

THE BEATLES

Fourth Session

ESSENTIAL BEATLES LISTENING, MID-1966-LATE 1967:

1. *Revolver* (EMI, the Beatles' seventh album, originally released August 1966). The group continued to relentlessly move forward on a record that drew from hard guitar British mod rock, soul, film orchestration, the American pop-rock of the Beach Boys and the Lovin' Spoonful, Indian music, and the avant-garde. The arrangements made use of backward tapes, distortion, and chamber music in ways that help pioneer psychedelic rock. In addition, the subjects of the songs continued to branch out beyond romantic themes into social commentary and drug-influenced introspection. Key tracks: "Eleanor Rigby," combining a portrait of social alienation with classical orchestration; "Tomorrow Never Knows," a leap into all-out psychedelia with tape loops and lyrics inspired by the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*; "I'm Only Sleeping," with hypnotic backwards guitar; "Taxman," one of George Harrison's fiercest rockers and social critiques; "Good Day Sunshine," one of their most upbeat, celebratory songs; "Got to Get You into My Life," their most effective fusion of soul and rock; and "Yellow Submarine," the Ringo-sung children's song that was the album's big hit.

2. *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (EMI, the Beatles' eighth album, 1967). Probably the Beatles' most famous album, and still considered the most representative musical document of the psychedelic era. The Beatles and George Martin became more adventurous in the studio than they'd ever been before and, arguably, they'd ever be again. Sound effects, exotic instrumentation, distortion, and grand orchestration were deployed on a remarkably eclectic set of songs that ran from anguished epics to vaudeville, Indian music, chamber pieces, and hard funky rock. Though sometimes described as a "concept album," the concept was loose and vague, and more related to the consistently kaleidoscopic mood of a set whose total effect was greater than the sum of its parts, rather than to any definite story or theme. Key tracks: "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," their dreamiest psychedelic song; "With a Little Help from My Friends," the

catchiest good-time number, and one of Ringo's most celebrated vocals; the "Sgt. Pepper" theme, which introduced the conceit of an album being presented as a concert by a fictitious group serving as an alias for the Beatles; and the closing "A Day in the Life," one of the most effective fusions of two entirely different Lennon and McCartney songs into one.

3. ***Magical Mystery Tour*** (EMI, the Beatles' ninth album, 1967). Though overshadowed by *Sgt. Pepper*, this December 1967 LP – divided about half between songs used in the *Magical Mystery Tour* soundtrack, and songs heard on the group's three 1967 singles – had psychedelic rock of equal imagination, even if it didn't cohere into as memorable a whole as *Sgt. Pepper* in album form. Some of these tracks, if anything, found them going out on a greater psychedelic limb than most of *Sgt. Pepper*, though sometimes with mixed results. The highlights were those released on singles: "Strawberry Fields Forever," "Penny Lane," the summer of love anthem "All You Need Is Love," the poetic absurdity of "I Am the Walrus," and the extremely commercial and hummable "Hello Goodbye."

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL RECORDINGS BY THE BEATLES, MID-1966-LATE 1967:

1. From ***Anthology Vol. 2*** (EMI): Tracks 17-25 on disc one and tracks 1-18 on disc two, all of which date from mid-1966 to late 1967. Like the rest of the three *Anthology* volumes, this contains rare recordings, virtually all of them unreleased before 1995. Key tracks: early version of "Tomorrow Never Knows"; recordings from mid-1966 Tokyo concert on their final world tour; early demo recordings, and drastically different first studio version, of "Strawberry Fields Forever"; and a Paul McCartney solo voice-and-piano demo of "The Fool on the Hill."

2. ***Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band super deluxe edition*** (EMI). On the 50th anniversary of *Sgt. Pepper's* release, several different reissues of the album were released. The most extensive of these by far was the "super deluxe edition," whose six discs featured four CDs, a DVD, and a Blu-Ray. The CDs included the stereo and mono versions, plenty of outtakes, the classic cuts from

the “Strawberry Fields Forever”/“Penny Lane” single (originally intended to be used on *Sgt. Pepper*), and the audio on Blu-ray/DVD discs if that rings your chimes, as well as (on DVD and Blu-Ray) the good 45-minute 1992 TV documentary *The Making of Sgt. Pepper*. Be aware, however, that the the different versions of songs they recorded for the LP—which form the bulk of the three dozen or so extra cuts on the box (counts vary according to whether you might consider a “2017 mix” previously unreleased)—aren’t all that different from the album versions we’ve heard all these years. Sometimes you essentially just get the backing track or elements of a track, which is interesting, but not so much that you’re likely to enjoy it over and over. These are more valuable for insights into how tracks were constructed than enjoyable new or different performances in their own right. The 144-page hardback book might be the best reason to buy the box, as it hasn’t been available before and can’t be easily bootlegged, and is pretty well done, even if the details on some tracks (like the bonus ones on the mono CD) could have been better. The price tag is a hefty \$150 or so.

NOTABLE UNRELEASED BEATLES MATERIAL, MID-1966-LATE 1967:

- 1. Candlestick Park Concert, August 29, 1966.** The final official Beatles concert was recorded on cassette by their publicist, Tony Barrow, and has circulated *unofficially* for many years. The sound quality isn't good, and the last song, "Long Tall Sally," cuts off after a half-minute as the tape ran out. But it's reasonably listenable, and a historic document.
- 2. "Strawberry Fields Forever" demos and outtakes.** About an hour of John Lennon solo demos, Lennon home recordings, and studio outtakes of "Strawberry Fields" as the Beatles and George Martin struggled toward the final version have circulated, only a few of which are on *Anthology Vol. 2*. Though hearing so many versions at once is too much for some casual fans, for more scholarly listeners, it's a fascinating document of the song's evolution from acoustic folkly song to elaborately experimental psychedelic masterpiece.

3. *The Beatles Christmas Album*. 1967 is the only year of the Beatles career from which there is no truly significant body of unreleased material. Most of what has surfaced are different versions, sometimes different mixes, of studio recordings that don't vary greatly from the originals. Exceptions scattered here and there include simple John Lennon solo voice-and-piano work-in-progress home recordings of "Good Morning, Good Morning" and "You Know My Name"; a nine-minute version of "Flying" with a very extended section of Mellotron loops; and "Christmas Time Is Here Again," the most musical and fully produced of the recordings the Beatles placed on their annual fan club Christmas discs. Which makes this a logical place to note that all seven of the Beatles' Christmas fan club-only records from 1963-69 – which were primarily devoted to humorous spoken word banter and sound collages, with virtually nothing in the way of proper studio recordings or developed original compositions – were issued together on one LP for the fan club on 1970. They were finally reissued in an expensive box of vinyl singles, *The Official Beatles Fan Club Christmas Records*, in 2017.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL READING (IN ADDITION TO SECTIONS ON THE BEATLES FROM MID-1966-LATE 1967 ON GENERAL READING LIST):

1. *Here, There and Everywhere: My Life Recording the Music of the Beatles*, by Geoff Emerick and Howard Massey (Gotham Books, 2006). For *Revolver*, Geoff Emerick became the Beatles' recording engineer, keeping that position for most of their sessions until they broke up. He worked on more Beatles sessions than anyone besides the Beatles or George Martin. This is his fascinating memoir of working with the band, also including some accounts of a few sessions he worked on prior to 1966, as well as on Paul McCartney's 1973 album *Band on the Run*.

2. *Ticket to Ride: The Extraordinary Diary of the Beatles' Last Tour*, by Barry Tashian (Dowling Press, 1997). Barry Tashian was lead singer, guitarist, and primary songwriter for the Remains, the underrated Boston band who were one of the support acts for the Beatles' final tour in August 1966. Though slim, this is an interesting account of those days by someone who was there, with

plenty of photos.

3. ***With a Little Help from My Friends: The Making of Sgt. Pepper***, by George Martin (Little, Brown & Co., 1994). On the slim side, but you couldn't ask for a more inside account than one from the Beatles producer, which also details the recording of "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "Penny Lane" (originally intended for *Sgt. Pepper* before being pulled for a single).

4. ***The Act You've Known for All These Years***, by Clinton Heylin (Canongate, 2007). Part a look at the creation of *Sgt. Pepper*, and part a study of the context of the cutting-edge rock with which the Beatles were competing during its construction, also looking into masterpieces of the era by the Beach Boys, Pink Floyd, Bob Dylan, and the Velvet Underground that were also expanding rock's frontiers.

5. ***Days in the Life: Voices from the English Underground 1961-1971***, by Jonathon Green (Pimlico, 1998). Extensive oral history of the emergence of the British psychedelic counterculture, drawn from dozens of interviews with figures in the movement.

6. ***In the Sixties***, by Barry Miles (Jonathan Cape, 2002). One of those key figures in London was Miles, a personal friend of McCartney and later author of McCartney's own pseudo-memoir of the time, *Many Years From Now*. This is his own memoir of the period, during which he edited London's leading underground paper, *International Times*. In the late '60s he ran Apple's short-lived spoken word/experimental label, Zapple.

7. ***Eight Miles High: Folk-Rock's Flight from Haight-Ashbury to Woodstock***, by Richie Unterberger (Backbeat, 2003). The sequel to *Turn! Turn! Turn!: The 1960s Folk-Rock Revolution*, picking up the story of folk-rock in mid-1966 and taking it through 1970. The Beatles were influential on both the original folk-rock musicians and folk-rockers of this period who went into psychedelic rock.

8. ***Summer of Love***, by Joel Selvin (Cooper Square, 1999). A history of San Francisco '60s psychedelic rock, the biggest trend in 1967 rock outside of the Beatles themselves, and highly influenced

by the Beatles.

RECOMMENDED DVDS/VIDEOS:

1. *The Beatles Anthology 5 & 6* (Apple, 2003). Things get a little confusing here, but some of episode 5, and all of episode 6, on *The Beatles Anthology 5 & 6* DVD, cover their career from *Revolver* through *Sgt. Pepper*. It adds up to an hour and a half or so of coverage altogether. Like all of the *Anthology* volumes, it includes extensive interviews with McCartney, Harrison, and Starr; archive audio clip interviews of Lennon; and a wealth of vintage performance and interview footage.

2. *The Beatles from Liverpool to San Francisco* (Eagle Media, 2005). Although this DVD compilation of Beatle interviews isn't that good, a 22-minute bonus feature, entitled *Beatles Across America*, has an interesting documentary filmed in 1966 of the controversy sparked in the US by John Lennon's "we're more popular than Jesus" remark.

3. *The Making of Sgt. Pepper*. Broadcast as a TV special in the early 1990s to mark the 25th anniversary of *Sgt. Pepper*, this 45-minute documentary features interviews with George Martin, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr done especially for the project. Although many of the stories are told in similar form elsewhere, it's a pretty entertaining and informative overview of the album's evolution, especially at the points where Martin isolates and discusses different parts of the mixes of several tracks. Never issued for the home video market on its own, its available as part of the expensive 2017 six-disc super deluxe edition of the *Sgt. Pepper* album.

4. *Monterey Pop* (Criterion, 2006). The Beatles didn't appear here, but this documentary of the Monterey Pop Festival in June 1967 (for which Paul McCartney had a symbolic position on the board of directors) encapsulates some of the most important changes shaking the world of rock music that year. Including Jimi Hendrix, the Who, Jefferson Airplane, Otis Redding, Janis Joplin, Ravi Shankar, and numerous others.

5. *Going Underground: Paul McCartney, The Beatles and the UK Counter-Culture* (Sexy Intellectual, 2013). This might be a little specialized and talking head-heavy for the general Beatles fan, but it's a good (and long – 150-minute) documentary on the rise of the UK underground counterculture in the mid-'60s, focusing especially on how it influenced the Beatles (and how the Beatles influenced it). There's no direct participation from the Beatles, but there's knowledgeable commentary by inside figures of the scene, like Beatle friends Barry Miles and John Dunbar, as well as musicians (Soft Machine's Robert Wyatt) and producer Joe Boyd.

6. *Magical Mystery Tour* (Apple, 1967). Finally issued on DVD with bonus features in late 2012. A disappointing movie, especially in relation to the Beatles' prior features. It's redeemed in part, however, by the purely musical sequences for the songs written especially for the soundtrack, especially "I Am the Walrus."

NOTABLE PEOPLE:

Geoff Emerick: Promoted to the position of Beatles engineer at the beginning of the *Revolver* sessions. Was vital in the technical realization of many of the group's increasingly ambitious production ideas. Continued to work as an engineer on most of their sessions until they broke up, though he quit for a while halfway through *The White Album*, and did not work with them on the *Let It Be* sessions.

Joe Orton: Renowned British playwright who worked on a script for a possible Beatles feature film, *Up Against It*, in early 1967. The Beatles and Brian Epstein found it unsuitable, and in the spring, the script was returned to Orton without explanation. Orton was murdered in August 1967, and "A Day in the Life," his favorite record, was played at his funeral.

Peter Blake: Designer of the sleeve for *Sgt. Pepper*, probably the most famous record cover of all time.

Hunter Davies: Author of the first and, thus far, only officially authorized biography of the Beatles, on which he began working in early January 1967. He was granted access to the Beatles, their

families, Brian Epstein, and several recording sessions. His book, titled *The Beatles*, came out in 1968, though he and others have admitted coverage of some of their more controversial personal affairs was omitted.

The Bonzo Dog Band: The only musical act besides the Beatles to appear in a Beatles feature film, performing a memorably comic song during the nightclub sequence of *Magical Mystery Tour*. The Bonzo Dog Band were the premier comedy-rock group of the late-'60s British pop scene, and Paul McCartney produced their one UK hit single, "I'm the Urban Spaceman."

NOTABLE LANDMARKS:

Candlestick Park: San Francisco stadium in which the Beatles gave their final official concert on August 29, 1966.

Santa Isabel, Spain: John Lennon began writing "Strawberry Fields Forever" at a rented house here in fall 1966 while filming his part in *How I Won the War*.

Indica Gallery: London gallery, owned by John Dunbar, at which John Lennon met Yoko Ono at an exhibition of Ono's art, November 9, 1966. Their relationship would not become serious until more than a year later.

Strawberry Field: Liverpool orphanage near John Lennon's childhood home, in whose grounds he used to play as a youngster. The inspiration for "Strawberry Fields Forever," Strawberry Field closed in 2005, and is now a church.

Penny Lane: Street in Liverpool, also referring to the neighborhood in which it's situated. Childhood memories of the street and its surroundings inspired Paul McCartney's "Penny Lane."

Saville Theatre: London theater, owned by Brian Epstein, where Jimi Hendrix opened a concert with "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" on June 4, 1967 (just three days after the album had been released), with Paul McCartney in attendance.

Normal College, Bangor, Wales: The Beatles were studying transcendental meditation here with the Maharishi on the last weekend of August when they heard that Brian Epstein had died.

Apple Boutique: Retail clothing and fashion shop that opened on the corner of Baker and Paddington Streets near central London in December 1967. The first visible manifestation to the world of the Beatles' Apple company, which would dominate their business affairs in the late 1960s. The boutique closed on June 30, 1968, giving away their stock to anyone who came that day.

ESSENTIAL ALBUMS BY OTHER ARTISTS THAT WERE INFLUENTIAL ON, ADMIRER BY, OR INFLUENCED BY THE BEATLES FROM MID-1966-LATE 1967:

1. **The Byrds, *Fifth Dimension*** (Columbia, 1966). The Byrds' third album found them branching out from folk-rock into early psychedelia that incorporated influences from Indian musicians like Ravi Shankar and free jazzmen like John Coltrane, especially on "Eight Miles High."
2. **The Beach Boys, *Pet Sounds*** (Capitol, 1966). The Beach Boys' most sophisticated album to date, and still the band's most critically acclaimed record, was far more influential in the UK (where it was a huge hit) than it was in their home country. Paul McCartney especially loved the record, and has cited "God Only Knows" in particular as one of his all-time favorite songs by anyone. The *Revolver* song "Here, There, and Everywhere" has sometimes been reported as having been specifically influenced by the kind of harmonies and arrangements heard on *Pet Sounds*.
3. **Bob Dylan, *Blonde on Blonde*** (Columbia, 1966). Mid-1966 double album that marked his final all-out rock record before his July 1966 motorcycle accident, his subsequent retreat from the music business for the next year and a half, and his re-emergence as a country-rock musician at the end of 1967. The album's "Fourth Time Around" is a gentle parody of "Norwegian Wood."
4. **Pink Floyd, *Piper at the Gates of Dawn*** (EMI, 1967). The

debut album by Pink Floyd was their most overtly psychedelic and pop-oriented, mostly due to the presence of original leader/singer/guitarist/songwriter Syd Barrett, who left the group shortly afterward and became an acid casualty. Some of their recording sessions at Abbey Road took place at the same time (in different studios) as the ones for *Sgt. Pepper*, and Paul McCartney dropped into an early Floyd session in March 1967 to give them encouragement.

5. **Donovan, *Sunshine Superman*** (Epic, 1966). Though he was a little unfairly accused of being a Bob Dylan imitator when he released his first records in 1965, by the following year Donovan had moved from folk to psychedelic rock with a British folk-rock slant. His huge hit "Sunshine Superman" was inspired in part by the Beatles (and originally subtitled "For John and Paul"), and he helped McCartney write a bit of the lyric for "Yellow Submarine."

6. **Bernard Herrmann, *Fahrenheit 451*** (Universal DVD). George Martin specifically cited the soundtrack to the Francois Truffaut adaptation of the Ray Bradbury science fiction novel *Fahrenheit 451* as an influence on his orchestral score for "Eleanor Rigby, especially the sharp staccato strings. Since it's a good film too, and this is how most viewers originally experienced the music, watching the DVD is recommended over hearing the music on its own.

7. **The Mothers of Invention, *Freak Out!*** (Verve, 1966). Other than perhaps in the dissonant sections heard in "Strawberry Fields Forever" and "A Day in the Life," it's hard to hear how the Mothers of Invention's brand of experimental rock might have been influential upon the Beatles. Paul McCartney nonetheless admired the album, and the strangeness of both its satirical songs and avant-garde improvisations – as well as its ambitiously colorful, text-heavy gatefold sleeve – might have at least given him encouragement to do work on an album that, in the context of the Beatles' own previous career and packaging, would be in its way as daring and different (*Sgt. Pepper*).

8. **The Jimi Hendrix Experience, *Are You Experienced?*** (MCA, 1967). The stunning debut album by Hendrix redefined the parameters of what was possible on electric guitar,

and made its first impact in the UK, where Jimi had relocated in late 1966 to make his rise to stardom. Hendrix admired the Beatles enough to make the title song of *Sgt. Pepper* the first song of a set he played three days after the album's release at a London concert, with Paul McCartney in the audience. Hendrix also covered "Day Tripper" later that year on the BBC.

9. **The Who, *The Who Sell Out*** (Universal, 1967). Though almost certainly not directly influenced by *Sgt. Pepper*, the Who's 1967 LP was a concept album of sorts, mimicking a pirate radio show linked together by commercials. Paul McCartney has cited a review of a Who record that praised it as one of the most raucous rock'n'roll records of all time as an inspiration for him to write "Helter Skelter," and most likely the review was of the Who's 1967 hit "I Can See for Miles," which is included on this album.

10. **Procol Harum, *Procol Harum*** (Deram, 1967). The debut album by a British group whose fusion of psychedelic rock, soul, and classical music helped pave the way for progressive rock. The big hit single "A Whiter Shade of Pale" (included here) was a big favorite of John Lennon's.

11. **The Zombies, *Odessey & Oracle*** (Big Beat, 1968). The final album by the Zombies was largely recorded at Abbey Road, and saw the group move from British Invasion pop to psychedelic pop with classical influences. Including the hit "Time of the Season," it was engineered by Beatles engineer Geoff Emerick.

12. **Jefferson Airplane, *Surrealistic Pillow*** (RCA, 1967). Although Californian psychedelic rock did not seem to be a notable direct influence on the Beatles, Jefferson Airplane's second album (including their hits "Somebody to Love" and "White Rabbit") was the biggest LP to come out of San Francisco in the Summer of Love. Since Paul McCartney hung out with the band briefly during a visit to San Francisco in 1967, it might also be the one most likely to have been heard by the Beatles.

13. **Nilsson, *The Pandemonium Shadow Show*** (RCA, 1967). Though it wasn't a hit record and it would be a couple years before Harry Nilsson got one, this LP was a special favorite of the Beatles,

who became aware of it through their friend and sometime publicist Derek Taylor. It might have caught their special attention via its inclusion of an ingenious medley of Beatles songs, "You Can't Do That."

14. **The Rolling Stones, *Their Satanic Majesties Request*** (ABKCO, 1967). Often derided as a blatant attempt by the Rolling Stones to mimic *Sgt. Pepper*, down to its gaudy 3-D cover. But though the Stones' only psychedelic album is uneven, it has some great songs, especially "She's a Rainbow," "2000 Light Years from Home," and "In Another Land."

15. **Aretha Franklin, *I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You*** (Atlantic, 1967). While soul music does not seem like much of an influence on the Beatles' psychedelic output, they were almost certainly continuing to keep up with it. Aretha Franklin was the breakout soul star of 1967, and this was the album that vaulted her into superstardom. It's still fairly little known that Franklin was offered the chance to record "Let It Be" before the Beatles had released their own version, though the offer was withdrawn when the Beatles decided to put it out as a single after all.

16. **The Mothers of Invention, *We're Only In It for the Money*** (Verve, 1968). Of the many albums to parody *Sgt. Pepper* and psychedelic rock in general, this is far and away the best, down to the deliberately ugly mock-*Sgt. Pepper* cover. This was not so much a parody of the Beatles or *Sgt. Pepper* as the flower power scene of Haight-Ashbury, but Frank Zappa's songs are none the less funny and penetrating for that.

17. **The Beach Boys, *Smiley Smile*** (Capitol, 1967). In late 1966, Beach Boys leader Brian Wilson, fresh off the triumph of *Pet Sounds*, began work on a yet more ambitious (and far more experimental) album, *Smile*, with which he hoped to top the Beatles. *Smile* was never completed, in part because Wilson got discouraged by the triumph of the Beatles' own "Strawberry Fields Forever"/"Penny Lane" single and *Sgt. Pepper*, issued while he was still struggling to complete the Beach Boys' *Smile*. *Smile* was abandoned, and a much more modest record, *Smiley Smile*, issued instead, which included a track ("Vegetables") to which McCartney made a mild contribution,

chomping on celery. A reconstruction of the original Beach Boys' *Smile*, as well as a deluxe box set of same with more tracks, has been announced for official release in late 2011, though much of the material has long been bootlegged (and some of it released on various Beach Boys albums and compilations).

18. **The Bee Gees, *Bee Gees' 1st*** (Atco, 1967). From Manchester, the three Gibb brothers in the Bee Gees had actually been recording in Australia for about four years before they moved back to England in 1967. The first album they recorded there, *Bee Gees 1st*, often resembled the most pop-oriented material of the Beatles, especially in the vocal harmonies. The first hit single from the album, "New York Mining Disaster 1941," was even sometimes mistaken for a Beatles single when it was first played on the radio in spring 1967.

19. **The Move, *The Move*** (EMI, 1968). Though unknown in the US, the Move had a long series of big British hit singles in the late 1960s (including a little-noted "Penny Lane" parody, "Blackberry Way") that were among the best and most energetic UK records with a Beatles influence. Chief songwriter Roy Wood, however, put his own quirky story-telling humor into their material. Their debut album included the hit single "Flowers in the Rain," and expanded CD versions contain two other 1967 hits not on the original album, "I Can Hear the Grass Grow" and "Night of Fear."

20. **The Kinks, *Something Else By the Kinks*** (Castle, 1967). The semi-vaudevillian, distinctly British rock of the Kinks continued to influence the Beatles and numerous other (mostly UK) bands in 1967. This album includes one of their biggest British hits, "Waterloo Sunset," although it didn't repeat its success in the States. A Kinks influence is likely in Paul McCartney-dominated 1967 Beatles tracks like "Your Mother Should Know," and John Lennon cited their early 1968 single "Wonderboy" as a special favorite.

21. **The Bonzo Dog Band, *Gorilla*** (Liberty, 1967). The Beatles must have been aware of the Bonzo Dog Band, as they got to perform an entire song ("Death Cub for Cutie") in the nightclub sequence of *Magical Mystery Tour*. Their debut album, issued in late 1967, was not as rock-oriented as most of their subsequent output, but established them as the funniest comedy-pop outfit in the UK.

