

Posse--Van Dyke Parks, Brian Wilson, and what might have been

Van Dyke Parks is one of the most enigmatic composer/arrangers in all of pop music, ranking with Phil Spector and Syd Barrett (late of Pink Floyd), and a number of other unfortunate personalities. He is of course, known largely for the company he kept, especially Brian Wilson during the ill-fated "Smile" years, but his own 1968 work "Song Cycle" is worth a listen, and better than the operatic work of Paul McCartney, Billy Joel, and other rockers who tried their hand at another genre. He has remained active as a tv and movie composer:

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0663026/> .

I have never known what to think of VDP, and a number of Wilson and Beach Boy scholars have made him out to be the bad guy who fueled Brian's drug use and mental health deterioration. I suspect it was a more complex relationship, as most are. This interesting NYT update on Parks celebrates his 70th birthday, and I pass it on because of his glancing role in some of the most glorious music ever produced, with one of the most talented and tragic figures in rock and roll, Brian Wilson. Can you imagine what Brian would have produced had he stayed on the same musical trajectory of 1962-67, and had he received proper medical treatment?

Best wishes to my Posse, during this shrinking summer time.

From Santa Fe, NM,

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Allan Kozinn, 'Smile' and Other Difficulties, NY Times, July 23, 2013, at C1--
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/23/arts/music/smile-and-other-difficulties.html?pagewanted=all>

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