

I first heard *Star of the Beach* on a late night Indie station and thought it was a late 70's Papa Doo Run Run song...the harmonies were simple but crisp, the lead guitar a perfect "Carl Wilson By Numbers" pastiche and lyrically it had the familiar looking back and crying vibe so popular back then...imagine my surprise when the DJ announced the song was arranged and produced by **Probyn Gregory** of the **Brian Wilson Band** with guitars by **David Marks!!!**...later that week I was joined in the stations chat room by the delightful lyricist of said song Jemi Blue and then joined Dan on The Legges show with Brian Davies at Salford City Radio, our mutual love of Beach Music led Dan to forward me his new CD ,whilst it is eclectic in the extreme [more The Beatles than All Summer Long] there is enough beautiful music thereon to warm the hearts of all BBB peeps...the CD kicks off with the title song.. *Then I Kissed Her / Don't Worry, Baby* guitar figures borrowed all the way to heaven, a few block harmonies ,the obligatory falsetto wail and a lead guitar that's both out of place - and fits perfectly??...For those of us who made music in the 90's it's like the Lungs, Insect Surfers, Viet-Vettes or even the Barracudas never happened , this is Beach Music for the beach..Gary and Jeff would be proud to call it theirs...*No Fear* is a vast improvement, again BW riffs are borrowed, this time bookended by *The Little Girl I Once Knew* and internally [vocally] *This Whole World/Sloop John B* a country styled melody and lead guitar make it a peculiar surf song but one that hits all the right notes, it would sound fine on *Bay Of Plenty*..*She Was In Love* is everything that Postcard from California promised, beautiful melody, haunting harmonicas, harmonised vocals and a production warmth that is tangible, here Dan finds his feet and runs, no need to try to step into someone else's shoes , here Dan walks tall..it's even more a beach number than the overt BB rips.. personally I love this more than the more ear candy previous track. *Look East Again* kicks off with a bizarre atonal SMiLE/Drone vibe until the band arrive, almost out of kilter but the struggle was worth it, again Dan finds his country flow but this time incorporating Stax /Chicago blues type bass/horns, and at last a "choking" lead guitar that fits tighter than a suede glove, lovely lyric an effortless melody and superb vocal delivery..Medal of Achievement goes to keys and percussion..what is there not to like? *The Old Man's Rules* is *maybe* a tad too country blues for most BBB peeps, but one can't help but be impressed with the interaction and tightness of the performance, half way through they seem find a second gear out of nothing and the ride section [believe in yourself/guitar/horns] is to die for. *Time To Move On* deserves the Grammy for contemporary Country Performance, a duet with the gossamer voiced Katey Randall; a piano not so much played as embraced ,keys that Al Kooper would put his name to - and a great lyric again very Al Jardine phrasing and a glorious coda...what a song, 'scuse me whilst I replay this one...*1944* is again a major triumph, again a Jardine-like composition and performance ,again a harmonica that haunts and fittingly the finest lyric thus far...how anyone can turn Omaha Beach into beauty "beats the bejeezus outta me", but Dan pulls it off effortlessly...*Age of Deception* has great 80's poodle-cut air geetar vibe...even more radio friendly than *Star of The Beach* the horns and guitars insinuate themselves into your consciousness like a drug finally taking control and never letting go, not beach music, just mighty fine country rawk...*Take Back America* is as political as Dan gets , sentiments that aren't limited to Old Glory, in fact I find myself echoing them constantly as our fine sceptered isle slowly sinks into the ocean...not the strongest song by a long shot but neither is it objectionable; there ends the "official" album

and mighty good it is as well, do not purchase it expecting the Surfponics or Papa Doo Run Run as it's not a beach album. Dan may be a Star of the Beach but he's far more comfortable on land, it's always nice to see/hear BBB friends Probyn and David anywhere and they both turn in great turns, but please give Dan's other material an ear, he is a wonderful composer and a vocalist; he deserves an hour of your time... The expanded CD includes a few "bonus" tracks but in truth dilute what's gone before, a fine album, hopefully the first of many....

James Crowther.