October 22 . In the UK , the song sold over 50 @,@ 000 copies in the first 15 days of its release . " Good Vibrations " quickly became the Beach Boys ' first million @-@ selling single . In December 1966 , the record was their first single certified gold by the RIAA . After the criteria for a gold record was modified , the RIAA failed to correct the listing , despite " Good Vibrations " being eligible for status as a platinum record as of 2015 . On March 30 , 2016 , the single was certified platinum by the RIAA .

Both New Musical Express and Melody Maker gave positive reviews at the time of the single 's release . Soon after , the Beach Boys were voted the number one band in the world in a readers ' poll conducted by NME , ahead of the Beatles , the Walker Brothers , the Rolling Stones , and the Four Tops . Billboard speculated that this was influenced by the success of " Good Vibrations " , and that " The sensational success of the Beach Boys , however , is being taken as a portent that the popularity of the top British groups of the last three years is past its peak . " In a Danish newspaper , readers ' polls voted Brian the winner of its " best foreign @-@ produced recording award " for the single , its first that the publication awarded to an American . A 1972 New York Magazine article would call the song " harmonically perfect " .

When asked about the song in 1990 , Paul McCartney of the Beatles responded " I thought it was a great record . It didn 't quite have the emotional thing that Pet Sounds had for me . I 've often played Pet Sounds and cried . It 's that kind of an album for me . " Pete Townshend of the Who was quoted in the 1960s saying " ' Good Vibrations ' was probably a good record but who 's to know ? You had to play it about 90 bloody times to even hear what they were singing about , " and feared that the single would lead to a trend of overproduction . In an Arts Magazine issue published in 1966 , Jonathan King said : " With justification , comments are being passed that ' Good Vibrations ' is an inhuman work of art . Computerized pop , mechanized music . Take a machine , feed in various musical instruments , add a catch phrase , stir well , and press seven buttons . It is long and split impressive , fantastic , commercial ? yes . Emotional , soul @-@ destroying , shattering ? no . " In the 2000s , record producer Phil Spector criticized the single for depending too much on tape manipulation , negatively referring to it as an " edit record ... It 's like Psycho is a great film , but it 's an ' edit film . ' Without edits , it 's not a film ; with edits , it 's a great film . But it 's not Rebecca ... it 's not a beautiful story . "

= = Influence and legacy = =

Virtually every pop music critic recognizes " Good Vibrations " as one of the most important compositions and recordings of the entire rock era , and it is regularly hailed as one of the finest pop productions of all time . To the counterculture of the 1960s , it served as an anthem . The A.V. Club theorized that the song helped turn around the perception of Pet Sounds ; that the " un @-@ hip

orchestrations and pervasive sadness baffled some longtime fans , who didn 't immediately get what Wilson was trying to do . " Encouraged by the success of the song , Brian continued working on the Smile project , intending it as an entire album using the writing and production techniques devised for " Good Vibrations " . " Heroes and Villains " , a follow @-@ up single , continued Brian 's modular recording practices , spanning nearly thirty recording sessions between May 1966 and June 1967 .

= = = Advancements = = =

= = = Recording and popular music = = =

" Good Vibrations " is acknowledged to have further developed the use of recording studios as a musical instrument . Author Domenic Priore noted that the song 's making was " unlike anything previous in the realms of classical , jazz , international , soundtrack , or any other kind of recording " . A milestone in the development of rock music , it was a prime proponent in revolutionizing rock music from live concert performances to studio productions which could only exist on record . Musicologist Charlie Gillett called it " one of the first records to flaunt studio production as a quality in its own right , rather than as a means of presenting a performance " . In a 1968 editorial for Jazz & Pop , Gene Sculatti predicted :

" Good Vibrations " may yet prove to be the most significantly revolutionary piece of the current rock renaissance ; executed as it is in conventional Beach Boys manner , it is one of the few organically complete rock works ; every audible note and every silence contributes to the whole three minutes , 35 seconds , of the song . It is the ultimate in @-@ studio production trip , very much rock ' n ' roll in the emotional sense and yet un @-@ rocklike in its spacial , [sic] dimensional conceptions . In no minor way , " Good Vibrations " is a primary influential piece for all producing rock artists ; everyone has felt its import to some degree , in such disparate things as the Yellow Balloon 's " Yellow Balloon " and the Beatles ' " A Day in the Life " , in groups as far apart as (recent) Grateful Dead and the Association , as Van Dyke Parks and the Who .

Popmatters wrote : " ' Good Vibrations ' changed the way a pop record could be made , the way a pop record could sound , and the lyrics a pop record could have . " It contained previously untried mixes of instruments , and was the first pop hit to have cellos in a juddering rhythm . Microtonal composer Frank Oteri agreed that it " sounds like no other pop song recorded up to that point " . Stebbins reflected that : " This signature sound would be duplicated , cloned , commercialized , and re @-@ fabricated in songs , commercials , TV shows , movies , and elevators to the point of completely diluting the genius of the original . But ' Good Vibrations ' was probably the quintessential ' sunshine pop ' recording of the century . " He added that the single " vaulted nearly every other rock act in their delivery of a Flower Power classic . It was just strange enough to be taken seriously , but still vibrant , happy , accessibly Beach Boys @-@ esque pop . " John Bush wrote that the single " announced the coming era of pop experimentation with a rush of riff changes , echo @-@ chamber effects , and intricate harmonies . " Gillett noted : " For the rest of the sixties , countless musicians and groups attempted to represent an equivalently blissful state , but none of them ever applied the intense discipline and concentration that Wilson had devoted to the recording . "

Priore argued that the song served as a forerunner to later works such as Marvin Gaye 's What 's Going On (1971) and Isaac Hayes ' Shaft (1971) which presented soul music in a similar , multi @-@ textured context imbued with ethereal sonic landscapes . Tom Roland believed that the song 's " format " would later be " borrowed " by Wings (" Band on the Run ") , the Beatles (" A Day in the Life ") , and Elton John (" Funeral for a Friend / Love Lies Bleeding ") . The song 's approach was repeated in Queen 's 1975 single " Bohemian Rhapsody " , which was also pieced together using various different sections . Upon release , Wilson praised Queen 's effort , calling it " the most competitive thing that 's come along in ages " and " a fulfillment and an answer to a teenage prayer ? of artistic music " .

= = = Psychedelic and progressive rock = = =

With " Good Vibrations " , the Beach Boys ended 1966 as the only band besides the Beatles to have a high @-@ charting psychedelic rock song , a time when the genre was still in its formative stages . Barney Hoskyns proclaimed it the " ultimate psychedelic pop record " from Los Angeles in its time . Popmatters added : " Its influence on the ensuing psychedelic and progressive rock movements can ? t be overstated , but its legacy as a pop hit is impressive as well . " Former Atlantic Records executive Phillip Rauls is quoted saying , " I was in the music business at the time , and my very first recognition of acid rock ? we didn 't call it progressive rock then ? was , of all people , the Beach Boys and the song ' Good Vibrations ' That [theremin] sent so many musicians back to the studio to create this music on acid . " Author Bill Martin suggested that the Beach Boys were clearing a pathway toward the development of progressive rock , writing : " The fact is , the same reasons why much progressive rock is difficult to dance to apply just as much to ' Good Vibrations ' and ' A Day in the Life ' . "

= = = Use of theremin = = =

Even though the song does not technically contain a theremin , " Good Vibrations " is the most frequently cited example of the instrument in pop music . Upon release , the single prompted an unexpected revival in theremins and increased the awareness of analog synthesizers .

When the Beach Boys needed to reproduce its sound onstage , Wilson first requested that Tanner play the Electro @-@ Theremin live with the group , but he declined due to commitments . He recalls saying to Wilson , " I 've got the wrong sort of hair to be on stage with you fellas , " to which Wilson replied , " We 'll give you a Prince Valiant wig . " The Beach Boys then requested the services of Walter Sear , who then asked Bob Moog to design a ribbon controller , since the group was used to playing the fretboards of a guitar . Sear remembers marking fretboard @-@ like lines on the ribbon " so they could play the damn thing " . Moog then set out to manufacture his own models of theremins . He ultimately noted : " The pop record scene cleaned us out of our stock which we expected to last through Christmas . "

In Steven M. Martin 's 1993 documentary *Theremin : An Electronic Odyssey* , in which Wilson makes an appearance , it was revealed that the attention being paid to the theremin after the release of " Good Vibrations " caused Russian authorities to exile the inventor Leon Theremin .

= = = Cover versions = = =

The song has been covered by a range of artists including Groove Holmes , the Troggs , Charlie McCoy , and Psychic TV . John Bush argued " ' Good Vibrations ' was rarely reprised by other acts , even during the cover @-@ happy ' 60s . Its fragmented style made it essentially cover @-@ proof . " In 1976 , a nearly identical cover version was released as a single by Todd Rundgren for his album *Faithful* . When asked for an opinion , Brian responded : " Oh , he did a marvelous job , he did a great job . I was very proud of his version . " The single peaked at 34 on the Billboard Hot 100 Pop Singles . Rundgren explained : " I used to like the sound of the Beach Boys , but it wasn 't until they began to compete with the Beatles that I felt that what they were doing was really interesting ? like around Pet Sounds and " Good Vibrations " ... when they started to shed that whole surf music kind of burden and start to branch out into something that was a little more universal I tried to do [the song] as literally as I could because in the intervening 10 years , radio had changed so much . Radio had become so formatted and so structured that that whole experience was already gone . "

In 2004 , Wilson rerecorded the song as a solo artist for his album *Brian Wilson Presents Smile* . It was placed as the album 's closer , immediately following the track " In Blue Hawaii " . It is the only track on the album that eschewed the modular recording method . Its verses and chorus were recorded as part of one whole take , and were not spliced .

= = = In popular culture = = =

In 1996 , experimental rock group His Name Is Alive recorded an homage entitled " Universal Frequencies " on their album Stars on E.S.P .. Reportedly , Warren Defever listened to " Good Vibrations " repeatedly for one week before deciding that the song " needed a sequel , " explaining that : " ' Good Vibrations ' is one of the first pop hits where you can actually hear the tape edits and I think that 's wonderful . " " Good Vibrations " inspired the title of French duo Air 's fifth LP : Pocket Symphony , released in 2007 . The song 's lyrics " I 'm picking up good vibrations " are quoted in Cyndi Lauper 's 1984 single " She Bop " .

= = Release history = =

Smiley Smile marks " Good Vibrations " ' s first album appearance , with no differences from the single version . Both Good Vibrations : Thirty Years of The Beach Boys (1993) and The Smile Sessions (2011) box sets contain extracts and highlights from the song 's extensive recording sessions . In early 2011 , the single was remastered and reissued as a four @-@ sided 78 rpm vinyl for Record Store Day as a teaser to the forthcoming The Smile Sessions box set . It contained " Heroes and Villains " as a B @-@ side along with previously released alternate takes and mixes . It was the first single issued by the group since " I Just Wasn 't Made for These Times " in 1996 .

Live versions appear on Live in London (1970) , Endless Harmony Soundtrack (1998) , Hawthorne , CA (2001) , and Good Timin ' : Live at Knebworth England 1980 (2002) .

= = = Stereo version = = =

There had never been an official true stereo release of the final track until the 2012 remastered version of Smiley Smile due to the loss of the original multi @-@ track tape . The 2012 stereo mix was made possible by newly invented digital technology by Derry Fitzgerald , with the blessings of Brian Wilson and Mark Linett . This software extracted individual instrumental and vocal stems from the original mono master ? as the multi @-@ track vocals remained missing ? to construct the stereo version that appears on the 2012 re @-@ issue of Smiley Smile .

= = = 40th Anniversary Edition = = =

In celebration of its 40th year , the Good Vibrations : 40th Anniversary Edition EP was released . The EP includes " Good Vibrations " , four alternate versions of the song , and the stereo mix of " Let 's Go Away for Awhile " .

= = Awards and accolades = =

In 2004 , Rolling Stone magazine ranked " Good Vibrations " at number 6 in " The 500 Greatest Songs of All Time " , the highest position of seven Beach Boys songs cited in the list . In 2001 , the song was voted number 24 in the RIAA and NEA 's listing of Songs of the Century . As of 2014 , " Good Vibrations " is ranked as the number three song of all time in an aggregation of critics ' lists at Acclaimed Music .

= = Personnel = =

The following people are identified as players on the " Good Vibrations " single .

The Beach Boys

Mike Love ? co @-@ lead vocals

Brian Wilson ? vocals , production , mixing

Carl Wilson ? lead vocals

Dennis Wilson ? Hammond organ during 2 : 14 ? 2 : 56

Additional musicians and production staff

Hal Blaine ? drums , timpani , other percussion

Al De Lory ? piano , harpsichord
Jesse Ehrlich ? cello
Larry Knechtel ? organ in verses and choruses
Tommy Morgan ? harmonica
Ray Pohlman ? electric bass
Paul Tanner ? Electro @-@ Theremin

Bassist Carol Kaye played on several of the " Good Vibrations " sessions , and has been identified as a prominent contributor to the track . However , analysis by Beach Boys archivist Craig Slowinski indicates that none of those recordings made the final edit as released on the single .

= = Sessionography = =

Session dates , track distinctions , studios , and notes adapted from Andrew Doe .

= = Chart positions = =