

THE BEATLES

Second Session

Essential Beatles Listening, early 1964-early-1965:

1. *A Hard Day's Night* (EMI, the Beatles' third album, originally released July 1964). Not simply a soundtrack to the movie, though about half of it does feature songs used in the film. The first Beatles album consisting entirely of original material, all of it written by John Lennon and Paul McCartney. A step up in the dynamism of the guitar sound, especially in the use of the electric 12-string on "A Hard Day's Night" itself, and the diverse balance of rockers and ballads. Key tracks: "A Hard Day's Night"; "Can't Buy Me Love," the last of their huge frenetic giddy smashes; "And I Love Her," the first of McCartney's classic romantic ballads; and "If I Fell," proof that Lennon could write great love songs as well as tough rockers.

2. *Beatles for Sale* (EMI, the Beatles' fourth album, originally released December 1964). Released under pressure to get an album out by Christmas, the Beatles reverted to filling out an LP with a half dozen covers, in addition to eight Lennon-McCartney tunes. The original songs, however, continued to show the Beatles expanding, this time in some folk and country directions, as well as some unexpectedly downbeat and personal romantic lyrics. The covers of rock oldies, while less adventurous, were still usually superb. Key tracks: the jubilant "Eight Days a Week," a #1 hit in the United States; "I'm a Loser," the first song on which Bob Dylan's influence on the Beatles is audible; "Baby's in Black," with its morbid country feel; and "I'll Follow the Sun," showing their skill at nearly acoustic folk-like pop.

3. From *Past Masters Vol. 1* (EMI): The four hard-rocking songs from their 1964 UK *Long Tall Sally* EP, especially "Long Tall Sally" itself; the late-'64 single "I Feel Fine"/"She's a Woman," with innovative guitar work (especially in the opening feedback on the A-side), and one of McCartney's best hard rockers on the flip; "Ticket to Ride"'s B-side "Yes It Is," an underrated ballad with complex vocal harmonies; and "Help!"'s manic B-side "I'm Down," which has McCartney's most searing energetic vocal.

Recommended additional recordings by the Beatles, early 1964-mid-1965:

1. From *Anthology Vol. 1* (EMI): Tracks 8-26 on disc two. Like the rest of the three *Anthology* volumes, this contains rare recordings, virtually all of them unreleased before 1995. Among the key 1964 material on the first *Anthology* volume: live recordings from 1964; the otherwise unavailable Isley Brothers cover "Shout," done for a TV special; the *Beatles for Sale* outtake "Leave My Kitten Alone," arguably better than some of the rock'n'roll covers that are on the album; and "You Know What to Do," the only George Harrison song the Beatles attempted in the studio that year.

2. From *The Beatles Live at the BBC* (EMI): Although the Beatles did far fewer BBC sessions in 1964 than they had in 1963, and did just one final BBC session in 1965 (in May) before discontinuing their musical BBC appearances, these include some notable goodies that don't show up on the official two-CD *Live at the BBC* compilation. Key tracks: "I Forgot to Remember to Forget," an early Elvis Presley song not recorded for their studio releases; Chuck Berry's classic "Johnny B. Goode," likewise not attempted at EMI Studios; and BBC versions of some *A Hard Day's Night* material.

3. From *On Air: Live at the BBC Volume 2* (Capitol/Apple/UMe/BBC): Most of this double CD of additional BBC recordings was recorded in 1963, but there are a few 1964 tracks too, though "I Got a Woman" (available in a different version on volume one) is the only one not done for their studio releases.

4. The Beatles, *The Beatles at the Hollywood Bowl* (Apple, 1977). This live record is actually divided about equally between concerts done in August 1964 and August 1965. The sound quality is only adequate, and the group obviously could have played and sung a little better if they weren't contending with thousands of screaming fans. But it's still a valuable historic document of Beatlemania in concert, including performances of some of their most famous early songs. This was finally made available on CD for the first time in 2016, with four bonus tracks and historical liner notes.

Notable unreleased Beatles material, early 1964-early-1965:

- 1. Numerous BBC sessions from January 7, 1964-May 26, 1965 not on *The Beatles Live at the BBC*.** While this doesn't include any songs unavailable elsewhere, there are plenty of live-in-the-studio performances of songs from their 1963-65 releases that still have yet to come out officially. Also in this batch are different versions of covers not found on their studio releases to the ones on *Live at the BBC*, such as "Hippy Hippy Shake" and "Sure to Fall."
- 2. The Complete Hollywood Bowl Concerts, August 23, 1964; August 29, 1965; and August 30, 1965.** Complete recordings of all three shows the Beatles did at the Hollywood Bowl were done and have made it into official circulation. Apple should really finally put *The Beatles at the Hollywood Bowl* on CD as an expanded edition that includes all three concerts in full.
- 3. Live at Convention Hall, Philadelphia, September 2, 1964.** Not quite as good technically as the Hollywood Bowl tapes, but perfectly listenable, and a somewhat better and more uninhibited performance. There are several other reasonable-quality unofficial live recordings of the Beatles in concert from 1964 and 1965, but this is the best.

Recommended additional reading (in addition to sections on the Beatles from early 1964-early 1965 on general reading list):

- 1. *The Beatles Are Coming! The Birth of Beatlemania in America*, by Bruce Spizer (498 Productions, 2003).** Extremely detailed, and very readable, specialized volume zeroing in on the onset of Beatlemania in the US in early 1964, as well as the preparations leading up to it.
- 2. *The Beatles in Richard Lester's A Hard Day's Night*, edited by J. Philip Di Franco (Penguin, 1977).** "A complete pictorial record of the movie," with the entire script (including deleted dialogue and

shots), hundreds of frame blow-ups, and a lengthy interview with director Richard Lester.

3. *Beatles at the Movies*, by Roy Carr (HarperPerennial, 1996). Overview of all of the feature movies in which the Beatles were involved (including some that didn't get made), among them of course *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!*

4. *The British Invasion*, by Nicholas Schaffner (McGraw-Hill, 1982). Profiles of major and minor British Invasion artists from the early 1960s to the early 1980s, starting with the Beatles.

Recommended DVDs/videos:

1. *The Beatles Anthology 3 & 4* (Apple, 2003). The third and fourth episodes (combined onto one 144-minute DVD) of the Beatles' official documentary tell the story of the band from their first American visit in February 1964 through mid-1965. 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 Four Complete Historic Ed Sullivan Shows featuring the Beatles* (SOFA Entertainment, 2003). Two-DVD set featuring the entire four half-hour episodes on which the Beatles appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, originally broadcast February 9, 1964; February 16, 1964; February 23, 1964; and September 12, 1965. The three 1964 episodes did more than anything else to launch Beatlemania in the United States.

3. *Live at the Washington Coliseum, 1964* (Apple). The Beatles' first American concert, held in Washington, DC on February 11, 1964, was filmed with somewhat crude visuals and sound. But it's enormously exciting to watch both the band and the audience, and overall the best concert-length footage of the Beatles onstage. Not yet available on DVD, but made available online by Apple via iTunes. Incidentally, their August 1965 Shea Stadium concert was filmed and broadcast as the basis of a network TV special, but has yet to be officially released.

4. *A Hard Day's Night* (Miramax). *A Hard Day's Night* has been issued on DVD in more than one edition. This one is a two-CD set with lots of extras.

Notable people:

Ed Sullivan: Host of the long-running American television variety program *The Ed Sullivan Show*. When the Beatles were featured on his show for three consecutive weeks in February 1964, those did more than anything else to spark Beatlemania in the US.

Sid Bernstein: Promoter of the Beatles' concert at Carnegie Hall in New York on February 12, 1964, and their Shea Stadium concert on August 15, 1965.

Derek Taylor: British journalist who began working for the Beatles as a publicist in early 1964. Quit later that year after disputes with Brian Epstein, but remained on good terms when he established himself as a leading rock publicist in California. Returned to the UK in the late 1960s to work at Apple, and was one of the few (along with George Martin and Neil Aspinall) people other than McCartney, Harrison, and Starr interviewed on-camera for the Beatles *Anthology* documentary.

Murray the K: New York radio DJ and self-anointed "Fifth Beatle" who attached himself to the group during their first American tour, sometimes to their annoyance, but did a lot to help publicize them in both New York and the US in general.

Richard Lester: Director of the first two Beatles feature films, *A Hard Day's Night* (1964) and *Help!* (1965). Also directed the one film in which John Lennon acted outside of the Beatles, *How I Won the War* (filmed in late 1966 in Spain just after the Beatles stopped touring).

Pattie Harrison (maiden name Pattie Boyd): Met George Harrison on the set of *A Hard Day's Night* (in which she had a small role) in March 1964. Became George's girlfriend, marrying him in January 1966. Divorced him in the mid-1970s, and later married George's friend Eric Clapton (from whom she also divorced). Her memoir

Wonderful Tonight: George Harrison, Eric Clapton, and Me was published in 2007.

Jimmy Nicol: British session drummer. Replaced Ringo temporarily when Ringo came down with tonsillitis just before a world tour in June 1964, playing with them for about ten days before Ringo was well enough to rejoin the group in Australia.

Bob Dylan: A big influence on the Beatles, and especially John Lennon, starting to make their lyrics more serious and sophisticated. Dylan and the Beatles met for the first time in New York on August 28, 1964, during the Beatles' second American tour.

Notable landmarks:

Plaza Hotel: Upscale New York hotel where the Beatles stayed during their first US visit in February 1964, causing much hysteria in the surrounding neighborhood.

Studio 50: Manhattan studios of CBS TV where the Beatles filmed their appearances on *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

Washington Coliseum: Site of the Beatles' first American concert in Washington, DC, February 11, 1964.

Carnegie Hall: Site of the Beatles' first New York concert, February 12, 1964.

Marylebone Station: London train station where the Beatles filmed the famous opening sequence of *A Hard Day's Night* on April 5, 1964.

Scala Theatre: London venue where the Beatles filmed the concert finale for *A Hard Day's Night*, March 31, 1964.

Cow Palace: San Francisco venue where the Beatles started their second American tour, August 19, 1964. (The Beatles also played there on August 31, 1965.)

Hollywood Bowl: Recordings of the Beatles in concert were made by Capitol Records here on August 23, 1964; August 29, 1965; and August 30, 1965. Some of these were used on the 1977 LP *The Beatles at the Hollywood Bowl*.

Kenwood: House in the London suburb of Weybridge where John Lennon lived with his wife and son from summer 1964 to spring 1968. He and Paul McCartney wrote numerous songs here.

Essential Albums by Other Artists That Were Influential On, Admired By, or Influenced By the Beatles from early 1964-early 1965:

1. **Bob Dylan, *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan*** (1963, Columbia). Dylan's second album, discovered by the Beatles not long before they first visited the US, was the first to fully display his talents as a protest ("Blowin' in the Wind," "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall") and personal ("Girl from the North Country") songwriter. Both his songwriting and harmonica playing would soon influence John Lennon in particular on the Beatles songs "I'm a Loser" and "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away."

2. **Bob Dylan, *Another Side of Bob Dylan*** (1964, Columbia). While Dylan did another important album (*The Times They Are A-Changin'*) between his second and fourth LPs, on this – his fourth LP – he moved away from topical songwriting to more personal, abstract lyrics. Though it was still an acoustic folk album, it was subtly helping to bring folk, pop, and rock closer together.

3. **The Searchers, *Greatest Hits*** (Rhino). The only other Merseybeat band regularly cited by the Beatles as among their favorite artists, the Searchers combined careful harmonies with glistening guitars, including 12-string electrics that anticipated the sound of folk-rock. "Needles and Pins" is their most famous hit.

4. **The Rolling Stones, *The Rolling Stones*** (1964, ABKCO). Almost everything the Rolling Stones recorded between 1963 and 1965 is worthwhile, and would have been heard and respected by the Beatles. Their self-titled debut album was their bluesiest effort, and upon topping the charts in the UK, established them as the

Beatles' closest competitors in Britain, though it would take about another year for them both to achieve similar success in the US and to write their own original hit records. Perhaps they reminded the Beatles of their own rougher roots before Brian Epstein managed them, and might have been envied for both those and their more uncompromisingly rebellious public behavior.

5. The Animals, *Absolute Animals 1964-1968* (Raven).

Perhaps the Beatles' other favorite British group in the early days of the British Invasion. Like the Stones, they were more inclined to blues and soul than the Beatles, though their sound was more oriented toward organ than guitar. Most renowned for their electric 1964 version of the folk song "The House of the Rising Sun," one of the first British Invasion hits to top the US charts after the Beatles.

6. Various Artists, *The Songs Lennon and McCartney Gave Away* (EMI). Except for a few late-1960s records on Apple, this collects all of the Lennon-McCartney compositions the Beatles did not release themselves, but gave away to other artists such as Billy J. Kramer, Peter & Gordon, Cilla Black, and the Fourmost, activity that for the most part stopped after the mid-1960s. Usually these songs are considerably more lightweight pop than the originals the Beatles saved for themselves, but they're still enjoyable and include numerous big hits, like Peter & Gordon's "A World Without Love" and Billy J. Kramer's "Bad to Me." Unfortunately, this 1979 British LP has never made it to CD.

7. The Beach Boys, *Endless Summer* (Capitol). The biggest American group of the mid-'60s, and one of the relatively few to excite praise from the Beatles, McCartney plugging their "very good harmonies" at a September 1964 press conference. The group would become considerably more influential upon McCartney with their 1966 *Pet Sounds* album, but this compilation has their big early-to-mid-'60s hits, many but not all of them surf and hot rod-oriented.

8. Various Artists, *British Invasion Vol. 1-9* (Rhino). The most extensive series of compilations of British Invasion hits of the mid-1960s. Aside from some major groups (the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Who, Herman's Hermits, the Dave Clark Five, and the

Animals) absent for licensing reasons, this has virtually every other British act of note from the period.

9. **The Byrds, *Preflyte*** (2001, Sundazed). Dating from around late 1964, the Byrds' demo tapes document not just the tentative birth of folk-rock, but how massively influential the Beatles were on their sound as they got started.

10. **The Byrds, *Mr. Tambourine Man*** (1965, Columbia). By combining the best of the Beatles and Bob Dylan, especially on the hit title track, the Byrds were more responsible than anyone else for the birth of folk-rock. The Beatles' influence is especially prominent on the vocal harmonies and electric 12-string guitar of Roger McGuinn, inspired to pick up the instrument after watching *A Hard Day's Night*.

11. **The Beau Brummels, *The Best of the Beau Brummels*** (Rhino). The first group to successfully and credibly emulate the British Invasion sound, San Francisco's Beau Brummels were sometimes mistaken for an actual British group when their first hit "Laugh, Laugh" started to get airplay in late 1964. Their proto-folk-rock thunder was stolen somewhat by the Byrds, but they remained a fine and underrated group, though they had just one more big hit, 1965's "Just a Little."

12. **Mary Wells, *The Ultimate Collection*** (Motown). The Beatles listened to countless soul records from Motown and other labels in the mid-1960s, and it's impossible to boil that influence down to one or two compilations. Mary Wells is an especially appropriate artist to check out, however, as the Beatles themselves cited her as one of their favorite singers, and she toured with the Beatles in the UK. In addition, her big hits (the biggest of which was "My Guy") were written and produced by Smokey Robinson, himself a big influence on the Beatles.

13. **Marvin Gaye, *Super Hits*** (Motown). Another Motown artist worthy of special citation, since McCartney himself named Gaye as one of his vocal idols on the BBC in February 1964, at a time when Gaye was only just starting to get established in the US and had yet to make the charts in the UK. It's also worth mentioning here that

McCartney was also a big fan of James Jamerson, bass player on countless Motown sessions. This CD has Gaye's biggest '60s hits.