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Story of Pop

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ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
POP IN 26 WEEKLY PARTS



THE BEATLES

Epstein: Merseybeat: Hysteria:
Songwriters: Lyrics:
PLUS: Gene Pitney: Soul: & more

PART 10

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The waiting and wondering that had followed the end of the rock era were over. The new music was here, in force and with an impact that no one could possibly have predicted. If 1962 was, in some senses, a lost year for musical innovation, it redeemed itself right at the end when a record called 'Love Me Do' was released. 'Love Me Do' made ripples if not waves, but within months its creators were to cause a flood. The Beatles had arrived, and in so doing started a completely new and possibly even more exciting chapter in the story.

Both this issue and the BBC programme are attempting to take a fresh look at the Beatles. We attempt to analyse why it should be that *this* group that sparked a hitherto unimagined hysteria; what it was all about; and what made it happen to them at that time. The radio programme looks at the influences that had gone into the making of the Beatles and their music. There is an old saying that nothing is really new, it's just old stuff served differently. To some extent this is true of the Beatles – they took the best of a wide variety of music, fused it together, distilled it, and turned it into something uniquely their own. They readily acknowledge their heroes – Presley, Chuck Berry, the early Motown groups and many, many others – but whereas this music had gone straight through the heads of others, it had lodged in the collective Beatle mind and then reprocessed. It came out sounding fresh, clear, and uncluttered. To a public whose ears had become jaded through a surfeit of pre-digested pap, it came as a welcome relief.

The Beatles changed everything. They bred a hysteria so startling and violent that the authorities felt the need to take strict steps to protect life and property. In this issue we investigate the properties of hysteria, and find out why nice respectable girls should, at the sight of a shaking Beatle fringe, scream, shriek and generally act in a most un-ladylike manner. We trace the success and tragic end of Brian Epstein – the first British impresario to play Colonel Tom Parker at his own game – and take a critical look at the songwriting talents of Lennon and McCartney.

Both this issue and the programme serve to show that the day of the Beatles had arrived. Pop would never be the same again.

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**Although the radio programme and this publication have been linked for readers in the UK, we have taken care to ensure that readers abroad will find this publication complete in itself.*

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Keystone

POP: 1960-65

The Mersey Sound



*'Twas in Liddypool one fine day
That the four fab boys began to play
They captured the Cavern and fans
galore
Who kept on screaming for more
and more.
It soon got round to all the towns
That here was the sound to beat all
sounds.'*

(reader's letter in The Beatles Book, March 1965)

That of course is the legend – the Beatles created Merseybeat all by themselves. The reality was rather different. From 1959 to 1962, when their first record, 'Love Me Do', was a minor hit which established them as the top Liverpool group, they were just one of a dozen bands who stood out from the 300 or so performing regularly on Merseyside.

There was Kingsize Taylor and the Dominoes, who always claimed to have been the first Liverpool beat group; Cass and the Casanovas (later the Big Three), who always disputed that claim; Rory Storme and the Hurricanes, whose drummer, Ringo Starr, sat in with the Beatles during their second trip to Hamburg in 1961; Derry Wilkie and the Seniors, the first Mersey group to play in Germany; the Chants, the first all-black vocal group in the country; Freddie Starr and the Midnighters (whose leader became a successful TV comedian), and Faron's Flamingos. All these groups were big names within Liverpool itself, while others became known nationally in the wake of the Beatles' success: Gerry and the Pacemakers; Billy J. Kramer and the Dakotas; the Merseybeats; the Swinging Blue Jeans; and the Searchers.

These groups all played at dozens of venues up and down Merseyside. The famous Cavern was a Trad jazz club until May 25th, 1960, when its first beat session featured Rory Storme and the Hurricanes, with Cass and the Casanovas. Its main rivals were the Jacaranda (which like the Cavern was managed by Alan Williams, the Beatles' first manager), where the walls were decorated with murals by Stuart Sutcliffe, the Beatles' first bass player; and the Iron Door, home of the Searchers.

Outside the city centre there were ball-rooms, church halls, and civic halls like Litherland Town Hall, Aintree Institute, Wilson Hall in Garston, and the Jive Hive at Crosby. There was a Merseybeat boat trip to the Isle of Man, with over a dozen groups on board. Special events were held at local venues like New Brighton Pier,



Keystone

Top left: An historic picture taken by Lennon showing Stuart Sutcliffe.

J. Alan Cash

Top right: The Big Three. Left to right: The Beatles, Epstein and

Pictorial Press

where Rory Storme once climbed on top of the Pavilion and broke his leg falling through the glass roof. Liverpool could also claim to have pioneered pop festivals when on one occasion 14 hours of music from 25 groups was presented at Stanley Stadium – tickets cost a pound.

A Little More Money

Before the Beatles and Gerry had their hits no musicians on Merseyside made much money. Five pounds a night was about average, and at one period the Beatles got just five shillings each for playing at the Jacaranda. Nearly every group was semi-professional, and most got their equipment through credit contracts guaranteed by their parents. A lot of the beat groups grew out of street gangs in working-class areas like the Dingle – kids who'd been enthralled by *Rock Around The Clock*, and wanted to do more than dance or slash seats to rock & roll music.

For the top Liverpool groups, though, Hamburg soon became the place to play and earn a little more money. According to Alan Williams, the German connection came about almost accidentally, when a

Hamburg club owner came to Liverpool and poached a steel band who were booked at the Jacaranda. In the negotiations which followed he persuaded the Germans that what they needed was an English beat group. A summer season in Blackpool for Howie Casey and the Seniors had just fallen through, so Williams shipped them off to the Kaiser Keller club. They were a howling success, so soon afterwards, the Beatles too appeared in Hamburg, at the Indra.

The Hamburg experience was the making of the Beatles and nearly every Mersey group who played there. Having to play long sets, in an environment where they knew only each other, welded the groups together into tight units. They also had to modify their style to the raucous drinking and dancing clubs of the Reeperbahn. The groups had to concentrate on loud, rocking numbers: "At the beginning they (the Beatles) still played a lot of the Shadows' numbers, but gradually turned to R&E with such numbers as 'Roll Over Beethoven'," recalled Howie Casey.

The German audiences also wanted groups who were visually exciting. They would call out for the musicians to 'mak

show', and the Beatles, in particular, responded. A German booking-agent later described some of their stunts:

"John Lennon marched in one night wearing just bathing trunks. Once, too, a toilet seat mysteriously disappeared from the club. Sure enough, John appeared with it round his neck like some wooden horse-shoe. The boys didn't mind taking the risk of upsetting the local people. They'd ape Hitler and do the goose-step. And of course the local fans soon learnt to love them..."

(from Billy Shepherd's, *The True Story of the Beatles.*)

An important element in the development of the Liverpool music scene was the newspaper, *Mersey Beat*, edited by Bill Harry who had studied magazine design at the Art College where both John Lennon and Stuart Sutcliffe had been. From the first issue John was a regular contributor and many of his humorous pieces ended up in his book *In His Own Write*. It was the winning of the *Mersey Beat* poll in 1962 which finally established the Beatles as the top Liverpool group.

Despite all this intense activity, nobody outside Merseyside knew what was



his Merseysound, Gerry and the Pacemakers.

happening there until Brian Epstein finally managed to interest George Martin in his Beatles tapes. The recording industry, in the UK, was centred on London, and as long as Cliff Richard and the Shadows, Billy Fury and Bobby Vee kept on selling records, it wasn't interested in local groups from provincial towns.

Colourless Sound

The Liverpool groups had a similar lack of interest in the hit parade music of 1959-62. They had grown up with the rock & roll music of Chuck Berry and Little Richard, next to which most of the early '60s stuff sounded pretty colourless. Besides, they had access to contemporary rhythm & blues hits from the States - thanks to Liverpool's situation as a seaport. Merchant seaman returning from New York would bring back records by such people as the Contours, the Miracles, Barrett Strong and Barbara George for their friends or brothers in the beat groups. Add to that the musical heritage of Liverpool in terms of folk music and country & western (Bill Harry estimates that there were 40 country groups operating or

Merseyside in the heyday of beat music), and you can see what a rich mixture of popular music the groups had to draw on forming their own individual styles.

Even among the rock & roll numbers they chose to perform, the best Merseybeat groups picked out the unusual. There were several recordings of songs written by the Coasters' producers, Mike Leiber and Jerry Stoller with their witty lyrics and singalong choruses notably 'What About Us' by the Undertakers, and 'Thumb n' A Ride' by Earl Preston and the T.T.s. Those qualities were also apparent in the R&B songs that became Merseybeat standards without anybody else in the country, except a few collectors, having ever heard them. There was 'Some Other Guy', recorded by the Big Three after Liverpool was 'discovered' by the metropolitan record companies; 'Fortune Teller' (originally done by the New Orleans singer Aaron Neville, and put on record in Britain by the Merseybeats); 'Do You Love Me' (the Contours song with which Brian Poole defeated Faron's Flamings for the British hit); and the well-known 'Money' and 'Twist And Shout'.

The Liverpool groups didn't practice

sexual discrimination in the slower numbers they performed. The Shirelles' 'Baby It's You' was popular, Little Eva's 'Let's Turkey Trot' and 'Our Day Will Come' by Ruby and the Romantics were covered on record by Mersey groups in 1963. Otherwise, the beat groups were surprisingly conventional in their quieter material - adopting songs from musical shows, and standard ballads like 'You'll Never Walk Alone' and 'Till There Was You'.

Because nearly all the records made by Liverpool groups, after they had been signed by major record companies, were hastily and unimaginatively produced in the hope of leaping on the Beatles bandwagon, it's very difficult to realise how exciting Merseybeat was in its natural habitat. There were, however, a few records made in Liverpool itself which captured some of the feeling of the music. Bill Harry has since described that feeling as "the voice of musicians in love with their instruments and the yells of the audiences who were up there with them."

One of these is an EP called 'The Big Three Live At The Cavern'. On it you can hear how the good-humoured shouting and whistling of the audience was almost part

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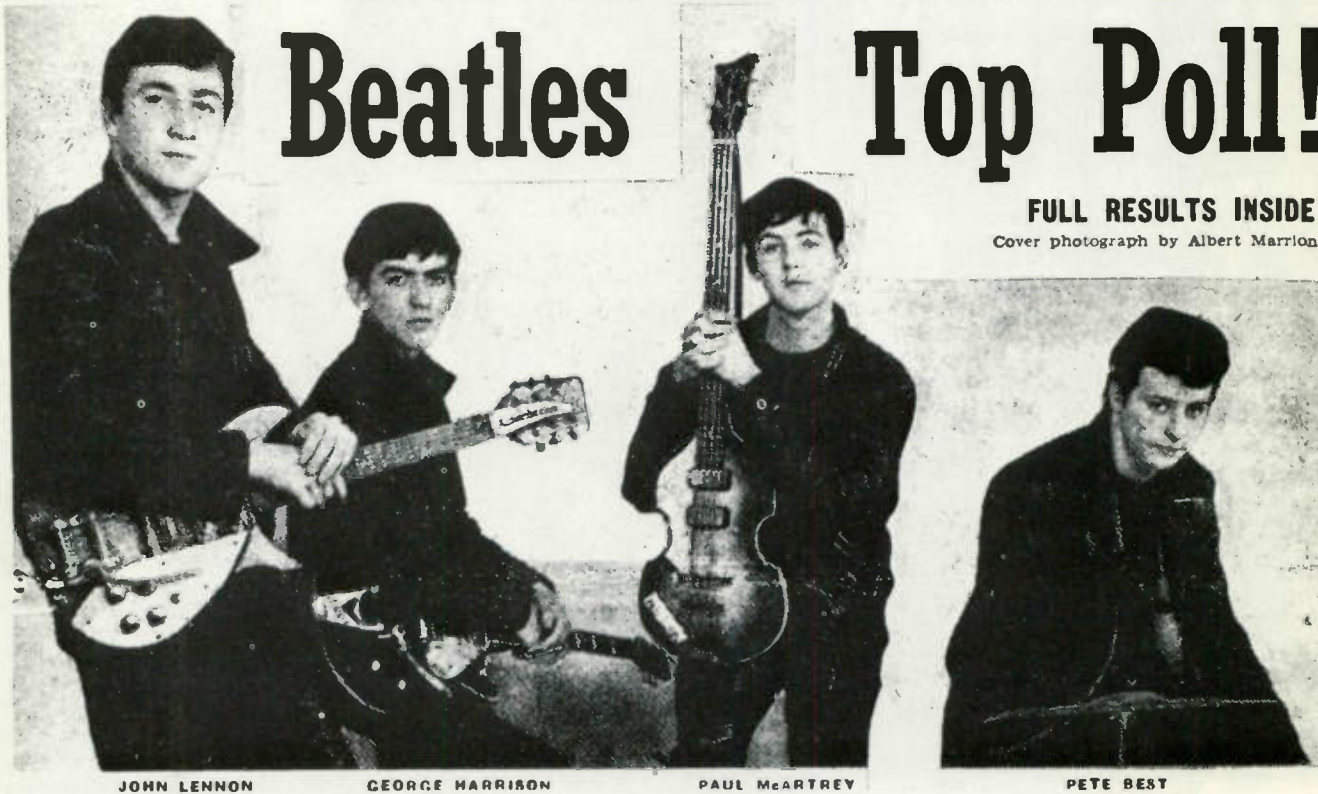
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FULL RESULTS INSIDE
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The front cover of Merseyside's own newspaper *Mersey Beat*

of the Mersey sound. The excitement is increased because the musicians aren't total masters of their instruments; you can hear, in the way they play, the enthusiasm and effort that went into Merseybeat. It's all very different from the 'cool', effortless approach of the Shadows, and the immaculate production jobs on records by American singers of the time like Neil Sedaka and Johnny Tillotson. The two albums called 'This Is Mersey Beat' recorded in Liverpool by John Schroeder of Oriole, a now defunct record company, convey the same excitement through the work of a large number of Liverpool groups. All these records have been unavailable for a number of years, but happily United Artists have recently acquired many of them for a new double-album of the Mersey sound.

Although the Beatles were part of Merseybeat, there were also important things which differentiated them from the other Liverpool groups. While most musicians composed the occasional song, Lennon and McCartney wrote continually and consistently - they had nearly 100 songs written before they made their first record. This songwriting ability and

interest must have owed a lot to the semi-bohemian, art college background of John Lennon and Stuart Sutcliffe. In addition, the vocal harmonies worked out by the Beatles were more sophisticated than those of nearly every other group in Liverpool. They had obviously listened carefully to early Tamla groups like the Miracles, as well as the Everly Brothers and the Drifters. They had learned how to use harmonies to give songs their own pace - the slow build-up to a climax - something that rock & roll and rhythm & blues weren't too concerned with. 'You Really Gotta Hold On Me' is a good example.

Recognition At Last

But of course, the immediate reason that the Beatles were the first Liverpool group to reach out to audiences beyond Lancashire and Hamburg was Brian Epstein. And it was ironic, if inevitable, that the moment Epstein persuaded George Martin to sign the group marked the beginning of the end for Merseybeat as a living music. For as soon as 'Please Please Me' and Gerry and the Pacemakers'

'How Do You Do It?' were hits, record company scouts descended on Merseyside like a plague of locusts. Any group with any talent, and some with none, was signed. Hardly any of them were recorded by anyone with the same understanding of their music that George Martin had of Epstein's stable of groups. Most made a couple of singles (often of rock or R&B numbers), had their brief hour of glory, and caught the train home.

The live music scene in Liverpool was devastated. Not only had the mature groups been whisked away, but so had the next generation of musicians who had yet to master their craft. Although it was only in 1973 that the Cavern finally closed, Merseybeat on Merseyside was dead by 1965.

NEXT WEEK IN POP:
Part 2 of Merseybeat. After Liverpool the Mersey Sound emerged from all corners of Britain.

THE GOLDEN YEARS

OF SOUL

The early and middle '60s are remembered by many as the time when the Beatles, Stones, and big British beat took the world by storm. The charts were suddenly alight with strange, raw, uncompromising sounds; and for the first time in its long history, Britannia ruled the airwaves.

But the same period also witnessed the flowering of black R&B into the distinctive soul style, and the emergence of a number of primarily black singers, groups, and music business aficionados who changed the sound of contemporary music nearly as much as the white beat groups and protesting folkies – though initially with less spectacular results. It took some years for the largely white pop audience to turn its ears in the direction of Memphis and Detroit, and by the time it did so, many of soul's finest recorded performances had slipped by unnoticed.

It was, however, black groups and singers who had initially provided a model for most of the successful white groups, the best of which went on to evolve their own style and material. Fortunately, groups like the Beatles and Stones made no secret of their influences; and indeed it was partly their praise that helped establish interest in black R&B and soul. Few Beatles' fans had heard of Smokey Robinson and the Miracles before the Fab Four started drooling over them. The Stones were more ethnic, basing their early repertoire on a large variety of black artists – among them Don Covay, Marvin Gaye, Solomon Burke, Otis Redding, as well as the perennial Chuck Berry.

Sharp, Cool Defiance

In Britain, interest in soul was largely confined to the Mods, who found in the music the sharp, cool, and self-contained defiance that they'd assumed; while in the unrelenting 4/4 rhythms they discovered the ideal vehicle for their footloose dance fantasies. They could also point righteously to the emotion and feeling of soul music, a complete contrast to the synthesised productions of most of the pop market. 'Soul' in Britain at that time meant an underworld of discos, small record shops,

Aretha Franklin: from gospel to sparkling soul star.

Redferns



Redferns

Sly Stone, the ultra-cool performer.

and US airbase imports. Titles and artists were relayed by word of mouth, and patient research was needed to discover what was available where. The Mods faced uncomprehending shop girls who wouldn't believe that there *were* such people as Dobie Gray and Betty Everett. They had to put up with friends who maybe liked the Stones' 'You Better Move On' or the Hollies' 'Just One Look', but hadn't heard of Arthur Alexander or Doris Troy who made the originals. Things aren't so tight these days, but among the white kids they haven't changed so much either. Soul in Britain remains a minority cult interest for the most part, though perhaps people are now more prepared to listen.

The situation in the States in the '60s was hardly better. Although black music is more readily accessible there, and has always made more impression in the pop charts, white groups stole most of its fire, while the 'Folk Boom' was another factor limiting its success. Moreover, racial tension ran higher there. Eric Burdon told the story of a girl in the Deep South who liked Otis Redding's music, but who wouldn't dream of going to a concert. "The place is full of niggers," she explained.

Gradually things changed. In Britain the disco crowd edged a few singles into the lower reaches of the charts, the record companies woke up to the potential of another market, and the BBC could no longer afford to ignore the existence of music that the pirate radio stations were only too willing to play, albeit Bob Dylan or Otis Redding.

1965 and 1966 at last saw soul records making the hallowed Top 20. The Supremes, at the most commercial end of Tamla Motown's spectrum, had already had some success; but it was the appearance of Wilson Pickett's 'In The Midnight Hour' in autumn 1965 that marked the start of a new era. The first Motown package tour had already flopped fairly disastrously outside London (Imagine seeing Stevie Wonder, Smokey Robinson, the Vandellas, and Supremes on the same bill today!) and 1966 saw Britain's first (and virtually only) no. 1 – the Four Tops' 'Reach Out I'll Be There'.

For a couple of years, 1966 through 1967 and into 1968, soul music was in fashion on both sides of the Atlantic, so that most of the performers in the field achieved some kind of belated recognition (with the notable exception of Bobby Bland). But as the familiar commercialisation process set in, so the music tended not to improve, but to fall back on a formula-sound and style, increasingly trapped in its own clichés, and increasingly diluted in its potency for the pop market.

Of the artists who established a definitive soul style that others imitated, the most influential were James Brown, Otis Redding, and Wilson Pickett, though the part played by studios, labels, and producers was also important. In the case of Tamla Motown and Stax records it was crucial.

Stax had been carving out a reputation since its inception in 1961, and boasted as its house band Booker T and the MGs, a four-piece of bass, drums, organ, and guitar, who together with three or four piece horn section also traded under the name of the Markeys. Both units had achieved success in their own right with their respective first records, 'Green Onions' (1962) and 'Last Night' (1961), and together they added up to a formidable powerhouse of funk, equally at home on slow or fast numbers. Their tight, spare sound, over which the Memphis horns blew pure, sweet, clear riffs was easily the most widely imitated (and successful) instrumental style in soul. It was this band that played behind notables like Redding, Sam and Dave, Rufus Thomas, Arthur Conley, Joe Tex and, for a time, Wilson Pickett who was sent south to Memphis by Atlantic records after signing with them in 1964 – an interesting policy that also sent Aretha Franklin to Alabama.

Virtually Unchallenged

Like many other soul artists, Pickett was born and raised in the Deep South (born Alabama 1941), though he moved to Detroit in his early teens, teaming up with a local group, the Falcons, in 1959. He became lead vocalist, made 'I Found A Love' in 1962 with them, then left to go solo. After a brief stay with Lupine records that produced 'If You Need Me', a slow sermonizing plea covered by the Stones, he joined Atlantic, the major force in R&B.

Pickett's Memphis sessions were first with Atlantic (who were based in New York), and produced some of his finest work, including the instant classic 'In The Midnight Hour'. Pickett had one of the most powerful sets of vocal chords in the business, and while slow numbers often showed up his inability to deal with any emotion outside the crudely assertive or straightforwardly raving, on harder up-tempo rhythms his raucous and tortured delivery was virtually unchallenged.

Steve Cropper, guitarist with Booker T, presided over Pickett's sessions at Stax and co-wrote several numbers with him.

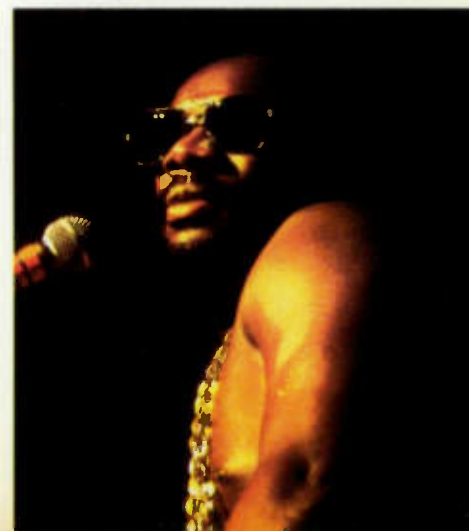
The result, in numbers like 'In The Midnight Hour', 'Don't Fight It', '99½ (Just Won't Do)', and '6345789', was a tension between rhythm, brass, and vocals that was often missing from his later work. Cropper underpins everything with his chopping, clean-machine riffs, allowing the bass line to loop in and out of Pickett's always heartfelt vocal extremism. Pickett's assumed role on these, and on almost all his records ever since, was that of midnight mover and soul supreme – when he sang: *'I'm gonna get you girl and hold you And do all the things I told you'* he sounded like he meant business.

Otis Redding had a less powerful but more expressive voice than Pickett, and while at home on fast numbers like 'Mr. Pitiful', handled slow stuff with complete mastery. Hailing from Georgia, he joined Stax in 1962 and made his debut with 'These Arms Of Mine' in the same year. He followed through with a sequence of extraordinarily moving sides like 'Pain In My Heart', 'That's How Strong My Love Is', and 'I've Been Loving You Too Long'. The mood of these records was both sad and compelling, his voice staggered with feeling, and the Markeys' horns were used like a vocal chorus in gospel call-and-answer style, allowing Redding to stray from the strict melody of the song to add improvised implorations of his own. Such liberties would have been unthinkable to Sam Cooke, Redding's idol, but the intensity achieved was far greater than on Cooke's records – as if there was more emotion than would comfortably fit into the song.

It was James Brown, however, who continued to boss the soul scene. Not only did Brown refine the soul style to its most basic and gripping (some would say banal), he also contributed a dazzling stage style that was often imitated, rarely equalled. Brown was and is his own man entirely – he wrote, produced, and arranged his own material, hired his own bands (50-piece no less), and supervised almost every aspect of his career. These days he heads a multi-million dollar combine that has recently moved into film production.

Brown could sing as sweet as the next man, as on 'Prisoner Of Love', but now he concentrated – in 'Out Of Sight' and 'Papa's Got A Brand New Bag' – on a grits'n'grunt style that was staccato,

A moment of power at the piano with Isaac Hayes.



Redferns

aggressive, and punchy. He too used plenty of horns, but his sound was altogether more crude, dirty, and relentless than the rural-tinged Memphis beat. It was great dance music if nothing else.

On stage, Brown outstripped his rivals effortlessly. He moved and danced with surprising agility for such a squat, powerful man, and every song, no matter what the mood, possessed him completely. His stage show is complete catharsis, with Brown collapsing at its climax – apparently for good – only to revive and collapse again . . . and again, until he disappears amid a welter of sobs, shouts, and shrieks.

Brown lacks subtlety – he still attracts intense hostility among fans as the epitome of clockwork soul – but he did show the potentialities of soul live on stage. Others could only compete with his gross sexuality, his alternately shrieking and supplicating theatrics.

Noisy Climaxes

Audience response has always played an important part in soul, with the audience playing the part of the gospel 'witness' while the artist 'testifies' his love on stage. With the elaborate synchronised movements of the band or group, the superslick mohair suits in fluorescent red and green, and the sweat of the lead singer flopping into the front rows, the spectacle of soul at its best was superb. How soon though, did the gospelling patter degenerate into a tired and sour routine of 'let me hear you say yeah', 'everybody clap your hands', and so on.

Once soul had established itself though, it became evident that there were a bewildering variety of performers at work. Stax and Memphis offered some of the best: there was the big bad dog himself, Rufus Thomas, with his gravel voice and zany dance numbers like 'Jump Back' and 'Willy Nilly'; his daughter Carla who duetted with Otis for 'Tramp', a rather limp novelty number that was nonetheless a hit; Eddie Floyd, who had sung alongside Pickett in the Falcons, with his 'Knock On Wood' – possibly the most covered number in soul; Arthur Conley with his tribute to the stars, 'Sweet Soul Music'; and of course Sam and Dave.

Real names Samuel Moore and David Prater, Sam and Dave were both from the South, had both spent time as gospel singers, and joined forces as a vocal duo in the late '50s after meeting in Miami. Their material for Stax was written and produced by the team of Isaac Hayes and David Porter, and their 'You Don't Know Like I Know' and 'Hold On I'm Coming' remain among the most dynamic performances put on wax in the mid-'60s. The differing textures of their voices was used to project mounting impatience and excitement, with thundering noisy climaxes. Although later estranged, and later still re-united, they continued to produce small wonders like 'Soul Sister Brown Sugar' after the soul boom had largely collapsed into routine sterility.

When soul stars weren't actually from

the South, they invariably seemed to record there. New Orleans continued its long tradition by turning out artists like Lee Dorsey and Aaron Neville – both produced by Allen Toussaint – and Chris Kenner. (Stokely Carmichael's favourite record at that time was said to be Neville's 'Tell It Like It Is'). Lee Dorsey was originally from Portland, Oregon, and found his way to New Orleans through his boxing career. He had a high, nasal voice that was nonetheless attractive, especially on novelty numbers like 'Ride Your Pony', 'Working In The Coalmine', and even on a slow blues like 'Get Out My Life Woman'.

Elsewhere in the South were artists like James and Bobby Purify in Florida, and Joe Tex from Texas!, who sang in an engaging downhome soft-spoken style that bordered on straight C&W. His speciality was homespun homilies, rather tongue-in-cheek, but deceptively funky too; and had hits with several records including 'I Want To Do Everything For You' and 'A Sweet Woman Like You'. Tex made his breakthrough after recording at Muscle Shoals Studios in Alabama, which soon emerged as one of the few real rivals to Memphis. Pickett transferred his business there, and Aretha Franklin cut 'I Never Loved A Man', her first record for Atlantic, there in 1967. Daughter of Detroit's acclaimed Baptist preacher, the Rev. C. L. Franklin, Aretha was another of the soul artists who boasted gospel roots. Now the undisputed 'Queen of Soul', more will be said about her later, but her success crowned the achievements of a number of girl singers who had been making outstanding records in recent years, breaking away from the tradition that women should only sing 'soft' ballads. Among these were Irma Thomas, Shirley Ellis, Lorraine Ellison, the Tamla girl-groups, and the fiery Tina Turner – who was busy commercialising soul with 'River Deep Mountain High'.

Pure and Powerful

The other Southern singer who made most impression on the pop charts was Percy Sledge out of Alabama. A sadly underrated performer despite the massive success of his beautiful debut 'When A Man Loves A Woman', Sledge sang in a pure but powerful voice that arced easily across the whole scale. His voice combined tenderness with forcefulness in a rare way, but his follow-ups, 'Warm And Tender Love' and 'Out Of Left Field', failed to make much impression.

Although soul power seemed rooted firmly in the South for the most part (Tamla Motown aside), there were plenty of fine artists recording elsewhere. One-off classics abound in soul music, and every fan has his own list of indispensable all-time great records – the more obscure the better! Sometimes, forgotten artists startle everyone by re-appearing years later with another classic . . . Dobie Gray, for example, who had seemingly sunk into obscurity after his 1966 Mod raves 'The In Crowd' and 'Out On The Floor', re-emerged



Redferns

Ike and Tina Turner

years later with the stunning 'Drift Away'; while Billy Preston made an even more surprising re-appearance as a sidekick of the Beatles some years after his instrumental antics on the Veejay album 'Wildest Organ In The West'.

Most soul groups and artists in fact have amazing longevity, and since soul is to some extent a separate and self-perpetuating musical culture, it seems wrong to talk of soul 'dying' in the late '60s. The white audiences might have tired of it and moved on in search of 'psychedelia', but soul continued anyway. Nonetheless it was a tired form, and had been too often reduced to a parody of itself. Wilson Pickett was pushing dozens of interjections like no less than 34 cries of 'Lord Have Mercy' and other assorted asides into the 2½ minutes of 'Soul Dance Number Three' (a good record all the same); Otis was sounding staler than might be thought possible on 'Tramp'; and just about everyone seemed to think that if you raved long and hard enough it made any song exciting.

Far from 'telling the truth', soul was becoming increasingly contrived, divorced from the emotion that was meant to be its foundation, and in many cases downright routine. The situation might have been saved had there been a few artists and producers who could keep up the inventiveness that flowed so freely in the previous years. Eventually though, a convincing 'funkadelic' approach did emerge. '60s soul had become increasingly less complex rhythmically, increasingly hardened in its emotional tone; and when '70s soul finally arrived both these tendencies were to be sharply reversed.

**NEXT WEEK IN
BLACK MUSIC:** Black
artists found a soul mate in
Atlantic Records.



ROCK: THE 1960s

Pictorial Press

Camera Press

“We owe it all to Elvis..”

Rock and roll's influence on the Beatles and the Stones

Ever since American rock & roll first hit the British charts with Bill Haley and his Comets' recording of 'Shake, Rattle And Roll' in 1955, it's never been very far from the minds of British musicians. Check out the record collection of the most 'progressive' of today's stars and you'll find copies of the Elvis classics, a few Gene Vincents, and the Eddie Cochran memorial album.

By the late '50s a huge batch of British rock & rollers – enough to fill a street of coffee bars – had been hastily assembled along American lines, licked up with a sneer and a palmful of grease, and wheeled out for home consumption. But it wasn't long before they were toned down and cleaned up with a view to lasting investment. Cliff Richard, after snarling his way through songs with evocative titles like 'Move It', 'High Class Baby' and 'Mean Streak', began to croon about living dolls and a desire to travel light – journey's end being his commitment to the Christian Crusades. Billy Fury, raised on rockabilly, turned to big American ballads for his hits.

But by this time the seeds of harsh, aggressive rock & roll music had been sown in the minds of the new wave of British stars, the ones who were to emerge around 1963 and conquer the world with the 'fresh sound' for which it had apparently been waiting. Those who were to become the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and the Animals were just entering their teens when Elvis Presley's 'Heartbreak Hotel' was released in May, 1956. No one who

was tuned in to late-night Radio Luxembourg when that record was unleashed could fail to be knocked sideways by it.

Just as 10 years later the Beatles' 'Sgt. Pepper' caused trainee bank clerks to hand in their notice and grow a beard, kids to leave school and start hitch-hiking, a whole generation to start taking acid: so did 'Heartbreak Hotel' and 'Blue Suede Shoes' sell thousands of guitars to those who should have been more concerned with passing their exams at school. Many a pubescent Presley was sitting in his bedroom, thrashing away at those three chords and insisting in a quavering squeak that you keep your hands off his woman or your feet off his shoes. No doubt John Lennon and Keith Richard were among them.

Hard Times

Jazz singer George Melly, who performed at Liverpool's Cavern Club during the '50s, notes in his book *Revolt Into Style* that towards the end of the decade the local talent booked to play during the main band's interval underwent a change. No longer was it just another Trad jazz band, but groups of scruffy young men playing very loud urban blues.

Liverpool was the ideal centre for the development of rock & roll into the 'British sound': a tough city and a major world port, Liverpool had seen hard times. The Quarrymen, who became the Silver Beatles and finally the Beatles, were just one of many groups playing part-time in the local clubs. They eventually came to be one of the city's favourites, and their music was rock & roll and R&B.

Eventually the Beatles made the obligatory trips to Hamburg, where poorly paid all-night sessions were the rule. Their dependence on rock & roll, the music that formed their raw, high-energy style, is demonstrated by a glance at the songs which were recorded during sessions at the Star Club just before Christmas, 1962 (shortly after their first record, 'Love Me Do', had been released). The tape opens with Gene Vincent's classic 'Be Bop A Lula', and is followed by their own 'I Saw Her Standing There', which was to be the rock & roll highlight of their first album. Ray Charles' 'Hallelujah I Love Her So', which had been revived by Eddie Cochran, leads to Billy Lee Riley's 'My Girl Is Red Hot'. From there on their set launched into a parade of R&R classics including: 'Kansas City', 'Shimmy Shimmy', 'Nothin' Shakin'', 'Little Queenie', 'Long Tall Sally', 'Roll Over Beethoven', 'Everybody's Tryin' To Be My Baby', 'Sweet Little Sixteen', 'Talkin' 'Bout You' and 'Matchbox'. The Beatles were turning to the masters – Chuck Berry, Little Richard and Carl Perkins – for the bulk of their material, and they were above all else a straight rock & roll band.

Their grounding in R&R continued to show throughout their career: they recorded Berry and Perkins numbers on their early albums, and recreated the style with songs like 'Lady Madonna', 'Helter Skelter', 'Get Back' and 'Oh Darling' on their own albums later. In his solo career, John Lennon produced perfect 1970 rock & roll, and when he jammed with Eric Clapton at the 1969 Toronto Peace Festival, following such artists as Bo Diddley, Gene Vincent, Chuck Berry,



Syndication International

Jerry Lee Lewis and Little Richard on to the stage, it was obvious that they should return to the songs they had in common, the songs they grew up with like 'Dizzy Miss Lizzy' and 'Blue Suede Shoes'.

Flavour Of Rock

In September of the previous year Lennon had given an interview to Jonathan Cott of *Rolling Stone* magazine. The writer notes the old 45s of the '50s scattered around the floor, and one of the first things they talk about are the lyrics to Gene Vincent's 'Woman Love'. Lennon says that the Beatles continually used to refer to their old records while they were recording. He goes further, and says that at that point the Beatles hadn't recorded anything that he'd found as satisfying as 'Be Bop A Lula', 'Heartbreak Hotel', 'Good Golly Miss Molly' or 'Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On'.

Listen to almost any Lennon track, whether with the Beatles, the Plastic Ono Band or Elephant's Memory, and you can see that as a producer he's trying to recapture that particular flavour that a rock & roll record had. 'Come Together', 'Cold Turkey', 'Mother', 'Crippled Inside'; they're different songs... Beatles soul, ambitious rock, ballad and country, but they all have the *sound* of rock & roll. R&R is the music that the Beatles, the great innovators of pop, were rooted in.

The rock & roll star who has survived to return to even greater popularity in the 1970s, still playing R&R music—Chuck Berry—was a central influence on both the Beatles and the other massive British group of the '60s, the Rolling Stones.

Where the Beatles' music was rooted in

R&R, that of the Stones was, and always has been, faithful to the spirit of R&R itself. What Liverpool's Cavern Club was to the Beatles in their early years, so the Crawdaddy Club in Richmond, South London was to the Stones. And as with the Beatles, the music that the Stones offered the customers was not the prevalent pop of the day, but dance music—raw, crude rock & roll.

The Stones' heroes were the urban blues artists who had formed the transition to rock during the '50s: Berry and his stablemates on the Chicago Chess label Muddy Waters, Howling Wolf, and Bo Diddley, plus the king of the simple, hypnotic 12-bar blues Jimmy Reed. Keith Richards could reproduce a Chuck Berry guitar intro to perfection—with just an added dash of hard-edged aggression—the accuracy of the licks a demonstration of his respect for the originator. The Stones recorded countless numbers written by or associated with Berry. As a promotion handout once noted about the Stones, there are well over 100 good reasons why they are the world's greatest *Rock* band. The reasons all take the form of song titles like: 'Round And Around', 'Confessin' The Blues', 'Down The Road Apiece', 'Little Queenie', 'Carol', 'Talking 'Bout You' and the number that they chose to record for their first single, 'Come On', which just failed to reach the Top 20.

It wasn't until 1965 and 'Satisfaction' that the Stones used one of their own numbers as the 'A' side of a single. Their second record was a Lennon/McCartney number 'I Wanna Be Your Man', which Jagger has said 'they played in Elmore James style', followed by the Valentinos'



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'It's All Over Now' and Howling Wolf's 'Little Red Rooster'. Since those days Jagger/Richards has come to rank even alongside the masters as one of *the* greatest rock composing teams, and one of even fewer to have made it through their first decade.

Both the Beatles and the Stones have constantly absorbed more influences and introduced them into their self-written numbers. But despite all the additions and the success and status that came with them, the feeling that lies at the roots of their musical drive is rock & roll.

NEXT WEEK IN ROCK:
Gene Vincent — the '50s rocker who would play for anyone.

Gene Pitney

The Rockville Swinger



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A self-confident and unshakeable Gene Pitney.

The annual *Royal Variety Show* that takes place in London – the annual self-congratulatory bonanza that's an anachronistic hang-over from the old values of show-business. Coy, comforting, superficial, glittering, vulgar, slick, teeth-gleaming matinées onstage; hard, wheeler-dealing, commercial machinations backstage. It's a show, and it's business.

The curtains rise on a well-known pop singer. We're already into the era when pop musicians are beginning to dress a little more naturally and comfortably – less like formal he-mannequins for the Saturday crowd at a ritzy night-club, where change is suspect, and the traditional standards are preferred.

The pop singer Gene Pitney has made no compromise: he's dressed in a shiny Italian suit, a white shirt and a thin black tie. He's always dressed like that, and always will, because in spite of his youth he's a businessman of the old showbiz school.

Incomprehensible Drama

He launches into a popular sub-operatic number. The concept of a variety bill has always demanded the inclusion of an operetta spot. It sounds like culture, it's histrionic, and it doesn't last too long. Pitney gives the goods. One white-cuffed arm stabs out towards the audience, stressing the incomprehensible drama of the piece. His mouth strains dramatically, and he's tense and yet strangely rubbery. Pitney is neat, short-haired, and unchallenging.

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The song finishes on a harsh, melodramatic crescendo. Acknowledging the applause with a practised mixture of gratitude, cockiness and emotional exhaustion from the ravages of the song, Pitney adds his own modest commentary: "How's that for a pop singer, huh?"

Sledgehammer Stuff

Well, as a piece of subtle cultural blend it's usually sledgehammer stuff. But as a business move, it's perfect. Pitney soothes his vast middle-of-the-road audience who don't seem concerned that pop music has become the province of the long-haired unwashed. Well, as long as Gene Pitney is around it hasn't, not totally. He can still make the familiar, overblown, uncontroversial noises; and you can safely buy his records. He's got 'class'.

Gene Pitney was born in 1940 of Polish origin, and grew up in the Connecticut town of Rockville. While at school there he formed a beat group, and then went to college to study electronics. He began writing songs, and by the beginning of the '60s was having so much success with them that he left college to concentrate on music. His most successful compositions for other artists at this time were 'Rubber Ball' for Bobby Vee (covered in Britain by Marty Wilde, and a hit for both artists), and 'Hello Mary Lou' for Ricky Nelson – both in 1961. Two years later he had another smash with the Crystals' 'He's A Rebel'.

But by this time he was already a hit recording artist in his own right, and before finally cracking the British hit parade in December 1963, he'd had 13 successes in the States. Among the biggest were 'Town Without Pity', 'If I Didn't Have A Dime',

'Mecca' and 'Only Love Can Break A Heart'.

It was another song by Burt Bacharach and Hal David that gave him his fourteenth American, and first British hit: '24 Hours From Tulsa'. At the time he was bemused that this was the song to break him into the UK – "What could Tulsa possibly mean to a British audience?"

He wasn't slow to consolidate his success, however, and in February 1964 he made the first of a series of British tours that have since become an institution. By this time he was finding, probably without too much regret, that his hobby of taxidermy was being squeezed out in favour of a new interest – business. Shortly before he made the trip to Britain he had invested in property, started a chemical firm and five finance companies.

A Personal Boost

Regular visits to his 'markets' are but one indication of Pitney's shrewdness, and by the time of his British tour, he had already given a personal boost to sales in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Japan, Hawaii, the Pacific islands, and the rest of Europe. He pointed out to one interviewer that he'd been in Algeria at the time of the war for independence, and in Berlin when the Wall was built.

While in Britain during the spring of 1964, Pitney became friendly with the Rolling Stones, and even shook an anonymous pair of maracas on their first album. He went on to record a Jagger/Richard composition, 'That Girl Belongs To Yesterday' as his next single. It was almost as successful as 'Tulsa', and reached no. 8 in the UK charts.

His next single, released in the autumn, was 'It Hurts To Be In Love'. While yet



another hit in the States, it didn't sell as well in Britain, so Pitney hurried back to give his career another boost. He delivered an obituary to the disc for *Record Mirror*: "Well, you can't win 'em all", mused the neat-haired songster. His follow-up, 'I'm Gonna Be Strong' (written by Barry Mann and Cynthia Weill), was by this time proving one of his biggest sellers in America, and it did the trick in Britain as well. The record went to no. 2, and stayed in the charts for three months.

From then until 1968 Pitney sold by the million. His 1965 hits were: 'I Must Be Seeing Things' (February), 'Looking Through The Eyes Of Love' (June), and 'Princess In Rags' (November). Three more followed in 1966: 'Backstage' (February), 'Nobody Needs Your Love' (June), and 'Just One Smile' (November). An elegant pattern of regularity had been set, and was followed in November 1967 by another huge success with 'Something's Gotten Hold Of My Heart'. But the chart magic began to fade six months later when 'Somewhere In The Country' only just made the Top 20.

Made A Fortune

By this time, however, success in the charts was virtually irrelevant to Pitney — whether in America or Britain. As a singer and investor he had made a fortune several times over, and his continual presence, in the charts and in person, had turned him into an institution. He's still a sell-out at the biggest halls wherever he performs, his albums sell continuously and datelessly, and at 33 he's been a tycoon for over a decade. All because he realised that, in the chaotic innovations of pop music during the '60s, there would always be a place and an audience for the big beat ballad, a dramatic production number with a strong story-line.



Syndication International

NEXT WEEK IN PROFILE: The Animals — the group that summed up all that was best in the British R&B boom in the mid-'60s.



Pictorial Press



Camera Press
Picturepoint

THE BEATLES

Ringo Starr once said that he'd like to end up 'sort of unforgettable'. Well, it's an ambition he certainly achieved, and with the possible exception of Presley, the Beatles – several years after their final split – still remain the most illustrious, influential, and potent names in the history of rock.

For a large part of the '60s, the Beatles were possibly the most famous men in the world. There is no way in which their all-powerful, all-embracing domination of the music scene from 1963–67 can be adequately described. In those years just to say 'The Beatles' was enough. To anyone who was over 10 and under 30 in those heady days of the '60s, the Beatles meant more than songs, performances and records: they meant a life-style, dress, slang, attitudes, humour and hair. They created a culture. Boys from London to Los Angeles, from Berlin to Tokyo wore button-down shirts, knitted ties and Cuban-heeled boots. The faithful imitators drank whisky and coke, and smoked Lark cigarettes. Everyone grew their hair. If you weren't Beatle-ish you were out of it.

The story of the Beatles rise from the back-streets of Liverpool, through Hamburg

BACK TRACK

July, 1940 : Ringo Starr born.
 October, 1940 : John Lennon born.
 June, 1942 : Paul McCartney born.
 February, 1943 : George Harrison born.
 1956 : John forms the Quarrymen skiffle group.
 June : Paul meets John, joins the Quarrymen.
 1958 : George joins the Quarrymen.
 1959 : John, George, Paul and Stuart Sutcliffe become the Silver Beatles. Audition for Larry Parnes who offers them two-week tour of Scotland as backing group.
 1960 : Pete Best joins group as drummer. Group play Liverpool clubs. First trip to Hamburg.
 1961 : Residency at the Cavern Club, Liverpool.

April : Second trip to Hamburg. Record with Tony Sheridan.
 June : Return to Liverpool leaving Sutcliffe in Hamburg.
 October : Boy walks into NEMS record store in Liverpool, asks manager Brian Epstein for disc called 'My Bonnie' by the Beatles.
 November : Brian Epstein meets Beatles.
 December : Brian Epstein signs Beatles.
 1962
 January : Beatles audition for Decca.
 March : Decca turns down group followed by Pye, Columbia, HMV and EMI.
 April : Third trip to Hamburg.
 May : Epstein meets George Martin.
 June : Group auditions for Martin.



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Keystone Press

London Features

Camera Press

Liverpool? There were a number of important factors, and all have to do with what makes a star. True stars usually have a number of things in common. And by stars we're really talking in terms of the monsters that Hollywood produced in its heyday; those personalities so glittering and huge that they dwarf all but a few that rock has ever produced. The truly GREAT stars combine a number of factors. They are always true to themselves no matter what publicity bandwagon, what pressures, what crises, what images have tried to do to them – they are fundamentally honest. Bogart had it. In every film he was,

essentially, Bogie; his own man, secure and confident in himself. So were the Beatles. Whatever excesses were heaped on them they still remained true to themselves – four totally individual people. MBE's. Establishment blandishments, royalty, showbiz glitter or near-Godlike worship never shook them out of their true personalities. They could walk through it all, shrug it off, use it, turn it to advantage or mock it, but they always remained – however tenuously – in control. It never swamped them; and therefore it never destroyed them.
Their appeal was bi-sexual; they attracted both sexes equally but differently.

While girls screamed, boys applauded. While females loved, males admired. While women yearned, men imitated. Both the personalities and the music appealed to the two sexes, and each Beatle had such an individual persona that he could be adopted for different reasons by different people. Simply, Ringo was cuddly, Paul was beautiful, John was strong and faintly intellectual, George was spiritual, ethereal. Their appeal likewise crossed all barriers. Initially they were *for* and *of* the kids; but once they had been firmly adopted by the under 30s they broadened and charmed the mums and dads alike. The older folks

who hated their hair loved 'Yesterday' and 'All My Loving'. It was admitted generally that they had talent and could turn a good tune.
The four Beatles were extraordinarily ordinary – or ordinary in a most extraordinary way. They talked in an accent that was off the street; wrote songs that were seemingly so simple; and sang well, but without any vocal pyrotechnics. It was all a deception, of course. The songs appeared simple but they were cleverly and intriguingly constructed. The first few seemed too easy for words but were, in fact, tautly and beautifully pared to the

establishment. MP asks questions in House of Commons about number of policemen taken off other duties because of Beatlemania. Fourth UK tour, this time with top billing. Start of merchandising of Beatle products. London *Daily Telegraph* compares hysteria with Hitler mass rallies. Mob scenes wherever group appears. 'With The Beatles' album released; 250,000 advance orders for it, highest in history, overtaking 200,000 for Presley's best – 'Blue Hawaii'. Fifth single, 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' released; direct to no. 1, advance orders of one million.
December : Seven records – singles and EPs – in Top Twenty. Film plans announced. British fan club tops 80,000 members. Appear in

1964
January : 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' enters US charts at no. 83. Play Olympia Theatre, Paris. First concert coolly received. 'She Loves You' enters US charts; 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' top in States; 'Please Please Me' LP enters album charts. Intensive US nationwide publicity campaign mounted to prelude first visit.
February : Beatles arrival at Kennedy Airport attracts screaming crowds in excess of 10,000. Top billing on *Ed Sullivan Show*. 50,000

apply for 728 available seats. 73,000,000 watch broadcast. Concert at Washington's Coliseum in front of 20,000 crowd followed by fracas at British Embassy. Two concerts at Carnegie Hall, both sell-outs. Second *Ed Sullivan Show*. On return to London, Prime Minister calls them 'our best exports'. 'All My Loving' EP makes no. 13.
March : Lennon's book *In His Own Write* published; heads best seller list. 'Can't Buy Me Love' released and is an instant no. 1 in UK and States with advance sales of 3,000,000. Start filming *A Hard Day's Night*. George meets Pattie Boyd.
Summer : 'Long Tall Sally' EP makes no. 11. Tours of Europe, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand. Biggest ever crowd turns out to see

July : Beatles arrive in Adelaide – estimated in excess of 300,000.
August : *A Hard Day's Night* premiered in London. Warm critical reception. Record of title song makes no. 1, and album reaches no. 22.
September : First major US tour, 31 performances in 24 cities. All existing attendance, fee and grossing records smashed.
November : 'I Feel Fine' makes no. 1.
December : 'Beatles For Sale' LP.
1965
April : 'Ticket To Ride' reaches no. 1.
June : Announcement of award to Beatles of MBEs. Storm of protest including House of Lords and return of awards by holders. Medals sent back from all over the world.
August : US tour including concert at Shea Stadium,

bone; and 'Please Please Me' instantly made the ears prick up with a chord sequence that sounded so odd. The song didn't proceed as expected but dipped and soared, bending and weaving in an intriguing way that teased the memory when you tried to whistle it. And the singing was not the usual slavish dependence on a limited range, as with the majority of other artists whose faces and carefully nurtured images meant more than their vocal ability. They were the classic local boys making good, the boys-next-door or down the street. But while their backgrounds were ordinary, their talent and their personalities were certainly not. Nonetheless, any Joe could dream that, given the breaks and the luck, he too could be a Beatle.

Grotty and Gear

The Beatles were stylish. There was a uniqueness and exclusivity about them that comes from people who work long and hard together; who build up their own private language and humour; who dress, act, talk and play to please themselves and each other rather than society. They were a club, a gang, a clique. They talked differently; were happy to use their own slang like 'fab' and 'grotty' and 'gear'; they were irreverent, slightly bizarre. They dressed modishly, but with an individualism that was carefully groomed and polished by Epstein. And everyone wants to be an insider, so that once the Beatles' individuality had been recognised everyone wanted to join the select few. A generation slavishly followed them as one – in fashion, in language, in every tiny detail. If a Beatle wore his tie only half knotted, without tucking the long end through the knot, you knew that within the week hundreds of thousands would follow. If a Beatle wore

funny little round glasses, you knew that within the month an industry had started.

Perhaps the most important reason why they carried all before was that, like all true stars, they were the right people with the right goods at the right time. And that's something on the wind, in the mood of the age; a visceral rather than cerebral feeling that defies analysis. The Beatles were so uniquely of the '60s, as Presley was of the '50s, that any study of the decade – however learned – cannot ignore them. To say that they dominated the style and music of the decade and profoundly influenced almost everything that was to follow is almost to state the obvious. A proof of their quality, if any is needed, is the way their music holds up. In the years between 1963 and '69 they released a dozen albums, the vast majority of the songs on which were composed by Lennon and McCartney. Listening to them today one is struck by the consistently high standard they achieved: few songs have dated, few sound tired or hackneyed; the majority are fresh, original and highly individual.

In retrospect, however, it is difficult to recall the extent of the adulation the Beatles enjoyed. They dominated the media, were drooled over by personalities, the public, the press and politicians alike. They were the 'Moptops' to the press, the boys to the fans, and dollar-earners to the British Government. They were accosted by scissor-wielding, souvenir-grabbing ladies of society at the British Embassy in Washington, embraced by the then-Prime Minister Harold Wilson, courted, feted and idolised everywhere. And at the bedrock was the near-worship of fans by the million. Wherever they went they were met by terrifying mob scenes. Their arrival in the States – the most important jumping-off ground they could ever encounter – was signalled by a \$50,000

'crash publicity programme' which, as one executive of their record company commented, 'was a lot of hype'. He went on to point out that 'all the hype in the world isn't going to sell a bad product'. He was right, of course, and the hype worked. 50,000 people applied for tickets to their *Ed Sullivan Show*. Carnegie Hall was a sell-out. It was a famous victory.

Big Brother

It was famous largely because no other British artist had managed to conquer the home of rock. The British had a deep-rooted musical inferiority complex. Rock & roll had been born in the States, it had toddled there, grown there, and then it had invaded Europe. Until quite late into the '50s British rock and pop were pale imitations of Big Brother across the Atlantic. Few British artists had ever made a showing in the charts – Britain's biggest star, Cliff Richard, hadn't even managed to make a dent. British fans were so used to seeing their charts dominated by Americans, her musicians reconciled to following where transatlantic artists led, that no one, including the Beatles themselves, could really believe that they had anything to offer.

Their success gave not only themselves but a whole nation confidence. Suddenly the entire emphasis shifted to London, to the Swinging London mythology of *Life* magazine. It was almost as if Britain had won the war again. After their barnstorming victories in the States nothing was impossible. There were no heights they couldn't reach; they had the Midas touch, it seemed. Everything they touched turned to gold. They took a crack at films, and *Hard Day's Night* met with warm critical success. There just wasn't a sour note for three glorious years.



Associated Press



Associated Press



Pictorial Press

Syndication International

and via the London Palladium to the world, is far too well-known and well-documented to need repetition. By 1968, a bare six years after the release of 'Love Me Do', they had their own fat and official biography – not to mention the unofficial and bootlegged versions. There can't be anyone now listening to rock who is not at least aware of the skeleton of the history. They've been analysed from every obvious and several obscure angles; they've been compared to almost anyone you can think of; they've been called the greatest songwriters since Schubert; they've been scrutinised in publications ranging from teenybopper weeklies to the *London Times*. The Beatles are simply the best documented, best loved, most celebrated rock group the world has ever seen. And while others have since matched and even bettered their record sales in a year, vied for their honours, and commanded the same intense and fervent following, no one has yet come close to equalling the universal popularity of the band.

The question that has nagged commentators since the first flowerings of their success (1963 in Britain, '64 in America and thence the world) is why? Why these four young men? What did they have that no one else could muster? What was the chemistry that Lennon, McCartney,

Harrison and Starr created that produced so violent, spontaneous and widespread a reaction? To try and analyse their history is rather like trying to define magic. The obvious word that springs to the lips is 'charisma' – now so over-used, so misused, as to be almost meaningless. But charisma it is, for charisma is a personal quality or gift that enables an individual to impress and influence many of his fellows. In the Beatles' case, millions.

Beatle Games

There are the usual Beatle games that have been played. Games like: would they ever have made it individually? An old game. Could Laurel have made it without Hardy? Astaire without Rogers? The short answer is no. Or, taken a step further, could the Beatles have made it without Harrison, or McCartney? Again, no. They didn't make it without Ringo. Certainly both Lennon and McCartney would have done something; a songwriting talent like that couldn't have gone unnoticed. Certainly, since the split, they've all continued successfully – but that was in the wake of the Beatles. The group was the *sine qua non*. Without it there would be no 'Imagine', no Wings, no 'Something'. Arguably there would have been no Rolling Stones, no

Bowie – nothing that youth is today. The fact is that you just cannot understate the effect the Beatles had, not only on their own generation and several younger ones, but also their parents.

By the same token, it is hard to overstate their influence. They may or may not be the greatest songwriters since Schubert, but who cares anyway? The Beatles burst on to a generation like Sun Gods. Their enormous dazzling presence blazed a trail that turned the course of music and, without the slightest exaggeration, the century. In their wake the attitudes, manners and morals of the young and many of their elders were radically changed. What they didn't accomplish themselves (and that was a great deal musically, in fashion and in life-style), they acted as a spearhead for, and opened the way to others. Once the Beatles had trodden the path and shown the way there was hardly a kid in Europe or North America who didn't believe that he could follow. Suddenly it really was possible that you could become rich and/or famous as a writer, musician, hair stylist, fashion designer, model, actor or a whole range of associated skills. What the Beatles did, very nearly single-handed, was put the entire emphasis on youth.

But, the question remains – why them? Why four working-class lads from

	New York, before an audience of over 55,000. \$304,000 taken claimed as biggest gross in show business history. 'Help' movie and album released.	September	: George and Patti Harrison visit India. John appears with Dick Lester in the film <i>How I Won The War</i> .
December	: 'We Can Work It Out' tenth consecutive hit to be instant no. 1 in UK. 'Beatles Million Sellers' EP. 'Rubber Soul'. Includes 'Norwegian Wood', first sign of George's growing interest in India is in the use of the sitar. Commence tour of Britain which, although not announced, is to be their last.	1967	
		February	: The Harrisons' first contact with the Maharishi. This interest in the mysticism of the East, coupled with acid, greatly influenced the rest of the year. The Beatles now completely retired from personal appearances and touring. All work from here is in studios. 'Penny Lane'/'Strawberry Fields' released; first single since 'Love Me Do' to fail to reach no. 1.
1966		June	: 'Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' released. 'A Day In The Life' banned by BBC and some US stations because of alleged overt drug allusions.
May	: Last live appearance in Britain at Wembley.	July	: Appear on world-wide TV programme <i>Our World</i> singing 'All You Need Is Love'. Seen by estimated 150,000,000 viewers. Song released as single and makes no. 1.
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January	: 'Please Please Me' released; reaches no. 1.	November	: Appear at <i>Royal Variety Show</i> before Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, Princess Margaret and Lord Snowdon. Beginning of acceptance by show business
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Associated Press



Associated Press



Pictorial Press



Syndication International

and via the London Palladium to the world, is far too well-known and well-documented to need repetition. By 1968, a bare six years after the release of 'Love Me Do', they had their own fat and official biography – not to mention the unofficial and bootlegged versions. There can't be anyone now listening to rock who is not at least aware of the skeleton of the history. They've been analysed from every obvious and several obscure angles; they've been compared to almost anyone you can think of; they've been called the greatest songwriters since Schubert; they've been scrutinised in publications ranging from teenybopper weeklies to the London *Times*. The Beatles are simply the best documented, best loved, most celebrated rock group the world has ever seen. And while others have since matched and even bettered their record sales in a year, vied for their honours, and commanded the same intense and fervent following, no one has yet come close to equalling the universal popularity of the band.

The question that has nagged commentators since the first flowerings of their success (1963 in Britain, '64 in America and thence the world) is why? Why these four young men? What did they have that no one else could muster? What was the chemistry that Lennon, McCartney,

Harrison and Starr created that produced so violent, spontaneous and widespread a reaction? To try and analyse their history is rather like trying to define magic. The obvious word that springs to the lips is 'charisma' – now so over-used, so misused, as to be almost meaningless. But charisma it is, for charisma is a personal quality or gift that enables an individual to impress and influence many of his fellows. In the Beatles' case, millions.

Beatle Games

There are the usual Beatle games that have been played. Games like: would they ever have made it individually? An old game. Could Laurel have made it without Hardy? Astaire without Rogers? The short answer is no. Or, taken a step further, could the Beatles have made it without Harrison, or McCartney? Again, no. They didn't make it without Ringo. Certainly both Lennon and McCartney would have done *something*; a songwriting talent like that couldn't have gone unnoticed. Certainly, since the split, they've all continued successfully – but that was in the wake of the Beatles. The group was the *sine qua non*. Without it there would be no 'Imagine', no Wings, no 'Something'. Arguably there would have been no Rolling Stones, no

Bowie – nothing that youth is today. The fact is that you just cannot understate the effect the Beatles had, not only on their own generation and several younger ones, but also their parents.

By the same token, it is hard to overstate their influence. They may or may not be the greatest songwriters since Schubert, but who cares anyway? The Beatles burst on to a generation like Sun Gods. Their enormous dazzling presence blazed a trail that turned the course of music and, without the slightest exaggeration, the century. In their wake the attitudes, manners and morals of the young and many of their elders were radically changed. What they didn't accomplish themselves (and that was a great deal musically, in fashion and in life-style), they acted as a spearhead for, and opened the way to others. Once the Beatles had trodden the path and shown the way there was hardly a kid in Europe or North America who didn't believe that he could follow. Suddenly it really was possible that you could become rich and/or famous as a writer, musician, hair stylist, fashion designer, model, actor or a whole range of associated skills. What the Beatles did, very nearly single-handed, was put the entire emphasis on youth.

But, the question remains – why them? Why four working-class lads from

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Syndication International

Keystone Press

Liverpool? There were a number of important factors, and all have to do with what makes a star. True stars usually have a number of things in common. And by stars we're really talking in terms of the monsters that Hollywood produced in its heyday; those personalities so glittering and huge that they dwarf all but a few that rock has ever produced. The truly *GREAT* stars combine a number of factors. They are always true to themselves no matter what publicity bandwagon, what pressures, what crises, what images have tried to do to them – they are fundamentally honest. Bogart had it. In every film he was,

essentially, Bogie; his own man, secure and confident in himself. So were the Beatles. Whatever excesses were heaped on them they still remained true to themselves – four totally individual people. MBE's, Establishment blandishments, royalty, showbiz glitter or near-Godlike worship never shook them out of their true personalities. They could walk through it all, shrug it off, use it, turn it to advantage or mock it, but they always remained – however tenuously – in control. It never swamped them; and therefore it never destroyed them.

Their appeal was bi-sexual; they attracted both sexes equally but differently.

establishment. MP asks questions in House of Commons about number of policemen taken off other duties because of Beatlemania. Fourth UK tour, this time with top billing. Start of merchandising of Beatle products. London *Daily Telegraph* compares hysteria with Hitler mass rallies. Mob scenes wherever group appears. 'With The Beatles' album released; 250,000 advance orders for it, highest in history, overtaking 200,000 for Presley's best – 'Blue Hawaii'. Fifth single, 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' released; direct to no. 1, advance orders of one million.

December : Seven records – singles and EPs – in Top Twenty. Film plans announced. British fan club tops 80,000 members. Appear in

Beatles Christmas Show in London. London *Times* music critic names them 'outstanding English composers of 1963'. *Sunday Times* critic declares them 'greatest composers since Beethoven'.

1964

January : 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' enters US charts at no. 83. Play Olympia Theatre, Paris. First concert coolly received. 'She Loves You' enters US charts; 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' top in States; 'Please Please Me' LP enters album charts. Intensive US nationwide publicity campaign mounted to prelude first visit.

February : Beatles arrival at Kennedy Airport attracts screaming crowds in excess of 10,000. Top billing on *Ed Sullivan Show*. 50,000



London Features

Camera Press

While girls screamed, boys applauded. While females loved, males admired. While women yearned, men imitated. Both the personalities and the music appealed to the two sexes, and each Beatle had such an individual persona that he could be adopted for different reasons by different people. Simply, Ringo was cuddly, Paul was beautiful. John was strong and faintly intellectual, George was spiritual, ethereal. Their appeal likewise crossed all barriers. Initially they were *for* and *of* the kids; but once they had been firmly adopted by the under 30s they broadened and charmed the mums and dads alike. The older folks

who hated their hair loved 'Yesterday' and 'All My Loving'. It was admitted generally that they had talent and could turn a good tune.

The four Beatles were extraordinarily ordinary – or ordinary in a most extraordinary way. They talked in an accent that was off the street; wrote songs that were seemingly so simple; and sang well, but without any vocal pyrotechnics. It was all a deception, of course. The songs appeared simple but they were cleverly and intriguingly constructed. The first few seemed too easy for words but were, in fact, tautly and beautifully pared to the

March	apply for 728 available seats. 73,000,000 watch broadcast. Concert at Washington's Coliseum in front of 20,000 crowd followed by fracas at British Embassy. Two concerts at Carnegie Hall, both sell-outs. Second <i>Ed Sullivan Show</i> On return to London, Prime Minister calls them 'our best exports'. 'All My Loving' EP makes no. 13.	July	: <i>A Hard Day's Night</i> premiered in London. Warm critical reception. Record of title song makes no. 1, and album reaches no. 22.
Summer	Lennon's book <i>In His Own Write</i> published; heads best seller list. 'Can't Buy Me Love' released and is an instant no. 1 in UK and States with advance sales of 3,000,000. Start filming <i>A Hard Day's Night</i> . George meets Pattie Boyd.	August	: First major US tour, 31 performances in 24 cities. All existing attendance, fee and grossing records smashed.
	'Long Tall Sally' EP makes no. 11. Tours of Europe, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand. Biggest ever crowd turns out to see	September	: 'I Feel Fine' makes no. 1.
		November	: 'Beatles For Sale' LP.
		December	: 'Ticket To Ride' reaches no. 1.
		1965	: Announcement of award to Beatles of MBEs. Storm of protest including House of Lords and return of awards by holders. Medals sent back from all over the world.
		April	: US tour including concert at Shea Stadium,
		June	
		August	

bone; and 'Please Please Me' instantly made the ears prick up with a chord sequence that sounded so odd. The song didn't proceed as expected but dipped and soared, bending and weaving in an intriguing way that teased the memory when you tried to whistle it. And the singing was not the usual slavish dependence on a limited range, as with the majority of other artists whose faces and carefully nurtured images meant more than their vocal ability. They were the classic local boys making good, the boys-next-door or down the street. But while their backgrounds were ordinary, their talent and their personalities were certainly not. Nonetheless, any Joe could dream that, given the breaks and the luck, he too could be a Beatle.

Grotty and Gear

The Beatles were stylish. There was a uniqueness and exclusivity about them that comes from people who work long and hard together; who build up their own private language and humour; who dress, act, talk and play to please themselves and each other rather than society. They were a club, a gang, a clique. They talked differently; were happy to use their own slang like 'fab' and 'grotty' and 'gear'; they were irreverent, slightly bizarre. They dressed modishly, but with an individualism that was carefully groomed and polished by Epstein. And everyone wants to be an insider, so that once the Beatles' individuality had been recognised everyone wanted to join the select few. A generation slavishly followed them as one - in fashion, in language, in every tiny detail. If a Beatle wore his tie only half knotted, without tucking the long end through the knot, you knew that within the week hundreds of thousands would follow. If a Beatle wore

funny little round glasses, you knew that within the month an industry had started.

Perhaps the most important reason why *they* carried all before was that, like all true stars, they were the right people with the right goods at the right time. And that's something on the wind, in the mood of the age; a visceral rather than cerebral feeling that defies analysis. The Beatles were so uniquely of the '60s, as Presley was of the '50s, that any study of the decade - however learned - cannot ignore them. To say that they dominated the style and music of the decade and profoundly influenced almost everything that was to follow is almost to state the obvious. A proof of their quality, if any is needed, is the way their music holds up. In the years between 1963 and '69 they released a dozen albums, the vast majority of the songs on which were composed by Lennon and McCartney. Listening to them today one is struck by the consistently high standard they achieved: few songs have dated, few sound tired or hackneyed; the majority are fresh, original and highly individual.

In retrospect, however, it is difficult to recall the extent of the adulation the Beatles enjoyed. They dominated the media, were drooled over by personalities, the public, the press and politicians alike. They were the 'Moptops' to the press, the boys to the fans, and dollar-earners to the British Government. They were accosted by scissor-wielding, souvenir-grabbing ladies of society at the British Embassy in Washington, embraced by the then-Prime Minister Harold Wilson, courted, feted and idolised everywhere. And at the bedrock was the near-worship of fans by the million. Wherever they went they were met by terrifying mob scenes. Their arrival in the States - the most important jumping-off ground they could ever encounter - was signalled by a \$50,000

'crash publicity programme' which, as one executive of their record company commented, 'was a lot of hype'. He went on to point out that 'all the hype in the world isn't going to sell a bad product'. He was right, of course, and the hype worked. 50,000 people applied for tickets to their *Ed Sullivan Show*. Carnegie Hall was a sell-out. It was a famous victory.

Big Brother

It was famous largely because no other British artist had managed to conquer the home of rock. The British had a deep-rooted musical inferiority complex. Rock & roll had been born in the States, it had toddled there, grown there, and then it had invaded Europe. Until quite late into the '50s British rock and pop were pale imitations of Big Brother across the Atlantic. Few British artists had ever made a showing in the charts - Britain's biggest star, Cliff Richard, hadn't even managed to make a dent. British fans were so used to seeing their charts dominated by Americans, her musicians reconciled to following where transatlantic artists led, that no one, including the Beatles themselves, could really believe that they had anything to offer.

Their success gave not only themselves but a whole nation confidence. Suddenly the entire emphasis shifted to London, to the Swinging London mythology of *Life* magazine. It was almost as if Britain had won the war again. After their barnstorming victories in the States nothing was impossible. There were no heights they couldn't reach; they had the Midas touch, it seemed. Everything they touched turned to gold. They took a crack at films, and *Hard Day's Night* met with warm critical success. There just wasn't a sour note for three glorious years.

	New York, before an audience of over 55,000. \$304,000 taken claimed as biggest gross in show business history. 'Help' movie and album released.	September	: George and Patti Harrison visit India. John appears with Dick Lester in the film <i>How I Won The War</i> .
December	: 'We Can Work It Out' tenth consecutive hit to be instant no. 1 in UK. 'Beatles Million Sellers' EP. 'Rubber Soul'. Includes 'Norwegian Wood', first sign of George's growing interest in India is in the use of the sitar. Commence tour of Britain which, although not announced, is to be their last.	1967	
		February	: The Harrisons' first contact with the Maharishi. This interest in the mysticism of the East, coupled with acid, greatly influenced the rest of the year. The Beatles now completely retired from personal appearances and touring. All work from here is in studios. 'Penny Lane'/'Strawberry Fields' released; first single since 'Love Me Do' to fail to reach no. 1.
1966		June	: 'Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' released. 'A Day In The Life' banned by BBC and some US stations because of alleged overt drug allusions.
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		November	: 'Hello Goodbye' released.
August	: John is quoted in a newspaper as saying that the 'Beatles are now more popular than Christ'. Causes furore in States; Ku Klux Klan burn effigies of the group. Last US tour and biggest grosser. Final live appearance anywhere in the world in San Francisco, 29th August. 'Yellow Submarine'/'Eleanor Rigby' released. 'Revolver' includes the first hint of drug influences on 'Tomorrow Never Knows'.	December	: <i>Magical Mystery Tour</i> TV film judged a failure by critics. Described as 'witless' and 'blatant rubbish'. Plans for Apple announced and shop



Camera Press

"The thing is, we're all really the same person. We're just four parts of the one."
— Paul



The greatest tribute to the Beatles is that when the going was this good their standards never dropped — indeed their music got better and better. Single after single flew straight to the top of the charts, and each new album capped the last in originality. They managed, it seemed, to avoid all the pitfalls that Elvis had plunged into: their only two films were both of high quality, and they never went soft, musically. Just when one of Paul's sweet ballads seemed to be the trend John came out with something freaky, or George floated off in a new direction — even introducing a new culture to the West. When it seemed like they'd finally sold out by accepting official honours at Buckingham Palace, they were into drugs and puzzling lyrics. For five years they never stopped moving.

Probably the first sign that they weren't infallible came at Christmas 1967, when BBC TV in Britain screened *Magical Mystery Tour*, the group's first self-made film. It was labelled by the critics as non-sensical and over-indulgent. It certainly wasn't very good, but the beating it took may in part be explained as a backlash. The

Golden Boys had had it too good for too long, and now was the time for their come-uppance. Slowly, from that point on, the tide began to turn. They weathered the *Magical Mystery Tour* storm, and their major abilities in writing and performing were unimpaired. But the next two years saw changes.

The group were maturing as individuals and starting to grow apart. Epstein's death certainly had an effect, as did the episode with the Maharishi, George's continuing involvement with India and things spiritual, and John's relationship with Yoko Ono which took him on to newer horizons.

It was inevitable that they should go their own ways. In fact, it was probably desirable. The unpleasantness surrounding business interests, and the bickering over management were sad and ultimately destructive, but they were probably only the public side of conflicts that went much deeper. It is conceivable that even despite the tensions the Beatles would have split anyway because, just as they were supremely children of their time and flourished during that era, their impeccable sense of timing would have told them when enough was enough. They got out when they were still on top. They suffered no sorry decline into obscurity or second-rate billing, living off the glories of the past.

Whatever the reason, the Beatles' retirement from the arena marked the end of an extraordinary era — one they had themselves created. They were still stars; they are stars now and, to some generations anyway, they will always be stars. They were in the end, as they had been throughout, true to themselves. Sort of unforgettable.

NEXT WEEK'S SUPER-STARS: The Who.

	opened. 'Magical Mystery Tour' album released.	August	: 'Abbey Road', the Beatles' last album, recorded. Linda gives birth to Paul's first daughter, Mary.
1968		October	: Plastic Ono Band releases 'Cold Turkey'. George Harrison's 'Something' makes no. 2 for the Beatles.
February	: Studying in India with the Maharishi: John and George for two months, Paul for one, Ringo for 10 days. Many plans announced for Apple during the early part of the year.	November	: John returns his MBE as a protest against Britain's involvement in the wars in Biafra and Vietnam.
March	: 'Lady Madonna' released (no. 1).	1970	
June	: John's marriage to Cynthia breaks down, he is seen openly with Yoko Ono.	February	: Plastic Ono Band releases 'Instant Karma'.
July	: The cartoon film <i>Yellow Submarine</i> is premiered.	April	: Paul issues a home-made album of his own songs entitled 'McCartney'.
August	: Apple shop suddenly closed.	May	: Premier of the film <i>Let It Be</i> but none of the Beatles turned up. The Beatles became artistically independent of each other. Ringo releases his album 'Sentimental Journey'.
September	: 'Hey Jude' the Beatles' first release on the new Apple label (no. 1).	September	: Ringo's next release, 'Beaucoup Of Blues'. George brings out his album 'All Things Must Pass'.
November	: The Beatles 'white' album is released. Also, John and Yoko's 'Two Virgins' with a cover picture of them both in the nude.	December	: John releases an album entitled 'John Lennon' by John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band. Paul files a court suit demanding the dissolution of the Beatles, and the appointment of a receiver.
1969			
January	: Filming of <i>Let It Be</i> started. Rifts between John and Paul widening.		
February	: Allen Klein appointed as their adviser.		
March	: Paul marries Linda Eastman. John marries Yoko Ono.		
April	: 'Get Back' topped the charts.		
May	: 'The Ballad Of John And Yoko' (no. 1).		
July	: Plastic Ono Band releases 'Give Peace A Chance'.		
			"I didn't leave the Beatles. The Beatles have left the Beatles — but no one wants to be the one to say the party's over." — Paul

HYSTERIA

There are three things that can be relied on to scare a star silly. One is that he'll have no fans at all. One is that the fans might get so hysterical they'll hurt him. One is that the fans might get so hysterical that they hurt themselves. He worries about them in that order.

Pop stars live off hysteria. They need fans, true, but no self-respecting pop star wants to see a line of neatly turned out men and women of all ages sitting there in the front seats, paying quiet attention, waiting to clap when told, and filing out with only polite applause for one encore – even if it does mean the hall is filled every night. No *star* wants that! Classical musicians, great actors, even pop stars turned pretentious who want people to stop screaming and start listening might want an audience full of goodie-goodies. But your true star, your Elvis, your Stewart, your Jagger – he needs to go one over the top and see the audience go stark staring potty when he comes on stage. All performances being two way affairs, he stimulates the fans and they, with their screams, stimulate him. If he knows what he's doing, an artist can almost control the hysteria of his audience (but never quite); the hysteria or lack of hysteria from an audience can equally freeze or frighten the star.

Why do people get hysterical over pop stars? How does it work that, when a crowd of fans really gets out of control it goes to work to destroy the star, to possess him even at the risk of killing him, the very person they love most in the world?

Female Fans

Most hysterical fans, you'll find, are in their early teens and female. Women may be weird enough creatures at the best of times, because their hormonal structure does tend to send their moods and emotions slightly berserk, but at no other time more so than in the turbulent time of adolescence and puberty when they are just beginning to develop both physically and sexually. Now is the time when they can be affected by the most primal instincts of sound, looks, and actions, and they respond – like joyous but amoral babies – by literally getting out of control, screaming, weeping and fainting.

The other thing about hysterical fans is that they don't come in ones apart from the exceptional case. Find a girl who was

carried out on a stretcher after a Jagger performance yesterday, and introduce her to him over tea and cucumber sandwiches alone today and you won't get more than a nervous giggle and odd wobbling of the left knee out of her. Hysteria is bred by a mass and, like some science-fiction plant, it just grows and grows.

600 Teenyboppers

Hysteria often prompts people to write letters to their favourites, like the girl who wrote to George Harrison: 'You are the most handsome boy I have ever seen and I am sure I would die for you. There will be nobody else for me but you.' It's conceivable she might really die for him because, when out of control, fans lose all sense of proportion. When the Monkees arrived in Britain for the first time, 800 fans ran amok at London airport, disrupted flights and services, and had to be picked up in the small hours of the morning by their parents – who often didn't know where they were. On one occasion when David Cassidy was on tour his fans found out where he was staying and hundreds of teenagers climbed on to a 60-foot-high roof, dangled their feet dangerously over the edge, and refused to come down until he appeared. Later they plunged fully clothed into the waters of the hotel swimming pool in the hope they'd be invited in to dry off and perhaps meet their idol that way. That was before he actually opened his concert tour. When he did 50 seats were smashed, and a 40-strong security force had to plead constantly with the weeping fans to keep away from the stage.

Donny Osmond once attracted 600 teenyboppers when he arrived at London Airport. They invaded the roof garden, broke through into no access areas, overturned benches and rubbish bins, and scrambled up scaffolding. They wept on each other's shoulders, fainted with grief, and screamed themselves into a frenzy. Airport officials later summed it all up by saying they were alarmed 'because the hysterical fans simply don't know how to look after themselves and are quite incapable of spotting dangerous situations. There is the constant fear of a teenybopper riot with hysterical children being injured or killed'.

So far no one has yet been killed at a pop concert due to hysteria alone – that is, being trampled, or choked, or having a heart attack. But the unprecedented did happen during the Stones' appearance at the Altamont Festival – it didn't just

happen even, but was recorded on the film *Gimme Shelter*. Here two women gave birth and two men were killed in the same evening – one of the killings taking place almost on the stage during 'Sympathy For The Devil'. How much the Stones' performance influenced this, one doesn't know, but undoubtedly the violence and emotion generated by the crowd can't have helped frayed tempers or bulging ladies.

Helen White, a 13-year-old who fasted for three days before a pilgrimage to see David Cassidy, pretty well summed up a fan's dangerous dedication to her idol. "One day I'm going to be Mrs. David Cassidy," she said at the time, "I just know it. You can laugh but it won't stop me believing it. I think if he ever met someone else I'd kill myself. I won't even hold hands with another boy now because I want to be faithful to him. When he sings I feel as if he's speaking only to me. It's as if no other woman exists in his life – only me." Which is all very well when spoken calmly to a reporter, but carry this attitude with you into a crowded, emotional theatre and who knows what might happen. Certainly thousands of fans have injured themselves at concerts, and hospitals are usually alerted when a particularly famous group appears in their area because girls are certain to need treatment for cuts, bruises or fainting caused by pushing, ranting and raving to get close to their idols.

Scared Idols

But what happens when they do get close to their idols? That's when the whole hysteria scene becomes really creepy. Johnny Ray has twice been knocked unconscious by fans; Adam Faith, who was literally choked when two girl fans grabbed opposite ends of his silk scarf, recalls: "I was very scared. Now I know what it feels like to be almost strangled." Cliff Richard needed hospital treatment after suffering a similar experience; and Engelbert Humperdinck, who has had a finger broken by his loving fans, says: "Fan-worship is vital but can be terrifying." Hysterical fans have wrecked eleven of Marc Bolan's cars. Tom Jones, who simply employs bodyguards, admits that: "Sometimes I really fear for my life when fans try to molest me."

Teenage fans, particularly when their inhibitions are broken down further by waiting in the cold for their idols and suffering from exposure and lack of anything to eat, can turn from being genuinely loving creatures to real monsters – as one of Donny Osmond's guards found when trying to protect Donny Osmond from his fans. "The youngsters fought to get into the hotel," he said, "I grabbed hold of one girl, but another stuck a knife in my back and I had to let go. Some of them just went on the rampage. They were screaming and throwing stones at the hotel windows. Other guards were punched, kicked and scratched."

Obviously to control hysteria it is not enough to simply erect physical barriers



Mirrorpic/Polydor

Police try to restrain fans waiting for the arrival of the Beatles in Vancouver City; while behind, hysteria rages at an Osmond concert.

around a star. Hysterical fans are undeterred by barbed wire or danger. However, although highly disapproved of, hosing down fans with jets of water can be effective simply because water acts like a gigantic slap in the face. Bouncers are often used, and depending on their personalities can either do more harm or less. The Hell's Angels used for the Stones concert at Altamont only exacerbated the situation — as is horribly clear to anyone who has seen the film. One bouncer — not at the concert — commented: "At one concert I saw a minder sling a kid off a 10-foot-high stage. He could have had the place in an uproar. But one of the pop group started to have a go at the bouncer and then invited the kid back on stage and it was all right. But if the fans see violence happening, that's when it starts everywhere else." He recommends: "Main thing is to chat to them first, looking for anyone who might give you bother. You fix them with your stare, hold your finger up, and there's no trouble. If they rush the stage you just pick them up, put them under your arm, and sit them down in their seat again. Nice and gentle."

A welfare officer who set up a squad to deal with hysterical fans said: "It's undoubtedly the contortions of these artists that start things off, not their singing. A swish of the hips by Tom Jones is enough to send some girls almost crazy. Mick Jagger's habit of wagging his bottom

is another great temperature-raiser. This kind of thing excites and causes many girls to pass out. Recently one girl shot from her seat, rushed the stage, and crashed into the orchestra pit, hurting her head. Our group tries to spot when a girl is just about to lose control, moves in with speed and removes her from the hall to treat her. Then we only allow her back if she promises to remain quiet. Nipping hysteria in the bud before the fever spreads is our job."

The Soul's Safety-Valve

Attitudes to hysterical fans are surprisingly divided. You might imagine that everyone would agree with people like Dr. William Sargant, who once announced that the Beatles and Hitler whipped up similar excitement in their audiences. "The human nervous system over 2000 years has not changed," he said, "people in such states of excitement are susceptible to suggestions, and could be made to believe and do all kinds of things."

As a contrast, one leading daily paper once suggested in an editorial that: "We should let the fans scream and squeal. It is good for the body. It is good for the morale. The scream is the safety-valve of the soul. There are occasions when the forces of emotion and excitement are so great that an incoherent squeal is the only possible method of expressing it. The fans

are raising a shout for youth, for gaiety, and have got to squeal in the same way that birds have to sing or young men have got to shout."

And yet anyone who's been to a concert peopled with hysterical fans can sense an underlying sense of frustration — frustration at not being able to reach the stage, a yearning for a dream that can't be touched. Mick Jagger, who should know, has the last word: "I see a great deal of anger in the air," he said. "Teenagers are not screaming over music any more, but for deeper reasons. We are only serving as a means of giving them an outlet. Pop music is just the superficial tissue to it all. When I'm on stage I sense that the teenagers are trying to communicate to me, like by telepathy, a message of some urgency. Not about me or about our music, but about the world and the way they live. I interpret it as their demonstration against society and its sick attitudes. They want to be free and have a right of expression; of thinking and living aloud without any petty restrictions. This doesn't mean they want to become alcoholics or drug-takers or tread down their parents. This is a protest against the system. And I see a lot of trouble coming in the dawn."

NEXT WEEK IN POP CULTURE: Hair as a youth symbol.

LENNON & McCARTNEY

When Paul McCartney and John Lennon entered the recording business in October 1962, they were to make innovations which eleven years later, became standard practice. Besides changing the entire face of pop music, they also introduced the singer/song-writer syndrome which has now become as commonplace as the group itself.

When Paul and John wrote and recorded 'Love Me Do' and 'P.S. I Love You' the common practice at that time was for a group's manager to scout the offices of Denmark Street, London's Tin Pan Alley, to see if he could find suitable material for his artists. Having found a song which he considered suitable, he would present it to the group and upon their approval (although groups or singers in the early '60s had very little say in what they did) they would record it. The composer of the song would receive his royalty and go away happy. He hadn't written the song for anybody in particular, so the fact that someone had come along, picked up on his song and made a successful record from it was his good fortune.

Paul and John changed all this. They believed, quite rightly, that if they wrote the material they were to record, not only would they pick up a greater percentage of the royalty, but they could adapt the song, through the Beatles, to how they had written it to be performed. Of course, the hierarchy would have to approve of this 'unorthodox' policy – after all, having just received a hard-earned contract, they could hardly start dictating to the higher echelons of EMI. They suggested the idea to George Martin, their newly acquired recording manager, and in Martin's own words: "I was convinced that I had a hit group on my hands if only I could get hold of the right songs." One assumed he meant somebody else's. He searched for the right song but couldn't find anything to surpass 'Love Me Do', so he reluctantly released it as their first single.

Four Young Novices

What George Martin didn't know when he made his first reluctant decision was that, by letting these four young novices have their own way, he was revolutionising the shape of things to come; for in a matter of a few years a group would find it unthinkable to record other writers' material all the time.

It would be extremely difficult to pinpoint Paul and John's influences as far as their writing is concerned. Certainly we know that Tamla Motown, rock & roll and rhythm & blues were influencing them as a group. One has only to listen to some of their early repertoire to know that Little Richard was highly respected as far as the boys were concerned. It is interesting to compare any of Little Richard's songs with the McCartney rocker 'I'm Down', and the fact that three of their first four albums ('Hard Day's Night' being the exception) contained songs by influential writers, indicated that they were still to find their own direction.

But why did they record other people's songs? Well, it could have been for one of two main reasons. Firstly, they hadn't yet written enough songs, or songs of high enough quality to fill an album containing 12 tracks – although this seems highly unlikely since they still wrote prolifically whilst they were on tour. On the other hand they could genuinely have wanted to record the songs of the people who were giving them a guiding light.

The Motown Influence

If we look at the songs that the Beatles recorded by other writers on their earlier albums what do we find? 'Twist And Shout', 'Money', 'Please Mr. Postman', 'Devil In Her Heart' and 'You Really Got A Hold On Me' were all from Berry Gordy's Oriole stable (later to be re-named Tamla Motown). Their interest in this music was a good four years ahead of most of the record buying public. Indeed it was the Beatles themselves who introduced most people to Tamla in a big way. Who knew that the Isley Brothers recorded 'Twist And Shout', and that Barrett Strong's 'Money' was the first ever Motown release? Taking a closer look at their repertoire would also show how two 'show' songs were included: 'Till There Was You' and 'A Taste Of Honey'. It would seem that Paul had an interest in these purely from a writing point of view. Was the style of these types of song the warm-up to such great McCartney ballads as 'Michelle', 'And I Love Her' and 'Yesterday', to name but three? It seems a strange coincidence that it was Paul who sang these obviously out-of-place songs in an act that was so strongly rock orientated.

Next we have, of course, rock & roll. Chuck Berry, Carl Perkins, Buddy Holly and Little Richard songs were all featured on three of their early albums, and the boys never disguised the fact that these performers had a great influence on the



shape the Beatles were to take. In fact as early as 1962, shortly after the release of 'Love Me Do', George Harrison openly announced that the four above-mentioned, plus the Everly Brothers, had a great deal to do with the way in which the Beatles music was being directed. Much later, in 1965, one song featured on the album and in the film 'Help', 'You've Got To Hide Your Love Away', had such obvious Dylan influences that it brought the American even more to the fore than he was already.

So there's no doubt that the Beatles, just like anyone else, had their influences. The peculiar thing is that the people who influenced them as writers and performers eventually finished up being influenced by them. An example of this was the album released from the Motown stable entitled 'Motown Sings Lennon And McCartney'. But who wasn't to sing Lennon and McCartney?

A Gear Change

With the emergence of 'Hard Day's Night', – a film, an album, and a single sharing the same title, – the Beatles' music seemed to change gear. From the early period, when their obvious influences



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led them to record, for example, 'Twist And Shout', the Beatles proceeded to scale the heights of popular taste. They came to represent the peak of pop writing, and found themselves able to restrict their records and repertoire to original material only. During this undisputed reign of commercial Beatle pop, the albums 'Hard Day's Night', 'With The Beatles', 'Help' and 'Rubber Soul' presented their music as the most desirable and successful brand of pop ever to emerge from Britain.

This period can perhaps be looked back on as the Beatles' mainstream. They were copied and covered by hoards of other artists. But the sort of music that the world took to be the Beatles best was a collection of those songs which most supported the public's conception of the group: a middle ground of Lennon and McCartneyism. With the Beatles busy touring and filming, as well as making records, and with Beatle wigs and clothes being marketed all over the world, they were big business. Lennon and McCartney were each developing their own approach to music, but because the Beatles were being offered to the world almost as Siamese quads, four lovable cheeky heads on one money-making body, the songs that were the hit singles were

carefully selected mainstream tunes. Paul's 'She's A Woman', or John's 'You Can't Do That' may have been commercial, but they didn't project the one-ness of the group as well as 'I Feel Fine' or 'Help' — with their characteristic join-in vocals and off-beat drumming that distinguished so much of the Beatles' mainstream pop.

In this period, of course, the hit single was still the touchstone of pop success. The group's album sales were crucial in turning the pop world on to the money that could be made out of LPs, but it was through singles that a group's desired image was projected. 'I Feel Fine', 'Ticket To Ride', 'Paperback Writer', 'Help' and 'Hard Day's Night' were all 'Lennon-and-McCartney' songs, rather than being identified with one or other of the two writers. The albums, too, carried mainstream songs, 'Drive My Car' and 'Eight Days A Week' for example, and these songs all succeeded because they contained elements of both Lennon's and McCartney's style. But there was always space on the albums for more characteristic songs as well. 'Yesterday' from Paul, and 'Norwegian Wood' from John, were indications that the Beatles' success was not merely based on a chance coming together of two ordinary writers to make great songs together. Instead, notice was served that here were two different and very considerable talents who wrote together sometimes, but who would be able to compose fine songs on their own, too.

John Lennon's Music: 1962–66

Lennon's own music is less easily categorised than McCartney's. Lennon has his different moods, but these are not as distinct as McCartney's rock style and ballad style. Because John Lennon's songs seem more personal and less 'composed' than many of McCartney's, the different styles of writing merge into a music which is definable only as 'Lennon's'. His music was born out of his time, his experiences and observations, rather than being influenced by traditional songwriting approaches. His songs, especially in the early years, were personal because they related to the 'boy and girl' problems of those who bought the records. His approach was more earthy and English, but at the same time his early musical ideas were not particularly profound.

Lennon's ballad style is a recognisable one, for he wrote far more slow and melodic songs than one might assume. 'If I Fell', 'This Boy', 'It's Only Love', 'Girl' and 'In My Life' all project Lennon into the middle of his songs. But 'If I Fell' for example, is as tuneful as many of McCartney's ballads. Unlike McCartney, Lennon didn't write much straightforward rock & roll. Though influenced, as Paul was, by Chuck Beffy, Little Richard, and other contemporary black American artists, the influences tend to show in harmonica-tinged, bluesy approaches. On the earliest records songs like 'Thank You Girl', 'You Can't Do That', 'Love Me Do', and 'I Should Have Known Better' show how Lennon

merged his influences into his roots to produce a style that, while based on the music he listened to, was very personal to him. McCartney, on the other hand, was more likely to come up with a straight, gutsy number like 'I'm Down', directly influenced by Little Richard's 'Long Tall Sally'.

Many of Lennon's songs can't be defined in terms of style, perhaps because of the way in which he has often adapted his influences so much. His wry humour shows through in 'Norwegian Wood'; while in 'Nowhere Man' — one of the few Lennon songs in which he doesn't write about himself — Lennon offers a strong melodic ballad, but with a slow, country blues rhythm, and typical Lennon lyrics. The early Lennon compositions were you and me songs; they are real because they are about such limited and identifiable subjects. It was only slowly, therefore, that Lennon's experiences as a member of the Beatles seemed to take their place in his lyrics.

Paul McCartney's Music: 1962–66

'All My Loving' was the first hint that Paul did in fact write songs on his own, and although for many this wasn't obvious it became clearly apparent in albums to follow. As was said earlier, McCartney's songs fell into two definable categories, one being ballads and the other being rock in the true sense of the word. Of course there was the 'mainstream', but that has been dealt with already.

McCartney showed his liking for slow ballady material on the first album when he sang 'A Taste Of Honey', and continued on the next album with 'Till There Was You'; but both of these songs were non-original. McCartney was to change this, so much so that to think of Beatle ballads now means thinking of Paul McCartney. The first traces of his ability to write such profound melodies appeared on the album 'Hard Day's Night', when he came up with two songs which since have been covered widely: 'And I Love Her' and 'Things We Said Today'. His rock writing wasn't being neglected however, and on the same album he wrote such a good rocker that it was eventually released as a single: 'Can't Buy Me Love'.

Although not a lot came from McCartney on their next album, 'Beatles For Sale', it was 'Help' that made it clear how this young Liverpudlian could develop along the lines of your Cole Porters, Hoagy Carmichaels and George Gershwin. 'I've Just Seen A Face', 'The Night Before' and 'Another Girl' were all good meaty rock songs containing slight tinges of 'mainstream'. It was, however, the only ballad that he wrote for that album, a song which didn't even appear in the film, that caused the greatest sensation. 'Yesterday' was a sympathetic ballad, beautifully arranged for a string quartet with only McCartney singing or playing. In many ways this was a complete McCartney composition, and for the first time the world was made to realise that Paul and

John did, in fact, write separately. 'Yesterday' left such an impact in the world of pop music that it has since become the most-covered Beatle song.

As if 'Yesterday' wasn't good enough, McCartney did it yet again with another ballad entitled 'Michelle'. A song very much in the same vein as 'Yesterday', this was equally as popular. It was at this time, with all due respect to Lennon, that people were dubbing McCartney as 'the real writer', the man that was able to compose the standards. Again, on the next album 'Revolver', McCartney proved to the world that here was the best composer Britain had produced for many a decade. When people first heard 'Eleanor Rigby' they were shouting McCartney's praises the world over. After all he had now written three world-class ballads on three consecutive albums – not a bad track record!

A Rock Writer

Despite the ingenious talent Paul had for writing memorable ballads, he never flagged as a rock writer. 'She's A Woman', 'Day Tripper', 'I'm Down', 'Drive My Car' and 'Got To Get You Into My Life' were all songs that could well have been written and recorded in the late '50s or pre-Beatle '60s. The latter song was very soul-tinged, and at the time it wouldn't have been surprising if a soul artist from the Stax stable had picked up on it.

'Revolver' was McCartney's most prolific album in terms of composing. On this he wrote, as well as 'Eleanor Rigby', two ballads of equal class: 'For No One' and 'Here There And Everywhere'; and 'Good Day Sunshine' could well have made it as a single. There was no longer any doubt over his ability as a tunesmith supreme, but he was hardly as personal as Lennon. Many of McCartney's lyrics were written in the third person, he wrote out of his head rather than through his eyes. 'Eleanor Rigby', 'Michelle', 'For No One' and 'Here There And Everywhere' were all, or so it seems, figments of Paul's imagination. A perfectly well-balanced contrast to the first person songs of John Lennon.

McCartney had hit on a formula that proved so successful he felt he really didn't need to change it. Lennon, on the other hand, was continually changing, looking for something new, wanting to play with sounds. The second period of the Beatles was to confirm that statement beyond all doubt.

Musical Maturity

'Revolver' was an overdue album. Off the road at last, the Beatles had a lot of resting to do before they were ready to set about recording. And although in retrospect 'Rubber Soul' seems to have hinted at increasing musical maturity, in 1965 it was just another Beatle album. It sold and sold of course – but then all Beatle LPs did. Nonetheless, some people felt that with the touring over, the Beatles' light would begin to wane.

Brian Epstein might have felt this too.

Certainly he felt that he had less real influence over the group than in the early days. But far from deteriorating, the music of Lennon and McCartney became stronger and more sophisticated. When 'Revolver' was released, in summer 1966, it had a lot of people reconsidering their opinion of Lennon and McCartney. Were they just clever compilers of catchy choruses, or did they have deeper and more timeless talents?

'Revolver' suggested that the two writers were progressing along divergent paths. Although hardly ever writing together, they were still able to use recording sessions and other meetings to comment on each other's work, and to test the quality of their writing against each others criticism. McCartney developed through his ballads, with the tasteful orchestrations that were one of George Martin's important contributions to the Beatles' work.

Lennon's music was also growing. With 'I'm Only Sleeping', 'She Said She Said', and 'Doctor Robert', his dry sceptical lyrics were well-married to some atmospheric and melodic tunes. 'And Your Bird Can Sing' was again John Lennon, and showed that his work was becoming more polished without losing any of its bite. Following 'Revolver' a new and more lasting respect was accorded McCartney and Lennon by many critics.

Drug Influence

Of course, all the songs were still 'Beatle' songs, not least because that's how everyone wanted them to be. But the massive commercial pressure to conform to the image the public cherished – especially in the days of touring had started to ease. By then the difference between Lennon's and McCartney's music had become increasingly apparent. 'Good Day Sunshine' is the only track which harks back to the 'mainstream'. But signposts of future development were also there. George Harrison had always been 'allowed' a track or two on previous albums, but they had never been highly rated, even by the other Beatles – though 'If I Needed Someone', for example, had clearly shown that he had songwriting talent.

But on 'Revolver', George, with 'Taxman' and 'I Want To Tell You', first gave real notice of his late-flowering talents. The influence of Indian music, as on his 'Love You To', was perhaps to be as liberating as the bright talents of McCartney and Lennon had been overpowering. And, of course, the group's interests in drugs, which were to influence their next album 'Sgt Pepper' as well as the whole youth movement, were most clearly presaged in Lennon's 'Tomorrow Never Knows'.

Talking 'bout my generation

PENNY LANE

*Penny Lane: there is a barber taking photographs
Of every head he's had the pleasure to know
And all the people that come and go
Stop and say hello.*

*On the corner is a banker with a motor car.
The little children laugh at him behind his back.
And the banker never wears a mac
In the pouring rain,
Very strange!*

*Penny Lane is in my ears and in my eyes,
Wet beneath the blue suburban skies,
I sit and meanwhile, back in Penny Lane:
There is a fireman with an hour-glass
And in his pocket is a portrait of the Queen,
He likes to keep his fire engine clean,
It's a clean machine.*

*Penny Lane is in my ears and in my eyes,
Full of fish-and-finger pies
In summer, meanwhile, back behind the shelter
In the middle of the round-about
A pretty nurse is selling poppies from a tray,
And though she feels she's in a play
She is anyway.*

*Penny Lane: the barber shaves another customer
We see the banker sitting, waiting for a trim
And then the fireman rushes in
From the pouring rain
Very strange!*

PENNY LANE by Lennon & McCartney.



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NEXT WEEK IN THE MUSIC: Lennon & McCartney Part 2.

THE MUSIC: LYRICS

This week, we take a look at the lyrics of Paul McCartney and John Lennon.

PLEASE PLEASE ME

*Last night I said these words to my girl,
'I know you never even try, girl.
Come on, come on, come on, come on
Please please me, oh yeah,
Like I please you.'*

*You don't need me to show the way, love
Why do I always have to say, love,
Come on, come on, come on, come on,
Please please me, oh yeah,
Like I please you.*

*I don't want to sound complaining
But you know there's always rain in
My heart.
In my heart.
I do all the pleasing with you
It's so hard to reason with you
Oh yeah
Why do you make me blue?*

*Last night I said these words to my girl
'I know you never even try girl
Come on, come on, come on, come on.
Please please me, oh yeah,
Like I please you.
Me, oh yeah, like I please you
Me, oh yeah, like I please you.*

Peter Owen

PLEASE PLEASE ME by Lennon & McCartney.

area – 'Strawberry Fields' was another. "We really got into the groove of imagining Penny Lane – the bank was there, the tram sheds, people waiting and the inspector stood there, the fire engines were down there. It was just re-living childhood." He has claimed that it stands no further analysis, but there is a strongly surrealistic feeling running through it. The Beatles are standing back from it all, and while at one moment it is a song about an area and its people, and next moment you really feel that these aren't real people at all, but people distorted by memory so that they live in a dream state. Perhaps they are all, like the pretty nurse, in a play; why should a fireman have an hour-glass, or the barber collect the photos of heads like scalps on a Cheyenne war belt? The whole song is slightly disturbing, more so even than 'Strawberry Fields'. 'Penny Lane' has a seemingly normal structure and imagery that, on further investigation, turns out to be abnormal. It is this stark dichotomy between the everyday and the fantastic that makes it so extraordinary.

NEXT WEEK: The lyrics of 'Tobacco Road' and 'Needles And Pins'.



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The Beatles wrote so many songs, in so many different styles, covering so many subjects, that any selection of two as being representative is bound to be arbitrary. 'Please Please Me' is perhaps the most interesting of the early period. It has more to say than either 'Love Me Do', 'I Want To Hold Your Hand', 'From Me To You' or 'She Loves You', and the musical arrangement is certainly more complex. 'Penny Lane' marks, with its flipside 'Strawberry Fields', a distinct change.

'Please Please Me' was the Beatles' second single release and first to hit no. 1. It's not quite a love song, in fact it's unusual in that it is not a love-lorn lament, but a straightforward appeal to a seemingly frigid girl. The singer can't get no satisfaction and, while the meaning is implicit rather than explicit, the listener immediately understands the trouble. Both Lennon and McCartney have often denied any hidden meanings in their work, and 'Please Please Me' works especially well because it is in language that the listener can easily understand, and about something that the listener has probably experienced. To read it now is to see how early it was in the Beatles' career; their song-writing was still in its infancy, and while the song is fresh and bright, it has none of the later sophistication.

In complete contrast is 'Penny Lane'. It is, Lennon says, simply a song about Liverpool that lists nice-sounding names in the



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The Fifth Beatle

On thinking back to the Beatles' beginnings, or come to that the beginnings of British pop music, a name that inevitably springs to mind is that of Brian Epstein. It was he who was without any doubt the finest manipulator of groups either before, during, or since the rise of the Beatles. His untimely death occurred in August 1967, and in many ways from that point on the Beatles started a slow downhill slide.

Brian was born on September 19th, 1934, in Rodney Street, Liverpool — an exclusive area well known for its concentration of doctors. The grandson of a Polish immigrant, Brian was the first of two children born to Queenie and Harry Epstein. At the age of four he attended kindergarten, which seems to have been one of the very few, if not only, schools that he ever came to terms with. When

the war broke out Liverpool became a prime bombing target because of the docks, and along with hundreds of other children, Brian was evacuated to Southport, a West Coast resort now better known for convalescing. He was sent to Southport College where he carried on, after a fashion, his schooling.

In 1943 the bombing seemed to have stopped, and the Epstein family returned to Childwall, a suburb of Liverpool. Obviously the move meant Brian would have to leave Southport College, and after an interview with the headmaster of Liverpool College he was admitted as a scholar. His stay was not a very long or rewarding one for after a short period he was expelled. Brian once said: "One feature of life which I experienced there and at other schools and even sometimes now, was anti-semitism. Even now it lurks around the corner in some guise or other, and though it doesn't matter to me any more, it did when I was younger."

Harry Epstein was wondering whether his son and heir was ever going to find a

school which he enjoyed, and the thought of having a totally un-educated son was worrying both him and his wife. Between them they decided, as a result of Brian's anti-semitic claims, to send him to a Jewish prep school, 'Beaconsfield', near Tunbridge Wells in Kent. Brian stayed at this prep school for the longest period of time that he stayed at any school, and when he was approaching the age of 13 he sat the examinations that would determine whether he would go forward to public school. Needless to say, the outcome was . . . failure.

To say that at this time Harry and Queenie were immensely worried about their son's future would be a gross understatement. However, they found a private school for their son in Dorset. At this school, if nothing else, he was allowed to express his flair for art, and remembers it as being the only thing that he was remotely good at. Back in Liverpool at this time, Harry Epstein was trying hard to find a good school for Brian before it was too late. His hard work bore fruit, for in the

autumn of 1948, just as Brian had turned 14, he was notified that his son was to attend Wrekin College in Shropshire.

At Wrekin, Brian discovered that he had another talent besides art. He took part in school plays and found that his performances were being praised by the teachers. It must have been the only thing young Epstein was praised for, and before he had the opportunity to sit any examinations he decided he wanted to leave school and become a dress designer. Brian might have *wanted* to become a dress designer but his parents had other ideas, and on September 10th, 1950, aged very nearly 16, he started his first job as a sales assistant at the family's local furniture store.

He started work at £5 a week, which really wasn't a bad wage at that time, and slowly but surely built up some kind of interest in his work. His parents were pleased as this was the first time in his life that he had shown concern for anything. Mr. and Mrs. Epstein were satisfied and happy with their eldest son. Things were on the up and up for Brian.

On December 9th, 1952, as though he hadn't gone through enough discipline of one sort or another, a buff envelope arrived through the door notifying him that he was to attend a National Service medical. (In those days National Service was compulsory). He passed his medical as an A.1., the only A.1. achievement he had ever received. And so he began his two years' service as a clerk in the Royal Army Service Corps.

Secure Businessman

Within 10 months of joining the army his nerves became seriously upset. He reported to the barrack doctor, and after a thorough examination he was passed on to a psychiatrist. After four psychiatric opinions they came to the conclusion that Private Epstein was just not fit for military service – and discharged him.

He arrived back in Liverpool prepared to work very hard at the furniture trade. This he did, and seemed to settle into some kind of routine way of life. His parents were happy. For no apparent reason at this time Brian's old love for acting returned, and he regularly attended the Liverpool Playhouse. He began to meet the actors socially, and started toying with the idea of acting as a profession. With the encouragement of the professionals Brian got himself an audition at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, and after reading two pieces, excerpts from 'Confidential Clerk' and 'Macbeth', he was accepted to begin studies as from the next term. So at 22, although a secure and aspiring businessman, he submitted himself once again to the rigours of community life, and became a student at R.A.D.A. It didn't take Brian too long to realise that studying just wasn't his forte, and he went back, once again, to the furniture business – where it now seemed that he was going to spend the rest of his working life.

The Epstein's store was at this time

expanding, and they opened another branch in the city centre. Included in this branch was a record department which Brian took charge of. Anne Shelton opened the store, and from that first day it began to flourish. Although most of the records Brian sold were pop, his real interest lay in classical and his favourite composer was Sibelius.

In 1959 the Epstein's opened yet another store, this time in the heart of Liverpool's shopping centre and opened by Anthony Newley. By autumn 1962 Brian's store, for he was in complete charge of the city centre branch, was running to absolute perfection.

The Beatles

At about 3 o'clock on Saturday October 28th, 1961, a young customer came into the store, dressed in the usual costume of the time – black leather jacket and denim jeans – he said: "There's a record I want. It's 'My Bonnie', and it was made in Germany. Have you got it?" Brian knew his stock inside out and gave a negative nod: but the old policy of keeping the customer satisfied was now to pay handsome dividends. "Who is it by?" asked Brian. "You won't have heard of them" said the young customer, "it's a group called the Beatles . . ." He learned that they had just returned from Hamburg, Germany, and were currently playing a residency at the local Cavern club.

Curiosity overtook Brian, and he decided to visit this cellar club and find out what it was about this group that made the locals react as they did.

He wasn't too impressed with what he heard, although he found their personalities magnetic and for this reason he stayed until they completed their set. When they left the stage he was taken to the band room to meet them, but merely for the

purpose of asking them about their record. George was the first to speak to him. He shook Brian by the hand and said: "What brings Mr. Epstein here?" They obviously knew of him from the record store. Brian went ahead and explained the situation about the several requests he had had for their record. George called over John, Paul and Pete Best – and said "this man would like to hear our disc". They played it to him, and on hearing it Brian asked the four young lads to visit his office a few days later. Their first meeting was set for December 3rd, 1961.

Brian, even if he was thinking about it, had as much idea of artist/management as he had about flying to the Moon, but something inside was burning to get these four scruffy kids under his ruling. The four of them arrived at his office as arranged, although Paul was a little late. They passingly discussed the future and contracts and then moved on to other topics of conversation. They drank a lot of coffee and arranged another meeting for the following Wednesday. In between time Brian paid a visit to the family solicitor, Rex Makin, to discuss what an artist/management contract consisted of. On asking him this question and then explaining the reasons for asking it, Makin added dryly, "oh, yes, another Epstein idea. How long before you lose interest in this one?"

Signed, Sealed and Settled

The second meeting took place as arranged, and with all members sitting in his rather plush office Brian said: "You need a manager, would you like me to do it?" There was a pregnant silence, and then John looked up and said "Yes." The others all agreed, and John again said: "Right then Brian. Manage us, now. Where's the contract? I'll sign it." Brian



Brian Epstein seen standing behind the bride at Ringo's wedding.

had very little idea what a contract looked like, let alone could he produce one. But within a week Makin had drawn one up, and the following Wednesday it was ready for all to sign. John, Paul, George and Pete Best all put their signatures to the contract, and all were counter-signed by witness Alastair Taylor, Brian's assistant. The only signature that was always conspicuous by its absence was that of Brian Epstein.

First Audition

Brian felt that the first task of a manager was to secure for his artists a recording contract. He managed to lure Mike Smith of Decca to the Cavern to see and hear the Beatles at work, and what Mr. Smith heard knocked him out. He went back to Decca and arranged for the four lads to attend an audition at the famous Decca Record Company. The boys plus Brian arrived in London on New Year's Eve 1961, and the following morning, with Brian at their sides, went to the recording studio for their first audition.

They played several numbers which were duly recorded, and having completed their task returned to Liverpool to await the voices from the hierarchy of Decca. In March 1962, three long months later, Brian was summoned to the Decca offices to meet Dick Rowe and Beecher Stevens, two important executives. On arrival he was shown into their suite of offices and asked to sit down. Dick Rowe was spokesman: "Not to mince words Mr. Epstein, we don't like your boys' sound. Groups of guitarists are on the way out." Brian tried to hide his immense disappointment and replied: "You must be out of your minds. These boys are going to explode. I am completely confident that one day they will be bigger than Elvis Presley." Dick Rowe was rather taken aback and, thinking it was Brian that was going out of his mind, said: "The boys won't go, Mr. Epstein. We know these things. You have a good business in Liverpool. Stick to that!"

Thus ended the Decca saga. Brian, however, was determined that someone somewhere was going to like his Beatles. Pye, Philips, Columbia and countless others all rejected Brian's tapes. 'There's nothing there' they all said in their voices of authority.

As a final resort Brian was going to have an all-or-nothing raid on London. If nothing happened this time he would call it a day. He hadn't any idea where he was going to take the tapes, but he was determined to secure a contract. Through a string of coincidences Epstein met up with a gentleman named Syd Coleman, who was a music publisher looking for songs. Brian played him the boys' tapes and Coleman liked what he heard. He would, however, like a gentleman called George Martin to hear them, and would Brian take them along to a company called Parlophone (part of the EMI group) and play them to him? This Brian did, and Martin hearing the tapes and having

nothing to lose invited them along for an audition.

A few weeks after the boys had completed their second audition Martin wrote to Epstein and offered him a recording contract. That elusive sheet of parchment was at last reality. The only bad side to the audition was the fact that George Martin didn't consider Pete Best's drumming suitable for the band. The other three were also appealing to Brian to ask Ringo Starr, the drummer to join the group. Brian was reluctant, but George Martin's hint made him realise something must be done, and so one afternoon he broke the bad news to Pete Best. He didn't want to do it, but he realised it would be best for the Beatles.

On their first actual recording session the boys put down two songs of their own: 'Love Me Do' and 'P.S. I Love You'. On October 4th, 1962 the record was unleashed upon the world, and within a matter of weeks 'Love Me Do' had reached the no. 17 position in the British charts. George Martin, who quite honestly was amazed at the progress of this record, realised the need to bring out another single quickly, and almost immediately did another session with the boys. About this time he introduced Brian to an old friend of his, Dick James.

Brian went along to meet Dick James, who at that time occupied a one-roomed office in the Charing Cross Road. Dick asked him to sit down, and takes up the story from there:

"He had with him a rough acetate of a session he had just completed with George Martin. I put it on my record player and I heard this song 'Please Please Me', and I just hit the ceiling. He asked what I thought, and I said 'I think it's a no. 1., I picked up the telephone and called a friend of mine, Philip Jones, who at that time was a light entertainment producer at ABC TV, and he was just starting a new show called *Thank Your Lucky Stars*. The breaks started to come virtually from that moment.

The Midas Touch

Brian was suitably impressed, and agreed to let Dick have the publishing to both sides of the forthcoming disc. As it turned out Dick was right and the record did make no. 1.

The song that George Martin wanted to follow 'Love Me Do' with was in fact given to him by Dick James. A song written by an up-and-coming writer called Mitch Murray, it was entitled 'How Do You Do It?', but the Beatles couldn't get into the song so they dropped it. Brian had realised the potential of this song though, and asked the only-too-pleased Dick James if he could have it for another Liverpoolian group that he had just signed. Dick agreed, and Gerry and the Pacemakers certainly did do justice to the song and took it right to the no. 1 spot.

And so the hits went on and on and on. Everything Brian touched turned to gold. He signed Billy J. Kramer and the Dakotas,

and they too wallowed in hits. Cilla Black, the Fourmost, the Big Three, the Merseybeats and many others followed. He formed an empire and called it NEMS (North East Music Stores), which he named after his record shop in Liverpool. Brian went on to shape the Beatles in such a way that they were shortly to have no. 1 records with everything that they released. Last but not least, they were to ultimately conquer the world.

Unfortunately, with success coming at the phenomenal rate Brian was getting it, the pressures began to grow. He started working a 25-hour day, eight days a week. He was careful not to lavish too much attention on any one act, and tried (unsuccessfully) to share his devotions. He was devoted to his artists, and saw more of them than he did of his family. One can't help feeling though, and if Brian were alive today he would probably clarify this, that the Beatles were his first love – not because they were the most successful but because they had an affinity that Brian had never experienced before. He gave these four suburban lads the world, and gave us all the Beatles. Nobody could ask a bigger favour of anyone than that.

Sad Death

A few years later, when the Beatles were in Bangor studying meditation under the Maharishi Yogi, Brian was found dead in bed in his Mayfair house. The coroner pronounced the death as accidental, due to the cumulative effect of bromide in a drug known as Carbitol. Brian had been taking this for some time because of the ever increasing pressures, which in turn led to insomnia. The world had lost a man whose foresight was greater than any music personality before or since. The Beatles had lost more than they could have possibly imagined. Brian Epstein was a fifth Beatle. He was as much a part of them as they were of him. Words can't adequately describe the loss of a man of his stature, but perhaps the last words should come from his long time secretary Joanne Newfield:

"A lot of people seem to forget and they say 'oh he didn't do that much', but if you look at the record since his death it makes you wonder. A lot of people say that the Beatles made Brian Epstein; I don't think Brian Epstein made the Beatles, but I think he did a great deal more than he is given credit for. A lot of managers could have found a group like them and completely messed them up. It wasn't just their talent alone, it was their talent plus a very creative person behind them. Maybe business-wise he wasn't the greatest, but creatively he was a genius."

NEXT WEEK IN POP INFLUENCES: The part that Liverpool played.

POP FILE

... the Who's Who of Pop. Week by week the A-Z of who did what and when.

FLEETWOOD MAC was formed in 1967 by guitarist Peter Green who had played with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. The original line-up was Peter Green (guitar and vocals), John McVie (bass guitar), Mick Fleetwood (drums) and Jeremy Spencer (slide guitar, piano and vocals). The group rode the crest of the blues-boom wave, playing the music of Elmore James and B. B. King, until they developed a rock/blues style of their own. With the addition of a third guitarist, Danny Kirwan, they produced a startling live sound and some startling hit records like 'Albatross', 'Man Of The World' and 'Oh Well'. At the height



SKR

of their popularity, Green left the music business for a while, gave a lot of his money away (yes, he really did) and worked as a gravedigger for a while. The group decided to carry on without him, but Jeremy Spencer soon left in the middle of a US tour, to join the Children of God. John McVie's wife, Christine Perfect, and Californian guitarist, Bob Welch, joined the group, which has continued to work and record steadily.

EDDIE FLOYD emerged from the Stax Studios in 1967, with a recording called 'Knock On Wood'. It was a hit both sides of the Atlantic and became a soul classic. Eddie wrote some fine songs too, including '634 5789' for Wilson Pickett, and other material recorded by Otis Redding, Carla Thomas, and Sam and Dave.



THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS were formed by two ex-Byrds, Chris Hillman and Gram Parsons, together with steel guitarist Sneaky Pete and bassist Chris Ethridge. In 1969, they released an album 'The Gilded Palace Of Sin' which took country-rock further than the Byrds, with 'Sin City' and 'The Dark End Of The Street', as well as rocking excellently on 'Christmas's Tune', complete with Everly Brothers type harmonies. The production was superb and the Burritos looked set to be really big but their second album mysteriously lost their original sound, and sadly the Burritos blew it.

TENNESSEE ERNIE FORD was one of the country & western singers who set the stage for rock & roll, with pop ballads for Capitol Records such as 'Give Me Your Word', 'Sixteen Tons' and 'The Ballad Of Davy Crockett'.

EMILE FORD AND THE CHECKMATES must have been the first English group with a black singer. In the mid-'60s, soul groups sprouted up like mushrooms, but Emile Ford had five hits in 14 months in 1959-60. It wasn't soul, but, apart from Johnny Kidd, it was the heaviest music Britain produced at the time, with a solid plodding beat and excellent lead and backing vocals. Emile's biggest UK hits were 'What Do You Want To Make Them Eyes At Me For' (no. 1), 'Slow Boat To China' (no. 4), and 'Counting Teardrops' (no. 6). Years ahead of their time.

THE FOUNDATIONS consisted of three white Londoners, a Barbadian, a Jamaican, a Dominican and a Ceylonese; Alan Warner (guitar), Peter Macbeth (bass), Tim Harris (drums), Colin Young (lead vocals, guitar), Pat Burke (sax), Eric Allendale (trombone), and Tony Gomez (organ). Their first hit 'Baby Now



SKR

That I've Found You' (1968), not only established the group but their songwriting recording manager, Tony Macaulay, as well. Other hits include: 'Build Me Up Buttercup', 'In The Bad Bad Old Days'.

THE FOURMOST were part of Brian Epstein's third-wave attack on the pop charts. As Merseymania arose, so did the group, who had UK hits with 'Hello Little Girl', 'I'm In Love', and 'A Little Lovin'' (1963-4). As Merseymania receded, so did the Fourmost, although they are still alive and playing Britain's night clubs and workmens' clubs - and playing very well too.

THE FOUR SEASONS started a remarkable string of hits in 1962 with Sherry. The falsetto voice of lead singer Frankie Valli combined with the rest of the group's harmonies made them sound like a black girl group, but they were all-male, all-clean, and all acceptable. Their best records stand as pop-plastic masterpieces; 'Sherry', 'Big Girls Don't Cry', 'Walk Like A Man', 'Rag Doll' and 'Let's Hang On'. Frankie Valli has also had solo hits and the group is still touring.



London Features

THE FOUR TOPS are: Levi Stubbs, Obie Benson, Lawrence Payton and Duke Fakir. They got together at high school in 1954 and, after 10 years of struggling and making a few unsuccessful records, they were signed to Motown. Their first release in 1965, 'Baby I Need Your Loving' was a worldwide smash and introduced songwriter-producers Eddie Holland, Lamont Dozier and Bryan Holland, who were to become the mainstays of the Motown sound. The Tops marked the beginning of Motown's second phase, after the Smokey Robinson-Marvin Gaye phase, and their records, always catchy and usually irresistible, were a perfect example of what Charlie Gillett calls 'city production line'. But they were (and still are) fine records: 'I can't Help Myself', 'Standing In The Shadow Of Love', 'Same Old Song', 'Reach Out And I'll Be There', 'Bernadette, Bernadette', 'Seven Rooms Of Gloom', 'Walk Away Renee', 'If I Were A Carpenter'. By late 1968 the Tops stuck in a rut, their records lacked the earlier lustre. The ever-cool Levi Stubbs did the unthinkable. The group left Motown for ABC-Dunhill in 1972. So far they haven't recaptured the magic or moved onto make new magic either.

Redfern



FREDDIE AND THE DREAMERS were another group that came in on the Mersey wave, but after a great first record, 'If You Gotta Make A Fool Of Somebody' (1963), lead singer Freddie Garrity played up his clowning and the group just didn't seem to believe in what they were doing. They made one more good record 'I Understand' (mixed in with 'Auld Lang Syne') before heading for the realms of variety, night clubs and children's TV.



Redfern

THE FUGS started out as a loose grouping of Greenwich Village poets, centred round Ed Sanders and Tuli Kupferberg, but soon became a group, mixing satire and obscenity in an attempt to shock and amaze anyone who cared to be shocked and amazed. You weren't supposed to mention sex or drugs on stage, so the Fugs centred their act round them. Lennon made great play of singing four-letter words, but the Fugs had already been through that. They never claimed to be great musicians and their roots go back to American beat poetry rather than rock. They were the first attempt at using the rock format to propagate poetry, and to make outrageousness the point of their very existence. One day people will rediscover them.

MARVIN GAYE stands as one of Motown's longest-running successes. Gaye joined the company in 1961 and, by 1964, he was among the 'first wave' of Motown successes, through records like 'Stubborn Kind Of Fellow', 'Can I Get A Witness', 'You're A Wonderful One', 'Pride And Joy', and 'Baby Don't Do It'. Despite an appreciative following of British devotees, Marvin first made the UK charts in 1967, with his duet with Kim Weston, 'It Takes Two Baby', but in 1969, he made it to no. 1 with 'I Heard It Through The Grapevine', which he followed the same year with 'Too Busy Thinkin' About My Baby' and 'The Onion Song' (with Tammi Terrell). He scored with 'What's Going On' in 1972, and has written his first film score for *Trouble Man*.



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