

which often focused on agricultural issues—as did his annual fanzine, the *Beat Farmer's Almanac* (a parody of the Farmer's Almanac). The group's debut album came in 1985 with *Tales Of The New West*, a record that included appearances from **Peter Case**, Chip and Tony Kinman (**Rank And File**) and **Sid Griffin (Long Ryders)**. Prior to *The Pursuit Of Happiness* Montana's primary partner was guitarist Buddy Blue (later a member of the Jacks), who was now replaced by Joey Harris. Their most eloquent album to date, alongside cover versions of **Johnny Cash** and **Tom Waits**, the material included typically rustic concerns such as 'Texas' and the sceptical 'God Is Here Tonight'. Harris emerged as a songwriter on the subsequent *Poor & Famous*, alongside vocalist/guitarist Jerry Raney, with Montana taking a back seat for the first time in the group's career (leading to claims that *Poor & Famous* fits unevenly with the rest of the Beat Farmers' discography). Although *Loud And Plowed* (a typically punning title) includes cover versions of the Kinks and **George Jones**, the highlight of the live album was its documentation of Montana's idiosyncratic, effervescent stage presence. In the 90s Montana suffered from thyroid cancer, which limited the Beat Farmers' activities until they signed to Dallas independent label Sector 2, for whom they completed two albums. Montana was also a member of the Pleasure Barons, an *ad hoc* roots band that also included **Dave Alvin (Blasters)**, **John Doe (X)**, Mojo Nixon and Harris (who also worked with his own band the Speedsters, releasing a self-titled album in 1983). Montana died while on stage with the Beat Farmers at the Longhorn Saloon in British Columbia, promoting the release of *Manifold*. A posthumous solo collection was released in 1996.

● ALBUMS: *Tales Of The New West* (Rhino 1985) ★★★, *Van Go* (Curb 1986) ★★★, *The Pursuit Of Happiness* (Curb 1987) ★★★, *Poor & Famous* (Curb 1989) ★★, *Loud And Plowed And . . . LIVE!!* (Curb 1990) ★★, *Viking Lullabies* (Sector 2 1994) ★★, *Manifold* (Sector 2 1995) ★★.

Solo: Country Dick Montana *The Devil Lied To Me* (Sector 2 1996) ★★★.

Beat Happening

Formed in Olympia, Washington, USA, the guitar band Beat Happening are led by Calvin Johnson. Two five-song tapes, *Beat Happening* and *Three Tea Breakfast*, introduced their primitive art, which echoed the jejune style of **Jonathan Richman**. The group's charming amateurism flourished on their debut album, *Beat Happening*, issued on their own K label and produced by **Wipers** guitarist Greg Sage. Their work drew parallels with Scottish act the **Pastels**, and a 12-inch EP, *Crashing Through*, was released in Britain on **53rd & 3rd**, a label co-founded by Stephen Pastel. Scottish acts **Teenage Fanclub** and **Melody Dog** reciprocally recorded for K. *Jamboree* revealed a more electric sound although the group's overall innocence remained intact. A collaborative EP with the **Screaming Trees** ensued, notable for the **Cream**-inspired 'Tales Of Brave Aphrodite', before the disappointing *Black Candy* appeared in 1989. Its inconsistent shortcomings were ironed out for *Dreamy* and *You Turn Me On*, which showed the band maturing without sacrificing their charm, but proved to be their final recording of the decade.

● ALBUMS: *Beat Happening* (K 1985) ★★★, *Jamboree* (K 1988) ★★★, *Black Candy* (K 1989) ★★, *Dreamy* (K 1991) ★★★, *You Turn Me On* (K 1992) ★★★.

● COMPILATIONS: 1983–85 (K 1990) ★★★.

Beat Publique

This UK trio featured former **Soul II Soul** vocalist Do'Reen (b. Doreen Parker), plus Lunarci (b. Jim Barnett) and Gary Masters. Do'Reen had provided vocals for Soul II Soul's 'Feel Free' and 'Happiness', and also worked on sessions for **MC Tunes**, the **Moody Boyz** and Don-E. It was while working for the latter that she met Lunarci (famed for 'Communion' and collaborations with **P.M. Dawn**) and Masters (behind Praise's 'Only You'). Together they released 'Realise' for Beat Fantastique in July 1992. Do'Reen went on to work on sessions as a solo artist with Peter Harder and also sued **Jaz-zie B** for underpayment on her Soul II Soul recordings.

Beat Rodeo

Beat Rodeo was initially the name given to an EP recorded by Steve Almaas (b. Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA), a guitarist and vocalist, formerly with the Minneapolis punk bands the Suicide Commandos and the Crackers. Almaas recorded the country rock-orientated *Beat Rodeo* in 1981 with **Richard Barone**, formerly of the New York-New Jersey pop band the Bongos, and record producer Mitch Easter, at the latter's North Carolina recording studio, the Drive-In. The EP was released on the independent Coyote Records, after which Almaas formed the group Beat Rodeo in 1982, along with guitarist/vocalist Bill Schunk (b. Riverhead, New York, USA). An early line-up of the band worked in clubs in the US north-east and Midwest for two years before signing with I.R.S. Records. The first version of their debut, *Staying Out Late*, was produced by **Don Dixon** at Easter's studio and released only in Germany in July 1984. That year, Almaas and Schunk replaced the original members with bass player Dan Prater and drummer Louis King. In early 1985 Almaas and Dixon returned to the Drive-In to remix the album and it was reissued, along with two new tracks added that year. *Home In The Heart Of The Beat* was recorded with producer Scott Litt in 1986. It failed to make a dent commercially and the band continued performing on the club circuit, but did not record.

● ALBUMS: *Staying Out Late With Beat Rodeo* (I.R.S. 1985) ★★, *Home In The Heart Of The Beat* (I.R.S. 1986) ★★★.

Beaters

(see **Billy And The Beaters**)

Beatles

The origin of the phenomenon that became the Beatles can be traced to 1957 when **Paul McCartney** (b. James Paul McCartney, 18 June 1942, Liverpool, England) successfully auditioned at a church fête in Woolton, Liverpool, for the guitarist's position in the **Quarry Men**, a skiffle group led by **John Lennon** (b. John Winston Lennon, 9 October 1940, Liverpool, England, d. 8 December 1980, New York, USA). Within a year, two more musicians had been brought in, the 15-year-old guitarist **George Harrison** (b. 25 February 1943, Liverpool, England, d. 29 November 2001, Los Angeles, California, USA) and an art school friend of Lennon's, **Stuart Sutcliffe** (b. 23 June 1940, Edinburgh, Scotland, d. 10 April 1962, Hamburg, Germany). After a brief spell as Johnny And The Moondogs, the band rechristened themselves the Silver Beatles, and, in April 1960, played before impresario **Larry Parnes**, winning the dubious distinction of a support slot on an arduous tour of Scotland with autumnal idol **Johnny Gentle**. By the summer of 1960 the group had a new name,

the Beatles, dreamed up by Lennon who said 'a man in a flaming pie appeared and said you shall be Beatles with an a'. A full-time drummer, **Pete Best** (b. 1941, Liverpool, England), was recruited and they secured a residency at Bruno Koschmider's Indra Club in Hamburg. It was during this period that they honed their repertoire of R&B and rock 'n' roll favourites, and during exhausting six-hour sets performed virtually every song they could remember. Already, the musical/lyrical partnership of Lennon/McCartney was bearing fruit, anticipating a body of work unparalleled in modern popular music. The image of the group was changing, most noticeably with their fringed haircuts or, as they were later known, the 'mop-tops', the creation of Sutcliffe's German fiancée Astrid Kirchherr. The first German trip ended when the under-age Harrison was deported in December 1960 and the others lost their work permits. During this turbulent period, they also parted company with manager Allan Williams, who had arranged many of their early gigs. Following a couple of months' recuperation, the group reassembled for regular performances at the **Cavern Club** in Liverpool and briefly returned to Germany where they performed at the Top Ten club and backed **Tony Sheridan** on the single 'My Bonnie'. Meanwhile, Sutcliffe decided to leave the group and stay in Germany as a painter. The more accomplished McCartney then took up the bass guitar. This part of their career is well documented in the 1994 feature film **Backbeat**.

In November 1961, **Brian Epstein**, the manager of North End Music Store, a record shop in Liverpool, became interested in the group after he received dozens of requests from customers for the Tony Sheridan record, 'My Bonnie'. He went to see the Beatles play at the Cavern and soon afterwards became their manager. Despite Epstein's enthusiasm, several major record companies passed on the Beatles, although the group were granted an audition with **Decca Records** on New Year's Day 1962. After some prevarication, the A&R department, headed by **Dick Rowe**, rejected the group in favour of **Brian Poole And The Tremeloes**. Other companies were even less enthusiastic than Decca Records, which had at least taken the group seriously enough to finance a recording session. On 10 April, further bad news was forthcoming when the group heard that Stuart Sutcliffe had died in Hamburg of a brain haemorrhage. The following day, the Beatles flew to Germany and opened a seven-week engagement at Hamburg's Star Club. By May, Epstein had at last found a Beatles convert in **EMI Records** producer **George Martin**, who signed the group to the **Parlophone Records** label. Three months later, drummer Pete Best was sacked; although he had looked the part, his drumming was poor. An initial protest was made by his considerable army of fans back in Liverpool.

Best's replacement was **Ringo Starr** (b. Richard Starkey, 7 July 1940, Dingle, Liverpool, England), the extrovert and locally popular drummer from **Rory Storm And The Hurricanes**. Towards the end of 1962, the Beatles broke through to the UK charts with their debut single, 'Love Me Do', and played the Star Club for the final time. The debut was important, as it was far removed from the traditional 'beat combo' sound, and Lennon's use of a harmonica made the song stand out. At this time, Epstein signed a contract with the music publisher **Dick James**, which led to the formation of Northern Songs. On 13 February 1963 the Beatles appeared on UK television's *Thank Your Lucky Stars* to promote their new

single, 'Please Please Me', and were seen by six million viewers. It was a pivotal moment in their career, at the start of a year in which they would spearhead a working-class assault on music, fashion and the peripheral arts. 'Please Please Me', with its distinctive harmonies and infectious group beat, soon topped the UK charts. It signalled the imminent overthrow of the solo singer in favour of an irresistible wave of Mersey talent. From this point, the Beatles progressed artistically and commercially with each successive record. After seven weeks at the top with 'From Me To You', they released the strident, wailing 'She Loves You', a rocker with the catchphrase 'Yeah, Yeah, Yeah' that was echoed in ever more frequent newspaper headlines. 'She Loves You' hit number 1, dropped down, then returned to the top seven weeks later as Beatlemania gripped the nation. It was at this point that the Beatles became a household name. 'She Loves You' was replaced by 'I Want To Hold Your Hand', which had UK advance sales of over one million and entered the charts at number 1.

Until 1964, America had proven a barren ground for aspiring British pop artists, with only the occasional record such as the **Tornados**' 'Telstar' making any impression. The Beatles changed that abruptly and decisively. 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' was helped by the band's television appearance on the top-rated *Ed Sullivan Show* on 9 February (with an alleged viewing audience of over 73 million) and soon surpassed UK sales. The Beatles reached a level of popularity that even outshone their pre-eminence in Britain. By April, they held the first five places in the **Billboard** Hot 100, while in Canada they boasted nine records in the Top 10. Although the Beatles' chart statistics were fascinating in themselves, they barely reflected the group's importance. They had established Liverpool as the pop music capital of the world and the beat boom soon spread from the UK across to the USA. In common with **Bob Dylan**, the Beatles had taught the world that pop music could be intelligent and was worthy of serious consideration beyond the screaming hordes of teendom. Beatles badges, dolls, chewing gum and even cans of Beatle breath showed the huge rewards that could be earned with the sale of merchandising goods. Perhaps most importantly of all, however, they broke the Tin Pan Alley monopoly of songwriting by steadfastly composing their own material. From the moment they rejected Mitch Murray's 'How Do You Do It?' in favour of their own 'Please Please Me', Lennon and McCartney set in motion revolutionary changes in the music publishing industry.

They even had sufficient surplus material to provide hits for fellow artists such as **Billy J. Kramer**, **Cilla Black**, the **Fourmost** and **Peter And Gordon**. As well as providing the **Rolling Stones** with their second single, 'I Wanna Be Your Man', the Beatles encouraged the Stones to start writing their own songs in order to earn themselves composers' royalties. By 1965, Lennon and McCartney's writing had matured to a startling degree and their albums were relying less on outside material. Previously, they had recorded compositions by **Chuck Berry**, **Buddy Holly**, **Carl Perkins**, Bacharach And David, **Leiber And Stoller** and Goffin And King, but with each successive release the group were leaving behind their earlier influences and moving towards uncharted pop territory. They carried their audience with them, and even while following traditional pop routes they always invested their work with originality. Their first two films, **A Hard Day's Night** and **Help!**, were not the usual pop celluloid cash-ins

but were witty and inventive, and achieved critical acclaim as well as box office success. The national affection bestowed upon the loveable mop-tops was best exemplified in 1965, when they were awarded MBEs for services to British industry. The year ended with the release of their first double-sided number 1 single, 'We Can Work It Out'/'Day Tripper', the coupling indicating how difficult it had become to choose between a- and b-sides.

At Christmas 1965 the Beatles released *Rubber Soul*, an album that was not a collection of would-be hits or favourite cover versions, as the previous releases had been, but a startlingly diverse collection, ranging from the pointed satire of 'Nowhere Man' to the intensely reflective 'In My Life'. As ever with the Beatles, there were some pointers to their future styles, including Harrison's use of sitar on the punningly titled tale of Lennon's infidelity, 'Norwegian Wood'. That same year, the **Byrds**, **Yardbirds** and Rolling Stones incorporated Eastern-influenced sounds into their work, and the music press tentatively mentioned the decidedly unpoplike **Ravi Shankar**. Significantly, Shankar's champion, George Harrison, was allowed two writing credits on *Rubber Soul*, 'Think For Yourself' and 'If I Needed Someone' (also a hit for the **Hollies**). During 1966, the Beatles continued performing their increasingly complex arrangements before scarcely controllable screaming fans, but the novelty of fandom was wearing frustratingly thin. In Tokyo, the group incurred the wrath of militant students who objected to their performance at Budokan. Several death threats followed and the group left Japan in poor spirits, unaware that worse was to follow. A visit to Manila ended in a near riot when the Beatles did not attend a party thrown by President Ferdinand Marcos, and before leaving the country they were set upon by angry patriots. A few weeks later Beatles records were being burned in the redneck southern states of America because of Lennon's flippant remark that: 'We are more popular than Jesus now'. Although his words passed unnoticed in Britain, their reproduction in an American magazine instigated assassination threats and a massed campaign by members of the Ku Klux Klan to stamp out the Beatle menace. By the summer of 1966, the group were exhausted and defeated and played their last official performance at Candlestick Park, San Francisco, USA, on 29 August.

The controversy surrounding their live performances did not detract from the quality of their recorded output. 'Paperback Writer' was another step forward, with its gloriously elaborate harmonies and charmingly prosaic theme. It was soon followed by a double-sided chart-topper, 'Yellow Submarine'/'Eleanor Rigby', the former a self-created nursery rhyme sung by Starr, complete with mechanical sounds, and the latter a brilliantly orchestrated narrative of loneliness, untainted by mawkishness. The attendant album, *Revolver*, was equally varied, with Harrison's caustic 'Taxman', McCartney's plaintive 'For No One' and 'Here, There And Everywhere', and Lennon's drug-influenced 'I'm Only Sleeping', 'She Said She Said' and the mantric 'Tomorrow Never Knows'. The latter has been described as the most effective evocation of a LSD experience ever recorded. After 1966, the Beatles retreated into the studio, no longer bound by the restriction of having to perform live. Their image as pin-up pop stars was also undergoing a metamorphosis and when they next appeared in photographs, all four had moustaches, and Lennon even boasted glasses, his short sightedness previously concealed by contact lenses. Their

first recording to be released in over six months was 'Penny Lane'/'Strawberry Fields Forever', which broke their long run of consecutive UK number 1 hits, as it was kept off the top by **Engelbert Humperdinck's** schmaltzy 'Release Me'. Nevertheless, this landmark single brilliantly captured the talents of Lennon and McCartney and is seen as their greatest pairing on disc. Although their songwriting styles were increasingly contrasting, there were still striking similarities, as both songs were about the Liverpool of their childhood. Lennon's lyrics to 'Strawberry Fields Forever', however, dramatized a far more complex inner dialogue, characterized by stumbling qualifications ('That is, I think, I disagree'). Musically, the songs were similarly intriguing, with 'Penny Lane' including a piccolo trumpet and shimmering percussive fade-out, while 'Strawberry Fields Forever' fused two different versions of the same song and used reverse-taped cellos to eerie effect.

It was intended that this single would be the jewel in the crown of their next album, but by the summer of 1967 they had sufficient material to release 13 new tracks on **Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band**. *Sgt. Pepper* turned out to be no mere pop album but a cultural icon embracing the constituent elements of the 60s' youth culture: pop art, garish fashion, drugs, instant mysticism and freedom from parental control. Although the Beatles had previously experimented with collages on *Beatles For Sale* and *Revolver*, they took the idea further on the sleeve of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, which included photos of every influence on their lives that they could remember. The album had a gatefold sleeve, cardboard cutout figurines, and, for the first time on a pop record, printed lyrics. The music, too, was even more extraordinary and refreshing. Instead of the traditional breaks between songs, one track merged into the next, linked by studio talk, laughter, electronic noises and animal sounds. A continuous chaotic activity of sound ripped forth from the ingenuity of their ideas translator, George Martin. The songs were essays in innovation and diversification, embracing the cartoon psychedelia of 'Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds', the music-hall pastiche of 'When I'm Sixty-Four', the circus atmosphere of 'Being For The Benefit Of Mr Kite', the eastern philosophical promise of 'Within You, Without You' and even a modern morality tale in 'She's Leaving Home'. Audio tricks and surprises abounded, involving steam organs, orchestras, sitars, and even a pack of foxhounds in full cry at the end of 'Good Morning, Good Morning'. The album closed with the epic 'A Day In The Life', the Beatles' most ambitious work to date, featuring what Lennon described as 'a sound building up from nothing to the end of the world'. As a final gimmick, the orchestra was recorded beyond a 20,000 hertz frequency, meaning that the final note was audible only to dogs. Even the phonogram was not allowed to interfere with the proceedings, for a record groove was cut back to repeat slices of backwards-recorded tape that played on into infinity.

While *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* topped the album charts, the group appeared on a live worldwide television broadcast, playing their anthem of the period, 'All You Need Is Love'. The following week it entered many of the world's charts at number 1, echoing the old days of Beatlemania. There was sadness, too, that summer, for on 27 August 1967, Brian Epstein was found dead, the victim of a cumulative overdose of the drug Carbatrol, together with

hints of a homosexual scandal cover-up. With spiritual guidance from the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, the Beatles took Epstein's death calmly and decided to look after their business affairs without a manager. The first fruit of their post-Epstein labour was the film *Magical Mystery Tour*, first screened on national television on Boxing Day 1967. While the phantasmagorical movie received mixed reviews, nobody could complain about the music, initially released in the unique form of a double EP, featuring six well-crafted songs. The EPs reached number 2 in the UK, making chart history in the process. Ironically, the package was robbed of the top spot by the traditional Beatles Christmas single, this time in the form of 'Hello Goodbye'.

In 1968, the Beatles became increasingly involved with the business of running their company, Apple Corps aka **Apple Records**. A mismanaged boutique near Baker Street came and went. The first Apple single, 'Hey Jude', was a warm-hearted ballad that progressed over its seven-minute duration into a rousing singalong finale. Their next film, *Yellow Submarine*, was a cartoon, and the graphics were acclaimed as a landmark in animation. The soundtrack album was half instrumental, with George Martin responsible for some interesting orchestral work. Only four genuinely new Beatles tracks were included, with Lennon's biting 'Hey Bulldog' being the strongest. Harrison's swirling 'Only A Northern Song' had some brilliant Pepperesque brass and trumpets. Although 'It's All Too Much' was flattered by the magnificent colour of the animation in the film, it was not a strong song. With their prolific output, the group crammed the remainder of their most recent material onto a double album, *The Beatles* (now known as 'The White Album'), released in a stark white cover. George Martin's perceptive overview many years later was that it would have made an excellent single album. It had some brilliant moments that displayed the broad sweep of the Beatles' talent, from 'Back In The USSR', the affectionate tribute to Chuck Berry and the **Beach Boys**, to Lennon's tribute to his late mother, 'Julia', and McCartney's excellent 'Blackbird'. Harrison contributed 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps', which featured **Eric Clapton** on guitar. **Marmalade** took 'Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da' to number 1 in the UK, while 'Helter Skelter' took on symbolic force in the mind of the mass murderer Charles Manson. There were also a number of average songs that seemed still to require work, plus some ill-advised doodlings such as 'Revolution No. 9' and 'Goodnight'.

The Beatles revealed that the four musicians were already working in isolated neutrality, although the passage of time has now made this work a critics' favourite. Meanwhile, the Beatles' inability as business executives was becoming apparent from the parlous state of Apple, to which **Allen Klein** attempted to restore some order. The new realism that permeated the portals of their headquarters was even evident in their art. Like several other contemporary artists, including Bob Dylan and the Byrds, they chose to end the 60s with a reversion to less complex musical forms. The return-to-roots minimalism was spearheaded by the appropriately titled number 1 single 'Get Back', which featured **Billy Preston** on organ. Cameras were present at their next recording sessions, as they ran through dozens of songs, many of which they had not played since Hamburg. When the sessions ended, there were countless spools of tape that were not reassembled until the following year. In the meantime, a select few witnessed the band's last 'public'

performance on the rooftop of the Apple headquarters in Savile Row, London. Amid the uncertainty of 1969, the Beatles enjoyed their final UK number 1 with 'The Ballad Of John And Yoko', on which only Lennon and McCartney performed.

In a sustained attempt to cover the cracks that were becoming increasingly visible in their personal and musical relationships, they reconvened for *Abbey Road*. The album was dominated by a glorious song cycle on side 2, in which such fragmentary compositions as 'Mean Mr. Mustard', 'Polythene Pam', 'She Came In Through The Bathroom Window' and 'Golden Slumbers'/'Carry That Weight' gelled into a convincing whole. The accompanying single coupled Lennon's 'Come Together' with Harrison's 'Something'. The latter song gave Harrison the kudos he deserved, and rightly became the second most covered Beatles song ever, after 'Yesterday'. The single only reached number 4 in the UK, the band's lowest chart position since 'Love Me Do' in 1962. Such considerations were small compared to the fate of their other songs. The group could only watch helplessly as a wary Dick James surreptitiously sold Northern Songs to ATV. The catalogue continued to change hands over the following years and not even the combined financial force of McCartney and **Yoko Ono** could eventually wrest it from superstar speculator **Michael Jackson**.

With various solo projects on the horizon, the Beatles stumbled through 1970, their disunity betrayed to the world in the depressing film *Let It Be*, which shows Harrison and Lennon clearly unhappy about McCartney's attitude towards the band. The subsequent album, finally pieced together by producer **Phil Spector**, was a controversial and bitty affair, initially housed in a cardboard box containing a lavish paperback book, which increased the retail price to a prohibitive level. Musically, the work revealed the Beatles looking back to better days. It included the sparse 'Two Of Us' and the primitive 'The One After 909', a song they used to play as the Quarrymen, and an orchestrated 'The Long And Winding Road', which provided their final US number 1, although McCartney pointedly preferred the non-orchestrated version in the film. There was also the aptly titled last official single, 'Let It Be', which entered the UK charts at number 2, only to drop to number 3 the following week. For many it was the final, sad anti-climax before the inevitable, yet still unexpected, split. The acrimonious dissolution of the Beatles, like that of no other group before or since, symbolized the end of an era that they had dominated and helped to create.

It is inconceivable that any group in the future can shape and influence a generation in the same way as these four individuals. Almost 40 years on, the quality of the songs is such that none show signs of sounding either lyrically or musically dated. Since the break-up of the band, there have been some important releases for Beatles fans. In 1988, the two *Past Masters* volumes collected together all the Beatles tracks not available on the CD releases of their original albums. The first volume has 18 tracks from 1962-65; the second, 15 from the subsequent years. *Live At The BBC* collected together 56 tracks played live by the Beatles for various shows on the BBC Light Programme in the infancy of their career. Most of the songs are cover versions of 50s R&B standards, including nine by Chuck Berry. The first volume of *Anthology*, released in November 1995, collected 52 previously unreleased out-takes and demo versions recorded

between 1958 and 1964, plus eight spoken tracks taken from interviews. The album was accompanied by an excellent six-part television series that told the complete story of the band, made with the help of the three remaining Beatles, and by the single release of 'Free As A Bird', the first song recorded by the band since their break-up. This comprised a 1977 track sung by Lennon into a tape recorder, and backed vocally and instrumentally in 1995 by the other three Beatles and produced by **Jeff Lynne**. It narrowly failed to reach number 1 on both sides of the Atlantic, as did the slightly inferior 'Real Love' in March 1996.

The reaction to *Anthology 2* was ecstatic. While it was expected that older journalists would write favourably about their generation, it was encouraging to see younger writers offering some fresh views. David Quantick of the **New Musical Express** offered one of the best comments in recent years: 'The Beatles only made—they could only make—music that referred to the future. And *that* is the difference between them and every other pop group or singer ever since'. *Anthology 3* could not improve upon the previous collection but there were gems to be found. The acoustic 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps' from Harrison is stunning. 'Because', never an outstanding track when it appeared on *Abbey Road*, is given a stripped a cappella treatment. The McCartney demo of 'Come And Get It' for **Badfinger** begs the question of why the Beatles chose not to release this classic pop song themselves.

In 1999, more mass media coverage came with the release of a remixed *Yellow Submarine*. The remastered film delighted a new audience stunned by its still incredibly original effects. The accompanying album dispensed with the George Martin instrumentals and instead reverted to the order of tracks featured in the film. Later in the year they were confirmed as the most successful recording act of the twentieth century in the USA, with album sales of over 106 million. The following year saw further Beatles activity. The long awaited but overpriced *Anthology* book, on which all three surviving Beatles collaborated with Yoko Ono, was published in October. A month later, their 27 number 1 hits were compiled on 1. Though the compilation was a huge commercial success, close scrutiny reveals that classic tracks such as 'Please Please Me' and the magnificent 'Strawberry Fields Forever' have to be omitted as they never reached the top of the UK or US charts. *Let It Be . . . Naked*, the stripped down version of the original 1970 album, was released in November 2003. Phil Spector's sugary production was removed, leaving a much better sounding batch of songs, albeit the Beatles' weakest collection overall.

In the course of history the Rolling Stones and countless other major groups are loved, but the Beatles are universally and unconditionally adored. This was further proved in November 2001 when George Harrison lost his long battle with cancer. The worldwide mourning resulted in massive coverage in the press and on radio and television. After this, Lennon's famously flippant 1966 comment about the Beatles being more popular than Jesus Christ should be taken very seriously indeed. The Beatles were, and still are, the greatest popular group of all-time. It is inconceivable that this could ever change.

● **ALBUMS:** *Please Please Me* (Parlophone 1963) ★★★★★, *With The Beatles* (Parlophone 1963) ★★★★★, *A Hard Day's Night* (Parlophone/United Artists 1964) ★★★★★, *Beatles For Sale* (Parlophone 1964) ★★★★★, *The Savage Young*

Beatles (USA) (Savage 1964) ★, *Ain't She Sweet* (USA) (Atco 1964) ★, *Meet The Beatles!* (USA) (Capitol 1964) ★★★★★, *With Tony Sheridan & Their Guests & Others* (USA) (MGM 1964) ★, *The Beatles' Second Album* (USA) (Capitol 1964) ★★★★★, *Something New* (USA) (Capitol 1964) ★★★★★, *Beatles '65* (USA) (Capitol 1965) ★★★★★, *The Early Beatles* (USA) (Capitol 1965) ★★★★★, *Beatles VI* (USA) (Capitol 1965) ★★★★★, *Help!* (Parlophone/Capitol 1965) ★★★★★, *Rubber Soul* (Parlophone/Capitol 1965) ★★★★★, *Yesterday . . . And Today* (USA) (Capitol 1966) ★★★★★, *Revolver* (Parlophone/Capitol 1966) ★★★★★, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (Parlophone/Capitol 1967) ★★★★★, *Magical Mystery Tour* (Capitol 1968) ★★★★★, *The Beatles* (Apple 1968) ★★★★★, *Yellow Submarine* (Apple 1969) ★★★★★, *Abbey Road* (Apple 1969) ★★★★★, *Let It Be* (Apple 1970) ★★★★★, *Hey Jude* (Capitol 1970) ★★★★★, *At The Hollywood Bowl* (Parlophone/Capitol 1977) ★★★★★, *Live! At The Star-Club In Hamburg, Germany, 1962* (Lingasong 1977) ★★★★★, *Yellow Submarine Songtrack* (Parlophone 1999) ★★★★★, *Let It Be . . . Naked* (Capitol 2003) ★★★★★.

● **COMPILATIONS:** *Introducing . . . The Beatles* (USA) (Vee-Jay 1964) ★★★★★, *A Collection Of Beatles Oldies* (Parlophone 1966) ★★★★★, *The Early Years* (Contour 1971) ★★★★★, *1962–1966* (Apple 1973) ★★★★★, *1967–1970* (Apple 1973) ★★★★★, *Rock & Roll Music* (EMI/Capitol 1976) ★★★★★, *Love Songs* (EMI/Capitol 1977) ★★★★★, *Rarities* (Parlophone/Capitol 1979) ★★★★★, *Reel Music* (Capitol 1982) ★★★★★, *20 Greatest Hits* (Capitol 1982) ★★★★★, *Past Masters: Volume One* (Parlophone/Capitol 1988) ★★★★★, *Past Masters: Volume Two* (Parlophone/Capitol 1988) ★★★★★, *Live At The BBC* (Apple 1994) ★★★★★, *Anthology 1* (Apple 1995) ★★★★★, *Anthology 2* (Apple 1996) ★★★★★, *Anthology 3* (Apple 1996) ★★★★★, *1* (Parlophone/Capitol 2000) ★★★★★, *Once Upon A Time In Germany* (Bear Family 2002) ★★★★★, *The Capitol Albums Vol. 1* 4-CD box set (Apple 2004) ★★★★★, *The Capitol Albums Vol. 2* 4-CD box set (Apple 2006) ★★★★★.

● **CD-ROMS:** *At The Movies/Scenes From A Career* (UFO 1998).

● **DVD/VIDEOS:** *Ready Steady Go Special* (PMI 1985), *A Hard Days Night* (Vestron Video 1986), *The Complete Beatles* (MGM 1986), *Magical Mystery Tour* (PMI 1989), *Help!* (PMI 1989), *On The Road* (MMG Video 1990), *Alone And Together* (Channel 5 1990), *Beatles Firsts* (Goodtimes 1995), *The Making Of A Hard Day's Night* (VCI 1995), *The Beatles Anthology Volumes 1–8* (PMI 1996), *Alf Bicknell's Personal Beatles Diary* (Simitar Entertainment 1997), *Yellow Submarine* (MGM 1999), *Washington, D.C. Feb. 11th, 1964* (Music Video 2003), *The Beatles With Tony Sheridan* (Universal 2004), *The Beatles' First U.S. Visit* (Capitol Video 2003).

● **FURTHER READING:** There have been hundreds of books published of varying quality. Our four recommendations are: *The Complete Beatles Chronicle* by Mark Lewisohn, an accurate and definitive career and recording history by their greatest historian; *The Beatles After The Break-Up 1970–2000*, by Keith Badman; *Shout! The True Story Of The Beatles* by Philip Norman, the most readable and objective biography; *Revolution In The Head* by Ian MacDonald, a beautifully written authoritative study of every song.

The True Story Of The Beatles, Billy Shepherd. *The Beatles Book*, Norman Parkinson and Maureen Cleave. *A Cellarful Of Noise*, Brian Epstein. *The Beatles: A Hard Day's Night*, John Burke. *Love Me Do: The Beatles' Progress*, Michael Braun.