

Welcome to Linn Lounge presents... The Beatles

Tonight we'll be listening to The Beatles in the highest quality available on a Linn network music system in Studio Master.

A Studio Master music download is the highest quality music file available anywhere. It allows you the listener to hear the music exactly as it was recorded, before it was altered to fit on a CD or squashed down to MP3 size.

So sit back and relax as you discover how four young lads from Liverpool sent the world into a frenzy, revolutionising the world of pop in just 8 short years.

Play Please, Please Me, Fade out at 0:41

In the 1930s young women danced to the swinging sounds of Benny Goodman. In the 1940s Frank Sinatra won the hearts of an entire generation and by the 1950s Elvis Presley was offering a whole new level of sex appeal.

But this was nothing compared to the ferocity and scale of the publicity enticed by The Beatles in 1963.

With an infectious melody, charging guitars and cheerful harmonies, 'Please Please Me' was the first single that saw The Beatles truly dominate the Sixties music scene, sending the entire western world into a frenzy. Beatlemania had landed. Girls were swept into an affectionate outpouring of high-pitched screaming and hysteria while young men grew out their conservative buzz cuts in favour of copy cat mop-top hair-dos. The Beatles' hairstyle - unusually long for the era - was mocked by adults and as such became an emblem of rebellion amongst the burgeoning youth culture. John, Paul, Ringo and George represented the musical embodiment of a new carefree, confident youth, brushing aside the sober ideals of their parents wartime generation.

'Please Please Me' was actually the band's second single, released in the UK on January 12th 1963. Their first recording, 'Love Me Do', had met reasonable success but 'Please Please Me' stormed the industry reaching number one on all the music charts, except for Record Retailer where it stalled at number two.

In order to capitalise on the triumph of this release, The Beatles rushed to record their debut album, naming it after their hit song. On 11th February 1963 The Beatles and their producer, George Martin, entered Abbey Road studios to record the 10 accompany tracks they needed to release a standard LP.

The four lads were under tight time constraints and managed to set down the 10 tracks in just 9 hours and 45 minutes – less than one a hour a song. Lennon commented that little thought went into the composition; he and McCartney were "just writing songs à la Everly Brothers, à la Buddy Holly, pop songs with no more thought to them than to create a sound. And the words were almost irrelevant." However the resulting album 'Please Please Me' was received with a riotous enthusiasm. The sound was a raw, a live product with a fresh, high energy. It quickly reached number one and remained there for 30 weeks, only to be displaced by their next album 'With The Beatles'.

It was with this second album that the Beatles were recognised as “the greatest composers since Beethoven”. A reviewer from The Times newspaper noted that McCartney and Lennon’s song-writing abilities were outstanding and subsequently published a series of articles analytically commenting on their music. This awarded The Beatles increased respectability and even more media attention.

In February 1964 The Beatles starred on American TV favourite, The Ed Sullivan Show, appearing to 34% of the population. This was the largest audience ever seen by a US TV program. Beatlemania had followed the four lads across the Atlantic. Their catchy pop hits, rouge Liverpudlian accents and boy next door looks were received with an insane fanaticism.

Play clip of Ed Sullivan Show YouTube

Play up to 3: 23 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBGtsKyVYE0>

The Beatles’ buoyant melodies, playful personalities and refreshing charisma were just the tonic needed by a nation left reeling by the senseless assassination of its young president, John F. Kennedy, two months earlier. Even adults typically given to dismissing rock and roll recognised that there was substance in The Beatles music and cleverness in their quick-witted repartee. The Fab Four’s first Number One single in the U.S. was ‘I Want to Hold Your Hand,’.

Play ‘I want to hold your hand’

This exuberant track was followed by another 45 Top 40 hits across the next six years. During the week of April 4, 1964, The Beatles set a record that is likely never to be broken. They occupied all five of the top positions on US Billboard Top 40 charts. ‘Can’t Buy Me Love’ was ensconced at Number One. Their popularity was only to soar further with the release of their anarchic Marx Brothers style documentary film, *A Hard Day’s Night* and its playful follow-up, *Help!*, a year later in 1965.

The band’s third album, a soundtrack to their mock documentary ‘A Hard Day’s Night’ showcased the beginning of an evolution in the bands song-writing abilities. Every track was self penned by Lennon and McCartney, and it resulted in a punchier pop beat, turning away from the 50s style rock n’ roll covers of their earlier releases. The Beatles had established a new sound that was entirely of their own making. Music critic Stephen Erlewine believes that it was this album that saw them “truly coming into their own as a band. All of the disparate influences on their first two albums had coalesced into a bright, joyous, original sound, filled with ringing guitars and irresistible melodies.”

That "ringing guitar" sound was primarily the product of Harrison's 12-string electric Rickenbacker, a prototype given to him by the manufacturer. The album's title track is immediately identifiable from the mighty opening chord of Harrison's unmistakable electric guitar talents.

Play A Hard Day's Night

After the success of 'A Hard Day's Night', The Beatles toured incessantly performing short but sweet 30 minute sets across the world including Hong Kong, New Zealand, Denmark, and Australia. When they returned to the US in August 1964 they had 30 concerts lined up in 23 cities across one month attracting audiences of an average size of around twenty thousand. It was during this impressive performance schedule that the band was first acquainted with Bob Dylan.

Visiting them in their New York hotel suite, Dylan introduced the previously untainted foursome to cannabis for the first time. The Beatles were simultaneously shirking away their unblemished reputation while further substantiating their youthful rebellion. Befriending Dylan and being introduced to mind altering drugs for the first time presented a musical and cultural significance in the bands history. Up till now the sum of The Beatles' fan base was a largely a group of 'teenyboppers', typically high school students wrapped up in pop culture, creating heroic idols of the latest fashions. Followers of Dylan posed a strong contrast. Bohemian style college kids dawning on political and social ideals. A deeper context and meaning could be heard in the Beatles music just six months after this introduction to Dylan and a darker side of fame. Lennon began making records on which he openly admitted to imitating Dylan's nasal drone, brittle strum and introspective, personalised content. The Beatles still retained their original admirers but they also impressed a more grown up audience too.

The band intended their fourth album, 'Beatles For Sale', to follow in the foot steps of 'A Hard Day's Night', offering only original material. They had been creatively inspired to place more personal depth in to their compositions. Unfortunately due to their heavy tour schedule and the quick turn around of new albums meant that the band were forced to use six cover songs from their extensive live repertoire in order to issue 'Beatles For Sale' in time. Lennon lamented that finding time to commit to worthwhile and inspired material was becoming difficult. The eight original tracks that were written by the Lennon-McCartney duo did show signs of the band's musical maturation. Of all the songs on the album Lennon's 'I'm a Loser' offers the greatest autobiographical content and was the first song by The Beatles that showed a strong reflection of Dylan. The Dylan flavour is in finger picking, country style harmonica and Lennon's lead vocal which was a plea of self expression, offering a more serious discussion than the topic of young love seen in their previous tracks. "Instead of projecting myself into a situation," Lennon explained about the song, "I would try to express what I felt about myself. I think it was Dylan who helped me realize that."

Play 'I'm a Loser'

The growing maturity of The Beatles' music was more widely noticed by the time their fifth album 'Help!' was released. This was the soundtrack to their second film; a comedy adventure that was essentially a spoof of the James Bond series. There were still two cover tracks on the album, but these would be the last covers ever recorded by The Beatles. The remaining 12 songs highlighted the band's increased creative energies. They were experimenting more in the studio, layering sounds and crafting songs in an original and more technical way that was still very accessible to their fans. The country and western slant felt on their previous album, 'Beatles For Sale', was more widely tested on this release, especially with McCartney's song 'I've Just Seen a Face' which was recorded at such a fast tempo that it might have been mistaken bluegrass, if it were not for the absence of a banjo and fiddle.

Play I've Just Seen a Face

The autobiographical nature of Lennon's song-writing was also firmly cemented in his tracks on 'Help!'. The album's title track was essentially a cry for help from Lennon – who later admitted that he regretted changing it from a down-tempo piano ballad to an upbeat pop song after feeling the commercial pressures of the need for a cheery song. Lennon commented:

"It was my fat Elvis period. You see The movie: He -- I -- is very fat, very insecure, and he's completely lost himself. And I am singing about when I was so much younger and all the rest, looking back at how easy it was. Now I may be very positive -- yes, yes -- but I also go through deep depressions where I would like to jump out the window, you know. It becomes easier to deal with as I get older; I don't know whether you learn control or, when you grow up, you calm down a little. Anyway, I was fat and depressed and I was crying out for help."

Play Help!

By the autumn of 1965 The Beatles had started to retreat from the ceaseless mayhem of pop celebrity, allowing themselves more time in the recording studio for their next album 'Rubber Soul'. Unlike the five albums that preceded it, this album was recorded during a specific period of four weeks, and was uninterrupted by other commitments such as tour dates, filming projects or media appearances. As a result the band felt like they could progress their music even further, indulging in deeper, more complex developments. Starr referred to 'Rubber Soul' as "the departure record" and McCartney commented "We'd had our cute period, and now it was time to expand."

The album was met with widespread critical acclaim and was perhaps the most important artistic leap for the band, signally a significant shift away from the heavy demands of Beatlemania towards a more adult persuasion. Rolling Stone magazine noted that "they achieved a new musical sophistication and a greater thematic depth without sacrificing a whit of pop appeal."

It was also around this time that the band had started to use drugs more heavily. It is noted that the musical direction seen on 'Rubber Soul' was largely the product of The Beatles habitual use of cannabis. Lennon referred to it as "the pot album", and Starr said, "Grass was really influential in a lot of our changes, especially with the writers."

Perhaps one of the most notable songs on this album was 'Norwegian Wood', written by Lennon about an affair he had been having. He later explained "I was very careful and paranoid because I didn't want my wife, Cyn, to know that there really was something going on outside of the household. I'd always had some kind of affairs going on, so I was trying to be sophisticated in writing about an affair. But in such a smoke-screen way that you couldn't tell. "

Musically 'Norwegian Wood' is credited as sparking off a new craze for the sound of novel instruments in the mid-1960s—a trend which would later branch out into the raga rock and Indian rock genres. During recording Harrison felt something was missing from the song and so experimented by adding his new beloved instrument, the Indian sitar. His first acquaintance with the sitar had been during the filming of 'Help!' when he had messed around with the instrument during a scene with some Indian musicians. The song is now acknowledged as a cornerstone in invention of world music, incorporating non-Western musical influences into Western popular music. This was beginning of musical turning point for Harrison. He would eventually be transfixed by all things Indian, taking sitar lessons from renowned Indian sitar player Ravi Shankar.

Play Norwegian wood

As much of a progression as 'Rubber Soul' was relative to their previous records, it was only a taster for the boundary-shattering outings of the next few years. After they had experienced the luxury of dedicated studio time, The Beatles could not go back to pressurised recording, plagued by outside interferences. 'Revolver', released in the summer of 1966, proved what the group could be capable of when allotted months of time in the studio. Hazy hard guitars and thicker vocal arrangements formed the bed of these increasingly ambitious lyrics; the group's eclecticism now encompassed everything from sing-a-long novelties like "Yellow Submarine" to string quartet-backed character sketches with "Eleanor Rigby". Drugs (psychedelic and otherwise) were fuelling their already fertile imaginations. The track 'Tomorrow Never Knows' offers a rather surreal experience with Indian-influenced swirls of echo and backward tapes.

Play Tomorrow Never Knows

Over the past couple of years live performance had become a tiresome and rote exercise for the group. They were exhausted by competing with thousands of screaming fans who would drown out most of their voices and instruments. They felt that touring obligations were becoming an increasing strain on their creative abilities. These concerns were cemented when they embarked on a worldwide tour during the summer of 1966 and experienced a particularly gruelling run of events. The group's entourage was physically attacked in the Philippines after a perceived snub of the country's first lady, and a casual remark by Lennon about The Beatles being bigger than Jesus Christ was picked up in the States, resulting in the burning of Beatle records in the Bible belt and demands for a repentant apology. The final concert during this tour was in San Francisco on August 29th. It was their last performance in front of a paying audience. Instead they would dedicate their attention to studio recording. Touring no longer seemed to be about the enjoyment of live music and the increased time constraints hindered their musical progression.

The decision to retire from touring was a radical and unexpected step and the media was rife with speculation that The Beatles were breaking up. However these concerns were squashed when they released the iconic 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' ten months later. The album took over 700 hundred hours to record – a far cry from the band's 'Please Please Me' days. The band and their producer George Martin explored new recording techniques, using better quality production equipment. The Beatles insisted that everything had to be different with this album and encouraged Martin to achieve the impossible in new and innovative musical ways. Now that they did not worry about what could be accurately recreated live, their music could be more complex. They were pushing further forward into unabashedly psychedelic territory, using orchestral arrangements but without abandoning a memorable melody and immediately accessible lyrical messages.

Sgt Pepper was an album of firsts. The Beatles' exploitation of multi-tracking transformed the very act of studio recording. The orchestral overdubs on 'A Day in the Life' marked the debut of eight-track recording in Britain. And not only was the music exciting, fun and colourful so too was the album's packaging. Sgt. Pepper's visual extravagance officially elevated the album cover to a work of art. Michael Cooper's photo of the Beatles in satin marching-band outfits, in front of a cardboard cut-out audience of historical figures, created by artist Peter Blake, is the most enduring image of the psychedelic era. The final cost for this cover art was nearly £3,000 (equivalent to £40,606 today). This was an extravagant sum at a time when album covers typically cost around £50. Sgt. Pepper was also the first rock album ever to incorporate complete lyrics to the songs in its design. The Beatles wanted to encourage a dedicated listening experience with this album. Listeners could not skip tracks and move between songs because the original LP was not banded.

The most complex song on the album was the finale track, 'A Day in the Life'. It is comprised of

distinct sections written independently by McCartney and Lennon. Each separate verse tells a different story which is broken up with grand orchestral music in between. A 41 piece orchestra played on this song. The musicians were told to attend the session dressed formally. As soon as they arrived however it was clear this was not to be a typical recording session. They were presented with party novelties to wear such as false noses, party hats and gorilla-paw gloves. Their conductor McCartney asked them all to start with the lowest note of their instruments and gradually play to the highest creating an impressive glissando. Following the final orchestral crescendo, the song ends with one of the most famous ending chords in music history. It was created with three pianos being played simultaneously by 10 hands belonging to Lennon, McCartney, Starr, Martin and Beatles roadie Mal Evans.

Play A Day in the Life

After the release of such an inspirational and instantly iconic album, The Beatles had become spokesmen of their generation. The Fab Four had embraced a more esoteric world of spiritual gurus, free love, drugs and peace-ins. This was a world away from the sharp cut suits of their original squeaky clean 'boy-next-door' image. Their single 'All you need is love' was released in the 1967 during the Summer of Love and became a flower power anthem for the hippy culture of this generation and the ones to come. However behind the scenes the group's strength began to unravel at a surprisingly quick pace. In August 1967, their manager Brian Epstein died of a drug overdose. They pressed on with their next film project, Magical Mystery Tour, nonetheless - directing it by themselves. It lacked focus and professionalism and was met with intense criticism. When the picture was premiered on BBC One in December 1967 it received scathing reviews, dismissing it as blatant rubbish and self-indulgent.

In early 1968 The Beatles decamped to India for a course in transcendental meditation with the Maharishi; this too became something of a media embarrassment as each of the four eventually departed the course before its completion.

The band did use their extra time in India to compose a wealth of new material that would be collected and released under their self titled 30 track double LP, commonly referred to as 'The White Album' due its plain white cover art. Judged solely on musical merit, The White Album released late in '68, was a triumph. While largely abandoning their psychedelic instruments to return to guitar-based rock, they maintained their eclecticism, proving themselves masters of every genre. As individual songwriters it contains some of their finest work.

The problem with 'The White Album', at least in terms of the group's long-term health, was that these were very much individual songs, as opposed to collective ones. Although Lennon and McCartney always composed most of their songs separately, they had always fed off of each other, supplying missing bits and pieces and providing a competitive edge that would bring out their best

work. McCartney's romantic melodicism and Lennon's more acidic, gritty wit were perfect complements for one another. It was clear, at least in retrospect that with The White Album each member was more concerned with his own expression than that of the collective group: a natural impulse, but one that was bound to lead to difficulties.

Ringo Starr, whose solid drumming and good nature could usually be counted upon actually quit for a couple of weeks in the midst of 'The White Album' sessions. Personal interests were coming into play as well: Lennon's devotion to romantic and artistic pursuits with his new girlfriend (and soon-to-be wife) Yoko Ono was diverting his attentions from The Beatles and when he was recording he would often bring Yoko along with him despite the band's insistent rule never to bring girlfriends in to the studio.

In addition, Harrison was becoming a more prolific and skilled composer as well, and was beginning to resent his junior status. The group began to bicker more openly in the studio and Harrison realised he was no longer living in Lennon and McCartney's huge, looming shadows. His track 'While My Guitar Gently Weeps' appears to be a declaration of independence from them and the band. The song was recorded several times. Harrison was not happy with the initial recordings and asked his friend Eric Clapton to perform a guitar solo on the track. Clapton was initially reluctant. Other artists did not appear on The Beatles' albums. In the final version Clapton is not credited for his appearance.

Play 'While My guitar gently sleeps'

Just three months after 'The White Album' was issued, the soundtrack to The Beatles' animation movie 'Yellow Submarine' was also released. This only included four previously unreleased songs. Because of this lack of new Beatles music, critics have often suggested that the album might be "inessential" if it were not for Harrison's 'It's all too much'" which has been regarded as "the jewel of the new songs ... resplendent in swirling Mellotron, larger-than-life percussion, and tidal waves of feedback guitar ... a virtuoso excursion into otherwise hazy psychedelia".

Play Its all too much up to 2:49

The album and film 'Let It Be' documented the final dissolution of the band. Although it was released in 1970 as the last Beatles' album it was actually recorded and produced almost entirely in January 1969, before the recording and release of their album 'Abbey Road'. For this reason, some critics and fans argue that 'Abbey Road' should be considered the group's final album and 'Let It Be' the penultimate.

Let It Be was originally intended to be released during mid-1969 under the title Get Back, but the Beatles were unhappy with this version and it was temporarily shelved. The concept for this project came from an idea attributed to McCartney, who suggested they "record an album of new material and rehearse it, then perform it before a live audience for the very first time—on record and on film." McCartney understood that the band had lost their fusion during the past two years. Without live performances they focused too heavily on their own musical experimentations and had lost group cohesion as a result.

The rehearsals and recording sessions for the album did not run smoothly though. The acrimony that had begun during the recording of the previous year's 'White Album' only intensified. Lennon commented that conditions between the members were miserable and Harrison agreed they were at an all time low. Lennon and McCartney weren't working together as before. McCartney assumed the role of the leader, while Lennon was more interested in spending time making music with his soon-to-be wife Yoko Ono. She was now present in the studio with him at all times. Aggravated by both McCartney and Lennon, Harrison walked out for five days and upon returning he threatened to leave the band unless they "abandon[ed] all talk of live performance". In an effort to alleviate tensions within the band and improve the quality of their live sound, Harrison invited keyboardist Billy Preston to participate in the last nine days of sessions.

Generally dissatisfied with these early-1969 sessions, the album and film later to emerge as 'Let It Be', remained in the can as the group tried to figure out how the projects should be mixed, packaged, and distributed.

The band's producer Martin was surprised when McCartney asked him to help record another album in the meantime and it was something of a miracle when this final album, 'Abbey Road' appeared as one of the Beatles most unified efforts. Although they were still recording many of their parts separately, the finished product delivered some of their most intricate melodies, harmonies and instrumental arrangements. It also publicly heralded Harrison as a composer of equal talent to Lennon and McCartney. Harrison's track "Something" was praised as one of The Beatles highest achievements and it was his first song to be released as a single alongside Lennon's infamous track 'Come Together'.

It is believed that each verse of 'Come Together' refers cryptically to one of the Beatles. "He's one holy roller" allegedly refers to the spiritually inclined George, "he got monkey finger, he shoot Coca-Cola " to Ringo Starr, the funny Beatle; "he got Ono sideboard, he one spinal cracker" to Lennon himself and the love of his life Yoko Ono; while "got to be good-looking 'cause he's so hard to see" was actually a snide remark against McCartney.

Come Together is credited to both Lennon and McCartney on 'Abbey Road's' sleeve notes however Lennon adamantly tried to keep the creation of the entire track as much to himself as possible. Even though McCartney did write the electric piano section, Lennon made sure he too learnt the piece so he could perform it himself on the actual recording. Beatles' recording engineer Geoff Emerick documents that Lennon even sang all the backing vocal over dubs himself and refused a harmony with McCartney, leaving McCartney feeling extremely frustrated. The title 'Come Together' therefore appears an antithesis of the actual relations between the band.

Play Come Together

'Abbey Road' would be the last time the band would record together. In their interviews for The Beatles Anthology (a TV series debuted in 1995 documenting the history of the Beatles) the surviving band members, McCartney, Harrison and Starr stated that, although none of them ever made the distinction of calling it the "last album", they all felt at the time this would very likely be the final Beatles product and therefore agreed to set aside their differences and "go out on a high note".

The enjoyment of making music together had evaporated into a sea of dissatisfaction, arguments, financial pursuits and individual gain. Despite their efforts, differences could not be reconciled. Lennon was the first Beatle to leave the band on 20th September 1969. He agreed to keep this announcement quiet until 'Let It Be' had been publicly released. The Beatles officially announced their retirement on 31st December 1970 but in reality they had already disbanded by early November the year before. The conception of Harrison's song 'Here Comes the Sun', recorded on 'Abbey Road', seemed to reflect the dejected feeling that existed between all the band members during the end of their Beatles' career. Their time together as a group had passed. It was no longer fun, experimental or cohesive. Harrison noted that "Here Comes the Sun" was written at the time "when the studio was getting like school, where we had to go and be businessmen: 'Sign this' and 'sign that'. Anyway, it seems as if winter in England goes on forever, by the time spring comes you really deserve it. So one day I decided I was going to sag off Apple and I went over to Eric Clapton's house. The relief of not having to go see all those dopey accountants was wonderful, and I walked around the garden with one of Eric's acoustic guitars and wrote "Here Comes the Sun".

Play Here Comes the Sun

Thank you for coming along tonight.

If you enjoyed this then you can follow Linn on Facebook or Twitter and be the first to hear about future 'Linn Lounge presents' evenings or if you want to join our mailing list then we'll

keep you posted on upcoming Linn events in your area. We've got some exciting artists coming up including Chic, The Eagles and Ray Charles.

Now it's your turn to be the DJ - we've got a range of Linn systems set up around the shop for you to try.

So grab a bite to eat, fill your glass and listen to some of your favourite songs. Whether it's the latest Studio Master download, a playlist on Spotify or even a movie, Linn systems are designed to get the very best sound from everything you listen to at home.

We've got staff on hand so feel free to ask any questions.