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ALBUMS THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

DEWEY BUNNELL

Singer-songwriter/guitarist Dewey Bunnell formed the folk rock band America with Gerry Beckley and Dan Peek (1950–2011) in 1969 and released their first self-titled album by 1971. Known for penning America staples such as “A Horse with No Name,” “Ventura Highway” and “Tin Man,” it was obvious Bunnell had a unique skill for writing catchy rock songs for FM radio.

To this day, Bunnell still tours as America with co-founder Beckley. America’s last studio album, *Lost & Found*, was released in 2015.

Judging from the list of 10 albums that changed his life, Bunnell was deeply influenced by both The Beatles and The Beach Boys throughout his lengthy musical career.

— Patrick Prince



The Beach Boys, *Surfin' USA*

I became interested in The Beach Boys in the summer of 1963. The surf scene was big and I listened to most of the instrumental surf bands in those days, but The Beach Boys had everything ... great songs, including lyrics and vocals, and I became aware of Brian Wilson as the leader. I saw them on TV and they were the “big thing.” During that time I got a guitar for the first time and picked out single-note surf songs.



The Beatles, *Meet The Beatles*

Then came The Beatles on TV in 1964. Songs like “I Want To Hold Your Hand,” “I Saw Her Standing There” and “All My Loving” were an incredible contrast for me to the music of The Beach Boys, and broadened my interest and understanding of song structure beyond the single-note songs I was playing on my guitar, and I began learning a few chords. The Beatles’ music became all-consuming from that point on for me.



The Beach Boys, *Pet Sounds*

By 1966 I listened to music from the British Invasion period primarily, but I remember hearing “Sloop John B.” and “Caroline, No,” which I ultimately came to know appeared on *Pet Sounds*. My family had moved to England, so The Beach Boys were off my radar until I heard “Good Vibrations” and was blown away by the uniqueness of that song. I listened to *Pet Sounds* again and realized what a fantastic album it was, incorporating so many different musical elements.



The Beatles, *Revolver*

Living in England at that time I was exposed to “all things Beatles” along with emerging bands in the U.K. Everyone waited for the next Beatles album with great anticipation. The new music they made on *Rubber Soul*, *Revolver* and ultimately *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was amazing and all-consuming at that time. I have always said *Revolver* was my favorite of the three, but that era certainly adds to a “life changing” time musically for me.



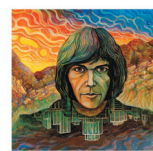
The Jimi Hendrix Experience, *Axis: Bold As Love*

I remember first seeing The Jimi Hendrix Experience on British TV doing “Hey Joe.” It was a raw and dynamic performance and, like so many people, I didn’t know what to think. The songs on *Axis: Bold As Love* like “Castles Made of Sand,” “Little Wing” and “If 6 Was 9” expressed intense personal feelings during the 1967 Summer of Love when I was in high school. I remember playing that album constantly. It still remains one of my favorite albums of all time.



Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, *Déjà Vu*

I first heard the debut Crosby, Stills & Nash album and really loved it and wanted to know everything about this group. Again, it was a matter of wonderful song crafting and beautiful vocal harmony arrangements, as well as terrific crisp acoustic guitar sounds. As that year moved into 1970, *Déjà Vu* became the album to focus on at that time. Another pivotal album and band in my musical life.



Neil Young, *Neil Young*

After the *Déjà Vu* album, I searched out Neil Young’s solo work and loved *Neil Young* and *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere* albums. The songs sounded uniquely personal and convincingly thoughtful. His voice seems to be an essential part of the structure of each song and there is a forlorn atmosphere created that I could understand ... and still do. *Neil Young* is a wonderful album.



The Beach Boys, *Surf's Up*

The Beach Boys were back on my radar by 1971 when our band were recording our first album, *America*. One of our mentors at Warner Bros., Derek Taylor, had gotten an early release of the album and we all listened in his office. It was magnificent. The title track is a masterpiece, as is “Til I Die” and Carl Wilson’s songs “Feel Flows” and “Long Promised Road.” It was as if The Beach Boys had transformed with this music, the album artwork and the odd retro-sounding title. This album succeeds on many levels. An album for the ages.



Joni Mitchell, *Blue*

On *Blue*, these are story songs and painful expressions of Mitchell’s personal life put to music. When our band came to California and we were in the same management office with Joni, it was a privilege to spend time with her and see her perform up close during those times. Another uniquely beautiful artist who affected my outlook on life then and now with her music.



Fountains of Wayne, *Welcome Interstate Managers*

The body of work that Fountains of Wayne produced is truly remarkable. The songwriting is superb and the four guys worked so well together. This album is a prime example. Song’s as diverse as “Halley’s Waitress,” “Hackensack” and “Bright Future In Sales” demonstrate an uncanny ability to write and produce complete songs that hold my attention with emotion and wit, as well as great instrumental performances from the quartet.