MUSCLG 5: Pre-1965 Listening Guide Tiya Chokhani

**Beach Boys - “Surfin’ USA”**

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| Credited to Chuck Berry and Brian Wilson, released by Capitol Records in March 1963. Reached #3 on the Billboard’s Pop chart and Cash Box charts. |
| **Form:** Simple Verse Chorus form, |
| **Time Signature:** 4/4 |
| **Instrumentation:** Lead Vocals, Backup Vocals, Guitar, Bass, Drums, Organ |

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| 0.00 | Instrumental Intro |  | * 2 bar Rock & Roll inspired electric guitar intro * The high reverb and medium fast tempo (about 150-160) add to the happy, carefree vibe |
| 0.04 | Verse 1 | “If everybody had…” | * Lead vocals start * Backup Vocals going “ooo” * Pickup with vocals then instruments start on the third bar * 16 bar verses (instruments switching with the kickdrum) * Starts out simple and softer, muted, * Kickdrum on every quarter note |
| 0.23 | Chorus | “You’d catch…” | * One bar of drums and organ solo going into the chorus to add to the build up * Opens up without the muted guitar and bass * Heavily swung jazz style bass * Background vocals throughout are “inside, outside, usa” * 16 bar chorus followed by the hook |
| 0.50 | Verse 2 | “We’ll all be…” | Same as Verse 1 |
| 1.13 | Chorus | “Haggerties …” | Same as Chorus |
| 1.37 | Instrumental Break |  | * Organ solo first 8 bars * Guitar solo for next four bars |
| 2.05 | Outro | “Everybody's gone...” | * Hook is repeated four times * Instead of playing the full verse again the last four bars are looped and fade out, with the instruments fading first so that the final words that linger on are surfing usa, the title of the piece |

2 bar guitar intro

high reverb and high end adds to the happy, carefree vibe of the song (bass sounds more like a guitar than a bass)

about 150-160 tempo, medium up tempo further adds to the intended vide of the song and central meaning

harmonies in the vocals, with a stronger emphasis on the higher end, and the low end it only really noticeable once the instruments fade out

not heavily produced, vary natural sounding recording, further adding to the central point of the beachy California casual song

swung feel, draws heavy inspiration from jazz and blues from that era and before (16 bar blues)

Pickup with vocals then instruments start on the third bar

Starts out simple and softer, muted, the focus being the driving kickdrum with four on the floor (referring to the four quarter note beats being hit in a bar)

16 bar verses (instruments trading ones with the kickdrum)

The chorus opens up without the muted guitar and bass and a heavily swung walking style jazz bass line

ABAB

Background vocals throughout song are “inside, outside, usa”

One bar drum fills going into the choruses and organ solo to further add to the build up

16 bar choruses

Organ solo first 8 bars of form, guitar solo for next four bars of form

Instead of playing the full verse again the last four bars are looped and fade out, with the instruments fading first so that the final words that linger on are surfing usa, the title of the piece