

# THE DRINK TANK



**MEAT THE BEATLES**



# How I Became a Beatles Fan—An Editorial by Alissa McKersie

Since I was ten years old, I was the one who swam against the current; I was a Monkees fan. No matter how hard my dad tried, it was the goofy guys with the silly television show that I was addicted to, even as he tried playing his Beatles vinyls for me.

Fast forward about 12 years, and a friend of mine took me to a showing of *A Hard Day's Night* in Tempe, Arizona. I knew that, had I seen that movie first, it would have been The Beatles that I would have been a fan of. It was easily the same kind of format that I enjoyed. But I knew nothing about the guys.

Time travel again to this year and Peter Jackson's *Get Back*...my husband has been a big Beatles fan, and we took the time to watch the documentary. I can honestly say, it was this that really gave me the insight into the process of some of the songs that I have enjoyed. I have been listening to as much of The Beatles' music as I can since. As much as it is long, I really enjoyed watching the *Get Back* documentary and the rollercoaster ride of emotions it takes you on. The one part that will always stand out to me is how everyone was with Linda's daughter, Heather. Paul, especially, was great with her, and later adopted her. That was a very special thing to see. If you haven't seen it, and you have an opportunity to, please take the time to do. I wholly recommend it.

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Ooh, I need your love, babe  
Guess you know it's true



Hope you need my love, babe  
Just like I need you



## My Top Nine Beatles Songs by Christopher J. Garcia

### “Helter Skelter”

Easily my favorite Beatles song, and it sort of shows a lot of where music on the radio was heading. We already had the beginnings of the metal movement, and folks like the MC5 were bringing the early roots of punk about, but “Helter Skelter” was the real signal that the Beatles were working with a bigger palette than what was pop music at the time. While everyone seems to say they were in their psychedelic phase, they were really experimenting with the edges of what their audience would take, and this is the best example of them hitting on a harder sound, and on an album that has some of their cutesiest song on it. Slapping it alongside *Rocky Raccoon* and *Bungalow Bill* really shows that they knew they were doing something that had to be eased into.

*“I GOT BLISTERS ON MY FINGERS!!!!!”*

### “Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da”

Do the ska!

Okay, it ain’t exactly Jamaican ska, but it is one of bounciest songs they ever did, and it’s an absolute pick-me-up on every level! Yes, it does pick up on the rhythms that were starting to hit the radio from Laurel Aiken, Desmond Dekker, Jimmy Cliff, and Bob Marley and the Wailers. It even plays like Millie Small’s, “My Boy Lollipop,” especially with that bouncy, almost beer-hall piano. It’s an amazing song.

*“La-La-La-La life goes on!”*

### “Day in the Life”

It’s not a song. It’s some sort of concerto.

It really is the prototype for everything Wings would be doing in the 1970s. It’s a chaotic piece at times, and it’s a stunningly beautifully orchestrated piece as well, but one of the reasons I love it so much is that I’ve heard it in the single best place to hear a piece of music.

CCRMA at Stanford is the world’s leading computer audio research school. The most important work in computer music has been done there, from the work that led to SIRI to important compositions that have changed the way we think of computer music. They have a Pit. The Pit is a room with dozens of speakers coming from every direction, making it possible to model physical spaces and how music would sound in it. I got to hear what music in the Hagia Sofia would sound like if it were allowed today. They also have a version of “A Day in the Life” that is tuned -- and there’s no better way to put that -- to the Pit.

And it is amazing. You realize exactly how much of a soundscape it is, and when it hits that ending, it’s a wham like you’ve never experienced.

*“Now they know how many holes it takes to fill the Albert Hall.”*

### “Revolution 9”

Speaking of soundscapes, this one is amazing, and it’s a large part of what made me realize I love sound art. It’s a sound collage, and one that 100% acted as a gateway drug for me. Many US releases of *The White Album* use a clipped version, but the full one is out

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I think I’m gonna be sad  
I think it’s today, yeah



The girl that’s driving me mad  
Is going away

there, and it's amazing. There's a piece on this one in the issue!

"Number 9, number 9, number 9, number 9 . . ."

### "She's So Heavy"

This is a hard one for me, and again it's a personal connection. I've heard this described as the heavy mellow, and it's certainly one of the kinds of songs that brought us sludge rock in the late 1980s. It's a beautiful song, and when it goes all guitar, I find it incredibly moving. It's honey-slow, and it's a simple set of lyrics that are just fantastic. It's a great song, and it gets going when it slows down. It's an almost eight-minute song, yet it's never bogged down. I love it so much, but I could also totally see the audience of the day hating it.

"Heavy, Heavy, Heavy."

### "Eleanor Rigby"

A former co-worker once described Eleanor Rigby as "wrist-slittingly good." It's one of the most depressing songs I've ever heard. It's a beautifully directed song. It's the first time that it feels like they're working towards an orchestral sound, as the strings are beautifully enmeshed with the vocals.

And it's incredible how depressing a story it is.

I mean, this is the story of what the 1960s British/American would have been afraid of modern living evolving into. The idea of the elderly dying alone, and more than that, that we are all destined to be alone. It's the clearest symptom of modern society, this loneliness, and the Beatles capture it perfectly.

"Died in the church and was buried along with her name."

### "Norwegian Wood"

The influence of Indian music pops up here, and it's so thoroughly integrated into the traditional rock format that the Beatles were working in at that point in their career. *Revolver* and *Rubber Soul* are two good albums closing out the period that they were skiffing and started experimenting and really rocking. This is such a great song, and for years I thought it was on one of their later albums, because it would so seamlessly fold into *The White Album* or *Abbey Road*. It's a great chill-out song, and the lyrics are trippy, but not so trippy they become psychedelic.



It's only love and that is all  
Why should I feel the way I do?



It's only love, and that is all  
But it's so hard loving you

"I once had a girl, or should I say, she once had me."

### "Back in the USSR"

This is straight-ahead rock 'n roll.

It's also the Beatles banging on themselves for being the biggest band in the world.

Really, no other song except for "The Ballad of John and Yoko," is as much about how they see themselves after having broken massive. Looking at the way the Beatles grew and let's put it into context with the Beach Boys, they became bigger than anything by being inventive musicians at the same time as being fascinating public figures. The Beach Boys became utterly uncool when they started becoming inventive musicians, and their sales tanked just when they were getting smarter about their music. The Beatles hit and hit and hit, and this is something of a throwback sound for them, but the lyrics are all about someone getting back to the USSR, but really, it's about someone becoming a star, leaving home, and returning. That story is simple and using the USSR as a theme was smart and makes 'em seem less arrogant. Also, there was no Ringo on this one!

"That Georgia's always on My, my, my, my, my, my, my, my mind!"

### "Glass Onion"

Another straight-ahead rock 'n roll song, but one that plays with the wall of sound idea. There's a lot going on, especially in the lyrics.

Lennon wanted to mess with people.

The lyrics are totally nonsensical. It's supposed to be thumbing their nose at the idea of their lyrics being deep. There's a great scene in *Walk Hard: The Dewey Cox Story* where Cox is in his Bob Dylan phase, singing a song which is completely meaningless, and backstage, when one of the other bandmates says, "These lyrics are meaningless," which leads to Tim Meadows' character saying "Shut up! This is very deep."

It's brilliantly orchestrated. The strings and Paul on the recorder come together in a brilliant way that lifts the entire song into a bigger thing.

"The Walrus was Paul."



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Spread the word I'm thinking of  
Have you heard the word is love?



It's so fine, it's sunshine  
It's the word, love



## Playing Song Games with the Beatles by John Purcell

**Baby** Boomers are defined not only by when they were born, but by the music and events of their times. My brother and I are Boomers. Rick was born in 1951, and I popped out in 1954. He is much more aware of the late 1950s television shows and music than I am, but I still remember watching episodes of shows like *Andy's Gang*, *Twilight Zone*, and *Ozzie and Harriet* from the tail end of that decade. Those first two shows were wonderful fun, and I loved them, but not so much *Ozzie and Harriet*. The only reason I bothered to watch that show was because at the end of every episode their son Ricky would play a song with his band. It didn't matter to me if the same song played every single week or rotated with his other current hits: for me this was the best part of each week's show. By the time I turned six years old, in my heart I knew that's what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.

See, Ricky Nelson was my first music hero. He looked so cool, calm, and confident, standing there strumming that guitar and singing away with his band, girls hanging on his every word and smile. That time frame - late 1950s and early 1960s - was perfect timing for Ricky Nelson to imprint on my mind: Elvis Presley was still in the Army in 1960, and when he returned to civilian life, Presley started making those godawful movies, complete with godawful songs [shudder]. To be honest, I didn't care for Elvis' music until I was in high school and started listening to his 1950s hits, which gave me an education and an appreciation for Elvis and his influence on rock and roll. But for me, Ricky Nelson was da bomb, as far as I was concerned. I wanted to be the next Ricky Nelson - even though I was less than ten years old!

All that changed by the end of 1963. My brother and I -- now ages twelve and nine, respectively -- listened to the two hit radio stations in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, KDWB and KSTP, both on the AM dial, naturally, since FM radio's heyday had not kicked into gear yet. The first glimmering of a seismic shift in pop music from across the Atlantic was starting to hit the airwaves that year, supplanting my favorite bands and singers of my youth, like Ricky Nelson, of course, but also Roy Orbison, Gene Pitney, the Shangri-Las, the Ronettes, and the Beach Boys. I will never forget when my brother and I first heard "Love Me Do," "Please Please Me," and "She Loves You" throughout 1963, and then "I Want to Hold Your Hand" was released just before Christmas that year. By the time these four lads from Liverpool appeared on *The Ed Sullivan Show* on February 9, 1964, their music was all over the radio. We faithfully watched their three appearances on that program wishing all those damned girls would shut up so that we could actually hear the music!

Well, there you have it: the background for this article. There is no need for me to recap Beatles history, it is so well known and constantly chronicled. Last month I finally watched Peter Jackson's documentary *Get Back*, and while hearing Lennon, McCartney, Harrison, and Starr playing bits and snippets of songs each was working on that would eventually show up on some of their later solo albums, I had a thought: which songs from all those solo recordings would the Beatles have recorded should they have managed to either stay together or reconvene as a unit?

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Why she had to go?  
I don't know, she wouldn't say.



I said something wrong.  
Now I long for yesterday.

Obviously, the reality is that this never really happened, except for two songs that the three surviving Beatles in the 1990s recorded for the *Anthology* albums: “Free as a Bird” and “Real Love,” reconstructed and mastered from tape recordings John Lennon had made at home before his death. That was spooky, I admit, hearing John Lennon’s voice again and all four voices harmonizing as if they were all really back together in the studio. But my original idea still floated inside my head, demanding release, since watching *Get Back*. What follows is a listing compiled from John, Paul, George, and Ringo’s solo releases that I think the full group might have recorded together through, say, February 2004, which would have been the fortieth anniversary of their Ed Sullivan Show broadcasts, and would likely have hit the Top Ten or Top Forty, at the very least. Please note that this is not a complete list of all their solo songs, but in my humble opinion, this is still one hell of a set list!

### Lennon Songs

“Imagine”  
“Instant Karma”  
“Give Peace a Chance”  
“Whatever Gets You Through the Night”  
“Oh, My Love”  
“Happy Xmas (War is Over)”  
“Woman”  
“Watching the Wheels”  
“Clean Up Time”  
“I’m Losing You”  
“Nobody Told Me”

### Starr Songs

“The No-No Song”  
“You’re Sixteen”  
“It Don’t Come Easy”  
“Photograph”  
“Back off Boogaloo”  
“Only You”  
“Goodnight, Vienna”  
“Fastest Growing Heartache in the West”

### McCartney Songs

“Maybe I’m Amazed”  
“Band on the Run”  
“Figure of Eight”  
“My Brave Face”  
“I Can See the World Tonight”  
“Put it There”  
“Jet”  
“Helen Wheels”  
“Letting Go”  
“Hope of Deliverance”  
“1985”

### Harrison Songs

“My Sweet Lord”  
“What is Life”  
“Got my Mind Set on You”  
“When We was Fab”  
“Any Road”  
“All Those Years Ago”  
“This is Love”  
“Give Me Love (Give me Peace on Earth)”

Like I said, this is a cornucopia of great songs spanning an incredible range of musical styles, formats, and topics. I am sure there are readers who will disagree with some of my choices and would like to add other songs, and they are welcome to do so. This is not a definitive list of “greatest hits” of each Beatle, but I selected these as songs that I personally believe the four of them might very well record as a band. I can imagine them smirking and smiling at each other on tunes like “Only You,” “Whatever Gets You Through the Night,” and especially “When We Was Fab.” Oh, yeah. They’d have fun on those songs, for sure.

There are a few songs here that might possibly be questionable additions, notably “My Sweet Lord,” which I personally can’t see the Beatles as a band improving on no matter what kind of studio magic wand George Martin might wave. Still, I am sure they’d try.

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If you drive a car, I’ll tax the street  
If you try to sit, I’ll tax your seat



If you get too cold I’ll tax the heat  
If you take a walk, I’ll tax your feet

Conversely, I can see these four really getting into the blues-rock vibe of "I'm Losing You," rocking out on "Helen Wheels" or "It Don't Come Easy," joyously jamming on "Got My Mind Set on You," and simply sharing their love songs about being in love with their beloved wives on the songs "Woman" and "Maybe I'm Amazed," these last two being what I consider to be top-flight love songs. They would be worthy companions alongside George Harrison's brilliant "Something" from *Abbey Road* (1969), continuing the Beatles' incredible string of hit songs for another thirty years.

It certainly makes one wonder what kind of music these four gentlemen might have produced if they had somehow overcome their divisions, and if John Lennon had not been brutally murdered. That much is obvious. Of course, George Harrison also died too young at the age of fifty-eight from cancer. Even so, playing mind-games like this is fun on a personal level, and I am fairly certain many other lifelong Beatles fans have concocted such lists.



The bottom line is that, without question, individually they were all talented musicians, singers, and songwriters who produced marvelous solo recordings long after the demise of the Beatles. When they were together and deep into their music in the studio, what they created as a group was truly magical and transcendent. I hope it is not too presumptuous of me to conclude this by saying that we mere mortals shall always be eternally grateful for having our lives blessed by their music.

Asked a girl what she wanted to be  
She said baby, "Can't you see



I wanna be famous, a star of the screen  
But you can do something in between"





## “Revolution 9”: The Best of the Beatles by Christopher J. Garcia

**There've** been surveys showing that the least loved Beatles song is “Revolution 9.” Those people are wrong. No, they are not only objectively, but also subjectively wrong. Just. Wrong. It is the best thing they ever did, the only thing that takes a real chance, that gives their audience any sort of credit as being capable of understanding the art they wanted to throw out into the world. It is not only a magical piece in and of itself, but it is tried into the world of sound art, and specifically audio collage, and it also shows that John Lennon and Yoko Ono together were way better artists than any other Beatle.

Let's start with the idea of tape music.

Tape music has been around as long as tape has been around. A lot of composers were experimenting with using tapes in the 1950s, but it was the San Francisco Tape Music Center that brought it to maturity. The folks who were there are some of the real giants in late twentieth century experimental music: Morton Subotnik, Pauline Oliveros, Tony Martin -- a wonderful human, who I just found out passed away last year -- and Ramón Sender. Sender created a bunch of fantastic pieces in the early 1960s, most importantly “KRONOS.” His use of tape loops, and often the sound of the operation of the equipment, helped to define the potential uses of tape music beyond the Avant Garde. Much of Sender's work in the early 1960s was still within the idea of New Music and had evolved out of the traditional orchestral/chamber music traditions. It's fascinating stuff to hear.

An incredible individual who worked in the same sort of idea but coming out of the hillbilly and ethno-

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She asked me to stay  
And she told me to sit anywhere



So I looked around  
And I noticed there wasn't a chair

musicology space was Henry Flynt, who happened to be born the same year as John Lennon. His work, like *Hillbilly Tape Music*, is both traditional in that it was based around mountain tonality and rhythms and manipulated audio using tape loops and background. It's incredible to hear, and it's the same idea as what gave us "Cotton-eyed Joe" and the general state of electronica.

Most folks point to Karlheinz Stockhausen as a forebearer to "Revolution 9," but it's far colder and on purpose. He explored coldness in music in a way that Kraftwerk would, only far more musically calculated. For example, "Telemusik" uses Japanese instruments and audio characteristics to lay out the piece along with the electronically generated sounds. It's highly intellectual, and there's a hint at emotionality that quickly becomes subsumed in the intellectual. It's a German musical of "Stiff Upper!" I think.

Of course, there's Steve Reich. He did some of the most important, and difficult, tape music pieces, the most famous being "It's Gonna Rain." It's a snippet from a fire-and-brimstone preacher that Reich lopped at various points to produce a near-hypnotic repetitive piece in 1965, HUGELY important to the development of everything from minimalism to sound art to what I think is the most important, Avant Garde soundscapes. It's also a shockingly important piece to the preservation of that kind of preaching.

The Fluxus movement, of which Yoko was a major part, provided a lot of incredible sound pieces, with artists like Nam June Paik, George Macunius, and Joan Jonas being very important practitioners. They were less interested in the collage aspect, though Nam June Paik's piece "Beatles Electronique" (1969) certainly goes down that road.

There is a piece I heard once on YouTube that sounded very 1960s. It was a couple in a New York apartment, and they were having an argument. The man felt that his wife was stepping out on him, and the wife was made he was always out drinking. I've only heard it once, and it was loops and manipulations that were incredible, perfectly timed to ramp up the emotional impact of the characters. This was the first time I'd ever heard anything edited that brought the same energy that a film scene did. If this rings any bells with you, tell me because I want to hear it again and cannot find it.

Richard Maxfield's work in the early 1960s was a bigger influence on the Wall of Sound, and especially on the work of Beach Boys' super-genius Brian Wilson, but the textures he creates are remarkably like what Lennon managed in his masterpiece. Kid Baltan also produced electronic and tape pieces that were incredibly textural, and you can feel much of what Revolution 9 was doing in it.

The point of "Revolution 9" is to give an impression, an experience, and an unpleasant one at that. It's been said that it is supposed to be the sound of revolution, but I reject that concept wholly – it's the feeling of what it is to be surrounded by a revolution, and not a part of it. This is what a pop star understands better than an Avant Garde musician. While Avant Garde music can be very moving, I'll point to much of the work of Philip Glass for film as an example. The way things are layered is disorienting, and more importantly, disturbing. Revolution, even one that you support and want more than anything should be disturbing, should hurt, should push you away. That's why it's a revolution and not a just a change. That's key, and I believe that Lennon, along with Yoko and George, captures that perfectly here. It is this idea that you must get through the discomfort, the disquiet, and fight your desire to just make it stop. That's why it's eight minutes. That's why there so little to latch on to. It's supposed to be hard, and when a poet takes that on, even in another form, it can be masterfully done to hit an emotional chord.

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When I call you up  
Your line's engaged



I have had enough  
So act your age



### **Creative Reflection on the Documentary Film *The Beatles: Get Back* by Kevin Luck**

We all know the story. I don't think we would be reading about these insights if we didn't.

This is the history:

*Let It Be* was the final studio album of the Beatles. It was released in May of 1970. The final track, entitled "The End," culminated with the lyric "All the love you ever take is equal to the love you make." This would be the last lyric ever written by the band as a collective entity. *Let It Be* the album was the product of a one-month series of recording sessions which were chronicled in over 160 hours of archival footage and condensed down into a three-part, seven hour and forty-seven-minute linear narrative in 2021.

If you haven't listened to the album in its entirety, I highly recommend you do. Aside from it being their last collective and commercial enterprise, it's an interesting perspective into the crucible of creative genius. It spawned, or reasonably developed, the contributing musicians directly involved aside, multiple careers of the cadre of support personnel, sound engineering, and record management. The cultural and musical impact of the album itself is the subject of countless articles and musings. From just a musical maturity standpoint, squinting and attempting to ignore any previous contributions to the industry, *Let It Be* was accomplished when John and Ringo were twenty-nine, Paul was twenty-seven, and George was twenty-five years old. While the music world does embrace youth, to create a masterpiece of this seminal importance at the tender age that the lads from Liverpool did, with the sheer volume of single hits on this one offering, would be a feat unequalled worldwide for decades.

The fact that I'm a reverent fan should be obvious. I wouldn't be writing this and definitely wouldn't have dedicated almost eight hours of my life to watching a documentary if I weren't at least curious. What I wasn't expecting was a perspective from those eight hours of my life to change. I believed I knew the Beatles as I turned on *The Beatles: Get Back*. I believed it was an opportunity to see the creative process they

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All these places had their moments  
With lovers and friends I still can recall



Some are dead and some are living  
In my life I've loved them all

were embracing as they walked into the soundstage at Tottenham with the intention of a new album and a possible live performance experience. What I experienced was emotionally crushing. A perspective into creative chaos the likes of which I knew was bad from the countless biographical accounts that I've read over the years. I was unprepared to bear witness to what I saw. I am still recovering as I write this. Trying to find the words to express the introspective anguish that I feel. Trying to make sense of what I watched happen in pure documentary filmmaker's captured realism in a series of moments fifty years ago.

If you have or haven't watched the documentary, this is neither an endorsement nor a cautionary tale. I'm positive that if you haven't seen it yet and you intend to do so, you'll enjoy it. It's a great narrative and awesome insight into the power that a culmination of extraordinary talent can bring to a project. If you have watched it and somehow believe that we watched a different documentary, you're not wrong. It's very possible that I read way too much into the experience.

What I experienced was very personal and is still shifting the shape of my creativity.

To me, good or ill, the Beatles were some of my formative role models of my personal creativity.

Still are, always will be, even after watching *The Beatles: Get Back*. I'm the child and grandchild of musicians. *Let It Be* was on the shelf next to Simon and Garfunkel's *Bridge Over Troubled Water*, King Crimson's *Court of the Crimson King*, Glenn Miller's *Greatest Hits*, and Chase's *Ennea*. While I dabbled in music, the shadow of the generations of my family before me eclipsed any forward progress with unspoken inadequacies and skepticism, I rebelled by becoming a dancer. Music always featured prominently in my artistic endeavors and still does to this day. The Beatles featured prominently the moment I was able, and allowed, to put a needle on a record. I believe that every musical experience a human has is deeply personal. We can all experience the same song, album, melody, or lyric. What we are doing, what culture we come from, the thing that we are doing right then, that moment when we experience, is what shapes that deeply personal experience. I grant that I don't see the world like a lot of others. I'd posit that hearing "Stairway to Heaven" is best experienced as a hurdy gurdy echo above the crowd in the train station in Madrid. Many Led Zeppelin fans might not agree.

I'd always held that the Beatles, collectively and individually, were creative geniuses on multiple levels. In my heart, I know what that kind of genius looks like, and have spent most of my life aspiring to achieve even the smallest fraction of it. While I have tried to dissect brilliance, it's like picking a thousand locks and realizing you still don't know what a door looks like. My hope, upon watching *The Beatles: Get Back* was that maybe, just maybe, I'd get one of those metaphoric locks of my youthful creativity to open. The pick broke off in the lock, that safe can never be opened and those role models are gone. The fab four desperately needed an adult. Paul even comments at one point that they were horribly lost without Brian Epstein, their manager from 1962 until he passed away in 1967. What I hoped would be a portrayal of playful creative process interspersed with disciplined insight was the farthest thing from that. My childhood expectations dashed upon a solid floor in a basement recording studio on Seville Road.

As I said earlier, I'm still recovering. I am just as creative, I think, as I was before I watched *The Beatles: Get Back*. I know now that the fear and self-doubt that I experience, which I thought was a byproduct of hypercontrolling adults of my youth, is truly inherent in the ugly act of creativity itself. What obstacles I place in front of my art are the defense mechanisms that make that art exist in the first place. Eventually I want to write a biography entitled *In My Own Way*.

This narrative will likely feature prominently in it. By the time the Beatles went to record *Let It Be*, they had already become larger than life. Many of the people around them sought answers from them merely because they were the Beatles. Already venerated rock stars. As evidenced in the documentary, they were often afraid. It sometimes evaporated in and amongst fleeting moments, but was always tangible, to me, just below the surface of the existing emotional state.

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I need to laugh and when the sun is out  
I've got something I can laugh about



I feel good in a special way  
I'm in love and it's a sunny day

John was perhaps too high sometimes to truly connect to it, it was often tangible in Paul's eyes and demeanor. A desperate, deeply visceral, exploration of melody and lyrics drawing on chaotic interludes of influences and stylistic exposures.

Do I recommend you watch the documentary *The Beatles: Get Back*? I can't answer that for you. If you're not a fan I'd say give it a miss. If you are, you might like it, it might infuriate you. It might be interesting to you to see the process, hear the unfamiliar melodies morph into the familiar as they appear in and amongst the exploration. It's beautiful and tragic, much like art and life. When I watched it, a stable foundation group of my personal artistic deities became fragile and scared humans. The inspiration that they continue to provide me personally through the gift that is their music is tangible. I can't be more grateful and wish they all could have known that.

I'm saddened by what I see in the reflection of this documentary, much as I am saddened, perhaps, with what I see when I see my own reflection. We all know the story. The concerts that didn't happen, the albums that don't exist, the music that stopped one day in 1970. The love we never made.

*The Beatles: Get Back* is a three-episode documentary currently featuring on the streaming service Disney+.

**Kevin Luck** (or "Ghost" as he is often referred to) is a San Jose based sculptor and mixed media artist. When he isn't knitting wire or rummaging through questionable localities searching for interesting objects or usable lumber, he's in his studio assembling one of many unfinished projects. His current explorations involve the upsetting of how we perceive the traditional framed artwork and the archival of objects in time and space. He is still trying to figure out what media he prefers to work in and likely won't make a decision anytime soon. If you want to visit him in the studio, have an obscure woodworking project, antique restoration, hoarding problem, or just long for a decent cup of coffee and an interesting social experience, feel free to contact him at [ghostballet@gmail.com](mailto:ghostballet@gmail.com).

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What would you think if I sang out of tune  
Would you stand up and walk out on me?

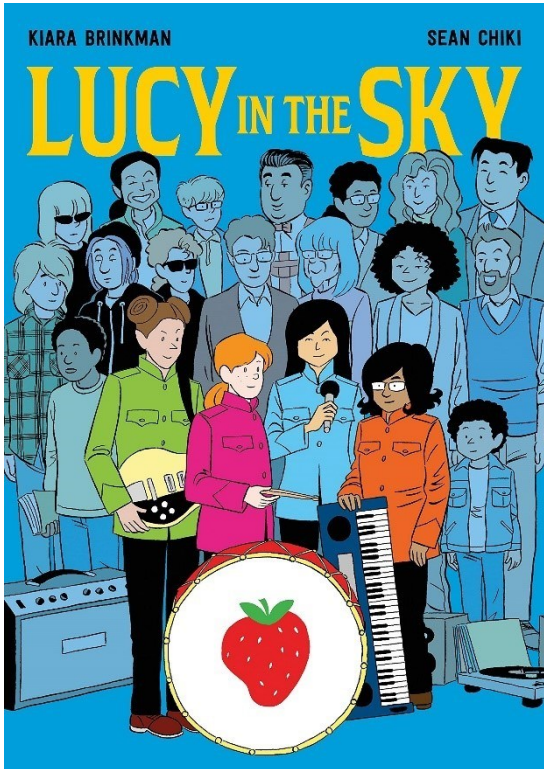


Lend me your ears and I'll sing you a song  
And I'll try not to sing out of key

# Recent Comics Inspired by the Beatles

## by Chuck Serface

### *Lucy in the Sky*



coming-of-age story . . . well . . . rocks. The creators intend it for middle-school ages, but adults will enjoy *Lucy in the Sky* equally.

Maybe Lucy's predicaments will remind them of how they first discovered the Beatles, or they'll reconnect with whatever music, literature, or art dulls the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to? Also, I appreciate how the Beatles collection she unearths gives Ruby insight into her father. During high school, I bonded with my father through male-adventure series, especially Don Pendleton's *The Executioner* series. I'm not sure I'd like them much now, but they're quick enough reading to find out. May *Lucy in the Sky* bring you similar delights.

Writer Kiara Brinkman and illustrator Sean Chiki craft the early history of the Fab Four . . . not *that* quartet, but the all-girl Strawberry Jam. Lucy Sutcliffe's life has not been running smoothly. A seventh grader, she feels increasingly separated from her friends, Vanessa Takahashi and Rupa Khanna. Vanessa's discovered boys, and Rupa has been undergoing continuing trouble with her immigrant parents. And like many adolescents Ruby feels pain from having divorced parents. Worse, though, is watching her grandmother, the family anchor, suffer through chemotherapy. What to do?

Upon finding her father's Beatles records, Lucy, a drummer, decides to form a band with Vanessa and Rupa. The fourth member, then, is guitarist Georgianna Birk. The road's not always smooth though. Rivalries and love lives challenge the group's bond. Indeed, readers will find parallels to the Beatles' bumpy history and Easter eggs, Ruby's surname, for example. Additionally, Brinkman infuses direct history into the narrative, helping newcomers understand why the Beatles continue influencing culture decade after decade.

Overall, this

### *the STRAWBERRY JAM*



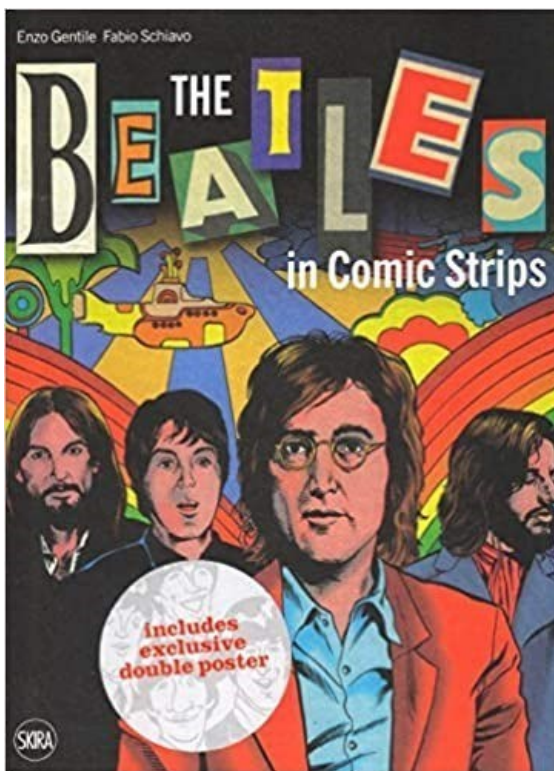
Me used to be angry young man  
Me hiding me head in the sand



You gave me the word, I finally heard  
I'm doing the best that I can



## The Beatles in Comic Strips



Enzo Gentile and Fabio Schiavo have compiled two-hundred examples from Beatles comics, from all periods of Beatles history, from all over the world. The book's sorted into decades, and the authors include timelines related to Beatles events during each section, as well as brief introductory paragraphs, but overall, the whole is filled with excerpts from the Beatles' many comic appearances.

Critics have dinged Gentile and Schiavo for not providing translations and for formatting issues. Trinia Yannicos from *Day-trippin' Beatles Magazine* states:

... only about 25% of the comics included have substantial Beatles content in English, and in many cases, the entire comic is not visible. This is due to the fact that a small graphic of the cover of each comic book is placed right on top of the actual comic strip. Many times, as you're reading the comic strip, the full story of the strip is unreadable since one of the captions is covered by a picture of the cover.

Independent reviewer Rob Imes adds:

Since the material comes from all over the globe, the comics pages are written in English, French, Italian, Spanish, and so forth -- none of which is translated. So unless you are multi-

I'm taking the time for a number of things  
That weren't important yesterday



And I still go  
Ooh ooh ooh ah ah







What can I do, what can I be  
When I'm with you I want to stay there



If I'm true I'll never leave  
And if I do I know the way there

## Paul Is Dead

October 12, 1969, Detroit Michigan, WKNR Radio: DJ Russ Gibb engages a caller who told him to play the *White Album*, specifically the number nine, number nine, number nine from “Revolution 9” backwards. Gibbs heard the words, “Turn me on, dead man.” Thus began the conspiracy surrounding Paul McCartney’s supposed death.

Other songs were assumed to hold clues. The theory was that in 1966 Paul was killed in an auto accident, and the band hired an imposter to replace him. Years later (1974), McCartney told *Rolling Stone*, “Someone from the office rang me up and said, ‘Look, Paul, you’re dead.’ And I said, ‘Oh, I don’t agree with that.’”

Fans saw evidence everywhere. Paul’s barefoot on the cover of *Abbey Road*, holding a cigarette with his left hand, although he’s righthanded! And he’s out of step with the other Beatles! Aha! And John Lennon himself offers more proof at the end of “Glass Onion” when he sings, “Here’s another clue for you all / The Walrus was Paul!” I mean, how can you *not* see this????? Well, probably because you have your senses under control.

At the time, Paul was relaxing in Scotland. In the same interview with *Rolling Stone* that I cite above, he recalls:

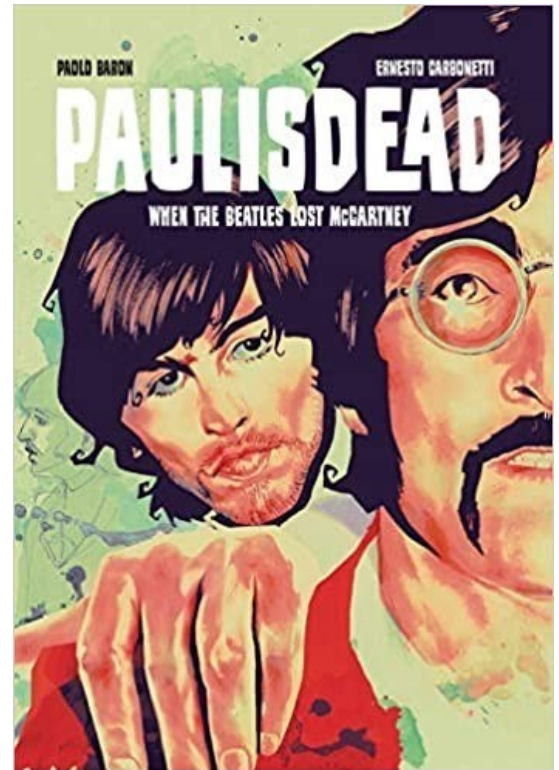
They said, ‘Look, what are you going to do about it? It’s a big thing breaking in America. You’re dead.’ And so I said, leave it, just let them say it. It’ll probably be the best publicity we’ve ever had, and I won’t have to do a thing except stay alive. So I managed to stay alive through it.

In 2019, Rob Sheffield from *Rolling Stone* writes:

John Lennon, calling the same Detroit radio station on October 26th, fumed, “It’s the most stupid rumor I’ve ever heard. It sounds like the same guy who blew up my Christ remark.” John denied any coded messages (“I don’t know what Beatles records sound like backwards; I never play them backwards”) or that he was the preacher at a funeral. “They said I was wearing a white religious suit. I mean, did Humphrey Bogart wear a white religious suit? All I’ve got is a nice Humphrey Bogart suit.” John’s pique was understandable — he was releasing his solo single “Cold Turkey” (the record where he finally ditched the “Lennon-McCartney” credit) and his *Wedding Album* with Yoko. The last thing on earth he wanted to talk about was Paul’s bare feet.

Writer Paolo Baron and artist Ernesto Carbonetti mine this legendary episode for their *Paul Is Dead*, imagining what would have happened if John Lennon truly had received news that Paul died in a car wreck. Quite a bold undertaking, no doubt. The plot abounds with silliness, but readers still experience deep views about the grieving process, the band’s internal workings, and, why not, noir-infused suspense.

The story recounts just a few days. We see John getting the news about Paul’s death, and how he ex-



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Nothing to do to save his life call his wife in  
Nothing to say but what a day how's your boy been



Nothing to do it's up to you  
I've got nothing to say but it's OK

periences anger, denial, the natural reactions stemming from loss. We even see John interviewing potential Paul replacements, shooting for the perfect McCartney doppelgänger. Not all is as it seems, however, and then comes a twisted denouement that makes me wonder if I was experiencing a contact high, since Lennon uses LSD at one point.

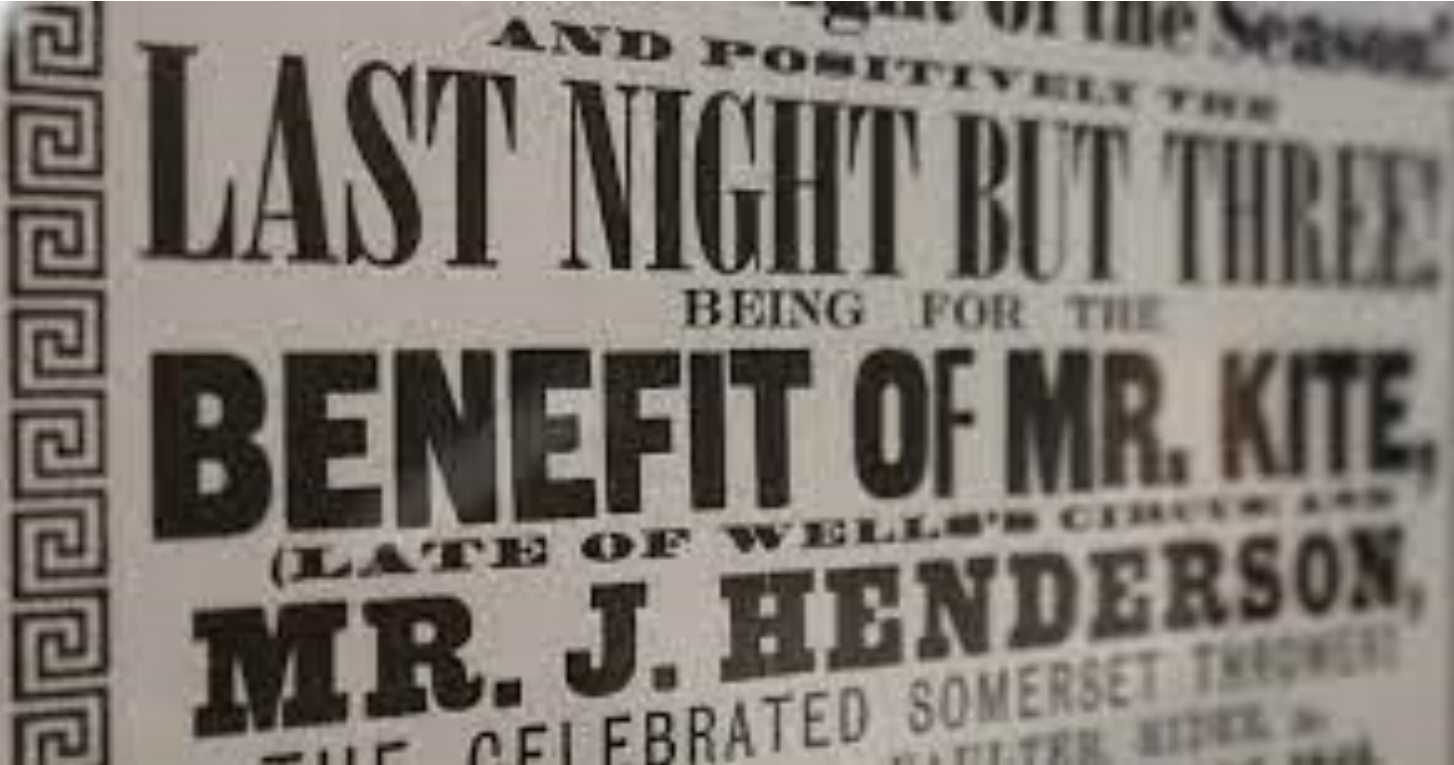
Carbonetti's art style appropriately honors that from the period surrounding *Paul Is Dead*, with enough surreal tones to match Baron's narrative. A favorite scene involves John hanging upside down in the Abbey Road studio, striving for a vocal quality he wants for recording. Beatles fans need this comic for their collections, even if only the collected, trade edition. Let it be (ahem).



Picture yourself on a train in a station  
With plasticine porters with looking glass ties



Suddenly someone is there at the turnstile  
The girl with the kaleidoscope eyes



## For the Benefit of Mr. Kite by Tassoula Kokkoris

On the last day of January in 1967, the Beatles were in Sevenoaks, Kent, filming what would become the music video for “Strawberry Fields Forever.” On a break, John Lennon went shopping on Upper High Street. There, he browsed an antique store where he discovered an old Victorian poster, advertising “Pablo Fanque’s Circus Royal,” an actual event which took place on Valentine’s Day in 1843. He bought the poster and soon hung it in his music room at home in Weybridge, Surrey.

Tasked with writing something new because the band needed another song for *Sgt. Pepper*, Lennon said he was “just going through the motions” when he constructed “Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite,” inspired by this new wall décor. He lifted the lyrics directly from the poster, changing only a few details, and told Producer George Martin that he wanted to “smell the sawdust” of the fairgrounds when the tune was complete.

When it was too difficult to get authentic steam organs to play (as Lennon requested), Martin took tapes of old organs and instructed his engineers to literally cut them up into small sections, throw them in the air, then re-construct them in whatever order they landed. Blended with old calliope music, Starr’s crashing cymbals and Lennon’s ringmaster-like haunting double-track vocals, the result makes it easy to picture “Henry the Horse” dancing the waltz.

But what’s even more extraordinary is that Lennon unknowingly immortalized an amazing man who may have otherwise faded into history along with his promotional posters.

*For the benefit of Mr. Kite  
There will be a show tonight on trampoline  
The Hendersons will all be there  
Late of Pablo Fanque’s Fair—what a scene!*

Pablo Fanque was the first Black circus owner in Britain.

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Turn off your mind, relax and float down stream  
It is not dying, it is not dying



Lay down all thoughts, surrender to the void  
It is shining, it is shining

Born William Darby in Norwich in 1810, he became an apprentice to circus proprietor William Batty following the death of his father at age 10. Just a year later, he entered the ring as an impressive rope dancer and equestrian performer.

By 1828 he had renamed himself “Pablo Fanque” and by 1841 he started his own circus with two horses, a clown, and tightrope and balancing acts. The very reason you’re reading this right now is because at age seventeen, Fanque was savvy enough to recognize the talent of Edward Sheldon, an artistic pioneer who would later, with his family, build the largest advertising business in Britain. Fanque hired Sheldon to promote his circus performances with elaborate playbills.

For the next thirty years, Fanque toured the United Kingdom appearing to sold-out audiences, spell-bound by his productions. The rich, the poor, the churchgoing and everyone in between enjoyed Fanque’s events, which often featured him performing graceful equestrian dance stunts.

Many of Fanque’s circuses, like the one Lennon wrote about, were also fundraisers for community organizations or other members of the circus profession that didn’t have access to regular health or retirement benefits. As a member of the Order of Ancient Shepherds, it was expected that Fanque would “relieve the sick, bury the dead and assist each other in all cases of unavoidable distress.”

Unfortunately, in 1848, tragedy struck (literally) when Fanque’s wife Susannah, in attendance to watch their son walk the tightrope at the King Charles Croft Amphitheatre in Leeds, was fatally hit in the head by the heavy planks of a collapsing gallery. During the freak accident, 600 people fell and many were injured, but Mrs. Darby was the only casualty.

As they say, the “show must go on,” and that it did. Fanque remarried later that year and continued touring his circus until the 1860s. Though slavery had not yet been abolished in Fanque’s heyday, it appears he was socially accepted by the dominant White communities in which he performed, united by art and entertainment.

Though he fell on hard times toward the end of his life, when he passed in 1871 from bronchitis, Fanque was celebrated with a spirited funeral procession, complete with his family and friends, a band, four coaches, and his favorite horse.

Ninety-six years later, the cosmic cacophony of “Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite” would weave seamlessly into the colorful tapestry of the album that redefined musical innovation . . . all because of a chance purchase in a “junk shop.”

As Lennon said in his final interview, “The song is pure, like a painting, a pure watercolor.”

**Tassoula Kokkoris** divides her time between Seattle and Los Angeles, where she is a full-time communications director. She still somehow finds the hours to write freelance articles, see the latest documentaries, and get to as many live music performances as possible.

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Found my coat and grabbed my hat  
Made the bus in seconds flat



Found my way upstairs and had a smoke  
And somebody spoke and I went into a dream

**PABLO FANQUE'S CIRCUS ROYAL,  
TOWN-MEADOWS, ROCHDALE.**



**Grandest Night of the Season!  
AND POSITIVELY THE  
LAST NIGHT BUT THREE!**

BEING FOR THE  
**BENEFIT OF MR. KITE,  
LATE OF WELLS'S CIRCUS AND  
MR. J. HENDERSON,  
THE CELEBRATED SOMERSET THROWER!**

**On TUESDAY Evening, February 14th, 1843.**

Messrs. KITE & HENDERSON, in announcing the following Entertainments, assure the Public that this Night's Productions will be one of the most Splendid ever produced in this Town, having been some days in preparation.

Mr. KITE will, for this Night only, introduce the  
CELEBRATED  
**HORSE, ZANTHUS!**  
Well known to be one of the best Brake Horses  
**IN THE WORLD!!!**

Mr. HENDERSON will undertake the arduous Task of  
**THROWING TWENTY-ONE SOMERSETS,**  
ON THE SOLID GROUND.

Mr. KITE will appear, for the first time this season,  
**On the Tight Rope,**  
When Two Gentlemen Amateurs of this Town will  
perform with him.

Mr. HENDERSON will, for the first time in Rochdale,  
introduce his extraordinary

**TRAMPOLINE LEAPS  
AND  
SOMERSETS!**

Over Men & Horses, through Hoops, over Garters,  
and lastly, through a Hoophead of REAL FIRE!  
In this branch of the profession Mr. H. challenges  
**THE WORLD!**

For particulars see Bills of the day.

JONES & CROSSKILL, FRISERS AND BOOKSELLERS, TORKSHIRE STREET, ROCHDALE

But the fool on the hill  
Sees the sun going down



And the eyes in his head  
See the world spinning 'round



# Six Degrees of Beatles By Tadao Tomomatsu

---

I am the eggman  
They are the eggmen



I am the walrus  
Goo goo g' joob g' goo goo g' joob

Long ago in a Midwest far away . . .

I found my mother in our guest room with a suitcase open, and she was on the floor unwrapping black-and-white photographs from old parchment paper/rice paper.

There were glossy pictures of Japanese Takarazuka actors, and many other actors, people who nowadays are not as easily remembered.

For example there was a headshots of :

- ◆ Andy Williams: Singer and showman, famous for the Song “Moon River” and his TV show.
- ◆ Richard Chamberlain: Actor and known then for his TV show, *Dr. Kildare*.

It was a fair stack of them.

Mom’s life before was working at NHK, the Japanese government TV station, much like the BBC or maybe PBS. She had many jobs, but one of the main ones was translating or subtitling scripts for TV shows and movies from the United States. And she would find equivalent voices, for a wild example John Wayne being dubbed by Toshiro Mifune, finding comparable strong voices, a sort of matching (and the dub example of Mifune/Wayne is a fiction). She oddly did not get any credits for directing at that time, but instead English translator was just her major one.

However, many American shows/movies had press junkets/tours, going from place to place, and thanking those TV stations and translators as part of the tour. And so select people from those departments would meet these actors/actresses, since mom was speaking in English and translating. The stars would meet and thank her and her team and bosses while autographing headshots.

As I was glancing through the various pics, she would mention she met Andy Williams, met Richard Chamberlain, and she did basic translations for TV shows like *The Ed Sullivan Show*, John Wayne movies, possibly *Hondo* or other westerns. She even met the four singers from *The Ed Sullivan Show*. She thought they were maybe British as well. They were thanking NHK for the time they had on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. John? Paul . . . one that sounded like apple”(Ringo).

ME: Wait. The Beatles??

HER: Oh, yes that’s right.

[I start looking thru the small suitcase . . . frantically]

ME: You met the BEATLES?

HER: Yes [looking at me weirdly], and I had a picture that they kindly autographed for me. They of course said thank you and shook our hands, even bowed. It was okay bowing. They put effort into it.

ME: WAAAAA??? Where is it? [Honestly at that point I was just wanting to see it.]

HER: I had it at some point. Maybe lost when I went from Japan to USA. It may have been misplaced when I came over for school, or one of my host families may have liked it?

ME: But MOM that was my college education!!

And Your Honor, honestly, I had no idea she had a rolled newspaper handy.

The wooden sword was much closer . . . KIDDING.

She just shooed me out of the with her memories.

It is kind of funny where she met celebrities.

She thought it was funny I met celebrities.

Dad just shakes his head.

So, six degrees of Beatles.

PS: no dear readers. I have no idea where that small case is, or if she kept it. Sadly, can’t ask mom as she passed.

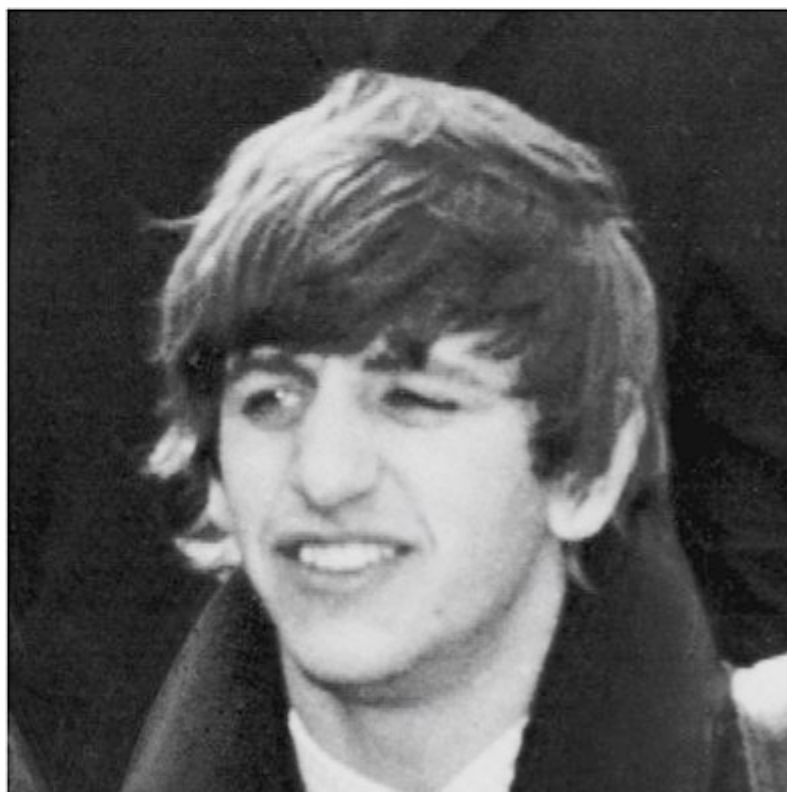
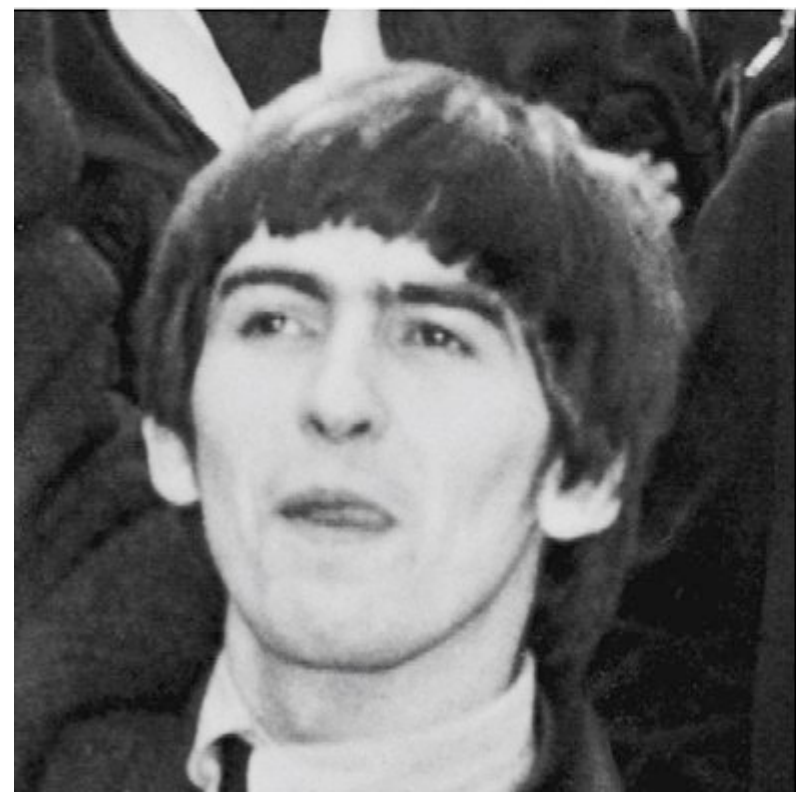
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Sitting in an English  
Garden waiting for the sun



If the sun don't come  
You get a tan from standing in the English rain





## Days in the Life [of a Beatles Fan]

by Steven H Silver

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Behind the shelter in the middle of a roundabout  
The pretty nurse is selling poppies from a tray



And though she feels as if she's in a play  
She is anyway

**M**y real introduction to the Beatles came one night when I was sleeping over at my friend Stanton's house. I had heard Beatles songs before that, after all, as John Hannah says in *Sliding Doors*, "Everybody's born knowing all the Beatles lyrics instinctively. They're passed into the fetus subconsciously along with all the amniotic stuff. Fact, they should be called 'the Fetals.'" However, I had never really thought about them or connected them in any way. Stanton had a cassette of 1962-1966, often known as "The Red Album," a compilation of their songs from "Love Me Do" through "Yellow Submarine." Realizing those songs were all by the same band was a revelation.



**1978:** A couple years later, we were visiting one of my mother's friends in Florida. The friend's two kids had each purchased a copy of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and they were each playing it over and over and over again, trying to drown the other one out, in some sort of strange version of dueling banjos. The problem, and it was a problem,

was that they weren't playing the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, they were playing the soundtrack to the amazingly awful 1978 film starring the Bee Gees<sup>1</sup>, Peter Frampton, and Steve Martin. It was enough to turn a person off to the Beatles.

Of course, the Beatles can rise above the atrocities committed in their name, and I remained a Beatles fan, becoming familiar with their music as it played on the radio.

**1980:** I woke up on the morning of December 9, 1980 to the radio playing. As it clicked on, the DJ was in the middle of an announcement. "A man named John Lennon, who is believed to have been the former Beatle, but his identity has not yet been confirmed, was shot outside the Dakota apartment building in New York." After making the announcement, the DJ played a Beatles song in tribute. The lyrics, which were familiar to me, started, "She's not a girl who misses much/Do do do do do do, oh yeah." All I could think was "Who would select to play "Happiness Is a Warm Gun" immediately announcing that the song's composer had been shot. I haven't listened to that radio station again in the past forty-two years.

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Been away so long I hardly knew the place  
Gee it's good to be back home



Leave it 'til tomorrow to unpack my case  
Honey disconnect the phone



**1984:** During the summer of 1984, my family visited England. When we were planning the trip, we knew that we would be spending the first week of the vacation in London before renting a car to drive through the rest of the country. My parents asked each of us to let them know specific things we wanted to see. My list included Liverpool, which had not yet really turned the Beatles into a tourist attraction, although there was a statue of the Beatles and a museum based on the Cavern Club. Strangely, at this long-ago date, the Beatles-related parts of Liverpool are not what stand out in my memory about that day. I did, however, finally buy my first Beatles cassette . . . *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. My sister, who had also suffered through that summer in Florida, couldn't understand why I would choose that album to buy, not seeing a difference between the travesty and the masterpiece. Over the years, I would buy each of the Beatles albums multiple times, on cassette, vinyl, and CD, in their British releases and American versions of the albums. That original cassette, however, was stolen out of my convertible in 1989.



Shortly after that trip, when I returned to the United States, I happened to open the venerable *Monster Manual* to page 9, which included entries for three types of bears, a giant beaver, and six types of giant beetles. My mind instantly flashed back to posing with a statue of the Beatles in Liverpool, and I had an idea for an AD&D campaign. I began to draw up the village that would form the central point of the campaign. Located on the village green would be a statue showing four of the giant beetles listed in the *Monster Manual*. A fire beetle representing John Lennon, a bombardier beetle for Paul McCartney, a rhinoceros beetle for Ringo Starr, and a boring beetle for George Harrison, for whom I clearly did not have the correct amount of respect (that has changed over the years). I began going through the Beatles' catalog, figuring out how to convert characters, places, and situations the Beatles sang about into aspects of the adventure, naturally, the villain of the world was a Neutral Evil cleric named Maxwell, Edward's Son, who wielded a silver hammer +3.

**1985:** With John Lennon's death in 1980, I lost any slim chance of seeing all the Beatles perform, let alone a reunion of any sort. However, on April 25, 1985, my friend Scott and I went into Chicago to the Auditorium Theatre to see Julian Lennon perform a concert on his tour promoting the album *Valotte*. It wasn't John, but it was as close as I would ever be able to get.

**1986:** I started dating a woman who I would eventually marry. One day, early in our relationship, I walked

Happy ever after in the market place  
Desmond lets the children lend a hand (Arm! Leg!)



Molly stays at home and does her pretty face  
And in the evening she still sings it with the band

into her apartment, and she was listening to some music. I sounded vaguely familiar, but it took me most of the song to place what it was. She was listening to the Beatles song "Ticket to Ride," but it wasn't John Lennon who was singing, but rather Karen Carpenter. She hadn't realized it was a Beatles song, and I can't blame her<sup>2</sup>. Over the thirty-two years we've been together, she has learned to recognize and appreciate the Beatles.

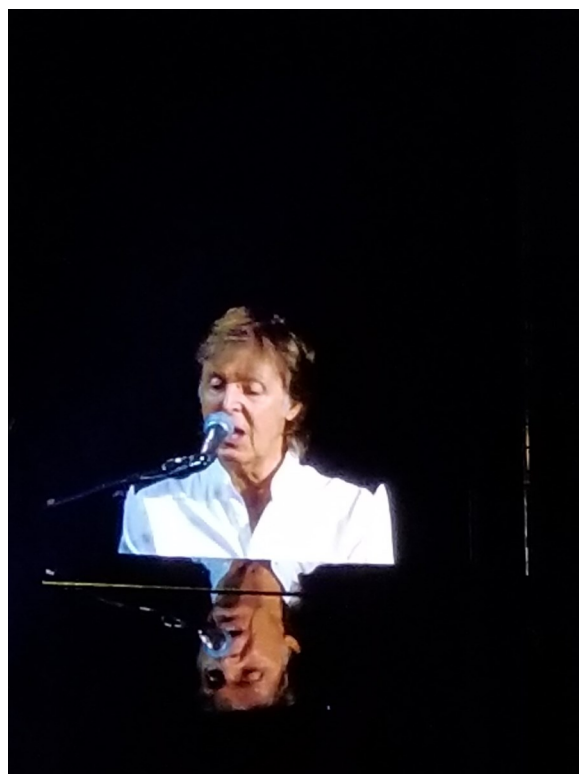
**1987:** In December of 1987, I had the opportunity to visit the Soviet Union. It was a strange time to be there. Mikhail Gorbachev was promoting *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*, but at the same time, several western reporters were being held in Soviet prisons, as was Mathias Rust, a nineteen-year-old West German who had landed a small plane in Red Square.

I was at what was essentially a flea market in Leningrad when I came across a record. It was on a thin, translucent piece of blue plastic in a thin paper wraparound cover. Written on the cover in Cyrillic letters was the word *Imagine*. Not knowing exactly what I was picking up, I passed over a couple of rubles and walked away with the record. When I got back to the states, I discovered it was simply a pressing of John Lennon singing "Imagine," but still a cool addition to my collection.

**1990:** I was living in Bloomington, Indiana and still dating Elaine. We noticed a couple of concerts at Market Square Arena, in Indianapolis that we were interested in attending. 1990 was still a time when concert tickets were reasonably affordable and we decided to go to two concerts, despite both of them being on weeknights. We would drive up from Bloomington for each of them, returning home after each concert. The first, on Thursday, February 15, was the first time I got to see a Beatle in concert as it was a stop on Paul McCartney's *Flowers in the Dirt* tour. Although the songs from that album seem to have mostly disappeared, it remains a strong album, well worth listening to. Four days later, on Monday, we made the drive again to see Billy Joel on his *Storm Front* tour.

**1995:** Married to Elaine by now, we were living in Chicago, and I found myself working a seasonal job for a mail order kitchenware company. Hired to work in their main office for November and December, I was given a variety of odd jobs...data entry, moving boxes in their warehouse, whatever needed doing. In the middle of December, I was given what had to be the worst job at the company. I was told to sit at a desk all day and make calls . . . to let people know that the gifts they had ordered would not arrive in time for Christmas. The best calls were when an answering machine clicked on. I could leave a quick message and let the people handling in-coming calls deal with the irate customers calling back to find out what, if anything, could be done. Three of the calls did stand out because I was calling celebrities' houses. Interestingly, all three were associated with music. For two of them, I spoke to the celebrities' employees. However, Yoko Ono answered her own phone. And she was understanding and pleasant.

**2008:** I hadn't been in New York for several years, but 2008 saw my first solo trip to the city, working for SFWA and arranging the New York Reception. I had some free time and decided to do touristy things that I



Honey Pie  
Honey Pie



Honey Pie  
I love you, Honey Pie

had always wanted to do but had never gotten around to. One of those stops was to the American Museum of Natural History, where, as luck would have it, I bumped into Neil deGrasse Tyson. Since the Museum is only five blocks from the Dakota, when I left I wandered down to pay tribute to John Lennon. Across the street from the Dakota is Central Park where a small garden had been created in his memory, called Strawberry Fields.

**2017:** My younger daughter had been to concerts before and a lot of musical theatre, but she hadn't been at a rock concert. In 2017, we decided to rectify that. Sir Paul McCartney was going to be performing at the Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre in Tinley Park on July 25. When Elaine and I attended the Flowers in the



Dirt concert nearly thirty years earlier, we bought tickets in the nosebleed section. We were pretty sure the guy standing at the front of the stage was Paul McCartney, but what really stands out was the laser beams he used while performing "Live and Let Die." For my daughter's first concert, we got pavilion seats rather than sitting on the lawn, so had a nice view of Sir Paul and his band. He was surrounded by enormous screens that were incorporated into the act, sometimes showing footage of him, sometimes images of the Beatles and sometimes other graphics that served to heighten the experience. As

we left, we made sure to stop so my daughter could buy a sweatshirt to commemorate the event.

**2018:** Elaine and I had plans to babysit my cousin's child on Saturday, September 22. We were both looking forward to having some time alone with him. On September 18, I got a call from Al, an old high school friend. "How about we meet for dinner in the suburbs on Saturday and all drive in together?" I had no idea what he was talking . . . oh, right, six months earlier we had talked about going to see Ringo Starr in concert. The last I had heard was when I said, "If the tickets are under \$XX, go for it." Apparently, the tickets were under \$XX (which was significantly higher than the Paul McCartney and Billy Joel tickets put together) and he bought them. I made my apologies to Elaine, who wound up babysitting along with our younger daughter, and I went to see Ringo Starr perform on one of his All-Star Band Tours.

The doors opened to the Chicago theatre late, people were pushing their way in, being stopped again by security. I found myself jostled by a woman and looked over to see it was Terri Hemmert, who was using crutches. I helped try to clear a little space around her. For those of you who aren't from Chicago, Terri Hemmert may not be a name you recognize. A long-time DJ at WXRT radio, for many years she hosted the

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Everybody seems to think I'm lazy  
I don't mind, I think they're crazy



Running everywhere at such a speed  
Till they find there's no need (There's no need)

Sunday morning Breakfast with the Beatles, which was a major source of my Beatles fix before I owned their records. Beginning in 1979, she was the host of Beatlefest in Chicago. About once a year, WXRT would turn over an entire weekend to Hemmert who would start playing the Beatles on Friday night and continue for as long as she could. When she needed a rest, she would play one of the Beatles movies, so the first time I experienced the film *A Hard Day's Night* was by listening to it on the radio while Hemmert took a nap.

Touring with the All-Star Band meant that in addition to Ringo, we got to see Colin Hay from Men at Work, Steve Lukather from Toto, and Graham Gouldman, from 10cc. During the second half of the show, Ringo disappeared from the stage for about seven songs. We figured, being only four blocks from the Richard J. Daley Center Ringo was taking advantage of the break to head over to pay off the back taxes for Helen of the Blessed Shroud Orphanage.<sup>3</sup>

And so, I'm left with the Beatles catalog to listen to on my iPod, several linear feet of books about the Beatles (and waiting for volumes 2 and 3 of Mark Lewisohn's amazing history of the band), and the ability to listen to Beatles Radio from Liverpool which sometimes finds a cut to play that surprises me, so there's always some Beatles around for me.

While Elaine doesn't always share my enthusiasm for the Beatles, but I have a couple of friends who can always be counted on to share my enthusiasm. The aforementioned Al, with whom I used to attend Beatlefest in the 1980s and whose knowledge of music is intensely deep, and Scott, who has a collection of Beatles memorabilia that, frankly, makes me envious, and with whom I've attended Beatlefest in the 2010s.



1- Side note, the Bee Gees predated the Beatles as a band, having formed in 1958. Although The Quarrymen dated back to 1956, George didn't join the group until 1959, they didn't take the name the Beatles until 1960, and their lineup didn't stabilize as John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Pete Best, and Stu Sutcliffe until 1961.

2 - The Carpenter's version of "Ticket to Ride," recorded in 1969 actually peaked at 54 on the *Billboard* Hot 100. The Beatles' version reached number 1 in 1965.

3 - Jake and Elwood Blues reference.

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In the town where I was born  
Lived a man who sailed to sea



And he told us of his life  
In the land of submarines



## My Love Affair with the Beatles by Linda Deneroff

**February** 7, 1964 is the date most people associate with the arrival of the Beatles. But for me it had started a few weeks earlier. My birthday, you see, is in January, and I had just turned 14. With some birthday money I bought "I Want to Hold Your Hand" (along with a few other singles. My best friend at school asked me if I wanted the LP, and I replied, no, I didn't need it. I had the single. Famous last words. Probably less than a week later I was scouring all the stores on Fordham Road (our big shopping area) for one that might have a copy of *Meet The Beatles*, but I was out of luck. I did come away with *Introducing The Beatles*, however, though I wasn't sure that was the right LP. On February 9, I saw the Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. My paper cover of "I Want to Hold Your Hand" is covered in red ink; my attempt at identifying which Beatle was which.

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I look at the world and I notice it's turning  
While my guitar gently weeps



With every mistake we must surely be learning  
Still my guitar gently weeps

There were three rock n' roll stations in New York at the time: WINS, home of Murray the K "the Fifth Beatle" (not!), WABC ("W-A-Beatle-C) with Cousin Brucie, and WMCA with B. Mitchell Reed, whose sign off was Ringo saying, "I will have no leader other than my leader, BMR." The hills were alive with Beatles music!

I didn't actually get to see the Beatles in person, however, until the Shea Stadium concerts—one in 1965 and the other in 1966. Not that I hadn't tried. In August 1964, the Beatles were to hold a concert at the Forest Hills Tennis Club (I think that was the name, anyway). I had no idea how to go about obtaining tickets, except that one radio station was offering some if you called in and got chosen. I don't recall how long I tried dialing, but all I ever got was a busy signal, and then it was announced that the tickets were gone.

The one and only time I ever "ran away" from home is when the Beatles arrived in New York in August 1964 to play that concert. A different friend of mine decided if we couldn't go to the concert, we could at least go to the Delmonico Hotel, where they were staying. I think I had all of two dollars on me, but in those days the subway was only fifteen cents. I don't remember what time we got down there, but it was before they arrived. When they did arrive, somehow Ringo got pushed right in front of me. Given the crowd, I merely touched his shoulder and then got out of the way. We hung around a little longer, and met a very nice Englishman, probably around ten years older than us. He walked us to Grand Central Station so we could get the train home from there. I got home and slept most of the day, then went back downtown in the afternoon for a few hours. I got home early that evening, but my mother was out playing mah-jongg, and my father didn't want to let me in the apartment. So I stayed at my friend's parents' apartment that night and went home in the morning.

When the first Shea Stadium concert was announced (1965), my schoolfriend and I were determined to get tickets. And we did. Up in the nosebleed section, but at least it wasn't the bleachers. As I recounted on Facebook, that was the first time I had ever taken money out of a real-life savings account (as opposed to a piggy bank) – a whopping twenty-five dollars for a pair of binoculars. (And since then, those binoculars have gone with me to not only the two Beatles concerts, but to every concert where I've seen Paul McCartney and/or Ringo play). I also took my Kodak camera with me to the Shea Stadium concert, and while everyone else was screaming their heads off, I was trying to take photos through the binoculars. I'm afraid I wasn't terribly successful.

In 1965, the Beatles again were on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, and by this time I had learned a trick with my Kodak camera: if you put a used bulb in the flash, the lens stayed open 1/30th of a second, just the amount of time needed to take photos off a TV screen. And I got a very nice shot of Paul as he sang "Yesterday." Shortly thereafter, my friend and I learned that if you wrote to the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, he would forward the mail to the Beatles' office, and they would send back an autograph. So I enclosed the photo of Paul, plus another of the entire group, and waited. Eventually I received the autographs, but whether they are really authentic I've never been able to verify. I like to think they are.

For the 1966 Shea Stadium concert, it was announced that tickets would go on sale at Circus Circus, a mid-Manhattan club. Well, my mother thought I was crazy, but I got up around four AM. and went downtown with my friend (we lived in the Bronx). We arrived around five AM, and there was already a line. And even though the line grew much longer behind us than in front of us, and we managed to get nicer seats, we still weren't very close. (The Beatles' stage was located at second base both times, so even a first-row seat wasn't all that close.)

I still have my ticket stubs to those concerts, as well as all the pins, buttons, magazines, and other things. By this time, I had a pen pal in England, she was getting married, so she sent me her British Beatles collection. None of this was in good condition even then, really, but I still have it. And somewhere along the way I even got a tin of Beatles talcum powder. I've never used it, and I'm told that goes for quite a bit of money – but it's not for sale.

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Down

I need a fix 'cause I'm going down



Down to the bits that I left uptown

I need a fix 'cause I'm going down



When the Beatles played Shea Stadium in 1965 and 1966, they stayed at different midtown Manhattan hotels, and of course I went back downtown to try to see them. Two different things happened, one of which actually has a fannish connection. The first was, somehow, a small group of us managed to get into the hotel and up to the top floor, where the Beatles would be staying. We didn't actually get into any room, and we were there probably only for a few minutes until someone from the hotel escorted us back downstairs. But I did snag a few pebbles or some such from the hallway. The second item played a more important part of my life. I met another girl in the crowd. She was from Brooklyn and very much a John Lennon fan, while I was more a Paul McCartney fan. She had a very distinctive face and voice, and when I first got involved in *Star Trek* fandom, we met again: she was Joyce Yasner, who was on the committee for the first *Star Trek* convention in New York.

In 1969, my schoolfriend and I went to England to celebrate our high school graduation. (Well, it was a year later for me, but we had to wait till my friend turned 18 or her mother wouldn't let her go.) We stayed at the YWCA for three weeks and went all over London. You couldn't really get lost because everywhere you went was a famous monument (plus we'd bought the London A to Z). We went to Abbey Road (but didn't take a photo at the zebra crossing because the eponymous LP hadn't been released yet). We also went to Cavendish Road, where Paul lived at the time. We didn't get to see him, but we met some of the "Apple Scruffs" there. What a vicious group of girls. I was no fan of Linda McCartney, but these girls said the nastiest things about her. She was pregnant with their daughter, Mary, at the time, only these girls said things like it was really "Jeff Beck's baby" and other terrible stuff I won't repeat.

I bought all new copies of the Beatles LPs in London. I had been buying the British LPs since the days of Help! because the American LPs were so butchered, but I had played them all to death. So we went to a gramophone store, and I bought all new copies, and carrying case for them. All of which I still have and never played. (And of course, since then I've bought the CDs and DVDs several times over. Somewhere along the way I managed to even snag a copy of the Beatles audition for Decca, which I've played only once since it's an LP.)

Time moved on, as it does, and the Beatles broke up and went their separate ways. While I never got to see John or George in concert, I have seen Paul in at least four different venues over the years, and Ringo twice.

When John Lennon was murdered, I had one of the most bizarre experiences of my life. I was living in Brooklyn, New York, and the 11 o'clock news was just about to go off the air when the newscaster announced that John Lennon had been shot. Optimistic me thought that that meant he was still alive. So I turned off the TV and went to bed. I turned on the radio as I always did to lull me to sleep, but instead I heard that John was dead. That put paid to sleep. I called my old school friend, and together we cried over the phone for I don't know how long. And of course we each had to go to work the next day.

I was working for CBS News's documentary department as a transcriber. So here I was, working on a TV production that was to air that night about the murder of John Lennon, when all I really wanted to do was curl up in a ball and cry. Several people there knew I was a Beatles fan, and I was handed fifty dollars for a cab to go home and bring in my "Beatles collection." Which I did – quickly deciding what to bring and what to leave at home, and then taking another cab back to the office. There's a lot of excitement in putting together a production, especially when it has to be thrown together quickly. I was just "small potatoes," but I felt it, so my emotions were really torn up. The producer, who was merely doing his job and not a fan, saw a subheading in *The New York Times* obituary, "The dream is over," and decided to give that name to the broadcast. NO!!! The dream was NOT over! Will never be over! I was furious that that's what the show, that I gave my heart to, would be called.

I moved to Seattle, Washington, in 1987, and everything moved with me: records, books, tapes, videotapes et al. At some point if I can bring myself to do so, I should probably donate everything to the Museum of Popular Culture (which incorporates what was the Experience Music Project/Science Fiction Museum, also known as EMP/SFM) there. In the meantime, I've been enjoying *Get Back* and hope Disney+ will find it in their greedy hearts to release it on Blu-Ray with extras.

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Sexy Sadie you broke the rules  
You layed it down for all to see



You layed it down for all to see  
Sexy Sadie oooh you broke the rules



## “You’ve Got to Hide Your Love Away”: **The Beatles Songs Hiding in Plain Sight** by Julian West

**The** Beatles continue to be one of the biggest stories in music. In 2016, acclaimed director Ron Howard released *Eight Days a Week*, a documentary about their touring years. In 2021, acclaimed director Peter Jackson produced *Get Back*, which was a documentary about the making of the Beatles documentary film *Let It Be*. The 2019 film *Yesterday* was based on the premise that the Beatles never existed, but one person nevertheless remembered them.

There are books and films, and new albums are released every now and again, in spite of the fact that there’s been no new material for fifty years. They were a band who worked in their final form for less than a decade, but never ceased to exist.

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Blackbird singing in the dead of night  
Take these broken wings and learn to fly



All your life  
You were only waiting for this moment to arise

Even back when they were the biggest act in the world, this continuing relevance fifty-plus years on would have seemed impossible. Pop was, even for the biggest acts, an ephemeral business. Youth and novelty were key. And after the Beatles, there were a succession of other huge acts, selling comparable amounts and doing a lot more touring. But the Beatles remain ahead. The Rolling Stones stayed together, down to their last two original members, but they will never quite be the cultural force that the Beatles were and remain.

There's a story arc related to this. The Beatles were a rough and ready Liverpool beat group, who honed their craft in the Cavern Club and Hamburg. They were discovered by Brian Epstein, who cleaned them up and got them a record deal. Initially, they produced a series of fun, lively, love songs, which gained them huge popularity. Then they met Bob Dylan, discovered drugs, and began to show greater musical and lyrical sophistication, examining deeper and more important themes, until finally, due to Yoko, or not due to Yoko, they acrimoniously broke up.

This has some truth to it. However, where I consider it to be wrong is in the assessment of the Beatles' lyrics – the material of the songs. It's my contention that the early lyrics of the Beatles songs, while they included an assortment of pleasant, happy love songs, were primarily characterized by a bleak, unhappy worldview. They usually deal with relationship problems, which seem incapable of resolution. They involve the singer addressing a woman with whom he has a problem. The songs are angry, and often misogynistic to the point of threatening violence. Many of the songs can, on the surface, seem innocent enough, but when they're all together, a menacing picture emerges.

That's the assertion, and to support it, I'll be going through all Beatles' recorded work. I'll leave aside the cover versions. The Beatles selected songs to cover not on the basis that they expressed any deep emotion – they picked songs that they could perform well. I'll divide the songs they wrote initially into two groups. The generally happy love songs I will call P1. I won't go into them in detail, but I'll refer to one or two along the way. The angry songs I'll call J1. In the early days, just about every song falls into the J1 or P1 category, but later on different themes emerge. These embrace a wide range of lyrical topics, and I'll refer to these under the catchall of JPG2.

It would be tempting to simply say that the J1 songs were John, and the P1 songs were Paul. I don't wish to do so because every song that John or Paul wrote, played on, sang and released for the Beatles was



I would like you to dance (Birthday)  
Take a cha-cha-cha-chance (Birthday)



I would like you to dance (Birthday)  
Dance yeah

credited Lennon/McCartney. It's never possible to know for sure exactly what contribution each made. Nor will I associate the sudden change in Beatles' lyrics with any change in their lives. It's tempting, but in the end just a matter of opinion. Nor will I delve into hidden, obscure inspirations. I'll stick to what the songs are actually about, and the reader is free to have their own opinion about just why these particular topics were chosen.

I'll mostly be dealing with albums. This is not, perhaps, the best representation of the Beatles' total impact. They were a hugely successful singles band, and for much of the public, their singles were what they mainly knew. It would be the singles that received constant airplay, that people would sing along to. But the Beatles were also the first band to consider the album as something important itself, not just a collection of the songs not quite good enough to get on the radio. The hardcore fans would ensure they owned the albums and listened to them constantly. And while the singles were largely (though not exclusively, as we will see) PI songs, the albums were dominated by JI – right until they weren't. But we'll look at singles too.

I won't, generally, deal with the musical merits of the songs, except in passing. There's been an enormous body of work describing the Beatles' music. I'll be concentrating on one thing – the lyrical subject matter. I won't even worry about whether the lyrics were good or not. If I point out that a particular song expresses misogynistic ideas, or sentimental gush, that doesn't mean that it's a bad song.

I will also refer to the protagonist of the song as "he" and the love interest as the "girl". It doesn't imply that the singer or the songwriters necessarily subscribe to what the song says. It's a construct. I'm dealing with the songs as they're presented. The women in the songs are invariably referred to as girls, and it would be confusing to change this.

I'll also work, chronologically, according to the UK releases. The US singles and albums were quite different, up until *Sergeant Pepper*. However, the band had most control over their UK albums, and they can be considered most representative. In any case, the same material appeared in each case, simply in a different order.

And we'll start with a couple of singles, because it was singles success that allowed the Beatles to graduate to albums. The first single was "Love Me Do"/"P.S. I Love You," which are both PI songs. In "LMD," he's pleading for attention, owning up that he's in love with the girl, and just hoping that it's reciprocated. If it isn't, what is he going to do? Nothing, except bewail his lot. "PSILY" is PI reassuring the young lady of his dreams that even though he's a long way off, he's only thinking about her. The unspoken message is that he's not about to get up to anything. This is typical of the PI love song. The protagonist is passive, pleading, willing to accept whatever comes his way. He's offering what he has and hoping it's enough.

The first single did a certain amount of business, and the Beatles became a little bit known outside of Liverpool. They were now a support act for Helen Shapiro, touring the country to polite applause. Then "Please Please Me/Ask Me Why" was released.

"PPM" is undoubtedly a JI song. The Beatles had previously politely requested that they be loved. That received a lukewarm response. Now it was a demand: "*Last night I said these words to my girl, I know you never even try, girl*". It's a row, with his girlfriend, recounted to his friends. She's not doing what she should, and she's getting a telling off. What's the problem? "*Please please me, like I please you.*" This could be any number of things. Perhaps she's not calling him "love"? But come on (come on), we know what it's really about. He's looking for something sexual, and not taking no for an answer. She's making him unhappy with her reluctance, and that's not fair.

What was the reaction to this fairly unprecedented and almost brutish demand? The people of Britain loved it. And in particular, young people. And in particular, young girls. Beatlemania had begun. "PPM" is sung in unison by John and Paul. Something about the two of them insulting their girlfriends in public generated an extreme response. It wasn't totally unprecedented – Elvis and Sinatra had had a similar effect – but never before had a group had this kind of shared devotion. The Beatles weren't asking to be loved. They were claiming it, as their right, and they got it.

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Rocky Raccoon checked into his room  
Only to find Gideon's Bible



Rocky had come, equipped with a gun  
To shoot off the legs of his rival



An album was needed, and “PPM” the LP was recorded in short order. The Beatles performed their current set as live, all recorded in a single day. It’s an album where JI doesn’t feature very strongly. “I Saw Her Standing There” is a PI song. There’s a girl, and she’s great, and falling in love is an excellent thing.

“Misery” at first glance seems like a JI, but it’s not. There’s no aggression here. It’s the other side of PI. If you’re happy when the girl is there, clearly, you’ll be less happy when she’s not. The misery here is because the girl has gone away. “Ask Me Why,” on the other hand, is a JI. In a JI song, the misery is because she’s still around: “Now you’re mine, my happiness still makes me cry.” Relationships, not breakups, are what cause the tears for JI.

“Do You Want to Know A Secret” is a song for Harrison, who hasn’t started writing his own yet. We’ll come to those. It’s also a PI,

possibly inspired by his habit of standing very close to people when he talked to them so that from a distance it looked as if he were confiding in them.

But “There’s a Place” is a JI. It’s not a breakup song. He’s talking about how he’s sad sometimes, and needs to be alone, and he can mull over the stuff his girlfriend said to him. He’s not angry, but he has issues: “Things you do, go ‘round my head, the things you said.” It’s a song about sitting alone and brooding, possibly about grievances.

But the six cover versions mean that JI is in the background here. The Beatles are warming up and choosing conventional subjects for their songs. That will gradually change. And the JI concepts are quite restrained. The Beatles have an idea of what a love song is, and they are only gradually starting to subvert it.

There follows a succession of hugely successful iconic singles, starting with “From Me to You.” This is the PI at its most passive and accepting. He’ll do just about anything she wants, and hopefully she’ll be satisfied. “Thank You, Girl” on the B-side is more of the same. He’s just enormously grateful for whatever attention the girl gives him.

“She Loves You” is a PI rebuke to JI. JI is viewed from the outside. He’s wrecked the relationship for no good reason. Perhaps he kept telling her, “You never even try, girl.” PI is telling JI to cop on, get back together and appreciate what he has. As we will subsequently see, the message did not sink in. JI will continue to nurture resentment and suspicion.

B-Side “I’ll Get You” is a PI in terms of its general sentiments, but veers into JI territory in the slightly sinister expression of his intentions. He’s expressing his love, but it’s in a very stalkerish way. “I promise you my friend, I’ll get you in the end.” That sounds more like a threat than a promise. She’s not a life partner, she’s

Will you, won't you want me to make you  
I'm coming down fast but don't let me break you



Tell me tell me tell me the answer  
You may be a lover but you ain't no dance

prey, something trying and failing to escape.

Perhaps the ultimate PI song is I “Want to Hold Your Hand.” This is the Beatles at their least threatening, more reassuring. He’s overflowing with love, but all he needs to gratify it is a little bit of palm-to-palm contact. Maybe after a while it will progress to cheek-kissing, but let’s not rush things. The contrast with the surly demands of “Please Please Me” couldn’t be greater. This was the song that turned the Beatles from a hugely popular act from the UK into the biggest thing in the world. Numerous American musicians have commented on how it had a transformative effect, from Dylan to Brian Wilson. It appears, as far as one can tell, to be a genuine co-composition by John and Paul, and was sung by the two of them in unison.

Again, the B-Side allows a darker, JI point of view. “This Boy” is as stalkerish as “I’ll Get You,” but in this case the girl already has another boyfriend. He’s the wrong person, though, and he’s got to go. The air continues to be menacing. How is he going to coerce the girl into dumping the wrong boy and picking him? We don’t know, but he doesn’t seem to be ruling anything out. This boy is going to get you, and when he does, it’s unlikely he’s going to be satisfied with handholding.

*With The Beatles* was the first time the Beatles had to produce a set of songs as the biggest band in the world. It wasn’t yet considered as a whole, but we start to get a picture of the kind of songs they were going to be writing.

“It Won’t Be Long” is PI. The girl is absent, he’s sad, but when she gets there, he’ll be happy. She can take her own sweet time about it, and he’ll be patient.

“All I’ve Got to Do” sounds similar, but it’s not. JI is asserting that *“All I gotta do is call you on the phone and you’ll come running home.”* It’s not quite “Under My Thumb,” but it’s the same idea. But then he says, *“And the same goes for me.”* Reciprocity is important for JI. It’s *“Please me like I please you.”* There’s a deal here, and he’ll live up to it, and the girl is expected to as well. JI is a bully, but he’s a fair bully. There’s no hint of *“Her eyes are just kept to herself, under my thumb, well I, I can still look at someone else.”* JI wouldn’t try that on.

“All My Loving” is another PI letter song, reassuring the girl that he’s entirely preoccupied with her, in spite of their physical separation.

“Don’t Bother Me” is trickier. It’s the first Harrison composition. It could be a PI breakup song, but then we hear, *“I can’t believe that she would leave me on my own, it’s just not right.”* The entitlement is pure JI, and Harrison has bought into the idea.

“Little Child” is another dance song, like “Twist and Shout” or “I Saw Her Standing There.” What makes it JI is the remonstrance to the girl, *“Don’t you run and hide.”* Sometimes it’s a single line that makes the difference.

“Hold Me Tight” is a PI. Holding tight? How does it feel? So right, of course. How else could it feel? PI is all about the moment. JI is worrying about the past and future, never able to settle and be happy with what he’s got.

“I Wanna Be Your Man” is JI in its expression of need, though undercut by Ringo’s friendly delivery. When Jagger sings it, he’s a bit more forceful. The rejection of alternative suitors is typical JI. The other guys simply can’t compete.

“Not A Second Time” is a JI expression of how the deal works. You get one chance to get this right, and if the relationship fails, there’s no going back. This is in contrast to the post-breakup PI songs, where he’d get back together in a second, given a chance.

We see a familiar pattern now in the next single. “Can’t Buy Me Love” is a rejection of all restrictions of common sense, and a willingness to live in poverty with only love to keep them warm. It’s PI to the point of idiocy.

The B-Side sees JI reject that view with an uncompromising abruptness. “You Can’t Do That” is a young man telling the girl what she is and isn’t allowed to do. Talking to other men when they’re out together

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You know that what you eat you are  
But what is sweet now turns so sour



We all know obla-dibla-da  
But can you show me where you are?

is not allowed. He becomes ever more insistent and threatening. This is JI fully come into its own, now. It's unashamed and still shocking. To some extent, when we're looking at the less obvious JI songs, where the threat is implied rather than explicit, we get the context from songs like this. We know what he's talking about once we've heard this. And while "CBML" takes place in a nowhere land of fluffy clouds "YCDT" is firmly in the dancehall, with young men staring each other down and frightened girls trying to pull them back. You can almost smell the stale beer and cigarettes.

The first two Beatles albums are to some extent compromises. They're doing as they're expected. They had their dance band obligations to play standards and a variety of music, and they had George Martin and EMI to please. But now they were the biggest band in the world, the biggest band that had ever been. They could do things the way they wanted. They would have an album entirely consisting of Lennon/McCartney compositions, and it would be pop, rather than rock'n'roll, and the songs would be predominantly JI. *A Hard Day's Night*, the third Beatles album.

"A Hard Day's Night" is an example of a JI song where a relationship is working properly. *"You know I work all day to get you money to buy you things."* Why is he doing this? Is it pure altruism? Not quite. *"it's worth it just to hear you say you're going to give me everything."* This is the deal. He works very hard, and he doesn't begrudge her getting his money, because she holds up her end.

"I Should Have Known Better" is apparently a straight love song, but again reciprocity comes in: *"When I tell you that I love you, you're gonna say you love me, too."* If not, then the whole thing is not going to work. The title is an acknowledgement that this can be a trap. We'll see more explicit examples of this later on.

"If I Fell" is a JI negotiation. He's had a failed relationship before, and he's quite upfront about ensuring that it doesn't happen again. He's hopeful, but suspicious. He's not going to commit to this unless she's willing to do the same thing. And when he says, *"I found that love was more than just holding hands"* that's a message to PI. The PI single *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* had been a huge hit. JI songs don't have such a simple resolution. Everything is complicated and will very likely go wrong.

"I'm Happy Just to Dance with You" is Harrison doing a PI song. There doesn't have to be any sexual trade-off. We're living in the moment, and whatever happens, happens. A complete contrast to the negotiation going on the previous track. The same relaxed confidence permeates "And I Love Her." Nothing can go wrong in the best of all possible worlds.

But "Tell Me Why" is pure JI. It's like listening to a couple arguing at the next table. They're both getting very emotional, and he's determined to keep probing about this incident no matter what. It could be that she's cheated on him with someone else, but: *"I gave you everything I had/ But you left me sitting on my own."* Did she just arrive late and pretend she missed the bus, and get caught out? He says, *"Tell me why you cried, and why you lied to me"* eight times. He's not going to let this go.

And then we're into PI with the other single, "Can't Buy Me Love." Could he be more



(Bom bom bom) Sail the ship  
(Bompa bom) Chop the tree



(Bompa bom) Skip the rope  
(Bompa bom) Look at me

starry-eyed? We've started the album with a JI explanation that one works all day to get money to buy things for the woman. Now we're finishing side one by saying that money doesn't matter. We know he doesn't mean it, but that's how he feels right this second. The JI viewpoint is that money can, indeed, buy you love, or at the very least help retain it. PI doesn't care about it.

Side Two opens with "Any Time at All," which is an example of a positive JI song. He's not promising anything extravagant, and for once he's not making demands. He's offering something practical. A shoulder to cry on, someone to talk to. There are some quite nasty JI songs, but this is reassuring and genuinely kind.

Which can't be said for "I'll Cry Instead." It's a petulant, whiny song. For once, the girl isn't listening to his complaints, and that's sent him into a decline. He wants to have another long discussion about what she's done wrong, and she's not interested. He's reduced to a weeping tantrum, and a determination to take it out on women generally: "You'd better hide all the girls, I'm gonna break their hearts all round the world." It shows that the JI viewpoint can portray itself as petty and foolish. Ultimately, JI doesn't think.

"Things We Said Today" is a PI song which, for once, shows a more three-dimensional relationship: "These days, such a kind girl seems so hard to find." While a JI song values honesty, a PI song places a higher value on kindness. "TWST" shows the importance of building a relationship for the long term.

"When I Get Home" is probably a PI. There's no discernible edge to it. He's going home and he's looking forward to chatting to his girlfriend.

"You Can't Do That," in contrast, is very much JI. He's angry (again) with his girlfriend. She's doing something unforgivable, talking to someone else. He describes this as causing him pain, being a sin. If his friends could see how she behaved, they'd laugh in his face. He repeats, over and over, that she simply cannot behave in that way. He'll leave her, flat. He can't help his feelings. It's a strong representation of male entitlement. The girl doesn't get to choose in this situation. There are rules.

"I'll Be Back" is more ambiguous. He's called her bluff, he's been dumped – and now he's changed his mind. Is it a JI or a PI? This seems to be the first hybrid. Call it a JPI. JI wouldn't be apologising like that, but PI would never have let the situation arise in the first place. We close the album on what's possibly the first compromise song.

*Beatles For Sale* is considered to be a darker album. That would imply a few more JI songs, but let's see. It's also reverted, after an album entirely filled with Lennon/McCartney compositions, to a mix of originals and cover versions focusing on an earlier generation of rock'n'roll with Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly and Carl Perkins featuring. Are the Beatles getting tired? Have they run out of variations on JI/PI?

"No Reply" is pure JI. He thinks the girl is cheating on him (a common theme for JI), and so he spies on her to find out. The song is his bitter confrontation.

"I'm A Loser" is a miserable acceptance of the results of this kind of behavior. It's not a melancholic PI my-girl-has-left-me song – it's an analysis of why it happens. It's the kind of introspection that will come up later on, particularly on Lennon solo work.

"Baby's In Black" is a cynical JI contemptuous sneer at a love triangle. Everybody is laughable – and none more so than the singer who's obsessing over a girl who doesn't care about him, and who is herself obsessed with someone who doesn't care about her: "What can I do?" he asks, and the answer, obviously, is nothing. This is just the way things are.

"I'll Follow the Sun" shows why we can't just classify JIs as John songs, and PIs as Paul. This is a Paul McCartney song, written before he met John. But it's a JI, without question. He's coolly announcing his intention to leave and intimating that it isn't going to be an issue for him. He's not really bothered how she feels about it.

"Eight Days A Week" kicks off Side One with a PI celebration of being in love. It's no surprise that Lennon subsequently called it "lousy". It's a rejection of the cynicism that dominates the first side of the record.

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Child-like  
No one understands



Jack knife  
In your sweaty hands



“Every Little Thing” continues the PI fightback. It’s a celebration of kindness, that most favoured virtue in the PI world: “*Every little thing she does, she does for me.*” In the PI world, little gestures are to be appreciated and celebrated.

“I Don’t Want to Spoil the Party” gives a different viewpoint. Back in the JI world, the relationship has gone wrong, he’s having a few drinks and wondering whether to go after the girl or not. He’s not sure whether this is a serious setback or just a glitch. He’s not happy about it.

*Help!* is the next album, where the Beatles start a drive to ever-increasing musical sophistication. It’s worth noting that *Help!*, *Rubber Soul*, and *Revolver* were released over a single year. It’s an astonishing example of a band progressing at an astonishing rate. The Beatles of 1966 were nothing like the band of 1965.

“Help!” sees JI taking over, but also developing. The album opens with the title track. It’s an upbeat song, but the lyrics are close to despairing. It’s like a JI song, but it’s not focused on a relationship anymore. It’s a realization that maybe, just maybe, the problem was never with the girl. It’s a piece of introspection. Possibly the first Beatles song that doesn’t fit the JI/PI context.

But “The Night Before” is more familiar JI territory. As so often in JI, the girl is accused of lying. And he’s pondering whether he’d have been better off not bothering with her. Another example of McCartney buying into the JI worldview.

“You’ve Got to Hide Your Love Away” is a JI song where he’s trying to figure out where it all went wrong: “*How could she say to me love will find a way?*” In a JI song, love never finds a way.

“I Need You” is George describing an uncomfortable dumping. It’s not angry like a typical JI song, but it’s definitely not upbeat, but on the cusp of being a PI.

“Another Girl” shows how a JI song deals with a new girlfriend. If it were a PI song, it would be telling the new girl how great she is, and things are so much better now. But in a JI, the point is to gloatingly tell the old girlfriend that her evil plot to ruin his life is foiled, and his life isn’t ruined. And gradually, as the song develops, we realise that this is him breaking up with her, and this is the first she’s heard about it. How is she feeling? He doesn’t care about that. He just wants to rub her nose in it. The JI songs are getting increasingly spiteful.

“You’re Gonna Lose That Girl” is a bit of JI entitlement. He sees a relationship which doesn’t meet his standards and asserts his entitlement to replace the other man whom he deems isn’t as good a boyfriend as he is. As always with JI, we’re left wondering just how true his assessment of the situation is.

“Ticket To Ride” is of course JI. The girl has been driving him mad, and now she’s going away. But for once we hear her side of the argument: “*She said that living with me is bringing her down . . . she would never be free when I was around.*” He responds, “*She ought to think twice, she ought to do right by me.*” Again, we’re over-hearing an argument. Who’s right and who’s wrong? That doesn’t matter. It’s all gone fallen apart, and it’s an inevitable consequence of even trying.

This is the end of Side One. It’s almost a complete set of JI songs, all of them more or less miserable. It’s part of the amazing gift of the Beatles that this was not how they were perceived. The Beatles at this time were regarded as being fun and uplifting. The NME review said, “*infectious romp which doesn't let up in pace or sparkle from start to finish.*” Did they notice that the songs were actually about unhappiness? Perhaps it didn’t matter.

We start side two with *It’s Only Love*. This is the JI description of what love is like. JI songs are love songs. They just consider love as something that makes you miserable: “*It’s only love and that is all but it’s so hard loving you.*” That’s what love is, and there’s no escape: “*Is it right that you and I should fight, every night? Just the sight of you makes night-time bright, very bright. Haven’t I the right to make it up, girl?*” The JI thesis summarized. The more emotional the commitment, the more it will hurt.

“You Like Me Too Much” is a Harrison song which is about as upbeat as a JI song can get. The girl is complaining about mistreatment, but rather than promising to reform and make it better, he triumphantly proclaims that she’s trapped by their mutual affection. It’s not even love, it’s liking that’s the trap here. Will he start treating her better? Probably not. He cheerfully admits, “*You’ve tried before to leave me, but you haven’t got the nerve to walk out and make me lonely which is all that I deserve.*” They’re stuck with each other, despite his bad behaviour. This might be the relationship being jealously observed in “You’re Gonna Lose That Girl.”

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Baby’s good to me, you know  
She’s happy as can be, you know



She said so  
I’m in love with her and I feel fine

“Tell Me What You See” is another JI. The intensity, the need for honesty, is very JI, but there’s an insistence that if she will just open up, express herself honestly, and things will work out. It’s another attempt at finding a solution to the endless failures described in the previous JI songs. Honesty is what’s required, and perhaps that can solve the problem.

“I’ve Just Seen a Face” is at last a PI song, full of entirely unwarranted optimism. He’s seen a face and is obsessing about it. Are there going to be any problems in pursuing this relationship? Almost certainly, but we aren’t going to worry about any of that now – it’s time to just wallow in how it feels. He’s in love with this girl he knows nothing about, and it’s wonderful.

“Yesterday” is the far end of the relationship, where it’s all over. It’s another PI song, this time at the melancholy end. After the breakup happens, the PI point of view can regard the separation as the problem. Things were really good yesterday. And one clue that gives away whether it’s a JI or a PI – “I said something wrong.” If it’s a JI, then it’s always the girl who says something wrong.

And that (apart from a Lennon thrash through a rock’n’roll classic) is the album. It’s one of their best, but that’s because (not in spite of) being a string of complaints about relationships gone wrong and unhappy lives. This was at a time when the Beatles had unparalleled wealth and fame and could do whatever they wanted. What they most wanted, it seems, was to complain about their love lives.

It’s worth mentioning the “Day Tripper” single which came out around this time. It’s like a continuation of “Ticket to Ride.” The girl isn’t interested. In this case, she’s had a fling and moved on, and he’s not ready to let her go. The JI sense of entitlement is in full force here: “She’s a big teaser.” Is he really singing “big?” We’ll probably never know, but we know what he means. He’s a person of wants and needs, and she’s not providing them. What is wrong with her?

But we’re seeing something else here. The girl in JI used to be a cipher. We know what she did – cheated, or lied, or failed to provide emotional or sexual support. She let him down, and he’s going to complain about it. Now she’s coming into focus a bit. She’s now becoming a person in her own right, for the first time. She’s got a mind of her own, a sense of humor, and is willing to stand up for herself. We’ll see a bit more of her on *Rubber Soul*. For the first time, after dozens of songs featuring the girl, she takes centre stage. She’s still called a girl, but she’s unmistakably a woman.

We see this in the discussion of the other side of the single – “We Can Work It Out” This is a JI song, but there’s little anger here. They’re a couple having a discussion. The intention is to avoid “fussing and fighting.” Try to see things both ways, try to figure out a way to stay together. This is a very adult song, and the JI viewpoint is trying to come to an agreement. But it’s not quite equality, not yet. It’s made plain that if they follow his plan, well, who knows, he might be right or wrong. However, follow hers, and they will undoubtedly, “fall apart before too long.” At least he’s trying to have a discussion.



You would think that we’re working up to a certain mellowing of the JI viewpoint. We’re dealing with a real other person now, so one would hope that her wishes and needs would start to matter. This doesn’t immediately happen. The girl is a source of interest, even of fascination, but this just makes the JI songs angrier. A few songs on *Rubber Soul* are some of the angriest, most misogynistic songs the Beatles ever recorded.

“Drive My Car” is a whimsical view of the eccentric, driven *Rubber Soul* Girl (henceforth RSG). She’s ambitious and knowing, but a bit flaky. She likes toying with his affections. He’s just amused at this stage, but there’s a hint that hiring a chauffeur when you can’t afford a car yet is a silly thing to do.

“Norwegian Wood” is a different matter. He’s a no-nonsense Northerner, being introduced to a sophisticated world of North London flats. He’s invited to this chic but under-furnished apartment. He tolerates having to uncomfortably sit on the floor and patiently waits, thinking he’s on a promise. Why did she ask him back if they weren’t going to get together? But she’s gone off the idea, maybe she doesn’t feel like it. And he’s clearly very, very angry. She heads off in the morning, assuming he’ll lock up behind himself. Instead, he burns the flat as revenge.

Here come old flat-top, he come groovin' up slowly  
He got ju-ju eyeball, he one holy roller



He got hair down to his knee  
Got to be a joker, he just do what he please

This is pretty extreme stuff, and it shows how much you can get away with if you have a pretty melody. If there's any doubt about what the lyrics mean, then McCartney says, "*In our world the guy had to have some sort of revenge. It could have meant I lit a fire to keep myself warm, and wasn't the decor of her house wonderful? But it didn't, it meant I burned the fucking place down as an act of revenge, and then we left it there and went into the instrumental.*" This was a fairly violent overreaction, but most reviewers just go on about George's sitar bit. This is J1 at its most extreme. Everything about this girl is annoying – boasting about her flat when she can't even afford somewhere to sit, staying up all night *talking* when they could have been having sex, feeding him wine – what's a bloke supposed to do?

This is where a nice PI would take the edge off, but no. "You Won't See Me" is another J1, a self-pitying plea to the girl to simply be reasonable. "Act your age" – this crazy idea of not wanting to go out with him is deeply childish. We go through all the pleading and complaining. This is stalker behaviour now. One feels like shouting at him: "She doesn't want you anymore, go away!" J1 entitlement is in full flow.

Ok, we get it. The RSG is terrible. She's just awful. He desperately needs her, she won't co-operate, she has a job and buys wine, she thinks she can hire a chauffeur, and she won't GROW UP AND JUST COME BACK. She deserves all she gets.

We're only three songs in and wondering where this will go. Is this entire album going to be just J1 rage? Well, fortunately not. The next song is "Nowhere Man," which is something entirely new. This is a JP2 song. The girl who's only just sprung into definition as a real person is suddenly not a consideration anymore. Instead of the first- and second-person interaction with the opposite sex, we have a song about authenticity. The Nowhere Man is a failed human being, because he's . . . actually, it's never quite clear just what's wrong with Nowhere Man, but he needs to sort himself out. There are traces of J1 here. He's telling someone what they should be doing. It's just that for once, it's not the girl.

"Think For Yourself" is a J1, but it has some of the JP2 philosophical musing. The girl is getting a ticking off as usual. This time she's been dumped and exhorted to sort her life out. However, instead of the usual demand to come back, or to stay away, she's being told to take control of her life and think. That's something slightly different. Up until now, independence has not been something to be prized. TFY is a George song, and it's indicative that the change of direction is going to be across the board. The Beatles have views on life now.

"The Word" is an example of stating the Beatles new attitude. It seems a bit shallow now. Just keep talking about love (\*\*LOVE\*\*) as the answer to everything. That's being churlish, though. The Beatles were providing songs, not self-help manuals. The song is perhaps addressed to the girl, perhaps not, but it's moved on from go away/come back. Love is the message. The Beatles aren't quite ready to abandon their J1/PI alternation, but this is a first tentative step to figure out what other things they might be writing about. This qualifies as a JP2, a song that isn't about romantic attachments at all.

"Michelle" gives us the first PI on the album. It's still a charming sentiment. The problem is the lack of a common language. Still, they will get by because they're in love. The girl has no noticeable characteristics, but she's French, which carries a level of sophistication which matches up with the RSG.

Side Two opens with a conventional J1 song, "What Goes On." She's got the cheek to go off with someone else. He can't even fathom the workings of her mind that would allow her to do such a terrible thing. Maybe she likes the new guy better? No, it can't be that. It has to be some incredibly warped and cruel thinking. The song is co-written by Ringo, which shows that he's just getting into the J1 thing perhaps a little late in the day.

"Girl" is a J1 song about the RSG. In typical J1 fashion he's obsessed, the relationship is causing him pain, but he can't end it. But for once, we hear why. The girl is described. She's the RSG, clearly: "*She's the kind of girl who puts you down when friends are there - you feel a fool. When you say she's looking good, she acts as if it's understood, she's cool*". He's complaining about her, but the complaints are almost half-hearted: "*It makes you sorry. Still, you don't regret a single day.*" He's simultaneously agreeing that the girl has made him miserable, but he has no regrets anyway. It's the resolution of the J1 problem. Just roll with it. But there's a "Hard Day's Night" -type reference to the fact that he's been working very hard.

"I'm Looking Through" You is a more familiar J1. She's done something different, she failed to be as she was before: "*Why, tell me why did you not treat me right. Love has a nasty habit of disappearing overnight.*" It's a McCartney song, which shows that any of the Beatles could be just as mean-spirited about their girlfriends as John. The Beatles were becoming very musically sophisticated, but the sentiments towards women remain primitive.

We follow a brutal Paul J1 song with a gentle John PI, "In My Life." It's a meditation on his past, but the central theme is that the girl is more important than all his background. It's very nostalgic, which given that John was only 25 when he wrote it, shows how quickly they had matured. It sounds a little incongruous when sung by a young man – when Johnny Cash sang it, he had the proper gravitas. It has more depth than the typical PI momentary obsession. This is someone who is being soberly evaluated, and she's the most important thing in his life.

Wait is a familiar PI epistolary song. He's been away, he's coming back, and he's definitely not been up to anything while he's been away. Perhaps he's protesting too much. In any case, he expects her to be patiently waiting there, and "*We'll forget the tears we've cried.*"

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If you're listening to this song  
You may think the chords are going wrong



But they're not  
He just wrote it like that

“If I Needed Someone” is PI ambivalence. George is holding back here. The typical PI song is all in. Here, he’s qualifying his devotion. Yes, he’s in love, but it’s just a matter of chance: “*Had you come some other day then it might not have been like this.*” This is realism to the point of brutality. He might call her up, it depends how he’s feeling. We’re somewhere between JI hostility and PI devotion.

If the Beatles were moving on from the simple opposites of JI and PI, with the ambivalence of “Girl” and “If I Needed Someone,” they decided to close with the most JI of all their songs. “Run For Your Life” is one of the most brutal songs they ever recorded. It takes a single line from Elvis’ “Let’s Play House”: “*Well, I’d rather see you dead, little girl, than to be with another man,*” and builds an entire song around the threat. Before, JI songs have alternated between love and demand. The threat has been implicit. The entitlement is alluded to. The JI song has always been a love song. Not “RFYL.” He hasn’t a single affectionate word to give to his girlfriend. She’s being told that if she leaves him, if she’s ever seen with anyone else, he’ll kill her. At last, the JI song is reduced to its true essentials. She’s his property, and his feelings towards her have no tenderness or affection. She’s there entirely to serve his needs, and if she steps out of line, he will kill her. In the Elvis song, this threat could be seen as hyperbole. Here, it’s entirely literal: “*I can’t spend my whole life trying just to make you toe the line.*”

*Rubber Soul* takes the JI song as far as it can go, in all directions -- acceptance, ambivalence, and shocking violence. And that’s it. After six albums of unparalleled success, built on songs which threatened, insulted, and commanded the girl, the Beatles were done with it. There are almost no JI songs for the rest of their existence. The PI song is also quite rare. The hints of new avenues that we first see on *Rubber Soul* are to become their new baseline. Suddenly, the Beatles switch from being a pop band touring with songs addressed to women, to being a studio band writing about . . . well, almost anything else, from children’s drawings to the information leaflet in a box of chocolates.

For a while, the Beatles were looking around for subjects to write about. *Revolver* is considered by many to be the greatest album ever recorded. It opens with Harrison complaining about the high rate of income tax which has led the Beatles to be less enormously rich than he feels they should be. It’s such a strong song that they just about get away with it. It’s their first political song, and it has an extremely conservative message. Other bands like the Rolling Stones quickly learned that the trick was to confine the songs to proclaiming revolution, and let the accountants figure out how to manage tax exile.

Then “Eleanor Rigby” is a little story about people who aren’t involved in the JI/PI business and how sad that can be. It’s a direct step away from the JI/PI axis. The Beatles are becoming able to think about people who are different to them.

It then becomes quite difficult to find what the themes of the songs actually are -- drugs, psychedelic imagery, surrealist wordplay, eastern philosophy, stories, and sometimes just extended fragments. I won’t deal with the rest of the catalogue in any detail because it no longer relates to what we’re discussing. There are, however, still some significant songs.

“She Said, She Said” is what I characterise as a J2 song. He’s talking to a girl, but it’s no longer a confrontation or worship. It’s an obscure, odd conversation. They’re disagreeing without the JI rage. Women are still mysterious, but that’s not a bad thing. Stick with it and learn something. The protagonist of “You Can’t Do That” or “Run for Your Life” wouldn’t be saying, “*No, no, you’re wrong*”. He’d be telling her to shut up. Instead, they’re having a civilised conversation.

*Sergeant Pepper* is on the same template as *Revolver*. There’s another little story (“She’s Leaving Home”), an Indian experiment from George (“Within You Without You”), and a big tour-de-force experiment at the end (“A Day In The Life”). And there are no JI songs. The psychedelic haze leaves a bit of room for a couple of PIs, but “When I’m Sixty-Four” and “Lovely Rita” are barely love songs at all, but more exercises in whimsy. Passion is spent.

As a coda, a winding up of the JI era, we have “Getting Better.” It’s looking back at a JI past: “*I used to be cruel to my woman, I beat her and kept her apart from the things that she loved. Man, I was mean but I’m changing my scene and I’m doing the best that I can.*” It’s a rejection of the JI approach. He’s acknowledging the way he used to be, and insisting he isn’t that way anymore. It’s almost a guarantee that we won’t get any more JI songs.

The following singles, the *Magical Mystery Tour EP*, *The White Album* abandon all varieties of love song. The only close example we have is “Julia,” a J2 musing from John about his mother and Yoko.

They then recorded *Let It Be*, though its release was delayed. “The Long and Winding Road” is a PI song that is more concerned with the process of getting to the girl than the girl herself. “For You Blue” has love lyrics bland enough for the *Please Please Me* era. “One After 909” is an old song, plucked out of the slush pile. It’s also a JI, though a comparatively mild one: “*Move over once, move twice, c’mon baby don’t be cold as ice.*” They can’t write them anymore, but they can still sing them.

The last thing the Beatles recorded was *Abbey Road*. To me, the album is too whimsical and quirky to listen to. It’s a band who’ve run out of things to say and are largely concerned with being clever about saying them. But the album is a chance to roll out some PIs, and they include the best one of all.

“Oh! Darling” is a PI, but it has a plea that resonates when we think of all the JI songs that preceded it: “*I’ll never do you no harm.*” That’s like a reference to the bad things that used to happen.

“I Want You” is a straight expression of desire. Without the JI threat, all he can do is repeat his wishes over and over. *The End* is even more of a fragment. It’s just asking a question and doesn’t seem that interested in what the answer is.

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It’s all too much for me to take  
The love that’s shining all around you



Everywhere, it’s what you make  
For us to take, it’s all too much

We also have “Maxwell’s Silver Hammer.” It has the misogyny of the JI songs, but none of the passion. It deals with a young man beating women to death with a hammer, but it’s played for laughs. Not a likeable song, but there’s nothing really threatening there. The singer is a passive narrator, not the angry participant. It’s the opposite of a JI song. In a JI, the singer is overwhelmed with violent emotion over quite mundane events. In *Maxwell*, he’s trying to feel something by confronting unspeakable horrors, but can barely muster a yawn.

And finally, out of sequence, we have the finest PI of them all. *Something* is the best song on the album, perhaps one of the best love songs of all time. Part of its strength is that it’s absorbed the reality of JI but purged the aggression. It feels like a real relationship. He doesn’t know if things will progress from where they are, but right now things are going well. It’s Harrison finally establishing himself as an equal to the other two songwriters, producing the single and the song that’s best remembered. Naturally the band immediately broke up.

The question, finally is – how should we feel about all those songs about mistreating women? Is it still okay to like the Beatles? Can we just focus on the inoffensive stuff and forget the nastiness?

First, of course anyone should listen to whatever they want. The position of the Beatles is not going to change any time soon. I’ve noticed that on quiz programmes, people readily identify Beatles songs and struggle with Lady Gaga or Ed Sheeran. They’re part of us. But if people don’t like the sentiments expressed, they should act in any way they want. There might be a reaction like when Lennon said they were bigger than Jesus.

From my point of view, though, the JI songs are an essential element in what made the Beatles the most successful and dominant group of musicians of all time. Sit and listen to their PI songs in succession, and they’re too bland, too unreal. The sentiments expressed might be sincere, but they sound clichéd and by rote. Intersperse them with the JI songs and they come to life. It’s the blend of material which works the magic.

Were the JI songs harmful? Did they normalize abusive behavior? It’s difficult to say. Certainly, they reflected attitudes of the time. And perhaps it did no harm to have a young woman with little experience of life being told just how dangerous a relationship with that young man might turn out to be.



You're asking me will my love grow  
I don't know, I don't know



You stick around, now it may show  
I don't know, I don't know

|   |     |                  |                  |
|---|-----|------------------|------------------|
| Don't Let Me Down                       | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | B-Side           |
| The Ballad Of John And Yoko             | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Single           |
| Old Brown Shoe                          | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | B-Side           |
| Only A Northern Song                    | JP2 | Harrison         | Yellow Submarine |
| All Together Now                        | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Yellow Submarine |
| Hey Bulldog                             | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Yellow Submarine |
| It's All Too Much                       | JP2 | Harrison         | Yellow Submarine |
| Come Together                           | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Abbey Road       |
| Something                               | P1  | Harrison         | Abbey Road       |
| Maxwell's Silver Hammer                 | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Abbey Road       |
| Oh! Darling                             | P1  | Lennon/McCartney | Abbey Road       |
| Octopus' Garden                         | JP2 | Starr            | Abbey Road       |
| I Want You (She's So Heavy)             | P1  | Lennon/McCartney | Abbey Road       |
| Here Comes The Sun                      | JP2 | Harrison         | Abbey Road       |
| Because                                 | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Abbey Road       |
| You Never Give Me Your Money            | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Abbey Road       |
| Sun King                                | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Abbey Road       |
| Mean Mr Mustard                         | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Abbey Road       |
| Polythene Pam                           | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Abbey Road       |
| She Came In Through The Bathroom Window | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Abbey Road       |
| Golden Slumbers                         | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Abbey Road       |
| Carry That Weight                       | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Abbey Road       |
| The End                                 | P1  | Lennon/McCartney | Abbey Road       |
| Her Majesty                             | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Abbey Road       |
| Two Of Us                               | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Let It Be        |
| Dig A Pony                              | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Let It Be        |
| Across The Universe                     | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Let It Be        |
| I Me Mine                               | JP2 | Harrison         | Let It Be        |
| Dig It                                  | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Let It Be        |
| Let It Be                               | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Let It Be        |
| I've Got A Feeling                      | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Let It Be        |
| One After 909                           | J1  | Lennon/McCartney | Let It Be        |
| The Long And Winding Road               | P1  | Lennon/McCartney | Let It Be        |
| For You Blue                            | P1  | Harrison         | Let It Be        |
| Get Back                                | JP2 | Lennon/McCartney | Let It Be        |

And in the end  
The love you take



Is equal to the love  
You make