



Surf Listening Stations

Listening Station 1: Vocal Harmonies

- Song 1: "The Things We Did Last Summer," the Beach Boys (1963)
- Song 2: "Angel Eyes," The Four Freshmen (1956)

Founded in Indiana in 1948, the Four Freshmen were a popular male vocal group that combined Jazz stylings with the sound of traditional barbershop quartets. As you listen to the two songs, think about the ways in which the groups use their voices to create a specific mood. In the two songs, is every singer singing the same part? How do the combinations of different sounds create a single whole? Note that the Beach Boys' performance came seven years after "Angel Eyes." How do you think groups such as the Four Freshmen might have influenced the Beach Boys' vocal style? Note also that "The Things We Did Last Summer" is a 1946 song that has been recorded by numerous artists. Why do you think the Beach Boys chose to perform this song in 1963? What does it suggest about the influence of earlier musical styles on them as a group?

Listening Station 2: R&B Guitar

- Song 1: "Fun, Fun, Fun," the Beach Boys (1964)
- Song 2: "Johnny B. Goode," Chuck Berry (1958)

The first time you listen, listen only to the first 18 seconds of each song. What do you notice? Then go back and play the rest of each song. Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode" remains one of the classics of early Rock and Roll. Think about why the Beach Boys might have borrowed its opening guitar riff for their song. What does it add to the song? Do the Beach Boys successfully take this famous guitar riff and make it their own?

Listening Station 3: Wall of Sound

- Song 1: "Don't Worry Baby," the Beach Boys (1964)
- Song 2: "Be My Baby," the Ronettes (1963)

Pay particular attention to the opening seconds of each song as you listen. What about them is similar? Both songs demonstrate a production technique called the "Wall of Sound" pioneered in the early 1960s by record producer Phil Spector. Listen carefully and think about how that sound was created. What do you think this sound accomplished? What kind of mood does it create?

Listening Station 4: Instrumental Reverb

- Song 1: “Wipeout,” the Surfaris (1963)
- Song 2: “Miserlou,” Dick Dale and the Del-Tones (1962)

In the early 1960s, the Fender Musical Instruments Corporation introduced a new type of electric amplifier that could produce a reverberating sound, an effect popularly known as “reverb.” This effect was featured on many instrumental songs of the Surf era. What kind of mood does it create in the two songs here? (Note that “Miserlou” is a recording of a traditional Greek song that was written in the 1920s.) Why don’t these songs have any words?