

THE BEATLES

Third Session

ESSENTIAL BEATLES LISTENING, EARLY 1965-MID-1966:

1. *Help!* (EMI, the Beatles' fifth album, originally released August 1965). Like *A Hard Day's Night*, divided about evenly between songs used for the film soundtrack and ones exclusive to the album. Though still sticking to romantic lyrical themes, the Beatles are getting into more playful and witty wordplay, more reflective moods, and groundbreaking imaginative guitar tones. Standout tracks: "Help!," in which Lennon's insecurities come to the fore with more vulnerability and force than ever before; "Ticket to Ride," with its great mix of ebullient vocal harmonies, intricate drumming, and guitar leads both folk-rockish and raunchy; "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away," Lennon's most Dylanesque ballad; "I've Just Seen a Face," almost a fusion of bluegrass and rock; and McCartney's "Yesterday," the first track on which the Beatles used a string arrangement.

2. *Rubber Soul* (EMI, the Beatles' sixth album, originally released December 1965). The album usually cited as the one on which the Beatles made their greatest leap as writers of song lyrics, though there had been growing indications of more personal and creative wordplay for at least a year and a half. Much of the album also found them influenced by the folk-rock of Bob Dylan and the Byrds, and they continued to expand their tonal palette with the use of harpsichord, sitar, fuzz guitar, Greek-styled guitar, and other creative expansions of rock's sonic boundaries. Key tracks: "Norwegian Wood," the first use of sitar in a Beatles song; "In My Life," a movingly autobiographical look at their recent past; "Nowhere Man," the first Beatles song not to refer to romantic love at all in its lyrics; "If I Needed Someone," evidence of George Harrison's growing strength as a songwriter, and their most blatantly Byrds-influenced track; "Drive My Car," one of their gnarliest rock songs; and "Michelle," one of their prettiest ballads.

3. From *Past Masters Vol. 2* (EMI): "Ticket to Ride"'s B-side "Yes It Is," an underrated ballad with complex vocal harmonies; "Help!"'s

manic B-side "I'm Down," which has McCartney's most searing energetic vocal; "Day Tripper"/"We Can Work It Out," a double A-sided single from late 1965 that matched one of their most riff-driven guitar rockers with one of their most lilting, ambiguous philosophical tunes; and "Paperback Writer"/"Rain," the mid-1966 single whose A-side marked a move into more aggressively recorded power chord guitars and bass (and McCartney's first venture into non-romantic topical songwriting), backed by Lennon's first venture into druggy, hazy psychedelia.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL RECORDINGS BY THE BEATLES, EARLY-1965-MID-1966:

1. From *Anthology Vol. 2* (EMI): Tracks 2-16 on disc one, all of which date from 1965. Key songs: *Help!* outtakes "That Means a Lot" (covered by P.J. Proby) and "If You've Got Trouble"; live August 1965 performances; much different earlier version of "Norwegian Wood"; harder-rocking, different version of "I'm Looking Through You" with reggae-like rhythm.

2. *The Beatles at the Hollywood Bowl* (Capitol Records LP, 1977). Still mysteriously unavailable on CD, 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.

NOTABLE UNRELEASED BEATLES MATERIAL, EARLY 1965-MID-1966:

1. **Shea Stadium Concert, August 15, 1965.** Reasonable-quality recordings of one of the most famous Beatles' concerts have circulated. Considering the sound quality isn't *that* good, the screaming's very loud, and the group couldn't play at their best owing to the crowd volume, this is better experienced by watching the TV special (still officially unreleased, unfortunately) based on the concert. One song, "Everybody's Trying to Be My Baby," can be heard on *Anthology Vol. 2*.

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. **Nippon Budokan Hall Concerts, June 30, 1966 & July 1, 1966.** Good-quality recordings of both of the Beatles' entire sets filmed for television in Tokyo have circulated for a long time. Unfortunately, the Beatles' performances were generally under-par, owing to their reduced enthusiasm for touring and some instrumental and vocal sloppiness. Two tracks from the June 30, 1966 concert, "Rock and Roll Music" and "She's a Woman," are on *Anthology Vol. 2*. The concerts are better appreciated by watching the color TV programs of the entire shows, though these are not currently officially available.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL READING (IN ADDITION TO SECTIONS ON THE BEATLES FROM EARLY 1965-MID-1966 ON GENERAL READING LIST):

1. *Turn! Turn! Turn!: The 1960s Folk-Rock Revolution*, by Richie Unterberger (Backbeat, 2002). Book by the instructor of this course details how folk and rock merged to form folk-rock in the mid-1960s, a fusion instigated in great part by the Beatles' impact on young American folk musicians like the Byrds, Bob Dylan, and the Lovin' Spoonful. Folk-rock artists like these in turn considerably influenced the Beatles' own mid-1960s music. This book covers the birth and growth of folk-rock through mid-1966; the sequel, *Eight Miles High: Folk-Rock's Flight from Haight-Ashbury to Woodstock* (Backbeat, 2003), takes up the story of folk-rock from mid-1966 through 1970.

RECOMMENDED DVDS/VIDEOS:

1. *The Beatles Anthology 5 & 6* (Apple, 2003). Episode 5 of the Beatles' official documentary (the first DVD of this two-disc set) covers their career from the Shea Stadium concert to their 1966

world tour. 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. *Help!* (Apple, 1965). The DVD of their second film has extras, more (including the script) if you get the much more expensive deluxe edition.

3. *Beatles Concert at Budokan 1966* (Apple, Japan, 1993). The only official release of the film made for Japanese television of their Tokyo concert on June 30, 1966 was on laser disc by Apple in Japan back in 1993. This and the television program made of their July 1, 1966 concert at the same venue have long circulated unofficially, however. Though the Beatles' performances (McCartney excepted) are disappointingly uninspired, the color filming and sound were very professional, giving us a look at the state of the group in their final months as a touring act. 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.

NOTABLE PEOPLE:

The Byrds: One of the few American groups the Beatles respected as peers and personally befriended. Members of both bands took LSD together during the Los Angeles stop of the Beatles' 1965 US in late August 1965, during which the Byrds introduced the Beatles to the Indian sitar music of Ravi Shankar. Paul McCartney visited a Byrds recording session in Hollywood a few days later.

Ravi Shankar: Renowned Indian sitarist, who taught George Harrison sitar after George became interested in Indian music and religion in 1965. The two also become close personal friends, and George and his wife spent a lot of time with him when they traveled to India for an extended trip in late 1966 after the Beatles stopped touring.

Maureen Cleave: British journalist who interviewed the Beatles on several occasions in their early years. Her interview with John Lennon in early 1966, when reprinted in the United States shortly

before the Beatles' American tour that summer, touched off a furor due to the inclusion of John's comment that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus.

John Dunbar: Marianne Faithfull's first husband, and co-founder of the Indica Gallery in London. Helped introduce the Beatles, and particularly Paul McCartney, to some currents in avant-garde/experimental art and culture that influenced their work in the mid-1960s. Helped introduce John Lennon to Yoko Ono at an exhibition of Ono's work at his gallery in November 1966.

NOTABLE LANDMARKS:

Twickenham Film Studios: Suburban London film studio where the Beatles shot many non-location scenes for *Help!* in spring 1965.

Shea Stadium: When the Beatles played to about 55,000 people here on August 15, 1965, it marked the biggest concert they or any other musical performer had played up to that time. They played here again on August 23, 1966. Demolished in 2009.

7 Cavendish Avenue, St. John's Wood: Paul McCartney's London home, bought in April 1965, into which he moved in March 1966. Only a few blocks from Abbey Road Studios; Paul and John did some songwriting here. Still one of the homes that Paul owns and lives in part-time.

Empire Pool, Wembley: Site of the Beatles' final official British concert, as part of the *New Musical Express* Annual Poll-Winners' Concert on May 1, 1966.

Nippon Budokan Hall: Tokyo arena in which the Beatles gave their final professionally filmed official live concerts on June 30 and July 1, 1966.

ESSENTIAL ALBUMS BY OTHER ARTISTS THAT WERE INFLUENTIAL ON, ADMIRER BY, OR INFLUENCED BY THE BEATLES FROM EARLY 1965-MID-1966:

1. **Bob Dylan, *Bringing It All Back Home*** (1965, Columbia). Even if his own songs weren't overtly Beatlesque, the Beatles were the biggest influence on Dylan moving from acoustic folk music to electric rock'n'roll. He did so on side one of this LP, while side two contained "Mr. Tambourine Man."
2. **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*.
3. **Bob Dylan, *Highway 61 Revisited*** (1965, Columbia). Dylan's first all-electric rock album, including the huge hit "Like a Rolling Stone," would not have been possible without the massive effect the Beatles and other major British Invasion bands had upon him.
4. **The Byrds, *Turn! Turn! Turn!*** (Columbia, 1965). The Byrds' second album, featuring the #1 title song, a folk-rock classic adaptation of a Pete Seeger song. George Harrison dubbed the Byrds "the American Beatles," and specifically emulated their 12-string folk-rock sound on his *Rubber Soul* composition "If I Needed Someone." The *Revolver* song "And Your Bird Can Sing" may also have been partially inspired by the Byrds.
5. **The Lovin' Spoonful, *Greatest Hits*** (Buddha). One of the Beatles' favorite American groups. Their good-time, bouncy folk-rock sound was echoed by the Beatles on *Revolver's* "Good Day Sunshine." John Lennon and George Harrison saw the Lovin' Spoonful perform at the peak of their fame at London's Marquee Club on April 18, 1966, and the Spoonful hits "Do You Believe in Magic" and "Daydream" were on Lennon's personal jukebox.
6. **The Who, *Meaty Big and Bouncy*** (Universal, 1971). Around the time of "Paperback Writer," Paul McCartney cited Dylan and the Who as the biggest influences on the Beatles. "Paperback Writer" certainly sounds influenced by the Who's power-chord-heavy guitar sound, especially as heard on the Who's early-1966 hit "Substitute."

This compilation of greatest hits from the Who's first half-dozen years includes "Substitute" and other mid-'60s classics like "My Generation," "The Kids Are Alright" (perhaps the Who song on which the Beatles' influence is most evident), and "Happy Jack."

7. **The Rolling Stones, *Big Hits (High Tide and Green Grass)*** (ABKCO, 1966). Compilation of the Rolling Stones' mid-'60s hits shows the growth of the Mick Jagger-Keith Richards songwriting team as one that began to rival Lennon-McCartney as one of the most successful of the era, especially starting with their monster summer 1965 hit "(I Can't Get No Satisfaction)." Occasionally they would be accused of copying the Beatles some degree, particularly on "Paint It Black" (which used a sitar shortly after the Beatles had first done so on "Norwegian Wood") and "As Tears Go By" (which had a string arrangement reminiscent of "Yesterday," though "As Tears Go By" had actually been written, and a hit for Marianne Faithfull, before "Yesterday" was released).

8. **The Rolling Stones, *Aftermath*** (ABCKO, 1966). The first Rolling Stones album to consist entirely of original material, likely under the pressure/influence of the Beatles, highlighted by the US hits "Mother's Little Helper" and "Lady Jane."

9. **The Kinks, *Greatest Hits Vol. 1*** (Rhino). Though not among the very most commercially successful British Invasion fans, the Kinks were enormously respected by fellow musicians. The esteem in which they were held especially grew when chief songwriter Ray Davies moved into wryly humorous character sketches with a British flavor, including the hits "Well Respected Man," "Dedicated Follower of Fashion," and "Sunny Afternoon" (the last on their 1966 album *Face to Face*). These were likely influential on Paul McCartney in particular, on songs like "Lovely Rita" and, near the end of the Beatles' career, "Maxwell's Silver Hammer."

10. **Ravi Shankar, *Ragas & Talas*** (Angel/World Pacific, 1964). It may be that George Harrison was likely the only one of the Beatles to listen closely to Shankar's records. But there's no doubt Shankar was a huge influence on him, and thus by extension a significant influence on the Beatles, especially on tracks on which the sitar was heard, including "Norwegian Wood," "Love You To," and "Within

You Without You." It's hard to say which Shankar record Harrison would have been most likely to have heard first, but it might have been this one, since it was on a label in which one of the Byrds' managers was involved, and he might have first heard Shankar when hanging out with the Byrds in LA during the Beatles' summer 1965 tour.

11. **Wilson Pickett, *The Very Best of Wilson Pickett*** (Atlantic, 1967). The Beatles didn't get too far into rock that bore the obvious influence of the southern soul music being produced in Muscle Shoals and Memphis, except maybe for "Got to Get You into My Life" and, to a lesser extent, "Drive My Car." When they entertained thoughts (never followed through) of recording in Memphis in 1966, however, they might have had the sound of records like Wilson Pickett's mid-'60s hits in mind, especially as John Lennon once said he was trying for a Wilson Pickett sort of groove on the Beatles' "You Can't Do That."

12. **Otis Redding, *Otis Blue/Otis Redding Sings Soul*** (Atco, 1966). Otis Redding's mid-'60s soul records might have also been influential on the Beatles' decision to at least investigate the possibility of recording in Memphis at the studio of Stax Records. John Lennon's jukebox had Redding's first UK hit, his version of the Temptation's "My Girl," which almost made the British Top Ten in late 1965 (and is included on this album).

13. **The Supremes, *Gold*** (Motown). For a while in the mid-1960s, the Supremes were the Beatles' closest competitors on the US charts, at one time issuing five #1 singles in a row. Though Paul McCartney pointed out that they tended to make variations on the same record whereas the Beatles were always trying to do something different from what they'd done before, the group nonetheless must have paid close attention to Motown's most successful act. Disc one of this double-CD greatest hits collection has almost all of the hits they would have heard in the mid-1960s.

14. **Buck Owens, *The Best of Buck Owens, Vol. 1*** (Rhino). Discussion of influences on the Beatles usually focuses on artists revered by Lennon, McCartney, and to a lesser degree Harrison. Ringo also had his favorites that impacted the group's sound, if not

as heavily, including country-and-western music by the likes of Buck Owens, whose "Act Naturally" he sang on *Help!* Country artists like Owens also likely had some influence on the more country-oriented tracks from *Beatles for Sale*, like "I Don't Want to Spoil the Party."

15. **Various Artists, *John Lennon's Jukebox*** (Virgin). Two-CD compilation of selections from the jukebox John Lennon carried around with him on tour in the mid-1960s. Includes classics by the likes of the Lovin' Spoonful, Donovan, Wilson Pickett, the Miracles, Bob Dylan, and the Animals, as well as numerous rock'n'roll oldies predating the Beatles' stardom.