

Prologue - What is Beach Music

If it was simple to describe Beach Music, this two-volume, 1000-page encyclopedia could be reduced to less than a dozen pages. The definition of Beach Music has been disputed for years. Not because the debaters don't know what they're talking about. The dissension arises because they confuse the experiential aspects of Beach Music with its phenomenological attributes.

Experience doesn't describe the phenomenon, it describes what happens in relation to the phenomenon. Even so, experience legitimizes the phenomenon. Let's take a look at how that's been reported in the past three decades.

We pulled the definitions of Beach Music from Bo the Web Guy's popular website at beachmusiconline.com on October 13, 2007. Dozens of folks had been adding their thoughts and definitions since March 2, 2006.

The definitions were experiential in ten easily identifiable sub-categories:

Seasonal:

60s	late 60s
70s	summers
beach walks at night	summertime
Labor Day Weekend 1967	sunshine
late 50s thru 60s	warm sand

Those who reported Beach Music in a seasonal sense saw it as primarily late 50s thru to the 70s with the greatest emphasis on the 60s, in the sunshine and summertime.

Social:

eliminates social differences	birth of beach music (60s)
let our hair down	carefree (no worries about tomorrow)
love for your fellow man	cruising Pavilion Myrtle Beach
me & dad shagging in sand	dancing
memories	no jealousy (wives & husbands)
no plans for tomorrow	beer-drinking, Sig Ep house,
olden days on boardwalk	enjoy life
Outdoor Concerts	feel young again
party	first kiss
safe for singles	flirt with boys while cruising
safe way to meet people	good friends
wonderful people	good times
Beach Music Festivals	

At the center of the social context is carefreeness, e.g. "no plans for tomorrow," "let your hair down," "carefree," "enjoy life." Some contributors described specific activities, especially cruising, along with dancing, flirting, shagging with dad, and meeting people. These and the other entries describe activities which happened in relation to Beach Music, but don't describe it. "Good times" also happen with Country Music, Rock and Roll, Hip Hop, the State Fair and innumerable other social activities. Partying is similar. Feeling

young again can be triggered by dieting to one's 'fighting weight' in high school, getting back into good physical shape, or hormone replacement therapy.

In the **Sensual** realm were entries including:

candy apples
cold beer
corn dogs
cotton candy
smell of sea
smell of suntan lotion
smell of suntan oil in breeze

No doubt these are the experiences of everyone who visits the Beach and other resorts where Beach Music may have been playing—but it's also the experience of Surfers, Square Dancers, fans of the Bluegrass festivals at Myrtle Beach for years, the drag races on Highway 501, and numerous other tourist and weekend getaway activities. These don't define Beach Music even though they're in the same neighborhood.

A short, but no less important, sub-category on Bo's site was **Fashion**:

halter tops
shell necklaces
shorts
tanned

Another short sub-category were entries which explained Beach Music in a **Developmental** sense:

childhood
evolved from late 60s
things were slower & sweeter
youth

i.e. it reminds some folks of their childhood or youth, it happened when time and human activities moved slower (something that every generation has been saying about the time just before "now" for 100 years), and there was the claim that Beach music evolved from the late 60s onward—a developmental claim.

Many folks described Beach Music as the **Groups** they encountered and liked:

Alabama (at the Bowery)	Breeze Band
Archie Bell & Drells	Castaways
Aretha Franklin	Catalinas
Arthur Conley	Chairmen of the Board
Band of Oz	Clifford Curry
Big John Thompson	Clovers
Bill Deal & Rhondels	Coastline
Billy Stewart	Craig Woolard Band
Black & Blue	Dominoes