

Morrison, Van (1945-) Encyclopedia Article

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Morrison, Van (1945—)

Van Morrison is one of the most gifted singers, performers, composers, and songwriters in the history of popular music. Born August 31, 1945 in Belfast (Northern Ireland), Van Morrison (real name: George Ivan Morrison) left school at age 15 to join the rock 'n' roll band The Monarchs on a tour through the United Kingdom and Europe. From 1963 to 1966 he led Them—a successful British rhythm and blues band—whose best known song, "Gloria," was written by Morrison. In 1967 Morrison embarked on a solo career that up until now has resulted in some 30 high-quality albums. *Astral Weeks* (1968), his second, is often cited as one of the best records ever, together with The Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, Bob Dylan's *Blonde on Blonde*, and *Pet Sounds* by The Beach Boys. While the album's sound retains a unique position within Morrison's oeuvre, it nevertheless contains all the ingredients of his later work. Even though Morrison has never had any really great hits—apart perhaps from the early "Brown Eyed Girl"—he is known by many as the author of "Have I told you lately that I love you," rated one of the "most performed songs" of the year in 1994.

Further Reading:

DeWitt, Howard A. *Van Morrison: The Mystic's Music*. Freemont, California, Horizon Books, 1983.

Turner, Steve. *Van Morrison: Too Late to Stop Now*. London, Bloomsbury, 1993.

Yorke, Ritchie. *Van Morrison: Into the Music*. London, Charisma Books, 1975.