

welcome to THE BEATLES

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THE BEATLES

TO  
RIDE

Welcome to the Beatles



# Welcome to the Beatles

Andrew Pregnall, Jason Arquette, Allyson  
Manhart, and Helen Goggins (Eds.)

Virginia Tech

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**Richard Pedro**



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# Introduction

In 1967, the Beatles' post-Brian Epstein years witnessed the release of a film that the band had chosen to write, direct, and produce all on their own: *Magical Mystery Tour*. Coming down from the artistic high of their most recent album, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, Paul McCartney suggested that the band continue their creative streak by making a television movie that followed the band touring the English countryside on a bus. Without Epstein alive to say no, the Beatles agreed that it was time to conquer the film industry on their own. The band's first idea was to undertake this tour in the company of a rag-tag group of outlandish characters whose roster began with a "fat lady" and ended with a "midget."<sup>1</sup> The album cover for *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* remains iconic partly because of the stunning aesthetic appeal created by the use of vibrant outfits and flowers. In keeping with this trend, the band made a conscious effort to film *Magical Mystery Tour* in loud, psychedelic colors. Yet all of these efforts quickly went to waste when the film aired on BBC1 in glorious black and white, a small detail overlooked by the band. This mistake only spoke to a small fraction of the band's ignorance about the film industry; critics loudly articulated the rest of their failures. The film received immediate backlash across the United Kingdom, and the reviews were so scathing that even across the pond,

1. David Philip, "Magical Mystery Tour: Failures From The Beatles' Self-Managed Era and Lessons for Today's DIY Musicians," *Journal of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association* 15, no. 1 (2015), 37-64.

## 2 Introduction

American broadcasting station NBC cancelled a contract to air the film in the United States.

Despite the success of its accompanying LP, the film was one of the first large-scale failures that the Beatles experienced during the height of their career. More often than not, however, failures like this are overlooked in the public memory of the Beatles. People's recollection of the Fab Four is selective and tends to recall the number one hits, the hysteria of Beatlemania, and the cultural legacy the band left behind; but in doing so, they filter out the fact that John Lennon, Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, and George Harrison were all simply musicians whose band was as much a product of the world around them as it was a contributor to it. The Beatles as a band were susceptible not only to failure, but the cultural, social, and technological influences that surrounded them on their journey to fame. And because the Beatles' career developed in the midst of the 1960s, there is certainly more to take into account than haircuts and an appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show*. Civil rights, counterculture, globalization, the media, and many other forces all played an irrefutable part in the creation of a band that to this day can claim unprecedented influence.

*Welcome to the Beatles* delves into the Beatles and their surrounding world to trace how the band simultaneously existed as a part of and an influence on their surrounding culture. Through the collaborative efforts of eighteen authors, this book conceptualizes the Beatles' career using the combined contexts of media, race relations, gender, globalization, business, and legacies.

The Beatles have been studied, written about, and analyzed in excruciating detail. Historical writings on the Beatles, according to Erin Torkelson Weber, can be divided into four distinct narratives. Broadly speaking, historical writers on the Beatles have been concerned with two central questions. First, who was the musical genius of the group? This discussion usually focuses on McCartney and Lennon. Second, who or what is to blame for the breakup? The newest trend, as exemplified by Marc Lewisohn's narrative improves upon the previous questions through his access to previously private documents, but is still

influenced by controversy; namely, McCartney's attempts to promote revisions.<sup>2</sup>

The Beatles historiography has also been plagued by issues that are, at their core, problems with sources. Namely, unverified "facts," journalism trying to pass as history, unchecked authorial bias, and the narrow demographic of Beatles writers who were mostly male journalists of a generation close to that of the Beatles. Weber notes the significance of this issue, arguing that, "the whole of Beatles historiography suffers because, so far, the personal perspective has been virtually the only perspective, and many of the premier secondary works of Beatles historiography lack adequate historical distance."<sup>3</sup>

The chapters of this book build upon the Lewisohn narrative and take into account the recurring issues in Beatles historiography. The authors of these chapters are largely removed from the Beatles; we have the advantage of being generations apart from the band and can reexamine them without any first-hand experience with the Fab Four. This book, we believe, raises significant issues about the whole of Beatles history.

The first section of this book contains chapters dealing with the Beatles and the media. These chapters draw on scholarly sources that analyze the role of the media in the 1960s, technological advancements during this era, popular art and film in the 1960s, and the shifts in public perception of the Beatles and their relationship to the media. In "You Say You Want a Revolution: Analyzing the Political Aesthetics of the Beatles' Album Covers," Andrew Pagnall examines the countercultural aesthetics of the Beatles' album covers to evaluate their purported revolutionary qualities. Jimmy Meehan's chapter, "The Beatles on the Big Screen: *Help!*," examines scholarly narratives focusing on the shifts in film throughout the 1960s and analyzes the Beatles' films within this context. Scottie Lynch's "Television and the Beatles: The Early Shows" analyzes 1960s mainstream cultures, technological

2. Erin Torkelson Weber, *The Beatles and the Historians: An Analysis of Writings About the Fab Four*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2016), 180.

3. Weber, 10.

advancements, the growing popularity and impact of television, and the relationship between media and public perception.

The chapters in section two consider topics dealing with race and racism. The chapters focus on accounts of racial tension in America during the Beatles experiences, changes within the political climate, the rise of more radical and polarized ideologies, and the increase in demonstrations. Allyson Manhart's "The Rise of the Beatles and the Fall of Vee-Jay Records: The Politics of Racism in the 1960s Music Industry" engages with what scholars have said about institutionalized racism during the 1960s, the notion of white artists appropriating and experiencing success from the artistry of black musicians, and compares the reception of black and white musicians at the time. Nick Hoy's "The Beatles Nay-Sayers: Evangelical Backlash to the Beatles and the Counterculture" explores the role of American religion and politics in the 1960s to understand the radical right and Evangelical backlash to the Beatles and the counterculture. Patrick O'Dell's "I'm Just Happy to Dance with You: How the Beatles Became Civil Rights Activists" looks at historic events in Jacksonville, Florida, during the 1960s, focusing on the history of segregation in public places of entertainment and the state of the civil rights struggle leading up to the Beatles' 1966 concert. In "The Beginning of the End: The Klan's America," Trey Wells describes the history of the Ku Klux Klan, their complex relationship to the Beatles, and their demands for religious freedom and desegregation.

The chapters of section three are devoted to introducing a fresh voice into the existing scholarly discussion around gender roles and feminism in America and Western Europe in the 1960s. Cecelia Burger's "Astrid Kirchherr: Forever With the Beatles," for example, looks at biographical works on Kirchherr, while also drawing on sources that discuss the history of postwar Hamburg and the Beatles' early development as a band within this context. In "Revolution 9: Yoko Ono and Anti-Feminism," Shelby Canonico draws on scholarship on gender and race, using Yoko Ono's biography to reveal the anti-feminism of the Beatles' fans and in the 1960s in general as well as the racism and anti-Japanese rhetoric in postwar Western society.

The chapters in the fourth section of this book consider

historical accounts that address the notion that the Beatles were a force of globalization or Westernization, along with those that analyze the Beatles' relationship to Asian cultures. Delanie Tarvin's "Go Home Beatles! Have a Haircut!": Postwar Japan's Backlash to the Fab Four" traces the political and sociocultural dynamics in postwar Japan, the relationship between Japan and America, and the role that postwar nationalism had on the Japanese backlash against the Beatles. Iris Swaney's "We Are Never Going Back: the Beatles in the Philippines" examines the political dustup in the Philippines to explain the poor reception of the band in the Philippines and supports the argument that the Beatles were a force of Westernization. Matt Remson's chapter, "Music and Meditation: How the Beatles Brought Indian Culture to the West," analyzes the Beatles' Indian influences on their sound and how that changed through their career; additionally, Remson draws on works that outline the origins, cultural significance, and growing popularity of the sitar and Transcendental Meditation.

The fifth section contains chapters dealing with the topic of the Beatles' business, drawing on scholarly works that look at 1960s capitalism and consumerism as well as the business endeavors of the Beatles. In "When the Beatles Played Businessmen: The Story of Apple Records," Jason Arquette examines Apple Corps to illustrate the haphazard confluence of the counterculture and mass consumerism as well as the rise of hip capitalism. Karson Lyon's "I'd Give You Everything I've Got for a Little Peace of Mind: the Beatles and Personal Security" considers the historical role of security for public figures and the shift in fan culture, privacy, and security from Beatlemania to the period after Lennon's assassination. Kenny Miller's "Let it Stream: The Beatles and the Age of Music Streaming" emphasizes the importance of publishing rights and the role advancements in technology played in this issue as well as how changing modes of distribution have impacted the Beatles' popularity in the contemporary world.

The chapters in our sixth and final section consider topics dealing with the Beatles' legacy. In "The Beatles and the Government: A Relationship with the Aristocracy and the British Monarchy," Brady Hess sketches the influence the

Beatles had on British culture, the role and perception of the British monarchy in the 1960s, the growing postwar generational shifts, and the historical significance of British honors. Helen Goggins' "The Show Must Go On: The Beatles' Lasting influence on Shea Stadium" analyzes the Beatles' historic concert, the historical significance of Shea Stadium, and the lasting impact the Beatles' had on the venues in which performed. Finally, Richard Pedro's "The Rooftop Concert: The lasting Effects of the Concert on the Beatles' Legacy" revisits the role of the Rooftop concert in the Beatles' history, offering a fresh interpretation that notes the banality of the concert itself.

The Beatles are the iconic group from a fascinating and chaotic era in human history. This book delves into the lives of the band members and how they affected the musical world while also looking at how that world shaped them. Our authors combine their unique perspectives to illustrate the distinct characteristics that made the Beatles who they were, while still managing to create a cohesive story that properly remembers this revolutionary band. There is a distinct give and take relationship that the 1960s fostered with the Beatles throughout their career and with this book. We hope this book illuminates how the Fab Four experienced the vast cultural phenomena around them while becoming a cultural phenomenon themselves.

So allow us to be the first to say, welcome to the Beatles!

[PART I]

## **Media**



[1]

# "You Say You Want a Revolution": Analyzing the Political Aesthetics of the Beatles' Album Covers

**Andrew Pregnall**

In April 1961, the Beatles returned to Hamburg, Germany, to play at the Top Ten Club. During their trip, the group went to the swimming baths with Astrid Kirchherr and Klaus Voormann, and after a swim, the Vaseline in George Harrison's slicked back hair washed off, causing his hair to fall into a characteristic Beatles Mop top. Kirchherr and Voormann urged Harrison to keep his hair in that style. "I was thinking, 'Well these people are cool – if *they* think it's good, I'll leave it like this,'" Harrison recalled. "They gave me that confidence and when it dried off it dried naturally down, which later became 'the look.'"<sup>1</sup> Suddenly, Kirchherr and Voormann became the creators of one of the Beatles' most iconic hairstyles. Years later, the Beatles hired Voormann to draw the album cover for their

1. The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002), 58.

LP *Revolver*. “My head was about to explode. Images and ideas were racing through my head like a betting frenzy, and then suddenly: ‘Hair!’ I yelled out loud. ‘Yes, HAIR!’” Voormann remembered.<sup>2</sup> His penciled depiction of the Beatles’ flowing hair became one of their most iconic album covers, hailed for its revolutionary aesthetics and even winning a Grammy for Best Album Cover, Graphic Arts. Beyond *Revolver*, however, many Beatles’ album covers received critical acclaim, with albums like *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* also winning a Grammy in the Best Album Cover, Graphic Arts category a year after *Revolver*. That cover also became the subject of many imitations, including the Rolling Stone’s *Their Satanic Majesties Request*. Overall, fans and critics generally have viewed the Beatles’ album covers as having revolutionary qualities, with Beatles producer George Martin even claiming, “the art of the vinyl album sleeve [...] did not have much of a life before the Beatles.”<sup>3</sup> Given these claims in popular rhetoric, I believe an analysis of what, if any, revolutionary qualities the Beatles’ album covers possessed seems long overdue. In this chapter, I will demonstrate the Beatles’ album covers represent a dynamic tension between the Beatles’ artistic and political desires and their record labels’ corporate desires, and I will argue that at the height of the Beatles’ artistic freedom and countercultural aesthetics Parlophone had completely commodified the group into a new form of capital that they packaged and sold as “The Beatles.”

### Historiography and Theoretical Framework

Outside of academia, innumerable examples of popular media directly or tangentially addressing the Beatles’ aesthetics exist. Some of these books tell the story behind the creation of the Beatles’ albums while others place the Beatles’ music, film, television appearances, and album artwork within the larger canon of musical history.<sup>4</sup> Current academic arguments on the

2. Klaus Voormann, *Birth of an Icon REVOLVER 50: The making of the legendary cover artwork for the Beatles album REVOLVER and other stories* (Wielenbach, Germany: Delius Klasing Verlag GmbH, 2017), 54.
3. George Martin and William Pearson, *With a Little Help from My Friends: The Making of Sgt. Pepper* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1994), 121.
4. For examples, see Klaus Voormann, *Birth of an Icon REVOLVER 50*; Robert

Beatles' visual aesthetics as multimedia extensions of their artistry and politics focus on the Beatles fashion and movies.<sup>5</sup> Some scholarship exists that addresses the Beatles' album covers; however, its analysis does not primarily focus on the album covers' function. For instance, Thomas Rickert and Michael Salvo argue the Beatles represent an example of the numerous artists who created proto-multimedia during the 1960s and reference the Beatles' involvement in the creation of their album covers.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, Kenneth Womack briefly analyzes the controversial "butcher" cover of the Beatles' album *Yesterday... and Today*, an album released in 1966 by American label Capitol Records. The LP featured a group of giddy looking Beatles holding decapitated baby dolls and bloodied steaks set against a stark white background; it drew enough backlash upon its release that Capitol Records recalled 750,000 copies of *Yesterday... and Today* to replace the cover art by hand.<sup>7</sup> In his article, Womack utilizes *Yesterday... and Today*'s cover imagery as a hook, and he argues it symbolizes a greater conflict between the Beatles and their American record labels, the actual focus of his article. Ultimately, this relative dearth of scholarship on the Beatles' album artwork allows for the creation of novel scholarship that analyzes the artwork's meaning, function, and legacy.

Renowned Beatles scholar Ian Inglis provides the best direct analysis of the Beatles' album covers in his essay, "Nothing You Can See That Isn't Shown: the album covers of the Beatles." Inglis evaluates the purported revolutionary visual qualities of the Beatles' album artwork. In the process, he provides several

Freeman, *Yesterday: Photographs of the Beatles* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1996); Storm Thorgerson, *Classic Album Covers of the 60s* (London: Collins & Brown, 2009); Aubrey Powell, *Classic Album Covers of the 1970s* (London: Collins & Brown, 2012); Mark Lewisohn, *The Complete Beatles Recording Sessions: The Official Story of the Abbey Road Years 1962-1970* (London: Hamlyn, 1988).

5. For examples, see Bob Neaverson, "Tell Me What You See: The Influence and Impact of the Beatles' Movies," in *The Beatles, Popular Music and Society*, ed. Ian Inglis (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2000), 150–62, or Charlotte Wilkins and Ian Inglis, "Fashioning the Fab Four: The Visual Identities of the Beatles," *Fashion, Style, & Popular Culture* 2, no. 2 (2015): 207–21.
6. Thomas Rickert and Michael Salvo, "The Distributed Gesamtkunstwerk: Sound, Worlding, and New Media Culture," *Computers and Composition* 23, no. 3 (2006): 296–316.
7. Kenneth Womack, "Editing the Beatles: Addressing the Roles of Authority and Editorial Theory in the Creation of Popular Music's Most Valuable Canon," *Text* 11 (1998): 189–90.

useful frameworks and arguments. First, Inglis notes that album covers and packaging serve four central functional roles: protection, advertisement, accompaniment, and commodity.<sup>8</sup> Second, Inglis supports the assumption that the Beatles' album covers "provided a physical link between the group's visual image and its recordings, which in some way reflected the Beatles' current musical and professional identity" by tracing the process by which Parlophone/Apple and the Beatles created their cover artwork.<sup>9</sup> Finally, Inglis argues the Beatles' album artwork *lacks* revolutionary visual aesthetics due to their classification as readerly texts as opposed to writerly texts.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, since the Beatles' visual aesthetics can, at times, be considered part of the counterculture (or at least classified as countercultural), a brief review on the historiography of counterculture in the 1960s will contribute to an analysis of the Beatles' artwork and its purported revolutionary qualities.<sup>11</sup> In his work, *The Sixties*, Arthur Marwick argues that counterculture, defined by him as the collective milieu of subcultures, did not challenge mainstream society directly but rather "permeated" and "transformed" it due to larger structural developments and, critically, the enlightenment, rationality, and tolerance of people in authority who acquiesced to countercultural demands (a phenomenon he calls "measured judgement").<sup>12</sup> Marwick flatly rejects the more radical readings of the 1960s like Marxist interpretations put forth by other scholars and claims that a

8. Ian Inglis, "Nothing You Can See That Isn't Shown": The Album Covers of the Beatles," *Popular Music* 20, no. 1 (2001): 83–84.

9. Inglis, 85.

10. For more information on readerly and writerly texts, see Inglis's article and his sources: Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (Hill and Wang, 1982); and John Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

11. For relevant historiography, see Detlef Siegfried, *Time is on my Side: Konsum und Politik in der westdeutschen Jugendkultur der 60er Jahre* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006); Detlef Siegfried, "Underground": Counter-Culture and the Record Industry in the 1960s," in *Mass Media, Culture And Society in Twentieth-Century Germany*, eds. Karl Führer and Corey Ross (London: Palgrave, 2006), 44–60; Robert P. Stephens, review of *Time Is On My Side: Konsum und Politik in der westdeutschen Jugendkultur der 60er Jahre*, by Detlef Siegfried, *American Historical Review*, 113 (2006); Peter Collier and David Horowitz, *Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts About the Sixties* (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2005); Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Mark Gottdiener, *New Forms of Consumption: Consumers, Culture, and Commodification* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2000).

12. Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 13.

Marxian revolution during the 1960s was never possible. Unlike Marwick, Robert P. Stephens challenges the notions of the 1960s as a cultural revolution and instead frames them as a period in which preexisting economic and cultural trends *accelerated* and *intensified*.<sup>13</sup> In addition, Stephens challenges Marwick's rejection of more radical interpretations of the 1960s like Marxist interpretations and asserts their need and function within society and history. Finally, Thomas Sutherland makes two arguments about counterculture and capitalism worth consideration. First, Sutherland argues that since "capitalism as an economic system and hegemonic cultural formation is so effective in producing the novelty we crave [...] there is no obvious metric for determining when we are looking at a genuine alternative to this hegemony, and when we are looking at yet another variegated product of it."<sup>14</sup> Thus, when examining any phenomenon labeled as countercultural, Sutherland suggests that one must be open to the possibility that the phenomenon is not actually the result of countercultural thought but rather of generative capitalism. Second, Sutherland suggests that even if a phenomenon is truly the result of countercultural thought, the countercultural "plays an essential role in the accumulation of the capital that drives our economic system, and that, accordingly, it cannot be plausibly understood as external to the structural conditions it opposes."<sup>15</sup> As such, Sutherland rejects the conflation of counterculture with the creation of new praxis or material items.<sup>16</sup> Ultimately, although each of these scholars differs in what liberal framework they use to evaluate the sixties, each of them does call into question the degree to which the sixties were actually revolutionary as assumed in popular rhetoric.

With these works in mind, I will examine the tension between the Beatles' artistic desires and their record labels' corporate desires to explore the interplay between commerce and counterculture and the revolutionary nature of the Beatles'

13. Robert P. Stephens, "¿Una Revolución Cultural? Reflexiones Sobre La Década de Los Sesenta En La República Federal Alemana," *Magazin* 21 (2013): 34–41.

14. Thomas Sutherland, "Counterculture, Capitalism, and the Constancy of Change," *M/C Journal* 17, no. 6 (2014).

15. Sutherland.

16. Sutherland.

album covers. To do so, I shall utilize Marxist scholarship that examines the function of art in a post-industrialist society and Marxist scholarship that examines the commodification of revolutionary values and ideas by capitalistic or Bourgeois forces.<sup>17</sup> As Walter Benjamin establishes, the age of mechanical reproduction changes both the function of art and the relationship between art and the viewer away from ritual and towards politics.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, I contend album covers serve a fifth political function in addition to the four given by Inglis, and that as such, the Beatles' album covers can be read as inherently political texts. In addition, like Inglis, I shall demonstrate the assumption that the Beatles' album covers represented their contemporaneous identities as musicians holds true since such a demonstration enables an analysis of the politics behind the Beatles' album covers. Finally, given the complexity noted by Sutherland in differentiation between "genuine alternative[s]" to mainstream capitalistic values and "variegated product[s]" of mainstream capitalistic values, I will make my argument within the framework that the Beatles' countercultural values and aesthetics were a product of *something* different from the mainstream culture.<sup>19</sup> To be specific, I shall argue the Beatles' album artwork lacked revolutionary political aesthetics due to its complete commodification and accumulation into a new form of capital by the Beatles' record labels.

### Please Please Me, With The Beatles, A Hard Day's Night, Beatles for Sale, and Help!

From 1960 to 1962, the Beatles, like most new artists, had limited musical knowledge, performance experience, and commercial success, which made them a financial risk to Parlophone when they signed a record deal. During the beginning of this period, the group's musical knowledge grew

17. For works that comprise the basis of Marxist theory, see Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: International Publishers Co, 2014), and Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (London: Penguin Classics, 1998).

18. Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, trans. J.A. Underwood (London: Penguin, 2008).

19. Sutherland, "Counterculture."

as they gained performance experience in Hamburg, Germany, and, eventually, through their growing success in Hamburg clubs, the Beatles garnered enough of a reputation amongst other musicians to record *My Bonnie* with Tony Sheridan in Hamburg.<sup>20</sup> Through coincidence, luck, or fate, the recording of *My Bonnie* brought the Beatles to the attention of record store owner Brian Epstein, and, as a result, Epstein became the business manager for the Beatles in November 1961.<sup>21</sup> After much work on the part of Epstein, the Beatles landed a contract with EMI subsidiary Parlophone in June 1962 after producer George Martin decided to sign the Beatles figuring he had "nothing to lose."<sup>22</sup> In spite of the group's limited success in Hamburg and Liverpool, Parlophone could not be sure upon signing the Beatles that the group would be culturally or financially successful. As with any business decision, the signing of the Beatles represented an inherent financial risk for Parlophone since it agreed to invest its human and financial capital in the Beatles in hopes the group would generate revenue. This factor created the foundation for Parlophone's need to control the Beatles' musical and visual aesthetics during their early career. Ultimately, as a result, Parlophone controlled the Beatles' music creation and music marketing in the beginning of their career to ensure to the greatest extent possible the group's cultural success and therefore Parlophone's financial success.

The story behind the creation of *Please Please Me* and its cover demonstrates Parlophone's control over the Beatles' music creation and music marketing. After his signing of the Beatles, Martin played an active role in the composition and recording of their music, and by January 1963 the Beatles' second single "Please Please Me" reached number one in *Melody Maker*, *New Musical Express*, and *Disc*.<sup>23</sup> Wanting to build off this success, Martin had the Beatles record their first LP, *Please Please Me*, in a whirlwind February 11, 1963, recording session; over the course of the next month, Martin mixed and dubbed the album and

20. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 59.

21. The Beatles, 65 and 67.

22. Mark Lewisohn, *The Complete Beatles Recording Sessions: The Official Story of the Abbey Road Years 1962-1970* (London: Hamlyn, 1988), 17.

23. Lewisohn, *The Complete Beatles*, 24.

directed the creation of its cover. “I was a fellow of the London Zoo and, rather stupidly, thought that it would be great to have the Beatles photographed outside the insect house. But the zoo people were very stuffy indeed,” Martin recalled. According to the London Zoo, photographing the Beatles was “quite out of keeping with the good taste of the Zoological Society of London.” Martin changed his plan for the *Please Please Me* cover and hired photographer Angus McBean to create the cover image.<sup>24</sup> Renowned for his surrealist portraits and his influential career as a dance and theater photographer, McBean’s cultural success and his experience as a photographer mitigated some of Parlophone’s risk by ensuring the creation of a quality cover appropriate to the cultural norms of the time.<sup>25</sup> Recalling when he traveled to EMI studios to photograph the *Please Please Me* cover, McBean said:

As I went into the door I was in the staircase well. Someone looked over the banister – I asked if the boys were in the building, and the answer was yes. ‘Well,’ I said, ‘get them to look over, and I will take them from here.’ I only had my ordinary portrait lens, so to get the picture, I had to lie flat on my back in the entrance. I took some shots and I said, ‘That’ll do.’<sup>26</sup>

The Beatles never had significant influence over Martin’s decisions during the creation of the *Please Please Me* cover. Likewise, the Beatles did not interact with McBean enough during his spontaneous creation of the cover photograph to influence its aesthetics. Ultimately, because of these two factors, the corporate values and politics of Parlophone feature prominently in the cover of *Please Please Me*, while the politics and aesthetics of the Beatles do not.

24. Lewisohn, 32.

25. Terence Pepper, *Angus McBean: Portraits* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2006), exhibition catalog.

26. The exact origination of this quote remains unclear. Several websites on the blogosphere like *The Daily Beatle* and *The Genealogy of Style* attribute this quote to McBean; however, these websites provide no further sourcing. The quote also appears in Kenneth Womack’s *Maximum Volume: The Life of Beatles Producer George Martin, The Early Years, 1926–1966*, which cites *The Genealogy of Style* as its source. These sources alone call into question the veracity of this quote; however, a variation of McBean’s story appears in George Martin and William Pearson’s *With a Little Help from My Friends: The Making of Sgt. Pepper* and corroborates the general events described in the McBean quote. Overall, it remains to be seen whether McBean said this quote; however, it seems likely that the overall sequence of events happened as described due to Martin’s account.

Since Parlophone essentially excluded the Beatles from the creation of the *Please Please Me* cover, then it follows that *Please Please Me*'s cover represents almost exclusively the politics of Parlophone. Inglis argues the *Please Please Me* cover fits into a genre first described by Storm Thorgersen as the "personality cover."<sup>27</sup> The personality cover genre characterized the LP covers of artists like Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra as well as many bands or soloists from the 1950s and beginnings of the 1960s, and from sociopolitical and sociocultural perspectives, the genre's conservative nature epitomizes the conformity culture characteristic of the 1950s. By portraying the Beatles as "bright, breezy, young, and handsome" in the personality cover format, *Please Please Me* fit into the broader norms of conformity culture about what was – and was not – acceptable for how a record label packaged, both literally and figuratively, pop music stars.<sup>28</sup> Put another way, during the creation of the *Please Please Me* cover, Parlophone controlled both the *advertising* and *accompaniment* functions of the LP cover and placed the advertising function of the LP cover over the accompaniment function. In doing so, Parlophone ensured to the greatest extent possible the album would be financially successful. Ultimately, the *Please Please Me* cover established the Beatles initial identity as an attractive pop boy band that would be maintained through the early portion of their career.

After McBean photographed the Beatles for their first album, photographer Robert Freeman started his long and fruitful relationship with the Beatles by creating the *With The Beatles* cover. Like the *Please Please Me* cover, the *With The Beatles* cover fits into the personality cover genre by featuring the Beatles in relatively conservative dress (turtlenecks) with their iconic Mop tops.<sup>29</sup> Unlike the *Please Please Me* cover, however, *With The Beatles* features the group posing with a serious demeanor in a dramatic black and white photographic style created by Freeman's usage of side-lighting. At first glance, these differences may only read as a difference in artistic style;

27. Inglis, "Nothing You Can See," 85.

28. Inglis; Angus McBean, *Please Please Me*, 1963, Album Cover, 12.375 inches by 12.375 inches.

29. Robert Freeman, *With the Beatles*, 1963, Album Cover, 12.375 by 12.375 inches.

however, these differences demonstrate the first instance of tension between the artistic desires of a cover's creator and the corporate desire of Parlophone. When Freeman created the cover, EMI expressed a desire for a color photograph. Freeman, however, wanted to create a black and white portrait and won the support of Epstein, Martin, and the Beatles, so EMI approved the final product.<sup>30</sup> Because of this, *With The Beatles* also represents the first hints of the Beatles gaining influence over their cover design and thus an overall microevolution in the Beatles' artistic freedom as a group. Overall, however, Parlophone maintained the *Please Please Me* status quo about the relationship between the advertising and accompaniment functions of the cover since *With The Beatles* still featured a clear shot of the group and their name in clear lettering; Parlophone still packaged and sold the group as "The Beatles."

For the remainder of this period until the release of *Help!*, the Beatles showed up to photographic shoots with Freeman who directed the artistic process from start to finish, while occasionally taking input from the Beatles and other individuals. "The photographer would always be able to say to us, 'Just show up,' because we all wore the same kind of gear all the time. Black stuff; white shirts and big black scarves," McCartney recalled.<sup>31</sup> Although some of these covers may be considered more artistic like *A Hard Day's Night* in which a series of photographs mimic the motion of film or *Help!*, which featured the Beatles nonsensically semaphoring with their arms, they still fell into the norms and politics of the personality cover genre.<sup>32</sup> In the cases of *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!*, the album covers served the additional purposes of not only being accompaniments for albums but also films, and thus the accompaniment function of the cover played a greater role than it did with the Beatles' other earlier covers. Overall, however, the covers during this period of the Beatles' career served predominantly in their advertisement function, and as such

30. Robert Freeman, *Yesterday: Photographs of the Beatles* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1996), 9.

31. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 160.

32. Robert Freeman, *A Hard Day's Night*, 1964, Album Cover, 12.375 by 12.375 inches; Robert Freeman, *Help!*, 1965, Album Cover, 12.375 inches by 12.375 inches.

reflected the cultural norms Parlophone needed to fit within to be most financially successfully. As McCartney said, "the photographs were artistic without being pretentious, and yet they were commercial enough to be enjoyed by the ordinary fan in the street."<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, the album covers for *Please Please Me*, *With The Beatles*, *A Hard Day's Night*, *Beatles for Sale*, and *Help!* represent the corporatized art of Parlophone as opposed to the later politicized art influenced by the Beatles, and as such should be read as political texts representing Parlophone rather than the Beatles.

#### Rubber Soul, Revolver, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, and The Beatles

After the release of *Help!* and its financial and artistic success, the Beatles entered a period of their career from 1965 to 1968 where they enjoyed greater artistic freedom and expression in their music creation and in the ability to control or influence their multimedia. Recalling the evolution, Lennon said:

We were getting better, technically and musically. We finally took over the studio. In the early days, we had to take what we were given; we had to make it in two hours, and one or three takes was enough and we didn't know how you could get more bass – we were learning the techniques. Then we got contemporary. I think *Rubber Soul* was about when it started happening.<sup>34</sup>

This evolution would not have been possible without the support and consent of Martin. "[He] was very understanding, even though we were going to change style and get more psychedelic or surreal," McCartney said. "It never seemed to throw him, even though sometimes it was not quite his taste in music."<sup>35</sup> Compared to when Martin funneled the Beatles through a whirlwind recording session for *Please Please Me*, the amount of time Martin allowed the Beatles to experiment musically, often under the influence of drugs, and to record outside his musical tastes represents a foundational shift in the dynamics between Martin and the Beatles. Thus, the creation

33. Freeman, *Yesterday*, 5.

34. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 193.

35. The Beatles, 194.

and release of *Rubber Soul* represents a transition point between the Beatles' identity as an attractive pop boy band and their newly found and allowed "willingness to explore directions and debates that went far beyond conventional assumptions about the activities of young musicians."<sup>36</sup>

*Rubber Soul's* cover perfectly demonstrates the Beatles' transition from attractive pop boy band to non-conventional musicians because it juxtaposes characteristics from their earlier album covers with artistic and political influences that would feature in their later covers. Recounting the story of how Freeman and the Beatles created the artwork for *Rubber Soul*, McCartney said:

The photographer Robert Freeman had taken some pictures round at John's house in Weybridge. [...] Back in London Robert was showing us the slides; he had a piece of cardboard that was the album-cover size and he was projecting the photographs exactly onto it so we could see how it would look as an album cover. We had just chosen the photograph when the card that the picture was projected onto fell backwards a little, elongating the photograph. It was stretched and we went, 'That's it, *Rubber So-o-oul*, hey hey! Can you do it like that?' And he said, 'Well, yeah, I can print it that way.' And that was it.<sup>37</sup>

What began initially as an accident became the Beatles' first foray into psychedelic artwork. Like the musical transition with Martin, the fact that the Beatles sat down with Freeman, chose the image for the cover, and chose its psychedelic finish demonstrates a profound shift from how they operated at the beginning of their career. Perhaps for this reason, scholars and fans alike view the *Rubber Soul* album cover as a projection of the Beatles' values onto the artwork – the lack of the Beatles name on the cover plus their stretched faces and dismissal of the camera representing a psychedelic pushback against the norms that governed the recording industry and society.<sup>38</sup> "I like the way we got our faces to be longer on the album cover," Harrison said, "We lost the 'little innocents' tag, the naivety, and *Rubber Soul* was the first one where we were fully-fledged potheads."<sup>39</sup>

36. Inglis, "Nothing You Can See," 86.

37. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 197.

38. Robert Freeman, *Rubber Soul*, 1965, Album Cover, 12.375 inches by 12.375 inches.

The *Rubber Soul* cover was countercultural. However, that does not mean *Rubber Soul* was revolutionary since it still classified as a personality cover and as an album cover focused on promotion.<sup>40</sup> Even though the Beatles' name did not appear on the cover, their recognizable faces still did; Parlophone still packaged and sold "The Beatles" to the masses. Ultimately, *Rubber Soul* represented a transition point for the Beatles' album covers during which the group explored their newfound freedom while Parlophone commodified the group's countercultural aesthetics.

For the creation of the *Revolver* cover, the Beatles passed complete creative control to their old friend from Hamburg, Voormann. As Voormann recalled the moment, he said:

I expected a sort of brainstorming, where everyone would come to share their ideas. But it didn't work like that. John only said: 'We still don't have a name for the new LP. So if a good title comes to mind, spit it out.' [Voormann:] 'Ok, but what kind of ideas do you have for it? In which direction should the cover design go?' [Lennon:] 'You're the graphic artist. We create the music, and you create your ideas for the LP cover.' [...] I was speechless. It is an absolute dream of any designer to simply do what they want to do. No one is interfering. I was quite proud that my friends trusted me with this kind of endeavor.<sup>41</sup>

Like their involvement in the creation of the *Rubber Soul* cover, the fact that the Beatles chose the artist who would create their cover and the fact that Parlophone would not be involved in its creation until final approval signifies an evolution in the artistic freedoms held by the Beatles. To be sure, the Beatles earned their artistic freedom through their unprecedented commercial success. This level of success, however, changed the relationship between the Beatles and Parlophone, for the Beatles no longer represented the financial risk to Parlophone they did at the beginning of their careers. It mattered little what imagery appeared on the cover of *Revolver* so long as the imagery was enough within cultural norms to not slow sales or provoke a boycott. So, it did not matter that Voormann eschewed the

39. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 197.

40. Inglis, "Nothing You Can See," 90.

41. Voormann, *Birth of an Icon*, 54.

favored color and psychedelic styles of the time in favor of black and white imagery or that the Beatles' name did not appear on the cover (for the second time) or that the Beatles continued to epitomize pot smoking, acid tripping hippies in their aesthetic presentation on the cover because Parlophone could ultimately package the Beatles as "The Beatles" and make money.<sup>42</sup>

This phenomenon becomes readily apparent when examining the cover of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Created through collaboration between artistic director Peter Blake, the Beatles, and photographer Michael Cooper, the *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* cover features marijuana plants, a hookah, the Indian goddess Lakshmi, Indian Gurus Sri Yukteswar, Sri Mahavtar Babaji, Sri Paramhansa Yogananda, and Sri Lahiri Mahasaya, authors Aldous Huxley, Oscar Wilde, and Lewis Carroll, four cutouts of Lennon, McCartney, Harrison, and Starr from their attractive pop boy band days juxtaposed against the contemporaneous Beatles dressed in eye-popping colorful suits, and, in the midst of the Cold War, none other than Karl Marx, the founder of the communist philosophy that Western countries were trying to prevent spreading around the world while young revolutionaries at home hoped for a proletariat uprising against the Bourgeoisie.<sup>43</sup> After *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*'s release, *New York Times* pop critic Richard Goldstein described the cover as "a mind-blowing collage of famous and obscure people, plants and artifacts" that ultimately felt "busy, hip and cluttered."<sup>44</sup> The cover was meant to be "busy, hip, and cluttered," however, as the Beatles packed every image and aesthetic they could into one cover that epitomized the counterculture. In spite of these visual and political aesthetics, the cover did not serve any less as an advertisement for the Beatles than it did for earlier albums, and the Beatles could still be recognized as "The Beatles." Therefore, the creation of the cover for *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* not only represents the Beatles at the

42. Klaus Voormann, *Revolver*, 1966, Album Cover, 12.375 inches by 12.375 inches.

43. Michael Cooper and Peter Blake, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, 1967, Album Cover, 12.375 inches by 12.375 inches.

44. Richard Goldstein, "We Still Need the Beatles, But ..." *The New York Times*, June 18, 1967.

height of their artistic freedom, but it also represents them at the height of their commodification.

In addition to its advertisement function, the cover of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* represents the Beatles at the height of their commodification for two more reasons. First, Parlophone spent over \$100,000 on the creation of the *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and its cover.<sup>45</sup> This sum not only represents an inordinate amount of money for the time (especially when one considers Parlophone only paid Voormann £40-50 for his work) but also exemplifies Sutherland's observation that, "the countercultural [...] plays an essential role in the accumulation of the capital that drives our economic system."<sup>46</sup> As such, the political aesthetics of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* cannot be considered aesthetically revolutionary. Second, one of the Beatles covers was far enough outside cultural norms in the 1960s that it could not be used for capital gain. Recall that the Beatles' cover for *Yesterday... and Today* that featured the giddy Beatles holding decapitated baby dolls and bloodied steaks was far enough outside American cultural norms in 1966 that Capitol Records recalled the cover and replaced it with a new cover viewed as more culturally acceptable.<sup>47</sup> This demonstrates there was a limit to the political and visual aesthetics that the Beatles could use in their album covers and that their record labels could commodify; however, that limit was not passed with the cover for *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Ultimately, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* epitomizes the dynamic interplay between commerce and counterculture in which capitalist forces accumulated countercultural aesthetics and sold them for gain.

45. Goldstein, We Still Need the Beatles, But ...

46. Sutherland, "Counterculture."

47. Interestingly, the "butcher" cover of *Yesterday... and Today* is now one of the most sought-after Beatles covers. Here I offer a few observations on that evolution: In 1966, the accompaniment function of the butcher cover was not able to serve in its desired advertising function due to its being too outside cultural norms, but today that accompaniment function is able to serve in the fourth function of an album cover Inglis describes: commodity. I believe this evolution in the perception of the album cover both signifies a shift in cultural values and norms from the 1960s (which probably goes without saying) and demonstrates the power of rarity/commodity in driving desire for an item in a materialistic and capitalistic society.

Sixteen months after the release of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, the Beatles released *The Beatles* (colloquially called the *White Album*). Visually, *The Beatles* is the polar opposite of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, featuring a plain white cover reminiscent of Russian artist and art theorist Kazimir Malevich's *White on White*, embossed with the words "The Beatles."<sup>48</sup> As Inglis astutely recognized, "for the only time in [the Beatles] career, there [was] no place for the group (in whatever form) on the album front. In saying nothing, the cover sa[id] everything."<sup>49</sup> Given this, one may question what political meaning may be derived from the cover, and on this point, I concede the answer may be nothing. However, scholar Ed Whitley argues the "*White Album*'s blank, nameless cover presents readers with a *tabula rasa* that shifts the centre of meaning from the text itself and onto the readers, who are then given a share of the responsibility for creating meaning."<sup>50</sup> Within this framework, the political message of *The Beatles* is whatever its audience wants it to be, which therefore frees that message from its commodification by larger capitalistic forces. Ultimately, in this way, *The Beatles* may represent the Beatles' most revolutionary and radical political and visual aesthetics.

### Abbey Road and Let It Be

Though scholars debate whether *The Beatles'* fractionated music style and all-white cover represented the decline of group cohesiveness within the Beatles, little doubt exists that by the time the Beatles recorded and released *Let It Be* and *Abbey Road*, they were on their path towards break-up.<sup>51</sup> As a result, the Beatles' last two albums convey little political messaging. Towards the end of the recording and mixing of *Abbey Road*, the need for an album cover image arose. As McCartney recalled,

48. Richard Hamilton, *The Beatles*, 1968, Album Cover, 12.375 inches by 12.375 inches; Kazimir Malevich, *White on White*, 1918, Oil on canvas, 2 feet 7 inches by 2 feet 7 inches.

49. Inglis, "Nothing You Can See," 89.

50. Ed Whitley, "The Postmodern White Album," in *The Beatles, Popular Music and Society*, ed. Ian Inglis (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), 108.

51. Even though *Let It Be* came out after *Abbey Road*, the Beatles actually recorded the album before *Abbey Road*. Although this complicates the periodization of this section from the perspective of trying to understand their evolution as a band, my conclusions remain the same.

"The crossing was right outside, and we said 'let's just go out, get a photographer and walk out on the crossing. It'll be done in half an hour."<sup>52</sup> With the resulting image, the Beatles cover returned to a personality coveresque genre.<sup>53</sup> After the release of *Abbey Road*, the Beatles had one last photo shoot as a group in August 1969, and, afterwards in September 1969, began the long and drawn-out process of unofficially and officially breaking up. As a result, when *Let It Be* was finally ready for release, the Beatles were not around for the creation of a cover, and their record executives simply used four individual photos of the band from the recording sessions of the music.<sup>54</sup> As such, the *Let It Be* cover is truly (and obviously) symbolic of the group's decline. The lack of intentionality in the creation of the cover images for *Abbey Road* and *Let It Be* make it difficult to read what, if any, political messages were present in the covers. To be sure, the Beatles looked like the stereotype of pot-smoking, acid-tripping hippies, and songs like "Let It Be" called for the radical notion of being at peace with oneself and the world. However, these images and messages were standard and expected at this point. Given this, I contend this period in the Beatles' career represents the continuation of their being packaged and sold as a commodity to a consumer; however, it no longer represents the active commodification of the Beatles and their values by their record labels. Ultimately, by the time the Beatles broke up, their record labels had completed commodification of the group and their values by accumulating them into capital and selling them as "The Beatles."

## Conclusion

As I have argued, the Beatles' album covers can be divided into three distinct periods that represent the group's evolution and identities as individuals and musicians. During the first period from the release of *Please Please Me* to *Help!*, the Beatles had little control over their aesthetics, and, as a result, their album covers represent the corporate politics and needs of their record

52. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 341.

53. Iain Macmillain, *Abbey Road*, 1969, Album Cover, 12.375 inches by 12.375 inches.

54. Ethan Russell, *Let It Be*, 1970, Album Cover, 12.375 inches by 12.375 inches.

labels and reflect the broader cultural norms of conformity that carried over in the record industry from the 1950s. During the second period from the release of *Rubber Soul* to the release of *The Beatles*, the Beatles reached an unprecedented level of artistic control that they used to infuse their politics into their music and album covers; however, during this time their record labels commodified those politics by accumulating them into a new form of capital. Finally, the third period from the release of *Abbey Road* to the release of *Let It Be* represented a simple continuation of the messaging and commodification trends that developed during the second period. Ultimately, whether the Beatles' album artwork should be viewed as revolutionary may depend on the readers' subjective evaluation of what constitutes revolutionary change; for example, the average American liberal would likely argue that the 1960s were a period of drastic cultural change and that the Beatles' aesthetics played into and epitomized this change. As I argue in this chapter, however, the Beatles' record labels completely commodified the group and their politics and transformed their countercultural aesthetics into a form of capital sellable under "The Beatles" label. As such, I conclude those politics and aesthetics cannot be considered revolutionary.

[2]

## The Beatles on the Big Screen: Help!

**Jimmy Meehan**

There is no shortage of individuals who could tell you when and where they first heard a Beatles song, but can the same be said of their films? Few music groups have achieved the same level of fame as John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr did in the 1960s. As a band, they followed in Elvis' footsteps by starring as themselves in their own movies. *Help!* was the second film they made, after *A Hard Day's Night*, and it stands out as one of their most unique projects. Most critics and fans view their first film, *A Hard Day's Night*, as one of the most successful films ever made with professional musicians as the main focus and cast. *Help!* was released while their fans were still raving about *A Hard Day's Night* and as Beatlemania swept across the U.S and Great Britain. Its style was totally different from their first film as the same director, Richard Lester, experimented with a very different method of film-making. After its release, it proved to be as popular as *A Hard Day's Night* was during its run in theaters. Even after the band had broken up, the film kept its fame just as much as the band's music

had. This chapter examines the place of *Help!* in the Beatles' legacy. Considering the popularity it had at its release and when it was re-released years later, the evidence shows that the film's popularity persevered long after the band broke up.

### Historiography

Much has been written about the Beatles' film *Help!*, and how it has been viewed over the years by film critics and scholars with an interest in the Beatles' legacy. Scholars generally focus on either the performance and the Beatles' involvement in the film, or on the film's director and the technical aspects that went into the making of the movie.<sup>1</sup> Others consider how the film fits into other movies made during that time and where it fits within the general course of 1960s cinema.<sup>2</sup> Scholarship about the Beatles' performance mostly discusses their views on how the movie was made and what they thought of it compared to *A Hard Day's Night*.<sup>3</sup> These sources are more biographical in nature and tend to focus more on the band than the film. Writers who focus on the film's director show the movie more in the light of film history. They go into detail surrounding the technical side of the movie and explain what specifically about the film made it unique when compared to other films.<sup>4</sup> By using both kinds of sources, it can be seen what place *Help!* holds in the Beatles' history as a band as well as its place in film history.

Other scholarship written about *Help!* and its director Richard Lester focuses on the trends of cinema during the mid-1960s in England and Hollywood. These authors provide context for the film history side of *Help!* by showing what was the normal style

1. Bob Neaverson, *The Beatles Movies* (London: Cassell, 1997), 34-36, and Neil Sinyard, *Richard Lester* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2010), 10-13.
2. Stephen Glynn, *The British Pop Music Film: The Beatles and Beyond* (New York: Springer, 2013), 69-72, and Kevin Donnelly, *Pop Music in British Cinema* (British Film Institute, 2001), 5-6.
3. Glynn, *The British Pop Music Film*, 69-70; The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2000), 167-171; and Raymond Narducci, "The Films of the Beatles: A Study in Star Images" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1981), 33.
4. Kenneth Womack and Todd Davis eds., *Reading the Beatles: Cultural Studies, Literary Criticism, and the Fab Four* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2012), 97-100; Michael R. Frontani, *The Beatles: Image and the Media* (Oxford, MS: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2009), 127-129; Neaverson, *The Beatles Movies*, 119; Sinyard, *Richard Lester*, 12, and Roland Reiter, *The Beatles on Film, Analysis of Movies, Documentaries, Spoofs and Cartoons* (Berlin: transcript Verlag, 2015), 69-70.

for movies during that time as well as what was changing.<sup>5</sup> *Help!*, in fact, demonstrates many of the changes that were taking place in filmmaking. Richard Lester's films were a part of that change; these publications show what made him different from other directors, as well as what made him appealing to the Beatles as a director. Examining these sources shows the context for the film culture at the time when *Help!* was made.

### The Lead Up

Viewers and critics held the Beatles first film, *A Hard Day's Night*, in high regard after its release in the summer of 1964. It would be this film's success, and the ever-growing popularity of the Beatles in the U.S., that allowed *Help!* to be made in the first place. Unlike *Help!*, *A Hard Day's Night* was shot in black and white, and was filmed as if it were a documentary about the band. Richard Lester directed film on a small budget, and he would go on to direct *Help!* as well.<sup>6</sup> Each of the band members enjoyed making the first film, although they all admitted to being nervous since it was their first time making a movie. It was not until they were working on *Help!* that according to Harrison they "all felt more at ease" when working on set.<sup>7</sup> They were able to give considerable input on the script and could just act like they normally would in their day-to-day life.<sup>8</sup> Despite the film's non-traditional approach, it became a huge success at the box office and was loved by both fans and critics.

The popularity of *A Hard Day's Night* did not just last during its time in theaters, but persisted throughout the rest of the band's legacy. To this day, it is considered one of the best films of its genre.<sup>9</sup> This popularity meant that *Help!* would inevitably be compared it to when it was released. Theaters were still showing the first film when *Help!* was released. This meant that *Help!*, had to live up to the praise of *A Hard Day's Night* as well, no small task given its lasting popularity.

5. Donnelly, *Pop Music in British Cinema*, 6, and Sinyard, *Richard Lester*, 31-32.

6. Sinyard, 44.

7. "Beatles Ultimate Experience: Movies - Help!," The Beatles Ultimate Experience, accessed February 27, 2018, <http://www.beatlesinterviews.org/dbmoviesb.html>

8. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 167, and "Movies - Help!"

9. Sinyard, *Richard Lester*, 5.

In the year of *Help!*'s release, 1965, the Beatles' popularity reached an all-time high. The period of the band's international popularity known as "Beatlemania" was still going strong at the time of the film's release.<sup>10</sup> Their fame in the U.S really started to take off after their first U.S tour in early 1964. During this time, the band performed constantly, which built up their international fame. After the release of *A Hard Day's Night* later that year, their popularity only grew. The Beatles were not the only ones to benefit from the increased notoriety after their Hollywood debut. Their director, Richard Lester, also grew in esteem after working with them on both films.

Lester was an American film director from Philadelphia who would become largely known for his zany comedies and his work with the Beatles. It would be his work on both *A Hard Day's Night* and *Help!* that, "set the standard by which all pop musicals are judged."<sup>11</sup> Before that, his most well known film was another madcap comedy called *The Mouse on the Moon*. His style of comedy in this film is what the Beatles found appealing about him and his work. He was also known for taking risks with filming techniques and experimenting with new ideas.<sup>12</sup> This would work in his favor as he incorporated this into both Beatles films. Later on in his career, he would show off his directing ability even further by making films that were more than just comedies.<sup>13</sup> However, it would be his work with the Beatles that allowed him to develop a reputation in Hollywood.

Working on *A Hard Day's Night* was the first time Richard Lester had ever worked with the Beatles. His earlier films, like *Mouse on the Moon* and *The Running, Jumping, & Standing Still Film*, and his work on the television series *Room at the Bottom* made the Beatles want him as their director.<sup>14</sup> The band enjoyed his brand of humor and wanted to have that in their film as well.<sup>15</sup> While making *A Hard Day's Night*, he worked closely with the band so that it would portray them as realistically as it could. This mockumentary style starring a group of musicians

10. Bosley Crowther, "Beatles' 'Help' Isn't Much Help," *The Atlanta Constitution*, August 30, 1965, 3A.

11. Sinyard, *Richard Lester*, 5.

12. Sinyard, 13.

13. Sinyard, 12.

14. Sinyard, 35.

15. Sinyard, 5.

was new and one of the many experiments Lester attempted while working with the Beatles. After finishing a subsequent film called *The Knack... and How to Get It*, he began production for the Beatles' second film *Help!*

### Shooting *Help!*

Filming for *Help!* proved to be a relatively quick process that only took a couple of months in the spring of 1965, in between the Beatles' touring schedule. Since *A Hard Day's Night* had been released just about a year before *Help!*, there was not much time spent between making the two films. After the success of the *A Hard Day's Night*, *Help!* was given a larger budget and more time was spent writing the script, which was first drafted by writer Marc Behm. Everyone in the band felt much more confident this time around since they had more experience working on film sets.<sup>16</sup> One issue that came up during production was the film's title. Originally it was supposed to just be *Help*, but another film was already being made with that title, and they had to change it to avoid any potential legal issues. Lester had told Lennon about the issue so he ended up writing the film's title song during a twenty-five-minute car ride.<sup>17</sup> During the actual filming part of production, everything was either shot in a film studio or on location. Given the settings of the film, that meant a lot of moving around for those few short months in the schedule.

Shooting at several notable locations around the world, *Help!* had a much wider scope than *A Hard Day's Night*. The first part of the film they shot was its ending which takes place in the Bahamas. They spent a few weeks there filming the final scenes and worked on some of its largest set pieces. There were two main reasons for going to the Bahamas to make the movie. First, the Beatles had not yet been to the Caribbean, so going for the first time proved to be an exciting working vacation for them.<sup>18</sup> Second, production costs made it more feasible to film

16. "Movies - Help!"

17. Steven Soderbergh, "Screen: 'George was by far the best actor of the four of them: Lester, veteran director of *Help!* talks to Steven Soderbergh, director of *sex, lies and videotape*, about working with the Beatles,'" *The Guardian*, October 22, 1999, 8.

18. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 171.

there than going to a different setting. Other notable locations included Stonehenge, Buckingham Palace, and the Austrian Alps. Like the Bahamas, they went to the Alps because the Beatles had not traveled there before. They largely enjoyed the travel; Harrison later said that, “it was real fun doing the movie on location.”<sup>19</sup> It gave the opportunity for many new experiences that would make it stand out in their memories.<sup>20</sup> Filming on location gave the film the chance to use their bigger budget and further spread the Beatles’ international popularity.

When the film was released, what stood out to many critics and fans was this film’s style. *Help!* looks and feels more like a Hollywood movie than the mockumentary style of *A Hard Day’s Night*. *Help!* was filmed in color rather than black and white, and Lester cited the European surrealists of the 1920s to 1940s as a major influence.<sup>21</sup> This influence can be seen in how colors are superimposed in the film.<sup>22</sup> In several sequences, Lester had the colors heavily saturated to create a strong visual dynamic. This gives certain scenes a vibrant tone that matches the film’s overall excited and lighthearted tone. To get a distorted effect for the end credit sequence, Lester had it filmed through a beer mug.<sup>23</sup> Choices like these show the kind of innovations Lester was looking for. This film, much more scripted than the *A Hard Day’s Night*, creates a relatively coherent story structure that feels more like a traditional film. The film’s comedic absurdity affects its structure as well, which is why, according to some critics, it feels so haphazard.<sup>24</sup>

*Help!*’s plot illustrates the film’s comedic tone and absurdist nature. The film opens with an Eastern cult in the middle of a ritual sacrifice to their god Kahili. However, the ritual stops when the high priest realizes the ring that the victim is supposed to wear has gone missing. It turns out that the sister of the victim sent the ring to Ringo in a fan letter, and it is now stuck on his finger. After multiple failed plans to steal back the ring, the cult attempts to kill Ringo as their next sacrifice to the god.

19. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 167.

20. The Beatles, 172.

21. Soderbergh, “Richard Lester Interview,” 8.

22. Soderbergh, 8.

23. Soderbergh, 8.

24. Bosley Crowther, “Beatles’ ‘Help’ Isn’t Much Help,” 3A.

What follows are several humorous attempts by the cult to paint Ringo red as part of their human sacrifice. The Beatles then try to find a way to remove the ring from Ringo's finger; this leads them to a pair of scientists that end up wanting the ring to rule the world. Now on the run from the cult and the scientists, the Beatles make several attempts to hide with police protection and continue recording their new album. After being chased from the Alps in Austria, to Stonehenge, and all the way to the Bahamas, Ringo is finally caught by the cult and prepared for his sacrifice. The cult sets a trap for the police and the rest of the band. Only after showing his courage does the ring fly off Ringo's finger and he is saved.<sup>25</sup> The film is filled with moments of absurdist comedy: the boys sing "Ode to Joy" in order to put a tiger to sleep, for example. Some scholars have linked this type of comedy to the kind found on the British television comedy series, *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. Bob Neaverson notes that, "it might also be fair to acknowledge the formal influence of the Beatles film upon the Pythons."<sup>26</sup> This tribute to absurdist cinema set it apart from other films of the time.

Unlike their previous film, the Beatles actually had to act from a script in *Help!*<sup>27</sup> While they chafed a bit under these restrictions, they did enjoy some parts of the filming. Because of the strangeness of the script, they took to learning their parts with much less interest than they did for *A Hard Day's Night*.<sup>28</sup> In some interviews, the Beatles discussed how they would start to go over their lines on their way to the filming location. They also claimed to spend a lot of time smoking marijuana between takes, making it harder for them to stay focused.<sup>29</sup> What was probably one of the most significant experiences during filming was Harrison's initial introduction to Indian culture. Both he and Lennon said that he first became interested in it while filming their scenes in the Bahamas. While there, Harrison met Swami Vishnu Devananda who gave him his book, *The Illustrated Book of Yoga*. Harrison claims that this initial encounter prompted his interest in Indian culture and music.<sup>30</sup>

25. Lester, *Help!*, DVD.

26. Neaverson, *The Beatles Movies*, 121.

27. "Movies - Help!"

28. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 172.

29. The Beatles, 172, and "Movies - Help!"

Lester enjoyed making this film and getting to work with the Beatles again. The band described Lester as a very polite and easy-going man, and they enjoyed working with him very much.<sup>31</sup> Even though the Beatles admitted that their actions and their performance on set made his job harder than necessary, he still had positive experiences working with them. One of the issues he did have was Marc Behm's original script. At the time, Behm was an American writer who lived in Paris and had never been to England. According to Lester, "Marc had no feeling for any English dialogue at all."<sup>32</sup> Because of this, they had to use another writer's draft while keeping the structure of Behm's original script. Lester also reportedly had problems setting up the giant Kahili statue that appears on the beach at the end of the film. They had to scrap their original plan of having it rise out of the ocean and ended up placing it in position when the scene began.<sup>33</sup>

One of the aspects of the film Lester most appreciated were the performances of the band members. Ringo was largely the focus of the film, and his part was written in a way that would allow the audience to sympathize more with him.<sup>34</sup> Throughout the film he is shown to be increasingly anxious as the cult and scientists keep chasing and trying to capture him. For the most part, critics and Lester believed Starr did a decent job of portraying that sympathetic side.<sup>35</sup> For Lennon's performance, both he and Lester admit that he did not put much effort into it.<sup>36</sup> When compared to others in the group, he has a weaker delivery of his lines. Conversely, McCartney was said to have tried the hardest out of all the members.<sup>37</sup> Like Lennon, his line delivery also generally does not hold up as well as others in the film. Lastly, Harrison's performance is generally considered the best out of the whole band. Director Steven Soderbergh claimed that he "was the best actor of the four," a statement with which Lester agrees.<sup>38</sup> Many other critics also concurred

30. The Beatles, 172.

31. Sinyard, *Richard Lester*, 35, and Soderbergh, "Richard Lester Interview," 8.

32. Soderbergh, 8.

33. "Movies - Help!," and Soderbergh, 8.

34. Soderbergh, 8.

35. Sullivan, "Director," D11.

36. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 169, and Soderbergh, "Richard Lester Interview," 8.

37. Soderbergh, 8.

about his performance, commenting that his line delivery is noticeably better than the rest of the band's.

### Reception

Given the popularity of the Beatles at the time, the studio planned a wide advertising campaign leading up to its release. The band did multiple interviews as part of its promotion; advertisements ran in newspapers, and film trailers showed in theaters. Reporters asked the band about the filming process and how they felt about acting.<sup>39</sup> During the interviews, the band went into some detail about the film's plot as well. Many of these interviews were quoted in advertisements for the film. Most of the advertising appeared in British and American newspapers and media.<sup>40</sup> *Help!* also got to coast off *A Hard Day's Night*'s success since it was still in theaters around the time of *Help!*'s own release. Film critics previewed the film before its release, and their generally positive reviews helped get the word out as well.

After the film's release, critics had a range of views on the quality of the film. Some critics enjoyed the nonsensical fun of the movie. Influential *New York Times* critic Bosley Crowther called it, "90 crowded minutes of good, clean insanity."<sup>41</sup> Like many other critics, Crowther commented on the film's fast pace and over the top scenes. Yet, while some critics enjoyed these aspects of the film, others failed to find them entertaining. A review from the *Los Angeles Times* considered *Help!* to be a disappointment when compared to *A Hard Day's Night*. *The Daily Mirror* critic Donald Zec shared a similar opinion saying, "I swear I wanted to laugh, but my sides remained unsplit."<sup>42</sup> Reviews like these show that *Help!*'s peculiar style was not universally appealing. The one area most critics agreed on was the creativity of the film's opening and closing title sequence.

38. Crowther, "Beatles' Help' Isn't Much Help," 3A, 15A, and Soderbergh, "Richard Lester Interview," 8.

39. "Movies - Help!"

40. "Beatles in Tuxedos for Help," *New York Times*, July 30, 1965, 15; Crowther, "Beatles' Help' Isn't Much Help," 3A; and "Help! Help!! Help!!! Help!!!!," *The Washington Post*, August 8, 1965, G1.

41. Crowther, "Beatles' Help' Isn't Much Help," 3A.

42. "Help' Cry the Critics After Beatle Movie," *Los Angeles Times*, July 29, 1965, C7.

Many tied this in with the film's use of color. Leo Sullivan of the *Washington Post* called the production dazzling.<sup>43</sup> The journal *Film Quarterly* also commented the film's technical aspects, considering them very impressive.<sup>44</sup>

Overall, the fans' response to the movie proved more positive than the critics' response, and *Help!* was widely successful when it was released. Like the critics, many of the fans enjoyed the fast pace and the wacky humor.<sup>45</sup> The only noticeable complaint made about the film was that a substantial number of people thought that it was not as good as *A Hard Day's Night*. This sentiment was shared by many critics who reviewed the film.<sup>46</sup> The popularity of the Beatles at the time contributed to the impressive box-office results that the movie received.

The comparison of *Help!* to *A Hard Day's Night* proved unavoidable. Many preferred the tighter, more realistic plot of *A Hard Day's Night* to the more comedic and screwball story of *Help!* However, most critics and filmmakers agree that the color and camerawork for *Help!* were impressive for the time.<sup>47</sup> As for the Beatles themselves, they were more comfortable making *A Hard Day's Night* and preferred that film over *Help!* According to Lennon, they had more input with the script of *A Hard Day's Night* than they did with *Help!*<sup>48</sup> That input allowed them to act more naturally and not worry as much about the overall plot.

Compared to other films of the time, and to other films made by musical artists, *Help!* stood out in a couple different ways. One way was the technical aspects. It was because of the work done by Lester and the rest of his film crew that *Help!* both looked and felt different from most other films of its kind. Many critics have cited its credit sequences and the use of color during them that make the film stand out from the crowd.<sup>49</sup> Another

43. Leo Sullivan, "Director of 'Help!' Sets Beatles Ablaze," *The Washington Post*, August 13, 1965, D11.

44. John Seelye, "'Help!'" *Film Quarterly*, 19, no.1 (Autumn 1965): 57-58.

45. Crowther, "Beatles' 'Help' Isn't Much Help," 3A; Harold Hobson, "'Help!'—Beatles Take to Their Heals," *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 2, 1965, 4; Seelye, "'Help!'" 57-58, and Sullivan, "Director of 'Help!' Sets Beatles Ablaze," D11.

46. Crowther, "Beatles' 'Help' Isn't Much Help," 15A; "'Help' Cry the Critics After Beatle Movie," C7, and Sullivan, "Director of 'Help!' Sets Beatles Ablaze," D11.

47. Seelye, "'Help!'" 57; Sinyard, *Richard Lester*, 46, and Soderbergh, "Richard Lester Interview," 8.

48. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 169, and Neaverson, *The Beatles Movies*, 48.

49. Sinyard, *Richard Lester*, 46, and Soderbergh, "Richard Lester Interview," 8.

aspect of the film that made it stand out was its plot. *Help!*'s style of humor and the way the story was structured made it unique among other films starring famous music artists.

## Conclusion

*Help!* remained popular throughout the years after the Beatles' breakup. It was re-released on multiple video platforms like VHS and DVD in the 1980s and 1990s. In 2007 a two-disc DVD was released that had special features and behind the scenes footage.<sup>50</sup> The movie sold incredibly well each time it was released on home video formats. Filmmakers would also commend it for what it added to cinematic history. Director Steven Soderbergh credited the film as the start of modern color cinematography. Many of the filming techniques they used when making the film would be used by future directors and are still used today.<sup>51</sup> Not only did the film leave an impact on the Beatles' career, but also film history. As shown by its performance on home video sales, fans still enjoyed the film long after its release. Overall, opinions of the film have not changed much since its release. Both critics and fans largely agree that the movie is enjoyable to watch. For the most part, fans and critics still consider *A Hard Day's Night* to be the better of the two films.<sup>52</sup> Although *Help!* may not be seen as the best Beatles film, it has still held onto its popularity like much of the Beatles' other work.

The Beatles have reflected on their experiences making the film over the years after its initial release in theaters. Overall, they each have fond memories of making the movie and like how it turned out. When commenting about the song for which the movie was named, Lennon has discussed what he thinks it is about. He said that during that period in the mid-1960s he felt lost and knew that he, "was crying out for help."<sup>53</sup> They were all still learning to deal with the huge level of popularity that they had achieved. Getting a break from touring to travel and

50. The Beatles, *Help!*, DVD, Directed by Richard Lester, 2007

51. Sinyard, *Richard Lester*, 47, and Soderbergh, "Richard Lester Interview," 8.

52. Crowther, "Beatles' 'Help' Isn't Much Help," 15A; Seelye, "Help!" 57, and Sullivan, "Director of 'Help!' Sets Beatles Ablaze," D11.

53. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 171, and "Movies - Help!"

make this film helped to give the band positive feelings about the movie.

Lester also reflected on *Help!* over the years. He has repeatedly said that he enjoyed working with the Beatles on both films.<sup>54</sup> For Lester, he took the film as an opportunity to try new filming techniques. The subject has been something people have asked him about almost as much as he has been asked about what it was like working with the Beatles. Lester considers both films he did with the Beatles to be highlights of his career. It gave him opportunities to explore new ideas he had been wanting to try with his films. Working with the band boosted his own career as a filmmaker and gave him more experience when working on future projects. Even with some of the on-set issues he had with the band for *Help!* he walked away from the project satisfied.

As a film, *Help!* holds a unique place in film history and, more specifically, in the history of musical artists in film. Like many of the Beatles' other projects, *Help!* has remained popular with both fans and film critics. While it may not have surpassed *A Hard Day's Night* in the eyes of critics, many still considered it to be a landmark film for its time.<sup>55</sup> Future film projects taken on by music artists would be compared to *Help!* in terms of quality and success. The film also made progress in how films shot in color would be made. Filmmakers took note of the technical aspects that went in to making *Help!* and copied them.<sup>56</sup> These techniques would become more common in future films as they were adapted and refined by other filmmakers.

*Help!* holds a unique place in the Beatles' career as another successful cinematic project in their film history. Leading up to *Help!*'s release, the Beatles were only growing in their popularity. Their first film, *A Hard Day's Night*, became a huge success after its release and is still held in high regard today. The success of both films allowed Richard Lester to grow as a director and expand his own reputation. Considering all of its success both in and out of theaters, it can be said that the movie *Help!* turned

54. Sinyard, *Richard Lester*, 35, and Soderbergh, "Richard Lester Interview," 8.

55. Neaverson, *The Beatles Movies*, 45 and 124; Sinyard, *Richard Lester*, 45; and Soderbergh, 8.

56. Sinyard, *Richard Lester*, 44, and Soderbergh, "Richard Lester Interview," 8.

out to be one of the band's most successful projects outside of their music.



[3]

## Television and the Beatles: The Early Shows

### **Scottie Lynch**

Did the Beatles change television, or did television change the Beatles? Regardless of the answer, it is generally understood that television was a tool that, “the Beatles participated in and benefited from.”<sup>1</sup> The Beatles’ 1964 performance on the *Ed Sullivan Show* is widely considered the most important television performance of their career. This essential and famous debut on American primetime television skyrocketed them into international fame. While this performance is considered immensely important for the Beatles on television, it was by no means the first. Their first television appearance occurred in 1962, two years prior. By the time the Beatles arrived on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, they already had a successful career on television in Britain.

During the rise of the Beatles, television was still a fairly young medium, but it was the principal medium for the Beatles

1. Jeff Bench and Ray Tedman, *The Beatles on Television* (London: Titan, 2011), 8.

to promote their music. It was a highly effective means of promotion for both its visual nature and its ability to reach mass markets. Television targeted a specific demographic and fueled their fan base. The Beatles rose to prominence just as the Baby Boomer generation grew old enough to enjoy a new age of technology. They became the primary demographic in the highly popularized fan culture that became known as Beatlemania. During the start of their career, the Beatles could be seen everywhere in the media. According to Ian Inglis, “it was the ubiquity, rather than rarity, of their appearances that introduced large sections of the public to their music, defined their stereotypical visual characteristics, and provided the platform upon which the explosion of Beatlemania would be ignited.”<sup>2</sup> It was indeed sparked not just by the Beatles efforts, but by the television networks as well. By evaluating the overall context of television as a medium in the early sixties alongside the promotional strategy of the Beatles and the television networks, television became a publicity tool that not only helped elevate the fame of the Beatles at the start of their career, but also fueled Beatlemania and their long-lasting fame.

### Historiography

Much of the scholarship about the Beatles and television revolves heavily around their famous performance on the *Ed Sullivan Show*. Authors who mainly focused on the Beatles, like Ian Inglis, often use two approaches to characterize the Beatles use of television. First, they focus on why the *Ed Sullivan Show* had such a great impact on the Beatles career and how it fit into their much wider television narrative.<sup>3</sup> And second, through a survey of early shows, they show how the combination of the Beatles early television appearances served as the introduction to the Beatles’ sound and visual characteristics.<sup>4</sup> Other authors study the context of the technological culture and how television and other technology enhanced the star quality of the

2. Ian Inglis, *Popular Music and Television in Britain* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 195.
3. Ian Inglis, *Performance and Popular Music: History, Place, and Time* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).
4. Ian Inglis, *Popular Music and Television*.

Beatles. Authors, like André Millard of *Beatlemania: Technology, Business, and Teen Culture in Cold War America*, argue that the Beatles' fame had everything to do with television as a medium and that the public's new-found access to different technologies as a whole created the promotional force behind the Beatles.<sup>5</sup> In addition, television is also used in case studies on public relations work behind the Beatles.<sup>6</sup> Most sources assess the cultural context in the early decade of the 1960s that enhanced the appeal of the Beatles and note how it was intensified by the media, and especially television.<sup>7</sup>

While there is a general trend to focus solely on the *Ed Sullivan* appearance or survey their entire career on both television and film, this chapter explores how the Beatles used the growing promotional value of television and took advantage of the medium to increase their exposure within their first two years of appearing on television from 1962-1964. Television was a versatile tool that allowed for manipulation, but it also created a dynamic relationship between the Beatles and the television networks.

### Television As A Medium

Television's spread as a popular medium in the home greatly impacted the diffusion of culture in the sixties. Television emerged in an age where mechanized entertainment was more accessible, and the Beatles emerged simultaneously with a generation who could afford it and had time to enjoy it.<sup>8</sup> Dick Bradley, in *Understanding Rock 'n' Roll*, describes that, "TV came to occupy an unprecedentedly large place in the lives of children and young adults... the whole world was represented in their living room and a vast new range of stars and fictional characters that became objects of identification and desire."<sup>9</sup>

5. A. J. Millard, *Beatlemania: Technology, Business, and Teen Culture in Cold War America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).

6. McCandlish Phillips, "Publicitywise: How They Grew, Publicity Wise" *New York Times*, February 17, 1964.

7. Jeff Bench and Ray Tedman, *The Beatles on Television* (London: Titan, 2011); Michael R. Frontani, *The Beatles: Image and the Media* (Jackson, MS: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2007); Inglis, *Popular Music and Television*; and Inglis, *Performance and Popular Music*.

8. Douglas Karsner, *Beatlemania* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016), 162.

These teens and young adults were part of the generation of Baby Boomers, and this large complex generation considered the Beatles “fresh, new, special, and magical.”<sup>10</sup> The visual element of television allowed this generation to experience music on a deeper level, as if they were somehow at a live show. The visual aide of television allowed their imagination to flourish and incited their curiosity to see, listen, and study the emerging televisual music industry.

The immediacy of television was one of its greatest appeals as well.<sup>11</sup> Not only could fans watch their idols live from their homes, but they could also follow them in real time whether through live performances, promotional content, or even through entertainment updates from national broadcasting networks. Television’s aspect of immediacy also allowed for the subject matter to be trend based.<sup>12</sup> The Beatles became one of the biggest trends in the sixties; they were everywhere, which increased the accessibility of their image to their fans. In addition, television also allowed for the Beatles to be in multiple places at once, but also on different television networks at the same time. This new technology allowed the band to constantly record footage and rebroadcast past footage while actively performing on an entirely different program. For example, their appearance on *Juke Box Jury* was actually prerecorded and shown the same night as a live performance on a different network.<sup>13</sup>

For any band or celebrity at the time, television provided the perfect platform for promotion, especially during the sixties. Television publicity required a mutual effort between the networks, the labels, and the musicians. Musical performing acts wanted to display their talents to mass markets, but television networks also wanted to book these acts to maximize their ratings. In the early 1960s, “television variety shows are apparently using more rock ‘n’ roll groups, country music

9. Inglis, *Popular Music and Television*, 190.

10. Millard, *Beatlemania*, 158-164.

11. Martin McLoone, “Boxed In? The Aesthetics of Film and Television,” in *Big Picture, Small Screen: The Relations between Film and Television*, eds. John Hill and Martin McLoone (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 184.

12. McLoone, “Boxed In?”, 184-186.

13. Inglis, *Popular Music and Television*, 190; Patrick Coldstream, “The Drive behind the Beatles,” *Financial Times*, October 18, 1963.

singers and teenage idols in the hope of increasing their ratings.”<sup>14</sup> Early in the decade, the Beatles fit perfectly the desired profile of the acts that large networks wanted to book because they appealed to a prized youth demographic.

The Beatles also gained exposure through the promotional effectiveness of their manager. The Beatles’ manager Brian Epstein, known as the man behind the Beatles, had a strategy that thoroughly took advantage of the qualities of this new medium: complete media saturation. With Epstein’s strategy, media coverage was considered even more paramount than the music in some aspects.<sup>15</sup> On television, especially at the start of their career, the Beatles only performed song selections from a very limited set list, and their performances were mostly repetitive in nature. This was a common strategy for contemporary musicians at the time, but the Beatles and their management saw television as a simple medium for exposure. When attempting to rise to fame, the Beatles spent more time participating in television programming than they did actively recording.<sup>16</sup> Epstein’s idea was that a defined public image would be the jumpstarting point for their career. The early television appearances and numerous televised press conferences helped to consolidate their brand, which automatically made the public view the band for more than just their music.<sup>17</sup>

### The Early Shows in Great Britain

In the early 1960s, the Beatles’ music alone allowed for limited public recognition. Within the music industry, it was widely believed that, “the broadcasting template that had evolved on British Television was accepted without question as the only legitimate way in which to present pop music.”<sup>18</sup> One of Great Britain’s television networks, Granada, was responsible for the Beatles first television recording in August 1962. This recording took place in Liverpool, in the club the Beatles made famous,

14. Val Adams, “TV Shows Seeking More Young Fans: Teen-Age Idols Appear With Greater Frequency,” *New York Times*, November 11, 1964.

15. Millard, *Beatlemania*, 158-164.

16. Millard, 158-164.

17. Douglas, “Beatlemania,” 162-164.

18. Inglis, *Popular Music and Television*, 188.

The Cavern Club, on a local program called *Know the North* that highlighted local bands. Although the footage was never broadcast by the original intended program because of its poor image quality, it was broadcast on *Scene 6:30* in November of that same year as the Beatles started to gain popularity.<sup>19</sup> George Harrison remembered the event stating, “I remember Granada TV cameras coming to the Cavern to film us...[i]t was our first television appearance. It was the big time, a TV-company-coming-to-film-us excitement.”<sup>20</sup> This was the start of the major recognition by the press, and the Beatles were quite aware of the exposure it would bring them. Although this footage was not broadcast until November, their first broadcast appearance on television occurred on October 17, 1962, on another Granada television program called *People and Places*. That year, the Beatles performed on a total of five shows; three of the five shows were broadcast on the Granada network – which is acknowledged to have “unknowingly captured the group at a pivotal moment [in their career].”<sup>21</sup> Even moving forward, the Beatles still performed on numerous shows on the network.

At the beginning of their television career, the Beatles performed for any legitimate broadcasting network possible. At this point in their career, any booking was beneficial. These shows helped fulfill the mission of Epstein’s strategy of media saturation. As a result, the following year the Beatles had three number one singles.<sup>22</sup> In these early days, each television performance included two song selections, one of which was always “Love Me Do.”<sup>23</sup> Their simple set list and their repetitive performances helped the Beatles build a fan base and elevated the popularity of their music. Even the smaller television programs allowed them to appeal to a significant number of people, especially after their music began to rise on the British music charts. This exposure from the lesser known shows greatly affected the listenership and the public’s recognition of their established sound. The appearances on the small

19. Bench and Tedman, *The Beatles on Television*, 11.

20. George Harrison, quoted in The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002), 75.

21. Bench and Tedman, *The Beatles on Television*, 11.

22. Inglis, *Popular Music and Television*, 185.

23. Inglis, *Popular Music and Television*, 185.

television shows at the end of 1962 kicked started their television career.

By 1963, the Beatles rose to celebrity status in the U.K. Previous television performances and the ambitious nature of Epstein's management granted them the ability to grow their television repertoire. In the early months of 1963, the group booked gigs on popular programs such as *Thank Your Lucky Stars* and *The Mersey Sound*.<sup>24</sup> After 24 television appearances and one whole year after their first TV performance, in October 1963, the Beatles hit it big with a spot on *Sunday Night at The London Palladium*, a one-hour program broadcast around the country every Sunday night during primetime. The Beatles knew a spot on the *Palladium* was the ultimate booking. It was the show the Beatles had dreamed of. As band member Starr put it, "I always wanted to play there, to get on that roundabout stage. There was nothing bigger in the world than making it to the Palladium".<sup>25</sup> The *Palladium* was not only highly respected by the Beatles, it was considered, "the most important platform in British popular entertainment, and regularly featured international musicians, dancers, and comedians."<sup>26</sup> That evening, the Beatles performed three of their most popular song selections at the time: "I Get You", "She Loves You", and "Twist and Shout" to over fifteen million viewers. In addition to those viewers, there were thousands of screaming fans in the stadium, and the visuals and audio of these fans gave the performance extra star quality.

The media coverage of this performance almost instantly elevated their celebrity status on a global level. The next day newspapers were flooded with headlines purely focused on the Beatles. Much of the media neglected the actual musical quality of the Beatles' sound, but instead focused on the chaos they had caused. Even the coverage of the tumult seemed to have caused even more pandemonium and curiosity. The aftermath of this performance brought Beatlemania to the forefront. The coverage displayed huge adoring crowds, and because of this

24. Inglis, *Popular Music and Television*, 186.

25. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 102.

26. Inglis, *Popular Music and Television*, 185.

performance, the Beatles officially became a household name in England.<sup>27</sup>

One month after the *Sunday Night* appearance, the Beatles booked the *Royal Variety Show*. Held annually and known for its immense prestige and the habitual attendance of the British royal family, this booking was essential in keeping the momentum that continued to skyrocket the Beatles into superstardom. Paul McCartney even stated that, “[t]he fame really started from when we played the Palladium. Then we were asked to do the Royal Command Performance and we met the Queen Mother, and she was clapping.”<sup>28</sup> Viewed by over 27 million people, the *Royal Variety Show* featured acts from all over the world; this performance not only gave the Beatles exposure, it displayed how essential the Beatles had become to English culture.<sup>29</sup> While it allowed the Beatles to be acknowledged along with other highly esteemed acts on the world stage, it also “confirmed their dual role of rock n’ roll performers and family entertainers.”<sup>30</sup> This particular performance was different for the Beatles because this audience had paid a lot of money to attend, and it encompassed a completely different demographic, composed of adults who proved less noisy than their younger fans. While on stage, John Lennon gracefully showed a bit of his charismatic personality, joking that the people in the cheaper seats should clap their hands while everyone else should just rattle their jewelry. The joke was well received. Even with the Queen Mother in attendance, they still won over the crowd and essentially won the respect of an upper class demographic. From this successful television performance, the band’s career was given a favorable endorsement on an international platform. It proved particularly important in England and the United States.<sup>31</sup> Some saw this performance in the U.S., and the media used it as a reference point when preparing the U.S. for the Beatles’ exciting arrival. The press described how these young performers gave a refreshing spin to a traditional and conventional royal

27. Inglis, *Popular Music and Television*, 180-182.

28. Paul McCartney, quoted in *The Beatles, Anthology*, 105.

29. Inglis, *Popular Music and Television*, 185.

30. Inglis, 182.

31. *The Beatles, Anthology*, 105.

fundraiser. Even Brian Epstein stated that this performance made them national.<sup>32</sup> In just two major television shows, they became a major music act in the British entertainment world.

As the Beatles became more popular, their television appearances became more diverse and more complex than the repetitive nature of simply performing their latest single, and their appearances were no longer limited to musical performances.<sup>33</sup> The Beatles basically understood the power of being everywhere on high profile television programs, and did not refrain from highlighting their personalities off stage. Network viewers became increasingly fascinated with them as people, not just as musicians. *Juke Box Jury* was one of these early platforms that contributed to the Beatles' image as actual people. This program featured various celebrities and entertainment personalities on a panel of four who shared their impressions of the new single releases. The normal show ratings reached about twelve million viewers, which made it a great platform for exposure. Although John Lennon had been a panelist previously on the show, for one segment, they broke with convention and featured all four Beatles. This specific show earned record ratings; their regular number of viewers nearly doubled.<sup>34</sup>

Shows like *Juke Box Jury* displayed their versatility on screen to millions of viewers, and John Lennon stated that they "had become technically efficient recording artists and whatever media you put us in we can produce something worthwhile."<sup>35</sup> By the end of 1963, the great span of appearances landed the Beatles the Show Business Personality Award given by the Variety Club of Great Britain, "citing their spectacular success in the field of records, television and stage concerts."<sup>36</sup>

Television, as a medium that reached millions of viewers allowed these viewers and the press the opportunity to assess, discuss, and evaluate the Beatles on a larger scale. Their fans wanted to understand them in every aspect, and the reactions of these viewers were the main topics in the media. These three

32. McCandlish Phillips, "Publicitywise."

33. Inglis, *Popular Music and Television*, 184.

34. Inglis, 180-184.

35. John Lennon, quoted in The Beatles, *Anthology*, 78.

36. "Variety Club Award for Beatles," *Financial Times*, February 18, 1964.

performances provided the catalyst for “Beatlemania” and for how quickly it exploded. This acceleration in their career was even noted by the Beatles themselves as what allowed them to shoot for international success.<sup>37</sup> The next stop was the United States.

### A Global Export of an Image

Brian Epstein’s strategy of mass media saturation succeeded in Great Britain, but the Beatles still had minimal name recognition in the United States.<sup>38</sup> Television and other media platforms contributed to building anticipation by running “colorful Beatles stories.”<sup>39</sup> By the time the media got hold of more footage and their music, the arrival of the British on live American television had become a highly anticipated event. The press often warned America about Beatlemania spreading to the United States. The headlines of the print media often displayed the screaming, over-zealous fans through photographs from the live British television performances. The visuals of the adoring fans had a ripple effect through the public. Their highly successful television performance on the *Royal Variety Show* was something that the American public had seen and was a point of reference for the talents of the Beatles. Building up to this performance, major networks like NBC and CBS presented short news clips about the group, promoting the Beatles before they arrived. In addition to short news clips, the Beatles performances were often pre-recorded and later broadcast on American programs.<sup>40</sup>

The context of British and American television’s relationship allowed for a more effective push when the Beatles entered the realm of American media. One *New York Times* writer stated this arrival of the Beatles was just part of Britain’s “empire-building on TV.”<sup>41</sup> The British and American television networks were already closely aligned. U.S. media organizations including

37. Inglis, *Popular Music and Television*, 180-184.

38. Richard J. Sadlier, “The PR Of The U.K. Invasion: a historical case study of the Beatles’ 1964 U.S. Tour” (Master’s thesis, Ball State University, 2012), 16-18.

39. Phillips, “Publicitywise.”

40. Adams, “News Of TV And Radio.”

41. Paul Gardner, “The British Boys: High-Brows And No-Brows,” *New York Times*, February 9, 1964.

television networks started to set up London offices just one decade before the Beatles arrived in the U.S. and these “first press and television reports about Beatlemania were sent to the United States by American journalists already working in England.”<sup>42</sup> For example, a preview that was broadcast on CBS in December 1963 was a result of one CBS’s correspondents who attended a show; he was “impressed by the visual appeal of the fans screaming [and] brought in a CBS film crew.”<sup>43</sup> The film included a band interview and was sent to the New York headquarters; it was broadcast in the U.S. one month later.

Because of the intertwinement of the British and American television and media industries, the American public became aware of the Beatles American television debut months before their arrival. The knowledge that they had booked three shows on the *Ed Sullivan Show* saturated the national news almost three months before the event in the late fall and winter of 1963. By this time, there was no question whether or not the American public knew about the Beatles. Headlines of national papers, like the *New York Times* read “British Rock ‘n’ Roll Group Signed for Three Ed Sullivan Shows.” The public curiosity constantly expanded because the Beatles were expected to “render musical mayhem on American Television.”<sup>44</sup>

### The Great American Debut

The first full “live” performance of the Beatles was broadcast to the American people as a feature on *The Jack Paar Program* aired by NBC. *The Jack Paar Program* was a popular variety show hosted by Jack Paar who was the former host of *The Tonight Show* and a highly esteemed television personality. The program aired for an hour every Friday evening at 10 pm. The footage of the Beatles consisted of a short, previously filmed clip as one of the acts on the variety show.<sup>45</sup> For the American public, this specific performance built anticipation.

The Beatles’ appearance on *The Jack Paar Program* prompted much discussion in the American media about the caliber of

42. Millard, *Beatlemania*, 195.

43. Millard, *Beatlemania*, 195.

44. Adams, “News Of TV And Radio.”

45. Frontani, *The Beatles*, 23-24.

them as performers, their music, their style, and their overall image on the television screen. Even in negative reviews, the *Jack Paar* broadcast provided the public with visual representations of the Beatles to evaluate such as their “crazy hairdos” or the intense reactions of the crowd.<sup>46</sup> The Beatles had a very unique physical appeal that could only be experienced visually. During his show, “Paar observed aspects of The Beatles’ emerging image, notably their hair, their wit, and their working class origins.”<sup>47</sup> Following the *Jack Paar* appearance, American media contributed to the discussion of this new phenomenon. Writing about the visceral nature of this Beatles’ performance, the *New York Times* wrote that, “their calisthenics were wilder and upon some-what fuller examination might prove infinitely more amusing.”<sup>48</sup> Even before the *Ed Sullivan Show*, the media contributed to the mania that would arrive with the Beatles.

After their initial introduction on American television, the Beatles arrived in New York City one month later to perform live on the *Ed Sullivan Show*. The Beatles performances on *Ed Sullivan* were the most widely recognized event of the Beatles on American television. George Harrison even stated, “we were aware that the *Ed Sullivan Show* was the big one because we got a telegram from Elvis and the Colonel. And I’ve heard that while the show was on there were no reported crimes, or very few.”<sup>49</sup>

In a broader sense, this performance was just one in a line of bookings that were part of the media saturation strategy. Prior to *Ed Sullivan*, the Beatles had just played on the largest television broadcast in British music only months before. Epstein planned the show as one of many bookings on their promotional tour, but it was much anticipated by the public, and proved to be a high-profile event in the American media. The *Ed Sullivan Show* was notable not merely because of their performance, but also because of its timing; the Beatles had just sold over a million records, and their song “I Want to Hold Your Hand” had just hit number one on the American charts. The *Ed Sullivan Show* proved to be the tipping point of their official

46. Frontani, 23-24.

47. Frontani, *The Beatles*, 23-24.

48. Jack Gould, “TV: It’s the Beatles (Yeah, Yeah, Yeah): Paar Presents British Singers on Film,” *New York Times*, January 4, 1964.

49. George Harrison, quoted in *The Beatles, Anthology*, 119.

international success.<sup>50</sup> The *Chicago Tribune* headline the next day read, “Beatles Arrive on TV – Girls Flip Whigs.” Reporter Larry Wolters claimed that, “several hundred feminine teenagers [were] reduced to screaming-meemie shambles. The Beatles have been doing great in their recordings for a year, but this was the first time an American television audience had seen them in lunatic action.”<sup>51</sup> It was clear that this television performance amazed the American audience and had been the final step to international success on television, which allowed for the continuation of a successful promotional tour through the U.S.

### Television and Staying Relevant

After the U.S. visit, the Beatles continued to use television to maintain their fan base. Their task was to film footage for different television networks. One example of this was their appearance on the ABC program called *Shindigs*. In October 1964, a Beatles’ feature was broadcast, but it was actually filmed well in advance. While in the U.K., the show’s producer had filmed a segment with the intention of specifically rebroadcasting it in America.<sup>52</sup> As much as the Beatles wanted promotion, television wanted the Beatles, and the demand seemed endless.

By the end of 1964, seeing the Beatles on American television was the new normal as they became global celebrities. Networks aired special primetime documentaries that showcased the fast lives of the Beatles. These kept the public updated on the different aspects of the Beatles’ lives, but also kept the public interested in the Beatles and their music. In September 1964, a documentary called “Beatles in San Francisco” aired on television and featured the “phenomenon of the Beatles in America.”<sup>53</sup> Essentially, allowing their fans to stay in the fantasy of their domestic presence and remain excited about the British invasion in the U.S.<sup>54</sup> It was also common for American

50. Inglis, *Popular Music and Television*, 180-184.

51. Larry Wolters, “Beatles Arrive on TV -- and Girls Flip Wigs,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 10, 1964.

52. Cecil Smith, “Shindig Tonight With the Beatles,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 7, 1964.

53. “TV Revisions,” *Chicago Tribune*, September 5, 1964.

television to feature old segments of the Beatles that were previously featured in the U.K. months earlier. This was a case of popular demand. These features once again showed more than their music. Popular segments, such as a Beatles' Shakespearean parody was one of the features on a variety of shows for the American television screens.<sup>55</sup> The very fact that these older U.K. segments were played almost a year after the original broadcast displays how much the Beatles were in high demand in the United States. The fans consistently wanted to see more of the Beatles, and the networks were more than willing to satisfy their request.

### Beatlemania Fueled by Screen

For the television networks, it was not as simple as giving in to public demand. "The importance of the ecstatic reaction of young Beatle fans to the early image of the Beatles and Capitol's promotion of the band is impossible to overstate," Michael Frontani argues.<sup>56</sup> Because the Beatles were in such high demand, for the remainder of the year following the *Ed Sullivan* appearance, networks used recorded performances for their own benefit. For example, ABC and CBS scheduled prerecorded Beatles appearances during what was known as "rating week," the central week to establish television ratings. Because of their awareness of how successful the program would be if the Beatles were aired during that week, these segments were strategically placed in their weekly line-ups. Networks even substituted their regular TV programs with the Beatles during this week.<sup>57</sup>

Showing the Beatles on air was only part of the role of the TV networks in the expansion of this fan culture. For many of the performances, there is no question that the performative nature of the Beatlemania audience was purposely displayed on screen. This was an on screen tactic to attract more people but also to give the press another subject to discuss. Not only did this benefit the Beatles but also the television programs.

54. "TV Revisions."

55. Cecil Smith, "The TV Scene: Video Glowed In Dark Time," *Los Angeles Times*, November 18, 1964.

56. Frontani, *The Beatles*, 30.

57. Val Adams, "Caste Changes: Or, The Sad Tale Of Four Beatles Who Were Not What They Supposed," *New York Times*, November 22, 1964.

Almost every source at the time, in some way, discussed how the crowd promoted or distracted from the Beatles performance. Essentially, contemporaries described how, “the whole show is being colored by the kids’ reaction.”<sup>58</sup> Especially for the *Ed Sullivan Show*, there were suspicions about how so many teenage girls obtained tickets to a show that had a highly competitive ticketing process. This was not only relevant for the *Ed Sullivan Show*, it was a common tactic used.<sup>59</sup> For the *Jack Paar Program*, the prerecorded footage had screaming fans edited into the production to give the illusion of a live show. For his viewers, Paar wanted them to experience how it felt to be in the crowd when the Beatles were about to perform.<sup>60</sup> Television was an experience for viewers who could not be there in person, and this experience was an aspect that television producers pushed to the public. As the focus on Beatlemania grew, Paar had purposely helped by, “presenting a model of hysteria that would be taken up by fans.”<sup>61</sup>

Although the audience was not entirely screaming teens, many of the adolescents of this generation did indeed buy into the culture of Beatlemania. Most of them got their first taste of the Beatles from television. One fan explained she “went crazy” from just seeing one performance.<sup>62</sup> Teens would have parties in which they gathered around the television screens; it was also not uncommon for more than one TV set to be used in one household to watch the same broadcast.<sup>63</sup> The craze seemed to have started with television, while obtaining other paraphernalia such as magazines and fan club memberships usually followed.<sup>64</sup>

## Conclusion

Beatlemania was a huge part of the Beatles overall persona. It

58. Paul Jones, “Ed Sullivan Doing His Share To Stir Up the Teen-Agers,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, November 5, 1964.

59. Jones, “Ed Sullivan Doing His Share.”

60. Frontani, *The Beatles*, 24-5.

61. Frontani, 25.

62. Edith Hills Coogler, “Beatlemania Hits Sandy Springs,” *Atlanta Journal and the Atlanta Constitution*, June 14, 1964.

63. “All-Out Beatle Craze May Be Quite Normal For Teen Girl,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, July 8, 1964.

64. Coogler, “Beatlemania Hits Sandy Springs.”

was the combination of their music, their image, and their fan base that gave them their ultimate star quality at the beginning of their fame. All of the qualities of the Beatles were displayed on television, and it was the medium that helped broadcast their talents to people in mass numbers. Within a year and a half of the Beatles' first television performance, the Beatles had progressed from multiple sets on the same television show, to playing on the biggest television program in the British entertainment world, to making their American debut on the largest variety shows on American primetime television.

The success of their television career rested not only on their musical talents, but also on their charisma as well as the television networks' attempt to satisfy public demand. The television networks played a primary role in expanding and intensifying the fan culture that surrounded the Beatles, which influenced how the public essentially bought into the Beatles. This cultural phenomenon worked its way into the daily lives of teenagers even off screen. Teenagers of the Baby Boomer generation, especially teen-aged girls, had a newfound access to the favorite entertainers. This accessibility and immediacy was a quality that television contributed to the promotion and continued relevance of the Beatles. They were able to be seen in multiple places and networks at the same time through the technology of prerecorded performances. By looking at television in a broader context, it is clear that performances like *Ed Sullivan* was just one part of the successful use of television as a medium at the start of their career. It was a medium that grew with them and allowed them to saturate mass markets for promotional use. And they were consummately successful at it.

[PART II]

## **Race and Racism**



[4]

# The Rise of the Beatles and the Fall of Vee-Jay Records: The Politics of Racism in the 1960s Music Industry

**Allyson Manhart**

Before Paul McCartney's solo acoustic set on the 2002 Driving USA tour, he offered some explanation to the audience behind the inspiration for the Beatles 1968 hit "Blackbird". At the time it was written, "bird" was popular slang in Britain for "girl" making the songs translated titled "Black Girl."<sup>1</sup> McCartney explained to the audience that it was inspired by the civil rights struggle in America, a symbolic message of support of the movement. The Beatles had a history of supporting this struggle. "It wasn't out of any goody-goody thing;" he said, "we just thought, 'why should you separate black people from white? That's stupid, isn't it?'"<sup>2</sup>

1. Dave Rybaczewski, "Blackbird' History," The Beatlesebooks, accessed April 2, 2018, <http://www.beatlesebooks.com>.
2. Bruce Mirken, "1964, Civil Rights – and the Beatles?" The Greenlining Institute, September 11, 2013, <http://greenlining.org/blog/2013/1964-civil-rights-and-the-beatles/>.

One of the most memorable instances of the Beatles stand for equality was when they refused to perform a segregated concert at the Gator Bowl in Jacksonville, Florida, forcing city officials to relent and allow the stadium to be integrated. “We never play to segregated audiences and we aren’t going to start now,” Lennon asserted. “I’d sooner lose our appearance money.”<sup>3</sup> The band stayed true to these claims, releasing a press statement in September 1964 that they would “not appear unless Negroes are allowed to sit anywhere.”<sup>4</sup> By 1965, they had a clause placed in their contract that the Beatles shall “not be required to perform in front of a segregated audience.”<sup>5</sup>

The Beatles are and were vocal about the influence of African American artists in their music. McCartney claimed repeatedly that many of their musical heroes were black. This raises the question of whether imitation is the sincerest form of flattery or if it is theft. The difference between stealing from an artist or being influenced by an artist is disputable over genres and eras. While the four mop-topped boys from Liverpool were well intentioned, their role in the history of Rock ‘n’ Roll still had profound consequences for black artists and businesses. The history of Rock ‘n’ Roll is intertwined with the history of race, and it is important to understand that popular music should be interpreted not only as art, but also as a product. By examining the Beatles’ music as both of these through its impact on Vee-Jay Records, a Chicago based black-owned record label, the more subtle and lasting negative effects of the colonization of black music by white audiences and businesses emerge.

The institutionalized discrimination against African Americans in business was widespread in the 1960s, and the music industry was not exempt from this. This chapter divides this struggle into two parts. First, the effect of discrimination on businesses. Jack Hamilton proposes the idea of cultural gerrymandering, “whereby economic and ideological power lies all too often in the hands of those who profit from (rather

3. Audie Cornish, “The Beatles: Fab Four AND Civil Rights Activists” September 18, 2011, in *Weekend Edition Sunday*, produced by NPR, podcast, MP3 audio, 00:58, <https://www.npr.org/2011/09/18/140573236/the-beatles-fab-four-and-civil-rights-activists>.
4. Keith Badman, *The Beatles: Off the Record* (London: Omnibus Press, 2009).
5. Cornish, “The Beatles: Fab Four AND Civil Rights Activists.”

than those who provide) the words and music of your national musical culture.”<sup>6</sup> This sentiment of financial racial oppression is echoed by David Sanjek. “Loyalty to one’s race and success in the marketplace would appear to be incompatible,” he claims, “and the market imperative to ‘cross over’ onto the pop charts that both reflect and are dominated by the interests of the mainstream power structure parallels the widespread advocacy of social assimilation and abandonment of separatist sensibilities.”<sup>7</sup> The second part of this struggle is the notion that the personal is political. Studying the political effects of music extends beyond the music industry. Political interests and movements inspired music, and music in turn informed and shaped the politics; music reflected the culture of the sixties and shaped that culture in return.<sup>8</sup> Acknowledgment of the colonization of blues music by the Beatles and how it impacted black artists is essential to understand the politics of black musicians. This chapter asserts that the Beatles unintentionally damaged the black music industry in both of these ways, and will illustrate this by examining the history of Vee-Jay records prior to and after their relationship with the Beatles by placing this story with the history of the racism of the music industry in the sixties and seventies.

### Historiography

The historiography of Vee-Jay Records consists largely of short mentions of their role in signing the Beatles followed by equally brief mentions of the company’s end in bankruptcy within larger volumes on Rock history. When examining the history of the Beatles and their relationship to race in America, scholars often focus on how liberal minded the band members were, how their fame gave them the power and influence to take a stand on civil rights issues, and how they revolutionized pop

6. Jack Hamilton, “How Rock and Roll Became White,” *Slate*, October 6, 2016, [http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/music\\_box/2016/10/race\\_rock\\_and\\_the\\_rolling\\_stones\\_how\\_the\\_rock\\_and\\_roll\\_became\\_white.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/music_box/2016/10/race_rock_and_the_rolling_stones_how_the_rock_and_roll_became_white.html)
7. David Sanjek, “One Size Does Not Fit All: The Precarious Position of the African American Entrepreneur in Post-World War II American Popular Music,” *American Music* 15, no. 4 (1997): 535–62.
8. John Street, “‘Fight the Power’: The Politics of Music and the Music of Politics,” *Government and Opposition* 38, no. 1 (January 2003): 113–30.

music into a political platform.<sup>9</sup> Those who do not sing the Beatles praises accuse them of outright theft of songs and culture. Controversial literature such as Edgar O. Cruz's *The Beatles: Extraordinary Plagiarists* credit the Beatles success not to relentless creativity, but consistent plagiarism of black artists.<sup>10</sup> These competing historiographies are largely incompatible. In my estimation, the historiographical debate suffers because scholars remove the Beatles effects on civil rights from their role in the music industry itself. It cannot be properly understood by either of these views completely without the greater context of how the music industries companies, consumers, and culture oppressed African Americans.

The historiography of the relationship between race and Rock 'n' Roll is much further developed. K.J. Greene's *Intellectual Property at the Intersection of Race and Gender* outlines the history of the phenomenon of cultural appropriation of black music, and explains how it is not new. It can be seen in two generations before the Beatles during the 1920s with ragtime. Despite being the original product of black composers, white artists profited the most by playing ragtime. White composer Irving Berlin is now one of the most iconic composers in the 1920s ragtime genre.<sup>11</sup> Works, including Ed Ward's *History of Rock and Roll*, Nelson George's *The Death of Rhythm and Blues*, and David Sanjek's *One Size Does Not Fit All*, highlight how blues creation by African American artists evolved to the styles of bands like the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. George Nelson's *The Death of Rhythm and Blues* claims R&B and rock 'n' roll are not different creations at all, and that the renaming of blues to rock was nothing more than an attempt to disguise its black roots to avoid the association of blues with African Americans and to create the association of Rock 'n' Roll with white artists and audiences.<sup>12</sup> White bands like the Beatles benefited from this

9. Marcus Collins, "The Beatles' Politics," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 16, no. 2 (May 2014): 291-309.
10. Edgar Cruz, *The Beatles: Extraordinary Plagiarists* (Manila: EXOM Publishing House, 2009).
11. K.J. Greene, "Intellectual Property at the Intersection of Race and Gender: Lady Sings the Blues," *American University Journal of Gender, Social Policy & The Law* 16, no. 3 (2008): 362-385.
12. George Nelson, *The Death of Rhythm and Blues* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988).

“colonization” of black music while black musicians suffered financially.

### A Brief History of Vee-Jay Records

Vivian Carter and James Bracken founded their record label in 1953 outside of Chicago on five hundred borrowed dollars. The husband and wife team owned a local record shop and first branched into the recording industry to seize the opportunity to record a new African American group they discovered at their store. The first initials of both of their names were taken to create Vee-Jay Records, one of the first African American owned record labels.<sup>13</sup> Jimmy Reed, an influential African American blues artist, whom both Elvis Presley and the Rolling Stones covered, released his second album under Vee-Jay records and put the label on the map.<sup>14</sup> With this success, the label branched into R&B, soul, jazz, and pop. They gained prominence and success throughout the fifties and sixties with artists including Memphis Slim, Dee Clark, and Jerry Butler. For a time, Vee-Jay was the largest black-owned record label in America, eclipsing the better remembered Motown.<sup>15</sup>

In 1962, the small label had established itself and had begun to go mainstream, signing more pop acts, despite financial mismanagement issues that would continue and eventually prove to be their undoing. In this year, Vee-Jay was officially large enough to do what no black label had done before when it signed its first white act, the Four Seasons. Nelson George employs the concept of “crossover” to refer to the act of shifting the sales base of black performers to larger white audiences. Black artists who were accepted by white audiences could achieve more profitable mainstream success. Vee-Jays first attempt at industry crossover exasperated their growing pains and money issues, the Four Season’s hit “Sherry” becoming so big the company was unable to pay for pressing more copies of

13. “The Rise and Fall of Vee-Jay Records” January 15, 2008, in *Fresh Air* produced by NPR, podcast, MP3 Audio, 7:48, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=18112344>.

14. “The Rise and Fall of Vee-Jay Records.”

15. “The Success and Undoing of Vee-Jay Records” August 21, 2007 in *Day to Day* produced by NPR, podcast, MP3 Audio, 5:16, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=18112344>.

the record and keep them on the shelves. Yet the label forged on with attempts at crossing over to white audiences, attempting to gain more mainstream audiences.

In 1964, Capitol Records threw the Beatles to Vee-Jay Records as a part of a deal to sign Frank Ifield. *Introducing the Beatles* was released under Vee-Jay as the Beatles' first American album release. Capitol tried to pawn off the Beatles as part of the Frank Ifield deal because they had not proven themselves to be successful in American markets yet. In addition to this, they feared that "Please Please Me" was too sexual for a white group and for white audiences in America, the song being described as "raw and raucous" and "interpreted as an exhortation to fellatio."<sup>16</sup> The emerging sexual revolution of the sixties in America gave an audience to a more sexualized and less proper popular music, but institutionalized white businesses were still afraid to take on that risk.

Signing the Beatles was the beginning of the end for Vee-Jay. Capitol Records, which quickly regretted passing on the Beatles as they flew to success, took Vee-Jay to court over their continued troubles keeping records on the shelves and paying the artists' royalties. In 1964, both labels claimed the exclusive right to manufacture and sell the Beatles' records in America in court.<sup>17</sup> Capitol and their parent company Transglobal Music Co. argued that because Vee-Jay had failed to pay royalties for records sold, Vee-Jay's contract should be void.<sup>18</sup> The payments that Vee-Jay failed to pay Capitol Records were spelled out in the second page of Vee-Jay's contract for the Beatles with Transglobal Music: \$0.0093 for each single record; \$0.11 for each extended play record; \$0.32 for each monophonic long-playing record; \$0.41 for each stereophonic long-playing record of phonographic records for *Introducing The Beatles*, and several Frank Ifield tracks.<sup>19</sup>

16. Ian Macdonald, *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles Records and the Sixties*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 2005).

17. Free Law Project, "Capitol Records, Inc. v. Vee Jay Records, Inc., 197 N.E.2d 503 (III. App. Ct. 1964)," *Court Listener*; accessed May 5, 2018, <https://www.courtlistener.com/opinion/2050333/capitol-records-inc-v-vee-jay-records-inc/>.

18. Transglobal Music Co. is the parent company of both Capitol Records and Electric and Musical Industries (EMI), these subsidiaries being their American and European branch respectively.

19. "The Beatles First and Last Vee Jay Contracts & Document Archive," BidAMI,

Vee-Jay Records' financial resources and legal team were no match for the behemoth Capitol records, and Vee-Jay's attempt at crossover into white audiences was crushed by the larger more established label, which led to the company's bankruptcy. The battle was really lost over financials before it ever reached court, as "each party alleges that it has expended considerable funds to promote the 'Beatles' in the United States and that the other party is unfairly reaping the benefits of these expenditures."<sup>20</sup> Where Capitol had the resources to bounce back from this financial loss, Vee-Jay was in a much worse situation after expending money in promotions with no hope of regaining it through Beatles' profits. The exact degree to which the Beatles' contract was responsible for Vee-Jay Records' bankruptcy is impossible to tell; therefore, we cannot predict how the company's financial mismanagement issues would have been resolved if they had never attempted crossover into mainstream markets. So while the Beatles cannot be accused of being the ultimate undoing of Vee-Jay, they were the final nail in the coffin for the company. Because Vee-Jay Records had felt that the only way to expand into a larger market of white buyers was to expand into white acts, they began signing more and more white bands, resulting in their inability to meet the demands of their white licensees and artists.

### Black Business

When confronted with the success of the Beatles in America and regretting their choice to pass on the cash cow band, Capitol Records and Transglobal hit Vee-Jay with an injunction against manufacturing or distributing any more Beatles albums in January 1964. Had Vee-Jay retained the rights to release Beatles records throughout their rise to unprecedented fame, the record label landscape of today could appear very different. Maulud Sadiq, a contemporary writer focused on hip-hop and race relations, argues that, "we were always taught that we had to be five times better than white folk just to level the playing

last Modified March 27, 2014, <http://bidami.com/Auctions/AuctionItem?AuctionID=84145>.

20. Free Law Project, "Capitol Records."

field. To be better, that thought pattern goes, alleviates people's desire to discriminate against you. We've all lived long enough to know that ain't true."<sup>21</sup> Vee-Jay's story exemplifies this same sentiment in the 1960s. Despite the label thriving, its attempted crossover killed it when it began to engage with white markets, corporations, and artists.

Music plays an important role in the public memory of the 1960s, since this new generation of artists' works became the soundtrack to the revolution.<sup>22</sup> The process of the rock 'n' roll being reconfigured, from "black to white in its production and reception while simultaneously retaining a notion of authenticity that remained deeply connected with constructions of blackness," allowed the white music industry to profit off the civil rights struggle.<sup>23</sup> The notion of authenticity was essential for the counterculture movement that the Beatles considered themselves a part of, as well as for the youth culture that made up their fan base. The Beatles were latching on to American black music in Britain and then returning that music to America, now as their own product and, therefore, financial profit.<sup>24</sup> The Beatles, using this genre, displaced black Rock and Blues artists and robbed them of these financial opportunities.

Vee-Jay's attempt and inability to crossover into larger white audiences and its battle with Capitol/Transglobal is ultimately a story of the Goliaths slaying David. Signing white acts and beginning to challenge what mainstream record labels thought of as theirs led to Vee-Jay's bankruptcy in 1966. White labels were operating on the unequal playing field described by Sadiq, allowing them to take profit from both Vee-Jay Records and genres created by black musicians. Critical race theory can be applied to the unintentional appropriation of blues music by white artists like the Beatles. This theory can be defined by its opposition to the ideas that ignoring race is the key to ending racism. Critical race theory states that racism is not a matter of

21. Maulud Sadiq Allah, "Why Do People Still Sign to Major Labels, Again?" Medium, November 28, 2017, <https://medium.com/the-brothers/why-do-people-still-sign-to-major-labels-again-f81cf49b6ed1>.

22. Craig McGregor, "So in the End, The Beatles have Proved False Prophets," *New York Times*, June 14, 1970.

23. Ulrich Adelt, "Black, white and blue: racial politics of blues music in the 1960s," (PhD diss., University of Iowa, 2007).

24. Adelt, "Black, white and blue."

individuals but of systems, and that, “one cannot fight racism without attention to economic exploitation and other forms of injustice and oppression.”<sup>25</sup> This system of financial oppression perpetuates inequality for African Americans; it is both institutionalized and personal, and it cannot be solved by the Beatles “all you need is love” rhetoric.

### The Personal is Political

The second way in which the Beatles contributed to the colonization of black music is on a level of personal politics. I use the term personal politics to describe issues that are inherently political that pertain to an individual or a group’s personal identity, where personal experience and political structures connect. The colonization of black music by white artists and audiences is clear in the Beatles catalogue, and despite the best intentions, it did have damaging effects on black music industries and on the artists themselves.

The Beatles African American influences range from outright covers and collaboration, to slightly less tangible genre influences, such as Chuck Berry, that helped create the rock ‘n’ roll the Beatles are now famous for. Between 1963 and 1970, the Beatles released twenty-five songs that were covers. During this time in the record industry, it was very much the norm for several artists to put out the same song.<sup>26</sup> Of those twenty-five, sixteen were from black artists. All of the six covers that appeared on their 1963 debut album *Please Please Me* were from black artists: “Chains”, “Boys”, “Baby It’s You”, “A Taste of Honey”, “Twist and Shout”, and “Anna (Go To Him)”. Many of these songs have stood the test of time because of their association with the Beatles, and the Beatles’ covers have far outperformed the sales of the original artists. This applies to even the Beatles early covers before their meteoric rise. For example, the Beatles version of “Twist and Shout” far outsold the two other versions on the market concurrently.<sup>27</sup> While this does not mean to discredit the Beatles talents, it does begin to paint the picture

25. Greene, “Intellectual Property.”

26. Ed Ward, *The History of Rock & Roll, Volume 1: 1920-1963* (New York: Flatiron Books, 2016), 376.

27. Ed Ward, *The History of Rock & Roll*, 376.

of how race, record popularity, and sales were clearly linked. Like in many industries in the 1960s, African Americans had to work harder to be successful. The key difference in the music professions of Blues and Rock is that these genres were created by black artists originally but earned profits for white artists as the sound became more popular and in tune with the counterculture movement of the time. The way we remember and talk about the contributions of artists reflects the colonization of black music. This is similar to the attempt to disguise the black roots of blues by renaming it rock ‘n’ roll for white artists. Yet instead of disguising the past, it disguises the future. Black artists are thought of as precursors or primitive beginnings of the art that white artists would later create and popularize. This sentiment projects the future of the genre into the hands of white musicians and takes it away from those who created it.

### Counter Argument

Many contemporary writers focus on the structural opportunities of African American artists in this era. Sanjek argues that there is a flawed dominant narrative in the history of African American music that presents white businessmen as all powerful and exploitative in the music industry. He believes that the discourse continuously puts African Americans in subordinate positions, which makes them “ill-equipped even to conceive of themselves as eventually rising to the status of a ‘David’ and therefore forever trapped as yet another victim of a corporate ‘Goliath.’”<sup>28</sup> This paper situates itself attempting to not impinge more opportunities to African Americans in the music industry than the historical record permits, but still respects the agency and success of their enterprises.

Vee-Jay Records’ experience with white audiences led to the company’s bankruptcy, but white musician’s effects on black music were complex: “this access to black society helped to alter white perceptions of African Americans. The venues for creation and consumption of Soul music threatened to and, in many cases, did break down the barriers of segregation in

28. Sanjek, “One Size Does Not Fit All,” 539.

America.”<sup>29</sup> It can be argued that to say that white musicians “stole” rock ‘n’ roll relies on the idea that cultural ownership is finite and rigid. 1950s and 1960s blues music had been considered “colored music” for a long time before it exploded into popularity with white artists and audiences.<sup>30</sup> Crossover black artists were responsible for desegregating mainstream white radio stations. DJs were forced to play these black musicians with crossover appeal in order to keep their audiences and stop them from tuning into African American soul stations as an alternative. These new desegregated radio stations seem like a step forward for civil rights, but the essence of their creation was meant to take audiences away from the black soul stations that had been playing genre and black artists before the crossover occurred. This similar pattern can be seen with Vee-Jay Records whose ability to break into mainstream white audiences appears like a victory for civil rights, but it drained its resources and opened the company to attacks from record company goliaths like Capitol Records.

Black artists such as Chuck Berry, Ray Charles, and Marvin Gaye held their popularity with white audiences and exposed these audiences to messages of the Civil Rights Movement.<sup>31</sup> These messages were only well received as long as they were passive, and more aggressive statements about black power hurt their popularity. While some artists were able to overcome the challenges of racism in the music industry to gain mainstream success, it does not diminish how many artists did not achieve success not because of their musical merit, but rather because of entrenched power structures.

After the Beatles’ break up in 1970, the *New York Times* published a shockingly progressive article for the time that both recognized the African American contribution to Rock and predicted the future of the black music industry. Author Craig McGregor wrote:

So in the end the Beatles have proved false prophets. It could

29. Christopher Smith, “The Last Mile of The Way: Soul Music and the Civil Rights Movement,” *Auctus: VCU’s Journal of Undergraduate Research and Creativity* (Spring 2015).

30. Smith, “The Last Mile of The Way.”

31. Smith, “The Last Mile of The Way,” 8.

hardly have been otherwise. But it is a cruel paradox, and a damaging one for the new culture, that the most important group in rock should have been white instead of black, and English instead of American, and should finally have turned its back upon the revolution. For it is the black American who has created the music of the revolution; it is the black American who (as Norman Mailer prophesied years ago in ‘The White Negro’) has liberated the young white ‘hip’ from the puritan, materialistic ethic of white WASP culture, and it is the black American who will probably have to map out, yet again, the direction which rock and the counter-culture of which it is a symbol takes. It may be that in soul, or avant-garde jazz, or in some other hot music still cooking in the ghettos, the future is even now being shaped.<sup>32</sup>

The music McGregor predicted can be seen today in hip hop and rap, genres that were created by African Americans, gained popularity and crossover appeal with white audiences and now has a catalogue of white artists who perform in the genre as well. The music of the counterculture has long been associated with black genres. “In any society which repressed its minorities less effectively than America, the black breakthrough would already have occurred,” McGregor argued, “and the Beatles would have been black.”<sup>33</sup>

### Conclusion

Vee-Jay Records is a case study to show how black industries fared when exposed to the appropriating white industrial music business. This is not to say that black businesses were not capable of succeeding in white markets, but to say that the white recording industry did both unintentionally and intentionally harm their black competitors, and that the power structures of the 1960s helped to facilitate this. The Beatles’ effects were unintentional. Their visible support for the Civil Rights Movement may have been an influence on the generation growing up around the Civil Rights Movement, but their use of black music had consequences as well. Their popularity continually eclipsed the black artists from which they drew their inspiration, contributed to the theft of the rock ‘n’ roll genre

32. McGregor, “So in the End,” 13.

33. McGregor, 13.

from black artists, and led to the end of America's first great black record label. Vee-Jay's failure as a business cannot be blamed entirely on race issues, but its desire to cross over proved fatal. Crossover was appealing because of how historically black artists were kept separate from white industries, and the chance to break into a larger market and be able to compete with the 'Goliaths' was too good to pass up. The power structures that perpetuated inequality and proved advantageous to bands like the Beatles stunted potential growth of black musicians.



[5]

# The Beatles Nay-Sayers: Evangelical Backlash to the Beatles and the Counterculture

**Nicholas Hoy**

Dr. Bernard Saibel, a child guidance expert from Washington, wrote in a 1964 report published by the *Seattle Times* that the teenage crowd reaction to the Beatles on stage was “unbelievable and frightening.” He emphasized that this outpouring of adulation was truly alarming. Saibel saw this “hysteria and loss of control” from the crowd as hostile and frantic. When Saibel asked a couple of girls present about the lack of control, he claimed all they could say was: “I love them.” Saibel concluded by describing this phenomenon as an “orgy for teenagers.” Dr. Saibel’s musings were later reported in David Noebel’s 1965 controversial political polemic *Communism, Hypnotism, and the Beatles*.<sup>1</sup>

1. David Noebel, *Communism, Hypnotism, and the Beatles* (Tulsa, OK: Christian Crusade Publications, 1965), 13.

David Noebel and Bob Larson were extremely critical of the Beatles. Both Noebel and Larson are evangelical writers who each wrote multiple tracts about the Beatles and their harmful effects on young audiences. The common theme between the two was their accusation that the Beatles' music was hypnotic, but for different reasons.

Noebel and Larson's criticisms illustrate the resistance to the counterculture movement that emerged in the sixties and seventies. The counterculture was in full force during the sixties. The Civil Rights Movement was at its height; resistance to the Vietnam War was on the rise, and second wave feminism grew quickly. All were met with stiff resistance that refused to give up on a set of conservative, religious values. Taking a step back, it is staggering to try and understand the changes the counterculture movement brought to America. Both Nobel and Larson offer a window onto the resistance to the Beatles and the counterculture they represented that grew as the Beatles fame rose, and they represent the origins of a certain evangelical version of the culture wars that dominated the last third of twentieth century politics.

### Historiography

The counterculture movement stood against most conservative American values in the 1960s. The counterculture supported integration of public facilities, improved sexual education, second wave feminism, and anti-war protests. To meet the rise of such an unprecedented youth movement, the evangelical Right rose up and acted as the conservative opposition. David Noebel and Bob Larson emerged as products of the evangelical Right. Noebel and Larson were evangelical writers who championed conservative right-wing values. Both Noebel and Larson accused the Beatles of being a part of hypnotic conspiracy that threatened American youth. They researched communist experiments, especially Pavlov's famous experiments, to support this extraordinary claim. This would not have any serious effect on Beatles' US relations until John Lennon's 1966 "more famous than Jesus" comment. However, Noebel and Larson's criticisms were aimed against the

counterculture movement; they simply used the Beatles as an opening to criticize the entire movement.

A rising evangelical right in the sixties allowed Noebel and Larson's criticisms to be heard. As the youth counterculture grew and Johnson's Great Society promised real changes, conservatives chafed and began building their own movements.<sup>2</sup> Scholars have pointed to radical right-wing attacks on the Beatles, including the backlash against Lennon's Jesus claims.<sup>3</sup> Yet there has been little direct focus on the works of Noebel and Larson and their place in the evangelical backlash against the counterculture.<sup>4</sup>

### Noebel and Larson

David Noebel studied at Hope College and the University of Tulsa. He was ordained as a minister in 1961. In 1962, Noebel founded Summit Ministries, but has since retired.<sup>5</sup> Summit Ministries was organized as a series of programs designed to

2. Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Axel Schafer, *Countercultural Conservatives: American Evangelicalism from the Postwar Revival to the New Christian Right* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011); Axel Schafer, *American Evangelicals and the 1960s* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013); David Platt, *Counter Culture: Following Christ in an Anti-Christian Age* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2017); and Christopher Gair, *American Counterculture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007).
3. Andre Millard, *Magic City Nights: Birmingham's Rock 'n' Roll Years* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2017); Mark Sullivan, "More Popular Than Jesus: The Beatles and the Far Right," *Popular Music* 6, no. 3 (1987): 313–26; James R. Goff, *Close Harmony: A History of Southern Gospel* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press Books, 2002); James Kennaway, "Musical Hypnosis: Sound and Selfhood from Mesmerism to Brainwashing," *Social History of Medicine* 25, no. 2 (2012): 271–89; Anna Nekola, "More than Just a Music": Conservative Christian Anti-Rock Discourse and the U.S Culture Wars," *Popular Music* 32, no. 3 (2013): 407–426; Olivier Julien, *Sgt. Pepper and the Beatles: It Was Forty Years Ago Today* (Abingdon-on-Thames, England: Routledge, 2009); Michael Kramer, *The Republic of Rock: Music and Citizenship in the Sixties Counterculture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Serge Denisoff, *Solid Gold: The Popular Record Industry* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995).
4. "Looking Ahead to the Future: David Noebel's Retirement," accessed March 20, 2018, *Summit Ministries*, <https://www.summit.org/news/looking-ahead-to-the-future/>; "About," *Summit Ministries*, accessed February 27, 2018, <https://www.summit.org/about/>; "Statement of Faith & Convictions," *Summit Ministries*, accessed March 20, 2018, <https://www.summit.org/about/statement-of-faith/>; "Bob Larson...The Real Exorcist!" YouTube, accessed March 26, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUF4AIX\\_0bcejVskjqk4qMw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUF4AIX_0bcejVskjqk4qMw); "Bob Larson The Real Exorcist - Get Free From Your Demons!", *Bob Larson*, accessed March 26, 2018, [www.boblarson.com](http://www.boblarson.com); Bob Larson, "Need Help?," accessed March 26, 2018, <https://www.boblarson.org/religious-need-help/>.
5. "Looking ahead to the Future."

champion traditional Christian values in youth aged sixteen to twenty-five that still operates today. They also provide semester long programs for college students to help cement Christian values. Along with these youth programs, Summit also acts as a publisher. In the years since the sixties, it has become commonplace for Summit publications to attack pop culture, like the Beatles.<sup>6</sup> In a 2006 article written by Noebel, he acknowledges that he was one of the first opponents of Beatles music, while referring to himself as “your humble and obedient servant.” Towards the end of the article, he concludes: “While no Christian condones Chapman’s taking the life of John Lennon the reality is: ‘The wages of sin is death...’”<sup>7</sup> This stark claim gives perspective on the career of David Noebel and his objection to the Beatles.

Noebel stood on the forefront of speaking out against popular culture in the sixties. Along with the Beatles, other popular musicians also received criticism from Noebel, including Bob Dylan and Joan Baez.<sup>8</sup> Noebel once said during a lecture that if you covered up Bob Dylan’s face that, “you would have a hard time telling if [he] was a he, she, or an it.”<sup>9</sup> Noebel referred to Dylan as the biggest influence on America’s youth during the lecture in 1968. He also insulted Baez earlier during the lecture. However, this is because both Baez and Dylan were huge counterculture figures, just like the Beatles; they represented a specifically communist threat to a way of life that Noebel was determined to defend.<sup>10</sup>

Bob Larson was another of the Beatles’ harshest critics. Like Noebel, Larson saw the Beatles as a danger to American youth, but the evil came from a different source. Whereas Noebel focused on communism, Larson worried more about Satan’s use of rock ‘n’ roll to bring about evil and chaos.

Larson is famous for his work in the field of exorcisms. On

6. “About”

7. David Noebel, “John Lennon’s Gospel of Drugs and Sex,” *Summit Ministries*, November 5, 2006.

8. David Noebel, *Marxist Minstrels: Communist Subversion of American Folk Music*, accessed March 20, 2018, <http://archive.org/details/DavidNoebel-MarxistMinstrelsCommunistSubversionOfAmericanFolkMusic>.

9. CONELRAD6401240, “David Noebel on Bob Dylan & Joan Baez,” accessed March 22, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srXa\\_eaiFFC](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srXa_eaiFFC).

10. CONELRAD6401240, “David Noebel on Bob Dylan & Joan Baez.”

his website, he proclaims that he is the foremost expert on cults, the occult, and supernatural phenomena.<sup>11</sup> Also, on this website, Larson claims to have, “delivered tens of thousands of people free from Satan’s bondage.”<sup>12</sup> He has published a number of his exorcisms on YouTube.<sup>13</sup> The gift to “free” people from “Satan’s bondage” was then passed down to Larson’s daughter, Brynne Larson, and her friends. Brynne and company have since taken up Bob’s work and have begun to “free” innocent victims from Satan’s horrific wrath.<sup>14</sup>

Like Noebel, Larson has also published multiple pieces about rock music. Larson, a rocker turned evangelical preacher, claimed that rock music was hypnotism by the devil. Larson’s publications include *Rock and the Church* (1971), *The Day Music Died* (1973), and *Rock, Practical Help for Those Who Listen to the Words and Don’t Like What They Hear* (1980). However, Larson’s *Rock and Roll: The Devil’s Disciple* (1967) is Larson’s most popular and most cited work.

Larson has many critics. These critics include former employees and even a former band member. In a *World* magazine article from 1993, Sharla Logan, former keyboardist in Larson’s band, reacted to an account of what the band’s music did to their audience. In his book, *The Day Music Died*, Larson claimed that his band used to play in a church that would gather an audience of mostly drunk teenagers, who “danced in sanctuary.”<sup>15</sup> Logan confirmed that they did play at a church but claimed that everything else about the account was false. Logan says it was a family gathering with an audience varying from small children to parents and adults, not a gathering of possessed teenagers. The article also addressed inconsistencies with Larson’s medical experience, accounts with employees, and accounts with the occult.<sup>16</sup>

11. “Bob Larson The Real Exorcist.”

12. Larson, “Need Help?”

13. “Bob Larson... The Real Exorcist!”

14. “Teenage Exorcists.”

15. Jay Grelan and Doug Leblanc, “This Is Me, This Is Real,” *World*, January 23, 1993, [https://world.wng.org/1993/01/this\\_is\\_me\\_this\\_is\\_real](https://world.wng.org/1993/01/this_is_me_this_is_real).

16. Grelan and Leblanc, “This Is Me, This Is Real.”

### Nobel and Anti-communist Reaction

During the early to mid-sixties Noebel feared that communist propaganda would find a way to corrupt the American youth. One of the methods Noebel feared most was music's power to hypnotize impressionable youth. In 1965, Noebel published the political pamphlet *Communism, Hypnotism, and the Beatles*. He cited numerous specialists in hypnosis, including a "well-known" unnamed professor as sources for his research. The purpose of *Communism, Hypnotism, and the Beatles* was to educate American parents about the communist use of hypnotism in the Beatles' music.

In the pamphlet, Noebel argued that music has been destructive since biblical times. Ancient Egyptians observed how music could have effects on the human body, he claims. Noebel then argued that communists used this theory to have destructive effects on the American youth. He claimed that, "youth actually [suffer] a case of artificial neurosis" precisely 29 minutes into a Beatles concert.<sup>17</sup> Noebel argued that this happened due to inhibitory and excitatory reflexes in children acting at the same time.

There are many glaring issues with *Communism, Hypnotism, and the Beatles*. Noebel never truly claimed that the young audience was ever actually hypnotized. He hoped that his research proved that the Beatles were guilty by association. The pamphlet preyed on widespread fears of communism by making a general association between the Beatles, rock music, and communism, all while not actually calling the Beatles communists. Noebel's argument was that rock music represented a true danger to the evangelical, American family. The Beatles simply served as the best outlet to speak out against rock 'n' roll. The only other rock musician at the time that was at the same stature of the Beatles was Elvis. However, Noebel did not speak out against Elvis. Noebel knew Elvis was always a God-fearing man who also happened to be a veteran. These Christian, American values that Elvis held made him untouchable to Noebel's ire. The Beatles, however, were young, British, and vulnerable to Evangelical criticism.<sup>18</sup>

17. Noebel, *Communism, Hypnotism, and the Beatles*, 11.

Another issue with Noebel's research is the relationship between the Beatles, rock music, and communism. Rock music had an important role in the decline of the Soviet Union. The Beatles had a massive fan base in the Soviet Union.<sup>19</sup> They had a tremendous impact on fashion and helped expansion of music on the black market. Beatles music was either smuggled inside the communist state or was recorded from Western radio.<sup>20</sup> This became much easier with Johnson prioritizing international broadcasting.<sup>21</sup> It does not make sense for rock music to be a communist conspiracy if the communist government actively sought to quiet the genre as well.

*Communism, Hypnotism, and The Beatles* was read and well received by evangelical Americans when it was published. However, the work did not have any serious impact past that demographic. The Beatles were simply not a vulnerable enough target for a conspiracy of this stature. Something would have to be done for the Beatles to open themselves up to criticisms of this nature. Finally in 1966, just before the Beatles' last tour, Noebel's sentiments gained a certain prominence after Lennon's unfortunate Jesus comment.

In 1966, Maureen Cleave published "How does a Beatle Live? John Lennon Lives like This" in the *London Evening Standard*. In the article, Lennon briefly expresses his thoughts on Christianity and religion. It is in this article Lennon famously proclaimed, "We're more popular than Jesus now." In this same conversation, Lennon questioned which would go first, rock 'n' roll or Christianity. He also mentioned that he found Jesus as an extraordinary character; the disciples are who turn Lennon away from Christianity. The article makes no other mention of religion, other than a quick mention of Lennon's crucifix and bible that are mixed in with other collectibles from Lennon's short-lived hobbies.<sup>22</sup>

18. Sullivan, "'More Popular Than Jesus': The Beatles and the Far Right."

19. Artemii Troitskii, *Back in the USSR: The True Story of Rock in Russia* (London: Omnibus, 1987).

20. Marc Leif, *Rockin' the Wall* (Los Angeles, CA: Rockin' the Wall Films, 2010).

21. Rosenberg, "Communism, Hypnotism and the Beatles Redux."

22. Maureen Cleave, "John Lennon Interview: London Evening Standard 3/4/1966: How Does A Beatle Live? Maureen Cleave 'We're More Popular than Jesus Now,'" 1966, <http://www.beatlesinterviews.org/db1966.0304-beatles-john-lennon-were-more-popular-than-jesus-now-maureen-cleave.html>.

The article came and went with little reaction from the English, who largely wrote this off as some minimal act of rebellion. Eventually, Lennon actually ended up retracting what he said about religion before the quote ever reached the States. It was not until the teen magazine *Datebook* quoted Lennon out of context that Americans took notice. The article was what anti-rock leaders, like Noebel and Larson, needed to finally have their movement gain traction. Church leaders started making statements like they would excommunicate anyone who agreed with Lennon. Others started calling for people to take this as an opportunity to examine their own values.<sup>23</sup>

This uprising against Lennon occurred just before the Beatles final tour in 1966. The quote was brought to wide attention by Tommy Charles and Doug Layton, two disc jockeys in Birmingham, Alabama. The two blew the whistle after reading the quote in *Datebook*. They announced that they would no longer play the Beatles on the air. They claim they had to stand up to “a group of foreign singers that strike at the very basis of our existence as God-fearing patriotic citizens.”<sup>24</sup> The movement spread all over the Bible Belt and had the support of thirty radio stations that joined the boycott. Layton and Charles continued on and created collection points for listeners to take their Beatles records and burn them.

This was not the first boycott of this scale in the American South. Louis Armstrong faced a similar boycott when he spoke out against the opposition to the desegregation of schools in Little Rock in 1957. Ed Willoughby, longtime associate of Charles, gave his account of the controversy. He claimed that this was not some sort of Noebel-like crusade. Instead, Charles saw this as an opportunity to create a conspiracy for the sake of business. Willoughby claims that Charles might have actually taken the statement as just a brief notion of arrogance. However, Charles turned it into a massive conspiracy.

In his retractions, Lennon still publicly chastised Christianity. Stephen Badrich, a writer for *The Paper* at the time, questioned if Lennon had a different definition of Christianity in his head. However, despite the fact he disagreed with Lennon’s remarks,

23. Sullivan, “‘More Popular Than Jesus’: The Beatles and the Far Right.”

24. Millard, *Magic City Nights*, 139.

he did not condemn Lennon strongly. He defended this by saying that Lennon deserved to be able to have his own opinions. However, he collected quotes from many officials from all over the South about the incident, many of whom did not share the same opinion. David Hanson of Louisville, Kentucky, for instance, said that the British Invasion only reversed the progression of American music. Kathy Looney and Cynthia Lindermayer of Shreveport, Louisiana, wrote in an open letter that they felt sorry for the Beatles. However, they also said that anyone who thinks that Jesus is going out of style should be sorry as well. They finished the brief letter by saying that they respect Lennon's opinion, but "because you and your messed up friends feel that way does not give you the right to make that statement."<sup>25</sup> Finally, with regards to Noebel's theory, Badrich quotes a political pamphlet called "The Vulgar and Profane Beatles, Admitted Atheists" that also claims that the Beatles played in certain beat that caused their young audience to act out irrationally.<sup>26</sup> Whether or not most people really did believe that the Beatles were pawns in a higher communist conspiracy is impossible to answer. However, more than likely most people passed this off as absurd. However, Christianity is a deeply rooted characteristic of the South, even today. So when Lennon insulted Christianity, the South responded.

Lennon eventually apologized for his statement in the United States. Despite the apology, he still insisted that his statement was true. George Harrison tried to put what his peer was saying into perspective. Harrison said that he knew Lennon believed in Christianity, but that Christianity was "on the wane."<sup>27</sup> The Vatican eventually responded by accepting Lennon's apology. The Vatican called the quote arrogant, but claimed it gave Christians "a well-placed kick where it was most needed."<sup>28</sup> The Vatican then quoted McCartney, saying that they deplore the fact that Christianity seems to be shrinking. The Vatican would

25. Stephen Badrich, "A Hard Day's Journey Into Night," *The Paper* (East Lansing, MI), October 6, 1966, [http://msupaper.org/issues/The\\_Paper\\_1966-10-09.pdf](http://msupaper.org/issues/The_Paper_1966-10-09.pdf).

26. Badrich, "A Hard Day's Journey".

27. "Lennon of Beatles Sorry for Making Remark on Jesus," *New York Times*, August 12, 1966.

28. "Vatican Accepts Lennon's Apology," *New York Times*, August 14, 1966.

finally try to put the issue to rest by saying that the “matter is closed.”<sup>29</sup>

The matter was not closed. On August 19, 1966, the Beatles arrived in Memphis for two concerts. Before the concerts, members of the Klu Klux Klan picketed outside the venue. During the concert, fruit and lightbulbs were dropped onto the stage by people on a balcony directly above the stage. Around the same time, a firecracker was thrown towards the stage, exploded, and injured three members of the audience. Another firecracker was thrown and exploded near Starr on the drums.<sup>30</sup> When the second firecracker went off, the band looked around confused, thinking a gun was fired at them. The concert was actually recorded. You can hear that once the firecracker went off, the band started playing with more urgency.<sup>31</sup> In a history published by the state of Alabama, J. Willoughby claims that at this moment, the band began the split up. In the *Beatles Anthology*, Lennon mentions that the Beatles really fell apart once they stopped touring. He says they were not a gang anymore. Lennon also said that the “more popular than Jesus” controversy was the biggest reason they stopped touring.<sup>32</sup>

### Bob Larson, the Counterculture, and Satanism

Eventually, the boycott came to an end. More centrist critics, like Tommy Charles and Doug Layton, eventually moved on while right-wing critics, like Noebel and Larson, continued to criticize the Beatles. Bob Larson published his first literature criticizing the Beatles, *Rock & Roll: The Devil's Diversion*, in 1967. *Rock & Roll* argued that rock music is hypnotic and satanic. In the book, Larson made the claim that teenager’s “conscious minds do not actively perceive what they are hearing.”<sup>33</sup> He also claimed that dancing, while not of a conscious state, thanks to

29. “Vatican Accepts Lennon's Apology.”

30. “Debris Is Hurled at Baetle Concert,” *New York Times*, August 20, 1966.

31. Doctor Robert, *The Beatles - Live At The Mid-South Coliseum - August 19th, 1966 (Afternoon Performance)*, accessed April 1, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DSws8O2VPCY>.

32. J. Willoughby, “The Beatles’ Breakup May Have Had Roots in Alabama,” AL.com, accessed February 22, 2018, [http://www.al.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2016/03/the\\_beatles\\_end\\_may\\_have\\_had\\_r.html](http://www.al.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2016/03/the_beatles_end_may_have_had_r.html).

33. Bob Larson, *Rock and Roll: The Devil's Diversion* (McCook, Nebraska: Bob Larson, 1968).

the music's effect, destroys the body. Larson, of course, saw the body as the temple of God. Therefore, dancing was destruction of God's temple and morally wrong.

Bob Larson followed up on his research with *Hippies, Hindus, and Rock & Roll* in 1969. In this book, Larson continued to preach that rock 'n' roll was inherently evil. However, in *Hippies*, Larson became more critical of the counterculture movement in general. He stated that initially, the "hippie" culture was fascinating, but it did not take long for this fascination to turn sour, with rising trends of drug abuse and crime. Eventually, he argued, the counterculture became brutal and aligned itself with the politics of Moscow and Peking.<sup>34</sup>

While writing *Hippies, Hindus, and Rock & Roll*, Larson traveled throughout India to learn about the Beatles' connection to the culture. Throughout his travels, Larson came to the conclusion that not only was meditation and Hinduism anti-Christian, but it was also a form of Satanism. While in India, Larson observed Hindu religious rituals. Larson noted participants of the rituals would convulse on the ground. The Hindus claimed that this was their Gods' spirits entering the body. To Larson, this was Satan's work.<sup>35</sup>

### Noebel, Pavlovian Responses, and Racism

The Beatles split up in 1970. Despite the band's demise, Noebel and Larson still saw them as embodiments of the counterculture movement and the dangerous influences on American youth. So, both Noebel and Larson continued to publish research criticizing the Beatles, rock music, and the counterculture movement.

Noebel expanded on his research in 1974 with his book *The Marxist Minstrels*. In it, Noebel went into greater detail about how the Beatles hypnotized children. At the beginning of this book, Noebel suggested that it was un-American and un-Christian to allow American youth to fall subject to this "nerve-jamming" music.<sup>36</sup> Noebel then began to make connections linking

34. Goff, *Close Harmony*.

35. Sullivan, "More Popular Than Jesus": The Beatles and the Far Right."

36. Noebel, *The Marxist Minstrels*, 42.

hypnotism to the violent, hysterical reactions at Beatles concerts. He made the rather blunt claim that the Beatles' ability to make teenagers weep, become uncontrollable, and "take off their clothes and riot" was the result of scientifically induced artificial or experimental neurosis.<sup>37</sup> He supported this claim by citing the work of Soviet scientists Ivan P. Pavlov, A. R. Luria, and K. I. Platonov. To bolster the claim that the Beatles induced neurosis, Noebel insisted that we must "return to Pavlov's laboratory" to understand this behavior. Noebel pointed to Pavlov's work with animals, famously with dogs. In this experiment, Pavlov inserted a glass container into a canine's lower jaw. This was not harmful to the canine. Next, a bowl of food would be presented to the canine. Once this was done, a light would go on. This would cause the dog to produce saliva. The communist scientist would then measure the saliva; making the saliva the dependent variable. This continued through multiple iterations, with food sometimes absent from the bowl. If this was done, the previously mentioned light would not go on. Eventually, the dog learned that if the light would pop on, food would be presented to it, and the dog then would produce saliva. The dog eventually only looked for the light, and if the light turned on, the dog would produce saliva even in the absence of food. Noebel presented the findings of this experiment as proof that Beatles' music induced neurosis in teenage listeners, that impressionable youth, when exposed to the Beatles, produced a Pavlovian response.<sup>38</sup>

Noebel then described the use of metronomes to create reflexes that worked in a Pavlovian manner. If the dog heard the metronome at 120 beats per minute, it would secrete saliva. The dog was then trained to do the opposite when a metronome was set to 60 beats per minute. These two reflexes were called the excitatory and inhibitory reflexes. Pavlov eventually came to the conclusion that if you made both reflexes act at the same time, the subject would undergo a mental breakdown. Nobel argued that, in the case of the American youth, the morals and ethics learned from the parents and church act as the inhibitory reflex. The Beatles' music would induce the excitatory reflex. When

37. Noebel, 46.

38. Noebel, 17.

these two reflexes would clash, teenagers would react in havoc and rip their clothes off.<sup>39</sup>

Pavlov's experiment is quite famous, but is often misused as proof in research of conditioned reflexes. Actually, most of what is known about the experiment comes from bad translations and basic misconceptions. Pavlov is best known for the idea of conditioned reflexes, much like the reflexes Noebel discusses. However, Pavlov never actually used that term. Pavlov's emphasis was actually on the "contingent, provisional nature of association" which is "completely natural and unvarying."<sup>40</sup> Unfortunately, Noebel fell into this common historical fallacy, and misused Pavlov's experiment to support his claims.

In *The Marxist Minstrels*, Noebel also claimed that the Beatles, along with other artists, incited young fans to start race wars. According to Noebel, these artists were supposedly trying to convince young white, presumably Christian students to join radical black racist groups so that they could achieve racial dominance in America. However, at the time of this publication in 1974, legal segregation had been reduced due to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Yet Noebel saw desegregation as a threat to the American society. Racial inclusion was a huge aspect of the counterculture movement, thus supporting that Noebel's criticisms are actually of the counterculture movement, and not simply against a rock band.<sup>41</sup>

The timing that Noebel published *The Marxist Minstrels* was odd. Besides the Beatles, the other artists that he mentioned were, for the most part, no longer relevant in 1974. These artists included Alan Freed and Pete Seeger. However, during the early seventies, many young people began to adopt left-wing politics and opposed the Vietnam War. This rebellion also had themes of drugs and sexual freedom. Instead of taking this rebellion as a natural change, Noebel blamed this corruption of American youth on Soviet manipulation. In a way, he blamed the entire existence of the counterculture movement on rock 'n' roll.<sup>42</sup>

During the seventies, Noebel and Larson's demographic did

39. Noebel, 53.

40. Michael Specter, "How Everyone Gets Pavlov Wrong," *The New Yorker*, November 24, 2014, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/11/24/drool>.

41. Frost, "Marxist Minstrels."

42. Armstrong, "The Marxist Minstrels."

not show any serious growth. Most Christian denominations simply did not align themselves with Noebel and Larson's argument. *The Christian Century*, a liberal, nondenominational publication wrote that, "somehow Noebel's line of reasoning strikes us as less than persuasive."<sup>43</sup> Instead, Noebel and Larson continued to preach to their and other likeminded congregations. In 1974, after a sermon based on Larson's literature, a Reverend in Garden City, Michigan, ignited a gigantic cross made of rock albums. The movement may not have gotten anymore followers, but those who already were continued to listen.<sup>44</sup>

### Noebel and Larson in the Eighties

Eventually, Noebel and Larson would find themselves in the eighties. The counterculture movement, for the most part, was largely in the past. Therefore, Noebel and Larson eventually changed their arguments. They still saw rock music as inherently manipulative and evil. But, the context had changed.

In Noebel's 1982 book *The Legacy of John Lennon: Charming or Harming a Generation*, Noebel spoke out against the Beatles' drug use. In this book, Noebel made multiple connections to the use of drugs by the Beatles and other big name rock bands and the rise of drug use among their young listeners. This reflected the decade's drug epidemic. Looking for a scapegoat, Noebel claimed that rock bands from the sixties set the stage for the drug epidemic in the eighties and concluded that, "music function[s] as a hooker for drugs!"<sup>45</sup>

However, drug use was only one of many topics Noebel discussed. As the name suggests, Noebel wished to speak out against Lennon's (and on a larger scale, the Beatles') legacy. In his introduction, he bluntly called Lennon a "purveyor of moral trash." He then claimed that though Lennon had died just recently, two years before the publishing of this book, his legacy still continued to lure immature youth to the evil that is rock 'n' roll. Noebel argued that rock 'n' roll culture, for which Noebel

43. Frontani, *The Beatles: Image and the Media*, 96.

44. Sullivan, "More Popular Than Jesus," 319.

45. David Noebel, *The Legacy of John Lennon: Charming or Harming a Generation* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982), 57.

credits the Beatles as progenitors, posed a threat to Christian, American values. He insisted that it was difficult to maintain a neutral view towards rock 'n' roll when so many children are lost to the rock-drug culture. Noebel claimed that these anti-Christian morals and ideals created by rock music from the sixties still permeated the culture and that society could not heal itself by continuing to ignore rock music.<sup>46</sup>

46. Noebel, *The Legacy of John Lennon*, 27.



[6]

# I'm Just Happy to Dance with You: How the Beatles Became Civil Rights Activists

**Patrick O'Dell**

In the summer of 1964, the Beatles solidified their place as civil rights activists by refusing to play for a segregated audience, marking their place in America's history as more than just musicians. That summer, the Civil Rights Movement was in full swing. Tensions were high across the nation, especially in places like Jacksonville, Florida, where there had been numerous race riots over the past several years.<sup>1</sup> For the Beatles, however, Jacksonville was initially just another stop on their tour, until it suddenly forced them to make a stand.

In Jacksonville, the Beatles were battered not only by the

1. Donald C. Bacon, "Race Riot Aftermath: A Sharp Sales Decline in Jacksonville Shops: Fears of New Violence Slash Trade; 'Invisible' Pickets to Aid in Negro Boycott Race Riot Aftermath: Sharp Drop in Sales of Jacksonville Stores," *Wall Street Journal*, August 31, 1960; James V. Aliday, "Angry Racial Incidents in Jacksonville Follow Campaigning Mayor's Speech: Jacksonville Seizes 200 Racial Demonstrators," *The Washington Post*, March 24, 1964.

winds of Hurricane Dora, but also by questions of whether the group would play in front of a segregated audience. Segregated concerts had long been the norm in Jacksonville, and in the South in general. In what was the Beatles' first real public stand against racism and segregation, the band refused to play in front of a segregated audience at their September 11, 1964, concert. This decision sent shockwaves rippling through America and helped to alter the course of musical history as well as the history of civil rights. This chapter explores the band's concert at the Gator Bowl in Jacksonville, and how as outsiders, both as foreigners and pop musicians, this refusal to comply with the norms of segregation meant that the Beatles became viewed as unexpected civil rights activists.

### Historiography

As one of the most popular bands of all time, the Beatles have had a great deal written about them, even almost fifty years after the band's break up. As they evolved from being merely songwriters and musicians, the record-setting group from Liverpool, England, also evolved as activists. Yet it is only more recently that historians have investigated how they became Civil Rights activists. This chapter examines the Beatles in Jacksonville, drawing on historical and sociological research on the band in relation to their broader involvement in the Civil Rights Movement.<sup>2</sup>

The 1960s were a time of shifting social and cultural norms. This chapter examines historical accounts of those shifting norms in postwar Britain and the American South, especially in the early years of the decade. By examining firsthand accounts and interviews, along with newspapers from the time period,

2. Marcus Collins, "The Beatles' Politics," *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 16, no. 2 (May 2014), 302; Michael R. Frontani, *The Beatles: Image and the Media* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2009); Elijah Wald, *How the Beatles Destroyed Rock 'n' Roll: An Alternative History of American Popular Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Kenneth Womack and Katie Kapurch, *New Critical Perspectives on the Beatles: Things We Said Today*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Bill Demain, "All Together Now: Civil Rights and The Beatles' First American Tour," April 18, 2012, <http://mentalfloss.com/article/30477/all-together-now-civil-rights-and-beatles-first-american-tour>; Vincent Dowd, "Larry Kane: The Reluctant Beatles Fan," *BBC News*, September 16, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-37355216>.

it is possible to understand just how impactful the Beatles' decision was.<sup>3</sup> This chapter contributes to this field by analyzing the atmosphere of the American South in relation to that of Liverpool to better understand the variety of responses they received in the years since their fateful decision.

### Racial Inequality in England

The band claimed that there was no segregation like that of the American South in Britain, adding to the group's image as every-day blue collar lads who fit in with their fans. Despite these claims, there is also evidence that racial relations in England were tense, especially while the Beatles were growing up. As the 1950s and 1960s were turbulent times everywhere, England was no exception. In 1958, crowds numbering in the thousands burned down the homes of many of West London's black population after eight people were injured in a knife fight the day before, just as riots swept Jacksonville a few years later.<sup>4</sup> Britain experienced massive postcolonial immigration, particularly from its colonies in Africa in the twenty or so years after the end of World War II. Similar to America's Civil Rights Act of 1964 that passed the year before, Britain passed the Two Race Relations Act in 1965, making it illegal to practice discrimination on the basis of race or ethnic or national origins in public.<sup>5</sup> Being one of England's largest port cities, Liverpool itself still experienced segregated living areas, mostly in its community of West African seamen.<sup>6</sup> As Peter Leese argues,

3. Bacon, "Race Riot Aftermath"; Aliday, "Angry Racial Incidents in Jacksonville"; Claude Sitton, "Biracial Committee Moving to Resolve Jacksonville Crisis: Peace is Sought in Jacksonville," *New York Times*, March 26, 1964; Claude Sitton, "Outlook in Civil Rights Controversy is Grim: Jacksonville Clashes and Inaction on Rights Bill Reflect Hardening of Attitudes on Both Sides and Raise Prospect of More Violence," *New York Times*, March 29, 1964; "Crisis-Filled Summer Ahead, Civil Rights Study Predicts: Jacksonville Riots Basis for Findings," *Afro-American*, April 25, 1964; Kitty Oliver, "As a Young Black Girl in 1960s America, The Beatles Gave Me the First Taste of a New World," *iNews*, September 9, 2016, <https://inews.co.uk/culture/music/black-teenager-1960s-america-beatles-made-stand-rocked-world/>.
4. Peter Leese, *Britain Since 1945: Aspects of Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 49.
5. David Childs, *Britain Since 1945: A Political History*, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 2001), 148.
6. Diane Frost, "Racism, work and unemployment: West African seamen in Liverpool 1880s–1960s," *Immigrants & Minorities* 13, no. 2-3 (1994): 22-33

race relations for the most part stayed the same as they had since the end of World War II. “For the ethnic minorities and immigrants of the United Kingdom,” Leese claims, “cultural revolution remained elusive.”<sup>7</sup>

The Jacksonville concert was not the first time the Beatles played the part of activists for black rights, even if it was the one that garnered the most attention. Several years earlier, when they were still playing the Cavern Club in Liverpool, the band did what they believed was right and put black musicians, the Chants, on stage, to the outrage of many at the Cavern Club.<sup>8</sup> This incident showed that the Beatles were committed to racial equality before they were global superstars and before their stand in Jacksonville.

### Racial Conflict in Jacksonville in the Early 1960s

In the few years leading up to the concert, numerous race riots and acts of violence broke out in Jacksonville, no doubt fueled by the increasing racial tensions. These were not limited to just Florida, but around the whole nation. Beginning in the summer of 1960, when an attempted sit-in led to the death of one African American and the hospitalization of twenty others, Jacksonville saw a spike in race-related violent crimes and rioting.<sup>9</sup> While the following years saw fewer acts of open racial bloodshed in Jacksonville, it came back with a vengeance in 1964 as the mutual animosity reached a fever pitch with seemingly no end in sight. In March of 1964, police arrested five Klansmen in Jacksonville after a man from Indiana admitted he was guilty of bombing the house of a six year old who was scheduled to enter a desegregated school.<sup>10</sup> In May of that same year, following governor Haydon Burns’ speech declaring African Americans did not have the right to go into hotels and restaurants, gangs of high-school-aged African Americans took to the streets to protest, ending in over 200 arrests.<sup>11</sup> The latest

7. Leese, *Britain Since 1945*, 48–50, 91.

8. “The Beatles Fight Bigotry in America,” *CBS News*, January 30, 2014, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/the-beatles-fight-bigotry-in-america/>.

9. Bacon, “Race Riot Aftermath.”

10. “One Admits Guilt in Race Bombing: 5 Klan Leaders Also Held in Jacksonville, Fla,” *New York Times*, March 14, 1964.

11. Aliday, “Angry Racial Incidents in Jacksonville.”

riots culminated in a biracial committee on March 25, 1965, charged with finally resolving the ongoing racial crisis.<sup>12</sup> However, as the committee worked, the violence in America's South grew.

While Jacksonville was not the only place that experienced such a crisis, it serves as a model for what was to come in the summer of 1964. In response to the continued refusal to grant African Americans their voting rights or to end segregation, many African Americans had seen enough and were ready to retaliate. One World War II veteran living in Jacksonville made no attempt to hide his beliefs: "I am ready to go to war for this country again. But I am ready to go to war in this country."<sup>13</sup> These common sentiments did not go unnoticed. A civil rights study by the Southern Regional Council predicted a crisis-filled summer to come in 1964, using the unrest in the earlier Jacksonville riots as a basis for study.<sup>14</sup> This study noted that the Jacksonville biracial committee had only been brought together when the uproar in Jacksonville had reached the tipping point, accomplishing "something that weeks of urging had not accomplished."<sup>15</sup> This implied that only violence would get any results, challenging civil rights activists such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who campaigned for racial equality through peaceful non-violence, in a message that was not dissimilar to the Beatles'.

The summer of 1964 saw an unusually high number of race related violence and civil strife. Amidst the unrest, the Civil Rights Movement carried on. While race relations in Jacksonville were still rocky at best, Congress was close to passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which would legally end segregation in America. The passage of this act meant the end of legal segregation in public places, and it prohibited employers from discriminating based on the race, skin color, or country of origin of an employee. Even on the eve of a national victory against segregation, Jacksonville was on the mind of President Lyndon B. Johnson. Johnson petitioned members of the

12. Sitton, "Biracial Committee Moving to Resolve Jacksonville Crisis."

13. Sitton, "Outlook in Civil Rights Controversy Grim."

14. "Crisis-Filled Summer."

15. "Crisis-Filled Summer."

Southern Baptist Church for their help in passing the Civil Rights Bill before meeting with Justice Department officials about the ongoing turmoil in Jacksonville.<sup>16</sup>

Aside from the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that outlawed segregation, in January of 1961, over three years before the infamous Gator Bowl Concert, Federal Judge Bryan Simpson signed an order ending segregation in public recreational facilities owned by the city of Jacksonville.<sup>17</sup> This nominally ended segregation not only in the big venues that could hold tens of thousands such as the Gator Bowl, but also in places such as public tennis courts and swimming pools used more in everyday life. While the effectiveness of the order remained unresolved, the idea took hold. Other towns and cities, like Richmond, Virginia, began asking for similar rulings a year later.<sup>18</sup> Despite the passage of both the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Federal Judge Simpson's order, showrunners and promoters for the concert prepared the concert as any other concert would normally in Jacksonville. This meant a segregated Gator Bowl. The Beatles had other plans in mind, however, and took a stand.

At one of the many press conferences along their tour, four days before the Jacksonville concert, the Beatles took a minute to step away from their usual jokes and get serious about the issue presented in Jacksonville. The Beatles threatened to walk off stage if the crowd was segregated.<sup>19</sup> Paul McCartney went on record saying: "We've all talked about it and we all agree that we would refuse to play... We all feel strongly about Civil Rights and the segregation issue."<sup>20</sup> Bandmate John Lennon quickly followed up: "We never play to segregated audiences and we're not going to start now... we will not appear unless Negroes are allowed to sit anywhere they like!"<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, the Beatles did not even have to go to Jacksonville. Given the choice

16. Robert E. Thompson, "Johnson Asks Baptists to Help Civil Rights Bill: President Asks Civil Rights Help," *Los Angeles Times*, March 26, 1964.

17. "Fla. Town Drops Race Ban at Sports Areas," *The Chicago Defender*, January 21, 1961.

18. "End Segregated Seats, Suit Asks In Richmond," *The Washington Post*, July 7, 1962.

19. Keith Badman, *The Beatles: Off the Record* (London: Omnibus Press, 2009), chap. 4.

20. Badman, *Off the Record*.

21. Badman, *Off the Record*.

between stopping at Atlanta, Georgia, or Jacksonville, Florida, the Beatles chose to play at Jacksonville the year before because of the money the band would be guaranteed by playing there.<sup>22</sup> However, the band made it clear they would rather lose the appearance money for the concert than play for a segregated crowd.<sup>23</sup> Having made their stance known, the band simply waited until it was clear what decision would be made by the concert's promoters and showrunners.

Despite the band's good intentions, several things still stood in the Beatles way. As the figurative storm that was the Civil Rights Movement hit Jacksonville, so too did a literal storm, Hurricane Dora. Although the storm weakened when it hit land on September 10, it still produced winds of over sixty miles an hour, costing millions of dollars in losses.<sup>24</sup> As the storm hit land in Florida, it turned north, and caused the most damage in Florida and Georgia, forcing thousands to evacuate and destroying hundreds of houses.<sup>25</sup> This once again brought President Johnson into the story, and he traveled to Jacksonville to survey the damage.<sup>26</sup> While the Beatles waited out the storm in Key West, Florida, officials in Jacksonville finally relented to the Beatles demands, apparently backing down to the world famous British band. As band manager Brian Epstein broke the news the day before the concert, the Beatles flew out of Key West for their now integrated concert at the Gator Bowl. When it seemed that finally the Beatles would be able to play at the venue's first ever integrated concert, several subsequent events almost prevented the Beatles from playing.

To further add to the Beatles' troubles, a union member from the American Guild of Variety Artists almost stopped the Beatles from playing. The union member declared the band could play their instruments but could not sing unless they paid \$1,800 in fines, because they were not part of the union.<sup>27</sup> The Beatles

22. "New Storm Hits Jacksonville --Yeah, Yeah, It's the Beatles!" *The Atlanta Constitution*, September 12, 1964.

23. Badman, *Off the Record*.

24. "2,000 Flee 2-State Flood: Heavy Rain Hits South Carolina, Florida, Georgia Dora Expected to Regain Force of Hurricane Floods Force 2,000 Persons From Homes Expect Dora to Regain Hurricane Force," *Chicago Tribune*, September 13, 1964.

25. "2,000 Flee 2-State Flood."

26. Tom Szaroleta, "Racism and Hurricane Dora Couldn't Stop the Beatles' '64 Show in Jacksonville," *Florida Times-Union*, September 10, 2014.

quickly paid their dues to avoid any more trouble. Next, a group of cameramen who had been illegally selling footage of the band followed the Fab Four to Jacksonville. Here they persisted until they were told that the band would not appear until the cameramen left, which they did.<sup>28</sup> Finally, the band took the stage, but the trouble did not stop there. Ringo Starr's drum kit had to be bolted down to the stage to prevent the leftover hurricane winds from blowing it all away.<sup>29</sup> With everything finally squared away, the show kicked off and the band played their twelve song set list, which only lasted about thirty minutes, to the thousands of screaming fans and took off as fast as they came in. They had to be in Boston the next day for another concert.

### Significance of the Beatles' Fight

While the decision to not play in front of a segregated audience was without question an important one, its actual significance was not recognized for some time. In fact, many of the Southern newspaper articles that came out in the days after the Gator Bowl concert failed to mention the segregation controversy at all. Instead several newspapers choose to go after the band itself for being a fad. As one reporter put it, the band was, "perfectly timed and fitted to the mores, morals and ideals of a fast-paced, troubled time."<sup>30</sup> Other authors took the time to explain just how "Beatlemania" had landed in Jacksonville with the arrival of the Beatles, but yet again failed to mention anything about the integration of the concert. Yet the group's decision was felt immediately by many of the Beatles' millions of fans, as well as the millions of African Americans in the American South.

One of these fans was Kitty Oliver, an African American teenager living in Jacksonville, who attended the now integrated show. In what Oliver described as one of her few interactions with white people at all, the Gator Bowl concert was a life-changing experience, especially because it was in a time of such

27. "Stage Union Warns Beatles," *New York Times*, August 11, 1964.

28. The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002), 153.

29. Beatles, *Anthology*, 153.

30. "Beatlemania is a Mark of a Frenetic Era," *Florida Times Union*, September 12, 1964.

turbulence. "In such a climate, what the Beatles did was remarkable," Oliver claimed.<sup>31</sup> She remarked that the Beatles "stepped into this arena," when it would have been far easier for them to simply say nothing at all. During this time artists speaking out about social or political issues could mean risking everything.<sup>32</sup> The refusal to play for a segregated concert caused considerable scrutiny in the South. Here were these four outsiders, foreigners even, going against what had been the norm. The decision left many wondering what the Beatles knew about American civil rights, and why should they have a say in an essentially American debate.

The Beatles' decision meant hope for young African American fans such as Oliver, especially because so many black artists had long suffered under segregation. It meant that the Beatles would be willing to also suffer to stand up for what they believed in.<sup>33</sup> In the still racially divided American South, the decision to refuse to play for a segregated audience outraged much of the South and could have had serious consequences. For some bands who made the same decision it meant the loss of fans as well as the loss of sponsors and revenue. The Beatles themselves took the incident very seriously, both as musicians and activists. A contract for the concert at the Cow Palace in San Francisco on their 1965 American tour guaranteed that the band would not play in front of a segregated audience for that tour.<sup>34</sup> In addition, it guaranteed more uniformed police officers for the band's security, as the Beatles required more protection even from their own ravenous and frenzied fans.<sup>35</sup>

The Beatles were not the first musicians to refuse to play for a segregated audience. Civil Rights activism surged in 1964, and many musicians took a part too. In February, pianist Gary Graffman led several artists in a boycott of their concert in Jackson, Mississippi. Graffman, along with the unnamed artists, refused to perform for a segregated audience following the

31. Oliver, "As a Young Black Girl in 1960s America."

32. Oliver, "As a Young Black Girl in 1960s America"

33. Oliver, "As a Young Black Girl in 1960s America"

34. "Beatles Banned Segregated Audiences, Contract Shows," *BBC News*, September 18, 2011, <http://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-14963752>.

35. "The Beatles: Fab Four and Civil Rights Activists" *NPR*, September 18, 2011, <https://www.npr.org/2011/09/18/140573236/the-beatles-fab-four-and-civil-rights-activists>.

arrest of two African Americans who tried to enter the Jackson City Auditorium.<sup>36</sup> What makes this instance so different to the Beatles' is that it showed that not all foreigners cared about American civil rights. Hans Richter-Haaser, a German pianist, was brought in to replace the American Gary Graffman at the last second. Despite arriving only three hours before the concert started, he played in place of Graffman. Richter-Haaser did not join the boycott because, "as a foreigner he saw no relationship between music and the race issue."<sup>37</sup>

Later in the year, the protests against racially segregated concerts continued. In March, a Polish-American pianist named Artur Rubinstein gave his public support to artists and musicians who took part in civil rights activism, saying racial discrimination, "is a human problem from which no one can escape."<sup>38</sup> Almost a month later, Swedish singer Birgit Nilsson canceled her scheduled concert in Jackson, Mississippi, after she discovered the concert would be segregated.<sup>39</sup> With the possibility of racial violence stronger than her own contractual obligations, Nilsson claimed she would only sing before integrated audiences.<sup>40</sup> While it is clear that many white Southerners wanted concerts to stay segregated, it is also clear that there were musicians and artists that wanted to take a stand against the segregation. Because of those such as Richter-Haaser, who believed foreigners did not have to participate in American civil rights, or even say anything about the issue, the Beatles' decision had a greater impact. They used their position to say something, and people noticed.

In recent years, just as in the height of the Beatles' popularity, the Liverpudlian band has captured the attention of so many writers. Although Lennon was quoted in 1964 as being not interested in politics, the group nonetheless found themselves in the middle of a political storm that year. With each passing year, the band became more involved in politics, becoming

36. "Concert is Given Despite Boycott," *New York Times*, February 27, 1964.

37. "Concert is Given Despite Boycott."

38. Henry Raymont, "Rubinstein Says Artists Belong In Campaigns Against Prejudice: Praises Musicians Who Bar Appearances Before Segregated Groups," *New York Times*, March 10, 1964.

39. Henry Raymont, "Miss Nilsson Bars Jackson Concert: Soprano Says She Will Not Sing in Segregated Halls," *New York Times*, April 6, 1964.

40. Raymont, "Miss Nilsson Bars Jackson Concert."

some of the “most prominent of young radicals demanding political recognition”.<sup>41</sup> In his article, “The Beatles Politics”, Marcus Collins argues that the Beatles came into the musical scene during a dearth of political activism among pop musicians. Because of the British group’s need to use their own fame for good, the Beatles used both civil disobedience and their own songwriting as a means to legitimize pop music as a form of political expression.<sup>42</sup> In addition, the band was helped out by its large following. Because they had so many fans, they could be the first band to make it as both musicians and activists, as they could potentially afford to lose some fans and still have enough to support the band.

In *New Critical Perspectives on the Beatles: Things We Said Today*, Kenneth Womack and Katie Kapuruch argue that the Beatles are forever linked to the Civil Rights Movement because of their anti-segregation concerts, their musical tastes, and because they actually listened to black musicians.<sup>43</sup> In fact, they offered not only acceptance but love for black musicians and their music.<sup>44</sup> *New Critical Perspectives on the Beatles* also highlights McCartney’s solo career and his efforts to make it known that his song “Blackbird” was written with civil rights and racial equality in mind. These efforts have come into play especially often in the last several years, despite conflicting stories from several band members on the story behind the song’s meaning.<sup>45</sup>

In “The Peculiarities of the Beatles: a Cultural-Historical Interpretation,” Oded Heilbronner argues instead that the Beatles were the voice of the new English generation in the 1960s, precisely because they were anti-revolutionary.<sup>46</sup> Heilbronner claims that the Beatles were the epitome of Englishness in the postwar era which undercut their claims as revolutionaries. Heilbronner argues that the general British population could not actually afford to be revolutionary like such bands as the Who or the Rolling Stones. Instead, he claims that English culture was on a slow upwards trend of cultural

41. Collins, “The Beatles’ Politics,” 291-296.

42. Collins, 296.

43. Womack and Kapuruch, *New Critical Perspectives on the Beatles*, 257.

44. Womack and Kapuruch, 257.

45. Womack and Kapuruch, 53-71.

46. Oded Heilbronner, “The Peculiarities of the Beatles: A Cultural-Historical Interpretation,” *Cultural and Social History* 5, no. 1 (2008): 99-115.

acceptance and social integration since the end of World War II, a trend that the Beatles perfectly encapsulated. However, Heilbronner's flaw is that the English culture he focuses so much on was in fact revolutionary compared to the American culture. When they did something like refuse to play for a segregated audience while in the American South, the act was revolutionary.

In a similar vein to Heilbronner, Elijah Wald declares the Beatles destroyed rock 'n' roll music because they were not revolutionary. In his book, *How the Beatles Destroyed Rock 'n' Roll*, he argues that because the Beatles' music was influenced by so many black musicians that came before; they played the previously black rock 'n' roll. The Beatles however played it without the skill or soul of the black pioneers.<sup>47</sup> Because the Beatles got so popular by playing "inferior" rock 'n' roll, it diverted attention from the black musicians who had inspired the Beatles. Because of this, the British Invasion, headlined by the Beatles, brought a racial split in American music that has grown wider in the forty plus years since the Beatles first came to America. The Beatles ended up perpetuating, at least in the music industry, the very thing they fought against in Jacksonville, albeit somewhat unintentionally, as the Beatles continued to fight for racial equality.<sup>48</sup>

### Beatles as Civil Rights Activists

It came as a surprise to many that the band were serious civil rights activists. One journalist, Larry Kane, who followed the Beatles on their 1964 and 1965 tours in America mentioned the intellectual curiosity of the group was more than he expected. By 1965, Kane and McCartney mostly talked about the Vietnam War and the ongoing racial relations in America.<sup>49</sup> Kane also relayed how the Beatles were questioned more frequently about Jacksonville when they went on tour in 1965.<sup>50</sup> Once again, the Beatles were resolute and, "openly criticized the prejudice that they witnessed throughout their travels in the country,

47. Wald, *How the Beatles Destroyed Rock 'n' Roll*, 5.

48. Wald, 252-253.

49. Dowd, "Larry Kane: The Reluctant Beatles Fan."

50. Frontani, *The Beatles: Image and the Media*, 99.

particularly in the South.”<sup>51</sup> For a group that was seemingly getting bigger every passing day, the band managed to stay true to their ideals about the Civil Rights Movement.

The easiest and most obvious way to connect the Beatles and the Civil Rights Movement is through the groups’ refusal to play for segregated audiences, most notably in Jacksonville, although the band never played in front of a racially segregated audience before or after. In addition, the band consistently played black music, and played with black musicians across their lengthy careers. For example, African American pop group, the Exciters, were part of the opening act at the Jacksonville concert.<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, the Beatles’ sound had long been influenced by black musicians such as Little Richard and Chuck Berry, as well as beat and skiffle music.<sup>53</sup> While the refusal to play for a segregated audience might have flown under the radar initially, it was certainly noticed by fans such as Kitty Oliver. Because the civil rights stand in Jacksonville was not an isolated incident, but rather one part of a trend, it shows that the Beatles were committed to racial equality and taking their place in the Civil Rights Movement.

There is also evidence that suggests that although the Beatles were not necessarily the first musicians to refuse to play for a segregated audience, there was no way for people to know it. Several musicians, including Mark Lindsay of Paul Revere & the Raiders and Bryan Hyland, solo artist famous for “Sealed With a Kiss” and “Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini”, viewed the Beatles as the first to make it a point to stick to their beliefs. Both musicians toured with Dick Clark’s Caravan of Stars, an interracial road show that traveled the nation, sometimes with the Beatles.<sup>54</sup> “They were really the first group to have the power to do that,” said Hyland. Lindsay concurred: “At that time, no one that I knew of really took the initiative to address any kind of social issues.”<sup>55</sup> Although they were not the first artists to commit to racial equality at their concerts,

51. Frontani, *The Beatles: Image and the Media*, 99.

52. Szaloreta, “Racism and Hurricane Dora Couldn’t Stop The Beatles’ ’64 Show in Jacksonville.”

53. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 11.

54. Demain, “All Together Now.”

55. Demain.

people from the time period, including peers of the Beatles as well as fans like Kitty Oliver claimed that the Beatles were the first group to do such a thing. This shows that the common perception was that the Beatles were the first, and that made their position all the more powerful.

Because the Beatles were and still are more popular than the likes of Birgit Nilsson or Gary Graffman, naturally when the Beatles did something it received more press and attention. This is not to discredit the works of those that came before, but rather to highlight the power that the Beatles held in the 1960s, not only as celebrity trendsetters but also as activists. In *The Beatles: Image and Media*, Michael Frontani offers that the Beatles' image as symbols of the counterculture, or at least opposed to tradition, helped their image as "organic intellectuals" in that they were "leaders of a group increasingly aware of its own social, economic, and political force."<sup>56</sup> Because the Beatles were these intellectual leaders, everything they did became part of the mainstream, and they urged their mostly young fans to follow in their footsteps and become activists in their own rights.

There were of course those who did not feel the same way about the Beatles. Many who lived through the era disapproved of the Beatles, whether they honestly thought the band was everything wrong with the new generation or were just tired of the frenetic fans and fanatical following. While some British diplomats called the band "superb ambassadors" for the country, others such as Paul Johnson, a famous British journalist and historian, called the Beatles the "apotheosis of insanity."<sup>57</sup> Johnson saw the Beatles as the head of a commercial machine that dictated the younger generations every want and need. Although he no doubt took the idea to the extreme, there is some truth in his thought in that the Beatles were at the forefront of many young people's minds, and they wanted to emulate the star musicians. In this sense, the Beatles being such advocates for change could have pushed the younger generation to be ready for the change, or they could have just been at the front of the generation that was ready for racial equality

56. Frontani, *The Beatles: Image and the Media*, 17.

57. Leese, *Aspects of Identity*, 96.

and would have done so without the Beatles. When writing of anything in the 1960s in relation to the Civil Rights Movement, particularly a pop culture group such as the Beatles, there is always a question of whether or not the time period made the people, or the people made the time period. Without trying to take the easy way out, the Beatles were decidedly a mixture of both, both influencing and being influenced by the times.

### Conclusion

As many of the Beatles' albums have reached their fiftieth anniversaries in the last several years, attention has shifted to the Beatles once again. On their 1964 American tour, as the British band bounced from city to city they encountered racial segregation the likes of which they had never seen before in Jacksonville, Florida. By refusing to play for a segregated audience at the Gator Bowl concert, the Fab Four wrote their names in history books not only as musicians, but as civil rights activists as well. In a time of marked violence and racial tensions at their highest since America's Civil War, being a pop musician did not mean also being an activist for a cause outside of their own music as it does for many musicians today. The Beatles helped to change this by being both, when doing so might have cost them everything. As the sixties went on, the band became more political and more ambitious in their activism. This meant writing songs with more revolutionary messages, as well as practicing their rhetoric outside their musical careers. Throughout all of this, racial equality remained a topic they never strayed from, being a root of their political and social activism.



[7]

## The Beginning of the End: The Klan's America

### **Trey Wells**

On August 19, 1966, the Beatles performed in Memphis, Tennessee, at the Mid-South Coliseum in front of thousands of screaming fans. During the performance, what sounded like gunshots rang throughout the venue, leaving the band members concerned that John Lennon had been gunned down. To everyone's relief, it was just a couple firecrackers. The incident felt all too real for the band because of death threats from one of the United States most feared terrorist groups, the Ku Klux Klan (KKK).<sup>1</sup>

The Beatles led the way politically and culturally. They had taken the world by storm with their dashing good looks, their prowess as songwriters, and their talent to produce a global buzz. By 1964, they had become the biggest band on the planet,

1. Dan Taylor, "Beatles Threats," YouTube video, 00:47, posted Aug. 9, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7asH72eh0WI>; "Live: Mid-South Coliseum, Memphis," The Beatles Bible, August 19, 1966, <https://www.beatlesbible.com/1966/08/19/live-mid-south-coliseum-memphis/>.

and their fan base continued to grow from the young girls who loved them for their looks to the college kids who embraced the lyricism of the band. One of the factors in the band being such a progressive force on many platforms, including race, is that they hailed from the United Kingdom where racism was not the central stain on the nation's history. In the United States and more particularly the US South, racism had long been a part of everyday life with the creation and implementation of Jim Crow laws. The Beatles were four of the many musicians who faced massive resistance from far-right extremist groups, especially the Ku Klux Klan, for what they represented: the shift of societal structures and values.

The mid-1950s to the end of the 1960s was a time of tremendous political and social change in the United States, especially around the issue of race. The United States Supreme Court's decision, *Brown v. The Board of Education of Topeka* (1954) altered the racial landscape, and many in the southern states felt their world was being turned upside down. With the fading of the old American ways, cultural change created a resurgence in the membership and popularity of the Ku Klux Klan, who tried to stop these progressive changes to their traditionalist world. The sense of traditionalism lived in the sounds of the music southerners listened to; artists like Hank Williams, Gene Autry, and the growing genre of country music gave a sense of wholesome music that spoke to many southerners, while the emergence of Elvis Presley and Chuck Berry provided examples of what was wrong with America. Rock 'n' roll blended African American music and other genres, blurred the line between white and black, and led to the integration of bands and the audiences that attended these concerts. If the challenge to racial segregation was not enough, then some of the bands' statements on religion, seemed ever more threatening. For groups like the Ku Klux Klan, this was intolerable and had to be stopped. Rock n' roll music represented a battleground musically, culturally, and politically in the United States and was met with harsh resistance from right-wing extremist groups, that included threats and violence.

## Historiography

This chapter delves into how the religious right and the Ku Klux Klan put up resistance against rock music and the Beatles. It uses sources from the people on the ground, like band members and members of the Klan, while also being supported by historians and musicians that have researched the topic of race and politics and their relationship to music.

As one of the most popular bands of all time and arguably the most influential band of all time, the historiography of the Beatles is expansive. Academics and other authors have written about the various influences of the band and how the band has influenced the world around them. With the impact the band had on popular culture at the time and how people listened to music, biographical works on the band make up a complete section of a library by themselves. Some authors have attempted the whole biography of the band, while others have focused on specific events or topics in the bands timeline, such as Marcus Collins' article, *The Beatles' Politics*.<sup>2</sup>

In terms of race relations and the Beatles, few pieces of academic literature have been written on the subject. Most of these works are written within the broader scope of the relationship between race and rock music. Glenn C. Altschuler's *All Shook Up: How Rock "n" Roll Changed America*, marks a major piece of literature in the theme of race and rock music. Other books provide biographical accounts of the life and times of The Beatles, like Bob Spitz's work, *The Beatles: The Biography*, which has small stories of certain memories of the band.<sup>3</sup> The lack of secondary sources on the band's interaction between themselves and the race issue in America leaves many readers

2. Bradford E. Loker, *History with the Beatles* (Indianapolis, IN: Dog Ear Publishing, 2009); Elizabeth Bush, "How the Beatles Changed the World by Martin W. Sandler (Review)," *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* 67, no. 6 (2014): 331; Janne Mäkelä, *John Lennon Imagined: Cultural History of a Rock Star* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004); Bob Spitz, *The Beatles: The Biography* (Boston: Little, Brown, 2012); Marcus Collins, "The Beatles' Politics," *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 16, no. 2 (2014): 291–309.
3. Glenn C. Altschuler, *All Shook Up: How Rock "n" Roll Changed America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Gina Misiroglu, *American Countercultures: An Encyclopedia of Nonconformists, Alternative Lifestyles, and Radical Ideas in U.S. History* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2015).

guessing the extent of the issue, as it related to the band, during the 1960s.

The Ku Klux Klan has been studied ad nauseam over the last century. The history of the Klan during its founding, during the time of Reconstruction has been written about extensively as well as the tactics used during the nineteenth century. The reemergence of the Klan during the 1920s and 1930s has also received considerable attention, while the final push of the Klan in the 1960s and its relationship to the Civil Rights Movement has generated copious amounts of academic work.<sup>4</sup> Other groups on the extreme right took stances against the societal changes that occurred during the mid-twentieth century. Many religious groups made it known that they would not tolerate this shift either.<sup>5</sup>

### The Klan and Early Rock 'n' Roll

In the history of the United States, race relations have been the central issue from the beginning. Conflicts throughout American history have pointed to race as a major player in politics from the writing of the US Constitution to the bloody American Civil War that eventually freed all slaves from servitude. During Reconstruction, the radical Republican Congress passed several amendments that guaranteed African

4. David Mark Chalmers, *Backfire: How the Ku Klux Klan Helped the Civil Rights Movement* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003); Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); David Cunningham, "Five Myths about the Ku Klux Klan," *Washington Post*, March 11, 2016; David Mark Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1981); David Cunningham, *Klanville, U.S.A.: The Rise and Fall of the Civil Rights-Era Ku Klux Klan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); "Ku Klux Klan: A History of Racism," Southern Poverty Law Center, accessed March 28, 2018, <https://www.splcenter.org/20110228/ku-klux-klan-history-racism>; Wyn Craig Wade, *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Aldon D. Morris, *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1986).

5. Brian Ward, "'The "C" Is for Christ': Arthur Unger, Datebook Magazine and the Beatles," *Popular Music and Society* 35, no. 4 (October 1, 2012): 541-560; Doris Buss, *Globalizing Family Values: The Christian Right in International Politics* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); Preston Shires, *Hippies of the Religious Right* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007); John C. Green, Mark J. Rozell, and Clyde Wilcox, *The Christian Right in American Politics: Marching to the Millennium* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2003); Karen Skollnaw, "When The Beatles Were Bigger Than Jesus Christ - CSI," September 10, 2009, [https://www.csicop.org/specialarticles/show/when\\_the\\_beatles\\_were\\_bigger\\_than\\_jesus\\_christ](https://www.csicop.org/specialarticles/show/when_the_beatles_were_bigger_than_jesus_christ).

American freedom, protection, and the right to vote. The physically and morally defeated white southerners had their world torn apart and were looking for a solution: enter the Ku Klux Klan. Formed in central Tennessee, a group of Confederate veterans created an organization based around the idea of the Greek word *Kucklos*, which means “circle”. The organization started to grow in numbers and put on white hoods to appear as ghosts in the night.<sup>6</sup> The government under President Ulysses S. Grant waged a war against the terrorist group, and the numbers of the Klan dwindled for decades. When the highly controversial movie *Birth of a Nation* (1915), which glorified the Klan, was released, William J. Simmons sought to recreate the Klan. Simmons stumbled upon a massive demographic of angry white men who were looking to have some sort of organization to channel their rage<sup>7</sup>

By the 1950s and the 1960s, when the Federal Government sought to dismantle Jim Crow laws, the Klan turned violent. Between 1955 and 1959, the Southern Regional Council reported over 530 cases of violence and 27 bombings perpetrated by the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>8</sup> The Klan was highly centralized at the time of these acts of violence. The men who were at the top of the command issued orders throughout the network, and they were carried out through a streamlined and hierarchical system.<sup>9</sup> The Klan was powerful, angry, and looking for ways to end this wave of change.

Rock ‘n’ roll music has its feet firmly planted in an interracial background. The beats and rhythms of rock music have distinctly African roots, which startled the white establishment. Asa Carter, a former radio commentator and fervent Ku Klux Klan member, commented about rock n’ roll music: “It appeals to the base in man; brings out animalism and vulgarity.”<sup>10</sup>

To the dismay of Klan members, some of the first rock musicians that become famous were African American. Musicians such as Fats Domino, Chuck Berry, and Little Richard quickly took off, performing to large crowds and selling large

6. Chalmers, *Hooded Americanism*, 8-9.

7. Chalmers, 28-30.

8. Wade, *The Fiery Cross*, 300.

9. Cunningham, *Klansville, U.S.A.*, 224.

10. Altschuler, *All Shook Up*, 38

numbers of records. In contrast, the Ku Klux Klan preferred country music with stars like Gene Autry, while the Religious Right sang hymns from the 18th and 19th Centuries and were cautious about any music that had suggestive lyrics. White musicians such as Jerry Lee Lewis and Elvis Presley were influenced by and performed with black musicians. This interracial heritage of rock music was a principle that the Ku Klux Klan would not tolerate.

This shift in culture gave rise to political actions that had consequences that trickled down to the Rock stage. Southerners allied against the shift to a more racially and culturally progressive society gave rise to the States' Rights Democratic Party (Dixiecrats) in the 1948 Presidential Election. With the increasing racial tolerance of President Harry S. Truman, who had recently integrated the military, Southerners felt the party was moving away from its core platforms. South Carolina Democrat Strom Thurmond ran in the US Presidential election as a third party candidate in 1948. This shocked political pundits, and the electoral math became tricky. In the end, Harry Truman won the election over both Thomas Dewey (R-NY) and Thurmond, but Thurmond had gained 39 electoral votes. The message was clear: if a candidate wanted to have an easier path to a presidential win, they must have the approval of the US South.

The image of young white women going to concerts where there were African Americans in the audience was often enough to unleash the ire of the Klan. Yet having their children pay to see an African American performer would have been unimaginable. On April 10, 1956, in Birmingham, Alabama, several white men jumped on the stage to assault Nat King Cole, who was not vocally opposed to segregation, then performing to an all white audience. One of the conspirators edited the racist newspaper, *The Southerner*, and printed multiple pictures of Cole with white women in the audience, labeling them with captions such as "Cole and your daughters" or "Cole and his white women".<sup>11</sup> This proved to not be an isolated incident.

This intimidation factor led many African American

11. Altschuler, *All Shook Up*, 38-39.

musicians to come up with more nuanced ways in subverting the whites in power and the Klan who would threaten them. Chuck Berry's song "Johnny B. Goode" originally was supposed to be about a "little colored boy", but Berry ultimately changed it to "little country boy." He made these changes not to pander to white crowds but to allow listeners to create an image in their mind on their own to decide the race of the subject of the song.<sup>12</sup> The way African American Rock musicians were treated went hand-in-hand with the conservative factions in the nation and their war on rock 'n' roll. It was not just Chuck Berry who made subtle changes to the genre: black musicians all over the country changed their sound and lyrics to allow their popularity to rise without facing the backlash of white America for being too radical.<sup>13</sup> The ability for the African American artist to be able to adapt and survive in the industry with the support of the white middle class frightened the Klan because that was the social makeup of the Klan itself.

The resistance formed by the white middle class cannot be understated. This was the part of society that could afford to go to the record stores, buy an album, or even go to a concert. The idea that a working-class white male could come home to his daughter listening to Fats Domino or Little Richard was inconceivable. Not all resistance to black musicians, or the rock n' roll genre came from white men in white hoods; it also came from families preventing their children from buying and listening to their albums. White adults often viewed this music as an attack on the basic pillars of society. One cannot keep the resistance from sections of the white community separate from the increase in tension and violence in the United States during the 1960s; they are interwoven.<sup>14</sup>

### From Across the Pond

On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, in the United Kingdom during the late 1950s, a musical revolution was underway. Those African American Rock and Blues artists who were ostracized by

12. Altschuler, *All Shook Up*, 66.

13. Brian Ward, *Just My Soul Responding: Rhythm and Blues, Black Consciousness, and Race Relations* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 3.

14. Ward, *Just My Soul Responding*, 3.

certain parts of American culture, influenced some of the most influential rock musicians of all time. In *The Beatles Anthology*, John Lennon raved about Chuck Berry: “I’ve loved everything he’s ever done, ever. He was in a different class than other performers.”<sup>15</sup> Once these bands started gaining fame in the United States through radio play, they also began touring in the United States, beginning the now famous British Invasion.

Though the Beatles were a major force in the United Kingdom and Europe before their first tour in the United States in 1964, this tour of the country left millions of people amazed at their talent and their charming looks. Many supported the band and fans spread to all different parts of the country. In 1965, the Beatles played their legendary performance at Shea Stadium in New York:

live shows were important in furthering that career, as was shown by the huge symbolic performance attached to their appearance at New York’s Shea Stadium... which was to Beatlemania in the United States what the London Palladium performance was to Beatlemania in Britain.<sup>16</sup>

Initially the band had an avid following with little reason to stir up controversy. The popularity of the band was at an all time American high.

The event that caused a rift with certain groups of fans of the Beatles in the US South and the band itself was prompted by comments made by Lennon that the band was “bigger than Jesus.” Lennon made the comment a year before in a magazine interview, but a publisher caught wind of the quote right before the Beatles were about to tour the United States in 1966. Once published, the religious right and the extreme right groups, including the KKK, started mobilizing movements to protest the band. Lennon issued an apology for the comment, but the damage was done. Organizers across the US South called for the outright banning of the Beatles and called on others to protest the bands as they toured the nation. This marked one of the first moments where neo-conservative forces aligned across the

15. The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2000), 11.

16. Ian Inglis, *The Beatles, Popular Music and Society: A Thousand Voices* (New York: Springer, 2016), 138.

country to show that they were not about to relinquish the power and status quo that represented their way of life.

Immediately following the release of the controversial Lennon quote, disc jockeys across much of the nation asked their listeners to send in all their Beatles memorabilia and albums to be burned at rallies. The *Washington Post* reported on August 6, 1966, that the Ku Klux Klan were behind the actions and stated that the Klan knew about the “atheistic views of a few of them.”<sup>17</sup> This kind of outrage was not limited to the US South; a D.J. in Massachusetts called for a Beatle record burning session. While another in Milwaukee was in utter shock at the statements and would not burn the albums at his radio station until he saw the quote from Lennon directly in print.<sup>18</sup> This form of resistance possibly was the one that could harm the Beatles the most. The Ku Klux Klan was a national organization with a strong base in the South, but there were klaverns (local Klan branches) across the nation. This coincided with the power of the radio at the time and allowed for the movement to spread all over the country.<sup>19</sup>

The resistance shown against the Beatles, and more specifically Lennon, shows the Klan’s ability to organize and have their voices heard across the nation. Newspaper and television coverage allowed the Ku Klux Klan to spread their exact words to not just the US South, but from California to Massachusetts. Getting their message to a larger, national audience was a great recruiting tool for the Klan. Using the Lennon comments as a way to break away from their portrayal as just a racist group, the Klan now had a mainstream platform with a protest against an attack on Christianity. The Lennon quote gave the Klan exactly what it needed, getting the Klan national coverage about their religious affiliations made their voices even louder.

The way in which Lennon reacted to the backlash by parts of their American fan base shows the power that religion had

17. Shaw, Peter J. “D.J.’s Ban on Beatles Spreading,” *Washington Post*, August 6, 1966.

18. “Beatle Quote Brings a Hard Day’s Night,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 5, 1966, sec. one.

19. Mark Murrmann, “Burn Your Beatles Records!”, *Mother Jones*, accessed February 20, 2018, <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2014/08/burn-beatles-records-lennon-jesus/>.

in American society. The speed with which Lennon recanted his statement and the subtle ways in which African American musicians had to subvert the whites in power illustrated what they were up against. As seen by Chuck Berry and the Beatles, artists had to strike a balance between having their own voice but also being careful to not step on the toes of the neo-conservative movement. Trying to find the balance between doing the right thing and being able to continue being successful was a constant for each musician. The Beatles had hard decisions to make, and sometimes they made choices that even they would come to regret.

Like the earlier Nat King Cole incident, violence was the ultimate tactic used by the Ku Klux Klan. Throughout its history, the Klan resorted to terror tactics of murder and intimidation to push their agenda. During the 1960s, the Klan was at its renewed zenith of power, but it was also experiencing the downfall of the organizational hierarchy that made the Klan effective. Membership started to fade in the back half of the decade, but their actions became more erratic and less centralized. David Cunningham writes of this transition in the state of North Carolina:

Many Klan members directly promoted violence during the UKA's (United Klans of America) mid-1960's heyday and police reports traced hundreds of acts of intimidation to plots hatched in local klaverns (local Klan units). As the Carolina Klan declined...the contours of Klan violence shifted. Core observers noted...semi-autonomous actions detached from those sanctioned by UKA leadership.<sup>20</sup>

This loosening of control by the centralized elements within the group allowed for more violent and erratic behavior by the lower members of the Klan hierarchy. This made being a musician in these times a potentially dangerous affair.

With the Ku Klux Klan becoming more decentralized and unpredictable in their behavior during the days of the final Beatles tour of the United States in 1966, the violent actors felt further emboldened and secure in their ability to act out their violence without consequences. The attack on Nat King Cole

20. Cunningham, *Klansville, U.S.A.*, 224

was not an anomaly, and the Beatles were not exempt from the anger of the Klan. The backlash of Lennon's "bigger than Jesus" comments was still reverberating throughout the United States. As the band prepared to cross the Atlantic to perform in front of massive crowds for four weeks in fourteen cities, some people in the US were preparing to try and sabotage the tour. During a performance in Detroit, audience members were escorted out for throwing jellybeans at the band during their performance. Six days later, after shows in Cleveland, Washington D.C., Philadelphia, Toronto, and Boston, came the show that made the band and the manager Brian Epstein the most nervous: Memphis, Tennessee. On August 19, the Beatles were scheduled to play two concerts at the Mid-South Coliseum. The Ku Klux Klan was ready to fulfill their promises of protesting and intimidation now that the band was on their turf. The tenseness of the situation was palpable for both the band and those who were attending the performance. Before the concert, Paul McCartney spoke in a press conference to try and ease the tensions by saying that Lennon was sorry for his comments and that "he can't say things like that."<sup>21</sup>

The Klan made it well known that they knew the Beatles were coming to Memphis and were taking steps to make their presence felt. In a news interview, a Klan member gave his thoughts on what the situation with the band was about and why they were doing what they were doing:

There have been statements in all the newspapers that they're getting more better than Jesus himself and the Ku Klux Klan being a religious order is going to come out here the night that they appear...we're gonna demonstrate with different tactics to stop this performance...<sup>22</sup>

With the Klan showing its face publicly in Memphis, this emboldened certain members who entered the concert without their outfits to throw firecrackers on the stage during the performance. Brian Epstein, Paul McCartney, George Harrison,

21. Abbey Road, "The Beatles at Mid-South Coliseum in Memphis in 1966," YouTube Video, 3:39, posted December 29, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xetlxTJiQhM>.

22. Dan Taylor, "Beatles Threats," YouTube video, 00:47, posted Aug. 9, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7asH72eh0WI>.

and Ringo Starr all immediately looked at Lennon to see if a gunman had shot him. They managed to continue playing through the incident, but played at a quickened pace.<sup>23</sup>

Just two years after this incident, the US South once again produced a political candidate that formed the basis of opposition to the ever-evolving political and social climate of the 1960s. After Johnson's decision not to run for reelection, Vice President Hubert Humphrey became the nominee for the Democrats. Humphrey was pro-desegregation and an ardent supporter of the Civil Rights Movement. With a candidate with that type of platform, the Southerners and neo-conservative forces nominated Governor of Alabama George Wallace, to lead the American Independent Party. This party was formed on extreme right rhetoric and called for the overturn of *Brown vs. The Board of Education*. Once again stealing votes from the Democratic Party, just like with Strom Thurmond in 1948, this time it affected the winner of the entire election. The constant campaigning against Humphrey left the Democratic Party divided, which aided President Richard Nixon (R-CA) in sealing his victory. This showed the ability for the ever-decreasing extreme right to still have a strong political voice by disrupting national elections.

The battle for the soul of America's children was well underway throughout the 1950s and 1960s, and the outcome was crucial to both sides. The popularity of black musicians and their white counterparts was too much to overcome for a group of white supremacists and the congregations of conservative churches. The album and ticket sales of the Beatles and other groups continued to grow, and the coverage that they garnered over time was growing at an even faster rate. Rock 'n' roll started to shift and change throughout the 1960s as well. Much harder and more suggestive lyrical versions of the genre started emerging toward the end of the decade with bands such as Led Zeppelin, The Doors, Pink Floyd, and Black Sabbath. These bands varied in style but departed from the poppy, love-tinged popular songs from the earlier half of the decade.

The Klan themselves changed during the decade as well. The

23. Clifford Williamson, "1966 and the Three Crises' of the Beatles," *BBC World Histories* 1 (2016): 52-57.

Ku Klux Klan began with a more centralized hierarchy where orders were then disseminated throughout the ranks to complete their agenda. Then with a waning membership and loss of popularity amongst the middle-class, the centralization disappeared and actions become more dangerous and erratic. The United Church did a study that showed that church membership was down across the board for most denominations.<sup>24</sup> Having that sense of a congregational community was an integral force within the Klan and having fewer people attend church was a variable the Klan could not overcome. Trying to keep their agenda alive and membership up during the last years of the decade, the Ku Klux Klan made an unusual alliance with the American Nazi Party. This cooperation with a political group that idealized Adolf Hitler established the Ku Klux Klan as an extremist hate group and shed the persona of a true religious order which in turn made the issue of the rock ‘n’ roll music and its racial tensions increasingly irrelevant.

### Conclusion

The 1950s and the 1960s were a time of massive shifts culturally, socially, and politically. No one could find a better battleground than the one over rock ‘n’ roll music. The music itself was grounded in African American beats, and rhythms, which strayed away from the music that was conventional from white, middle class America, the members of the Ku Klux Klan, and the white church-going members. The interracial background and mindset of rock musicians shook the core of what the Ku Klux Klan stood for, a society from where whites were in power and African Americans were second-class citizens. Religion was a mainstay in both Southern culture and within the Ku Klux Klan; the powers behind these groups were in full force when their religion came into question. But one must remember that it was not just the men in white hoods or priests in the local Baptist church, it was also white parents who were startled at the

24. C. Kirk Hadaway, Penny Long Marler, and Mark Chaves, “What the Polls Don’t Show: A Closer Look at U.S. Church Attendance,” *American Sociological Review* 58, no. 6 (1993): 741–52.

instant popularity of rock musicians and the suggestive stances that they stood for in society.

The Ku Klux Klan was founded during Reconstruction as an outlet for white southerners to get together. Popularity came and went for the Klan, reaching a peak in the 1920's. Then the Klan reentered the political landscape when the US Supreme Court decided separate was inherently unequal with the case of *Brown vs. The Board of Education*.

The Klan resorted to an assortment of tactics to try to subdue the ever-rising popularity of the genre, such as having rallies around burning Beatles albums and protesting their concerts. To escape from this pressure, black rock musicians tended to mask their lyrics to not feed into the racism and to appeal to broader audiences. There was an ebb and flow between the groups who were sizing each other up before the next major round of conflict.

White America produced presidential politicians like Strom Thurmond in 1948 and George Wallace in 1968 to combat the desegregation policies of the federal government. These candidates stole electoral votes away from the Democratic candidates in both elections, causing chaos and unpredictable elections. This allowed for this vocal minority to have their voice heard on the national political stage. When their voice was heard, it trickled down to policies that affected musicians and their fans.

The declining popularity of the Ku Klux Klan by the end of the sixties resulted in several things: the Klan became more erratic in their behavior; there were fewer organizational protests, and there were more small group acts of violence. The membership problem caused even more unpopular alliances with the American Nazi Party, which furthered the decline in membership. When the Klan needed to move to a more moderate tone to survive, they did the opposite and went further to the extremes and doomed their own future. The religious right and the KKK waged a war that they thought they could win. Rock music indeed did create massive waves of resistance from certain religious groups, white supremacists, and middle class America. But rock music also generated a larger wave of new fans and supporters everyday, and fringe

groups that do not support the ideals of average America could never defeat that kind of momentum.

Rock 'n' roll itself did not go unchanged throughout these tumultuous times. It shifted from greats like Little Richard and Fats Domino, to the Beatles and the Doors. But the popularity of the genre grew with the changes and more people came to identify with these different types of rock music. From *Brown vs. The Board of Education*, to the days of Watergate, it was a time of protest and anger. Music was an outlet and a battleground, a safe haven and a frontline foxhole.



[PART III]

## **Women**



[8]

## Astrid Kirchherr: Forever with the Beatles

### **Cecelia Burger**

Steep steps lead down into the depths of a dark cellar that was fashioned into a dance hall. A band perched on a platform almost too small to constitute a stage. Filling the room and floating up into the stairwell, the sound of rock 'n' roll poured into the Reeperbahn, the red-light district of Hamburg, Germany, where in 1960 Astrid Kirchherr descended the stairs and became absolutely captivated by the band playing on stage. Their look and sound enchanted her as she came night after night, becoming fast friends with the band members. This band was not the Beatles, not yet; they were just five boys discovering themselves in the dingy clubs of Hamburg. Kirchherr fell in love with one member and made lifelong friends with the rest. As she visited the Reeperbahn many nights over again, Kirchherr was unaware she was becoming a part of the story of arguably the most famous band in history.

The Beatles are one of the most documented, photographed,

and written about bands in history. Their rise to fame was swift and unprecedented as they captured the hearts of people throughout the world. The band's early years were starkly different from the general understanding and picture painted of their music and fame. This chapter focuses on some of the lesser-known aspects of the band's early years as they began to build a reputation playing at venues in Hamburg, Germany, through the years of 1960 to 1962. The early group was not composed of the iconic four that most people think of today. In addition to the core trio of Harrison, Lennon, and McCartney, Stuart Sutcliffe was the original bass player. Days of trial and error defined their time in Hamburg, and this experimentation extended to the composition of the band itself. The members had to discover their group dynamic as they lost and gained members of the band. Stuart Sutcliffe did not stay with the band but still contributed to its history and story while the Beatles gained invaluable experience in the dingy dance clubs of Hamburg's party scene.

Many of the events of the Beatles' early years are not widely known by the general public today. Yet the band's development and early experiences are vitally important to their eventual propulsion into fame. A particularly significant individual who was a part of these years was Astrid Kirchherr, a young and aspiring German artist who met the band in 1960. Kirchherr's contributions to these formative years were substantial, and her relationship and experiences alongside the band will be an important focus of this chapter. Her personal accounts of the band and the relationships she formed with each member provide insight into these lesser-known years. Kirchherr has often been linked to the Beatles through her iconic photographs of the band, but she has also faced deep difficulties as she has struggled to forge her own path outside the shadow of the band. The Beatles became enormously famous in the days and years after Hamburg, and Kirchherr felt the reverberations of that fame due to her personal relationships with the band members in her work and career. These consequences were both positive and negative at different times and in different situations. The following chapter focuses on Hamburg as a formative moment

for the band and argues that it was Kirchherr's unique artistic influence that made a lasting stylistic mark on the band.

## Historiography

This chapter explores the history of the Beatles in Hamburg, Germany, focusing on the band's early development. It draws on research by historians that have assessed the experience of the Beatles in Hamburg from 1960 through 1962. Part of this history is Hamburg itself, as it provided a unique setting for the Beatles' early years. The years after World War II created a particular backdrop for the band and their self-discovery. Artistic freedom and progressive movements proliferated throughout the city while the Beatles were still in infancy as a band. Scholars acknowledge the importance of this on their need to develop in style and music. This period in the Beatles' history is frequently studied and often mentioned as the starting point and cultivation period for the band's launch into fame.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, this chapter investigates historical accounts of the influence of Astrid Kirchherr on the Beatles. Kirchherr is considered an important individual who significantly impacted the band in their early Hamburg years. Historians have argued that the Beatles' style and lasting iconography were influenced by Kirchherr's close relationship with Sutcliff and the other band members. According to these scholars, Kirchherr took the first professional photos of the band and had considerable influence on the band's style, particularly that of the "Beatles haircut" and their collarless jackets.<sup>2</sup> This chapter contributes

1. Ian Inglis, *The Beatles in Hamburg* (London: Reaktion Books, 2012); Larry Kane, *When They Were Boys* (Philadelphia: Running Press 2013); "The Official International Hamburg Website," Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, accessed March 20, 2018, <https://www.hamburg.com>; James Morrison, "Fifth Beatle' Died After Fight with Lennon, Sister Claims," *The Independent*, July 12, 2003; Barry Miles, *Paul McCartney: Many Years From Now* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998); The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002), 44-48; Chris Junior, "Head Back to Hamburg," *Goldmine*, 2010, 30-35; Jonathan Clark, *The Beatles: Where We Grew Up: Their Formative Years In Hamburg, 1960-1962* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014); "Arne Bellstorf Illustrates The Young Beatles," *Rolling Stone*, accessed March 14, 2018, <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/pictures/arne-bellstorf-illustrates-the-young-beatles-in-babys-in-black-20120515>, and Ray Coleman, *Lennon: The Definitive Biography* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993).
2. "Astrid Kirchherr: The Woman Who Gave The Beatles 'Style,'" Beatles Music

to this field by contextualizing the specific experience of the Beatles in Hamburg within the scope of Kirchherr's relationship with and impact on the band.

### Hamburg, Germany

Hamburg's historic label as "the gateway to the world" testifies to the city's importance.<sup>3</sup> The city is the second largest in Germany, located in a unique position at a major international crossroad, and is home to the biggest port in the country. These factors have allowed the city to engage in trade and commerce with the world since the Middle Ages. For over 800 years, the port has allowed for access to other cultures through the exchange of goods and intermingling of peoples. This has in turn created a city with a vast blending of ideas. Hamburg has long been ahead of the rest of Germany and surrounding countries as the intermixing created a setting of progress where oddity and innovation could flourish.<sup>4</sup>

After being seriously damaged during the bombing campaign of the Second World War, Hamburg had to rebuild and became a bustling city in the late 1950s and 1960s. It was a city that fostered new social movements. Rock 'n' roll surfaced in Hamburg around 1960 as youth in the area had access to an unprecedented number of music venues and other spaces

Radio, December 4, 2014, <http://beatlesarama.com/astrid-kirchherr-woman-gave-beatles-style/>; "Astrid Kirchherr," Center of Beat, August 13, 2011, archived URL: [https://web.archive.org/web/20110813082715/http://center-of-beat.com/en\\_ak.php](https://web.archive.org/web/20110813082715/http://center-of-beat.com/en_ak.php); Peter Fetterman, "Astrid Kirchherr," accessed February 13, 2018, <http://www.peterfetterman.com/artists/astrid-kirchherr>; Laura Davis, "Rare Beatles Images Revealed in Astrid Kirchherr Exhibition," *Daily Post*, August 25, 2010. See the following for individuals who influenced the Beatles: "Astrid Kirchherr With The Beatles," The Beatles Bible, accessed February 14, 2018, <https://www.beatlesbible.com/people/astrid-kirchherr/>; Bill Harry, *The Encyclopedia of Beatles People* (London, New York: Sterling Pub. Co., 1997); The majority of histories credit Kirchherr with creating "the Beatles haircut." See the following two sources for alternative history: Klaus Voorman, "On Working with the Beatles," interview by Paul Morley, *The Guardian*, audio, September 7, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCtIN-SByRU>; Patrick Prince, "Origin of Beatles' Mop-Top Style Remains a Hairy Issue," *Goldmine*, November 5, 2010; *Backbeat*, directed by Iain Softley (Germany: PolyGram Filmed Entertainment, 1994); Arne Bellstorf, *Baby's In Black* (New York: First Second, 2012); "Arne Bellstorf Illustrates the Young Beatles," and J. R. Wick, "Stuart Sutcliffe: The Lost Beatle," *Home Media Retailing* 28, no. 29 (July, 2006).

3. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, s.v. "Hamburg, Germany," accessed September 28, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hamburg-Germany>, and "The Official International Hamburg Website."

4. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "Hamburg,"

beyond the reach of parental supervision.<sup>5</sup> Key to this was the city's world-famous Reeperbahn. The Reeperbahn is a long street in the St. Pauli quarter that is famed for its nightlife with a red-light district, numerous clubs, and live music venues.<sup>6</sup> The Beatles played at several of these clubs in and around the Reeperbahn.

The environment of Hamburg in the years of 1960 presented a unique time and place for the Beatles as they lived and performed there in their formative years. The band started playing in Liverpool but quickly branched out and were in Hamburg on and off from August of 1960 through December of 1962. Lennon famously said, "I might have been born in Liverpool—but I grew up in Hamburg."<sup>7</sup> In 1960, club owner Bruno Koschmider was visiting Liverpool in search of bands to play in his Hamburg club. The Beatles were put in touch with Koschmider by way of Jacaranda Enterprises.<sup>8</sup> Allan Williams, who created the Jacaranda Enterprises agency, owned the Jacaranda coffee house in Liverpool where he met the Beatles; he facilitated the band's ability to perform in Germany. Considered the first manager of the Beatles, Williams convinced the Beatles to take a chance and move to Hamburg.<sup>9</sup> The band needed to venture away from Liverpool to find a new audience that would push the boys to be great. The opportunity to perform in Hamburg was exactly what they needed. The composition of the audiences that the Beatles came to perform for was crucial in shaping the band. The Germans were volatile, and the drunken crowd forced the Beatles to stay engaged late through the night and into the early mornings. The Beatles were changed by these long nights as they stepped up to the challenge and used it to propel them to become the best band in the city.<sup>10</sup>

5. Johannes Novy and Claire Colomb, "Struggling for the Right to the (Creative) City in Berlin and Hamburg: New Urban Social Movements, New 'Spaces of Hope'?", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37 (2013): 1816-1838.
6. "The Official International Hamburg Website"; Novy and Colomb, "Struggling," 1823, and Julia Sneeringer, "'Assembly Line of Joys': Touring Hamburg's Red-Light District, 1949–1966," *Central European History* 42, no. 1 (2009): 65–96.
7. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 45-46.
8. Junior, "Head Back to Hamburg," 30-33, 35.
9. Daniel Kreps, "Allan Williams, Beatles' First Manager, Dead at 86," *Rolling Stone*, December 30, 2016, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/allan-williams-beatles-first-manager-dead-at-86-w458560>.
10. Devin McKinney, *Magic Circles: The Beatles in Dream and History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 33.

Many “firsts” were created in Hamburg as the band went through periods of trial and error in order to discover their voices, music, and style. They played their first Hamburg concert in August of 1960 at the Indra Club. The boys (they were truly boys as Harrison was only 17 at the time) shared these early performances with a stripper, and the band played during her breaks.<sup>11</sup> The band was soon exposed to drugs and drug culture for the first time. To stay awake during their long performances the boys would take amphetamines.<sup>12</sup> Professionally, many significant developments happened during this time. The Beatles were still working in Germany when Bert Kaempfert produced their first true studio recording. Toward their last months in Hamburg, the band met Brian Epstein and officially hired him as their manager and then recorded their first single “Love Me Do.” More personal shifts occurred for the band members as they developed their image. Their friendship with Kirchherr contributed directly to their changes in style.

### Kirchherr Changes the Beatles

Astrid Kirchherr played an influential role in the formative early years of the Beatles as the band developed in Hamburg. She continues today to contribute to the band’s enduring fame and iconography. Kirchherr entered into the Beatles’ lives at the beginning of their two years in Hamburg. She discovered them in early 1960 through her former boyfriend, Klaus Voormann, who heard them playing one night at a club.<sup>13</sup> The Beatles were set up performing in dance halls on the Reeperbahn. Kirchherr explains that this was “not a place where young ladies of the fifties and sixties were to have seen or go.”<sup>14</sup> She eventually was convinced by Voormann to go anyway and became immediately infatuated with the group. Kirchherr admits that after the first night she went almost every night after.<sup>15</sup> Her

11. Kane, *When They Were Boys*, 140.

12. Kane, 141-42.

13. Astrid Kirchherr, “Beatles’ Photographer Astrid Kirchherr Opens Up,” interview by Terry Gross, *Fresh Air*, NPR, January 15, 2008, audio, <https://www.npr.org/2008/01/1518112532/photographer-astrid-kirchherr>.

14. Kirchherr, NPR interview.

15. Klaus Seeshaupt, “Klaus Voormann: Biography,” July 17, 2011, <https://web.archive.org/web/20110717231704/http://www.voormann.com/biography>, and Kirchherr, NPR interview.

quick captivation with the Beatles seemed to foreshadow their looming fame and appeal to young women. Kirchherr and the band became fast friends despite the language barrier; the Beatles knew no German, and Kirchherr no English.

Kirchherr was twenty two years old in 1960 and was an aspiring photographer and artist. Her widowed mother brought her up in Hamburg, but she spent a few years at the Baltic Sea to escape the destruction and risks of World War II. Kirchherr came from a wealthy family, which had allowed for their escape from war-torn Europe and also provided for comfortable living after the war in an expensive suburb of the city known as the Altona. Kirchherr was highly educated thanks to the insistence of her mother and attended art school to learn photography. She describes a freshness to the time due to backlash that followed World War II. "We didn't want to get our inspirations from the past because our past was the war, was Hitler, was uniforms," Kirchherr wrote, "so we were searching for something new."<sup>16</sup> Kirchherr was very chic and followed new social movements that influenced her strong sense of style. She spent many nights in fashionable "existentialist" bars, which were popular among artistic circles in the years after World War II. Kirchherr was also independent minded, which made her willing to discover the Beatles in the taboo basements of the notorious Reeperbahn. McCartney recalled meeting people in Hamburg and singled out Kirchherr as the individual they liked the most because of her style and beauty.<sup>17</sup>

Kirchherr contributed a few major changes to the band's style and overall image, the most iconic of which was the Beatles haircut. Originally, the Beatles sported a style that was common among skiffle bands and early American rock 'n' rollers. Musicians such as Elvis Presley, who made popular the "Greaser" style that used Brylcream or Vaseline to sport slicked back hair, heavily influenced the style of the late fifties England. This was the style the Beatles were originally inspired by.<sup>18</sup> The

16. Astrid Kirchherr "An Interview with Astrid Kirchherr," Retrosellers.com, September 2012, transcript, archived, <https://www.webcitation.org/6AP2qWkny?url=http://www.retrosellers.com/features10.htm>.

17. Inglis, *The Beatles in Hamburg*, 52-54.

18. Jennifer Moore, *Street Style in America: An Exploration* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2017), 250.

band had this popular hairstyle when they started performing in Hamburg. As she tells the story, Kirchherr initially gave the new style haircut, what became known as the Beatles haircut, to her former boyfriend Klaus Voormann to hide his ears, which stuck out awkwardly. Sutcliffe soon asked for Kirchherr to do the same for him after admiring Voormann's new hairdo. Harrison eventually came to her in order to achieve the same style, but Lennon and McCartney did not get it until later on.<sup>19</sup> Jürgen Vollmer, a friend of Kirchherr, Lennon, and McCartney, has made the claim that he in fact came up with the now-famous mop-top hairstyle. There are multiple sources that address this gray area of the story; however, most credit Kirchherr with first giving the haircut to Sutcliffe and Vollmer later on convincing Lennon and McCartney to adopt the style.<sup>20</sup> The new hairstyle became iconic and, in many ways, symbolizes their takeover of rock 'n' roll. The Beatles' style developed in Hamburg to become something much different than the musicians that ran the show in the 1950s.<sup>21</sup> Their hair showed a marked breakaway and emitted confidence that they were unique and talented enough to push the mainstream boundaries of fashion.

Another iconic change to their style was influenced by Sutcliffe's borrowing of Kirchherr's clothes. Sutcliffe began living with Kirchherr after they became engaged in November 1960. Kirchherr has stated that Sutcliffe was ahead of his time and that this translated in his fashion choices. Upon moving in with Kirchherr, he quickly started wearing her clothes. He showed up to a few shows in one of her jackets with no lapels, which at the time was outrageous because it was considered a feminine style. Eventually the look became mainstream fashion and was taken up by the other band members. Fashion designers of the 1960s championed new styles for the progressive generation and pushed past the stereotypes of what was acceptable men's clothing.<sup>22</sup> Photos and videos of the band sporting jackets with no collars have since become iconic.

19. Kirchherr, NPR interview.

20. Voorman, interview.

21. Joshua Sims, *Rock Fashion* (London: Omnibus, 1999), 22-23.

22. Kirchherr, NPR interview, and Richard Morais, *Pierre Cardin: The Man Who Became a Label* (London: Bantam Transworld LTD, 1991), 96-97.

Sutcliffe also pushed fashion boundaries by wearing Kirchherr's leather pants. He was so inspired by her artsy looks that he could not resist trying them himself. Just as with the jackets, the rest of the Beatles eventually wore black leather pants as well.<sup>23</sup>

Kirchherr took the first professional photographs of the band. These photos have become some of the most iconic images of the group and are the main reason for her ready association with the Beatles. She took a wide assortment of photos of the Beatles. Some of the most famous came from her first photo session with them. These were a series of pictures of them at the St. Pauli fairground when the band still had the distinctive old rock 'n' roll style with leather jackets and slicked back hair.<sup>24</sup> She took another iconic set of photos in the immediate aftermath of Sutcliffe's premature death in 1961. The photos are set in the attic of Kirchherr's house, an area that Sutcliffe used as a workspace. One photo shows Lennon and Harrison with somber faces, pondering the death of their dear friend.<sup>25</sup>

Her photographs of the band became iconic, but she also influenced them in smaller, more intimate ways. At times, the Beatles would visit Kirchherr at her mother's home, to bathe, eat and get away from their poor living conditions. For many of the months spent in Hamburg, the band stayed in a small back storeroom of a cinema turned club called Bambi Kino. Kirchherr explained, "the Beatles smelled awful...They had to wash where the Kino customers were having a wee."<sup>26</sup> The band was truly learning to live and work in the worst environments.

Kirchherr also played a part in their introduction to drug culture. In the biography *Lennon* by Ray Coleman, she explains that amphetamine was not seen as a serious drug in Germany at that time. Kirchherr helped supply the band with *Preludin* through a doctor friend of her mother's. Kirchherr felt that the drug made Lennon more accessible. "I was always close to John, but he never allowed anyone to get inside him," she claimed. "Only when he took the pills did he open up about himself."<sup>27</sup>

23. "Beatles History: Part One 1956-1964," *De Gruyter*.

24. Astrid Kirchherr, Matthew Clough and Colin Fallows, *Astrid Kirchherr: A Retrospective* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 44-47.

25. Fetterman, "Astrid Kirchherr."

26. Kane, *When They Were Boys*, 140-142.

27. Joe Goodden, *Riding So High: The Beatles and Drugs* (Pepper and Pearl, 2017).

She had many deep conversations with the band while they were on drugs and seemed to see some of the first moments of the bands' extensive use of and attraction to drugs.

### Kirchherr and Sutcliffe

Kirchherr was quickly attracted to Sutcliffe. They became engaged just three months after she met the Beatles. "When I saw him for the first time I knew that was my man," Kirchherr explained. "He was, and still is, the love of my life."<sup>28</sup> Sutcliffe was brought up in Liverpool. In primary school Sutcliffe did not impress teachers, one describing him as, "possessing some imagination but little evidence of future distinction."<sup>29</sup> As a young man he defied the expectations of his teachers; he made it through elementary schooling and at sixteen went on to study at the Liverpool College of Art.<sup>30</sup> His passion and smarts lay in the arts, as he was very committed to artistic pursuits even at a young age. He was introduced to Lennon by a mutual friend. Sutcliffe was originally asked by Lennon to join the group in January of 1960 out of the need for a bass player, and Sutcliffe used what little money he had from the sale of a painting to purchase a bass guitar. Sutcliffe stuck to the basics of music and was always unsure of his musical abilities. Allan Williams, the person who brought the Beatles to Hamburg, commented that Sutcliffe was, "more a friend of John's; he wasn't really a musician."<sup>31</sup> Sutcliffe did contribute significantly to the Beatles' development as he organized performances and was crafty in attaining needed stage equipment. Sutcliffe remained close friends with Lennon and McCartney and agreed; however, his heart was in the visual arts. Sutcliffe was further inspired to pursue painting by Kirchherr who recognized true talent in his works and inspired his confidence.<sup>32</sup> Shortly after their engagement, Sutcliffe enrolled in the Hamburg College of Art to focus on his studies as a painter. He also began living permanently with Kirchherr in her family home and even had a

28. Kirchherr, NPR interview.

29. Catherine Jones, "Your Chance to read Stuart Sutcliffe's school reports," *Liverpool Echo*, June 23, 2016.

30. Jones, "Your Chance."

31. Kane, *When They Were Boys*, 164.

32. "The Lost Beatle," *Rolling Stone*.

studio in their attic.<sup>33</sup> The Beatles continued to play in Hamburg as Sutcliffe became more devoted to Kirchherr and his schooling, and soon left the band.

Sutcliffe's dreams of marrying Kirchherr and becoming an artist were short-lived. Sutcliffe began experiencing severe headaches. Within a few weeks, in April 1962, he died of a brain hemorrhage.<sup>34</sup> Kirchherr brought the news to the rest of the band a few days after and relied heavily on their friendship to get through the difficult time.<sup>35</sup> Sutcliffe's death right as the band was coming to fame has immortalized him as the "lost" member of the Beatles. The tragic and untimely death of Sutcliffe at the age of 21 brought their engagement to a grim end. There is an innate captivation with their tragic story. The relationship has been dramatized and memorialized in works such as the 1994 movie *Backbeat*, a drama film that chronicles the early days of the Beatles in Hamburg, and the graphic novel *Baby's in Black*, a visual portrait of the Beatles in their early years.<sup>36</sup> Sutcliffe's death deeply affected Kirchherr and the rest of the band; however, the Beatles had little time to mourn. They were at the cusp of real fame, and the next chapter in their lives was about to start.

### Kirchherr After The Beatles

Kirchherr remained close friends with the Beatles after the death of Sutcliffe and even in the many years during and after their thrust into incredible fame. Kirchherr continued working as a photographer and faced her own mounting fame as the Beatles became international celebrities. She joined the band in 1964 on the set of their first film, *A Hard Day's Night*. Kirchherr was able to visit with the Beatles and take their photographs in both public and private moments. After this visit, she published a book on the Beatles and their profound effect on their hometown of Liverpool that included some of the photos from her work on the set.<sup>37</sup> The Beatles also returned to Hamburg

33. Miles, *Paul McCartney*, 65-66, 75.

34. Kirchherr, NPR interview, and Kane, *When They Were Boys*, 168.

35. Kirchherr, NPR interview.

36. Softley, *Backbeat*, and Bellstorf, *Baby's In Black*.

37. Astrid Kirchherr, *Yesterday: The Beatles Once Upon a Time* (New York: Vendome Press, 2007).

while on tour in 1966 and paid a visit to see Kirchherr. The band was welcomed as heroes, but they remained grounded and spent a quiet night reminiscing with Kirchherr and other friends in town.<sup>38</sup>

Kirchherr struggled to find confidence in her photography when she stopped photographing the Beatles and they moved out of Hamburg to continue their careers. She was constantly introduced as “the Beatles photographer” and faced the sexist environment of the 1960s. Those around her, from acquaintances to close friends, wished to use her friendship with the band for their own gain and gave little respect to her skills as a photographer. Kirchherr grew extremely disheartened and unsure of herself as an artist. There was an obsession over all things Beatles at the time. By the late 1960s, Kirchherr finally gave up photography after she became frustrated by never-ending requests for Beatles images.<sup>39</sup> Kirchherr even sold off all of her personal camera equipment in the 1980s after a period of disuse. She did continue to work as an assistant to a German photographer for another twenty years but did not take her own photographs.<sup>40</sup>

Her experience is compelling, especially when put into perspective by comparing her to other Beatles photographers. Harry Benson, another aspiring photographer in the 1960s, took a photo of the Beatles mid-pillow fight in a Paris hotel room. Benson credits this photo with launching his career and allowing him to become a successful and renowned photographer.<sup>41</sup> Another photographer, Robert Whitaker, was also best known for his photographs of the Beatles. However, Whitaker had a rich career after photographing the band. He later photographed prominent figures such as Salvador Dali and Mick Jagger, gaining an international reputation.<sup>42</sup> There seems to be a disconnect between the lack of credibility given to Kirchherr as a photographer and the recognition and notoriety

38. Goodden, *Riding So High*.

39. “Astrid Kirchherr talks about The Beatles,” *Liverpool Echo*, August 25, 2010.

40. Kirchherr, NPR interview.

41. “Harry Benson’s photos of the Beatles sparked career,” *The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation*, November 16, 2013, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/harry-benson-s-photos-of-the-beatles-sparked-career-1.2428648>.

42. “The Official Robert Whitaker Photography Website,” 2018, <https://www.robert-whitakerphotography.com/>.

of her Beatles photographs. Hers are considered some of the most iconic, yet she found no welcome into the world of photography.

Throughout Kirchherr's life she has demonstrated her deep respect and reverence for her friendship with the Beatles and had no desire to cash in on the relationship. She often received no credit for many of her Beatles photos and certainly gained little financial recompense. Kirchherr freely gave away her images, letters, and mementos to charities and fans, but at the same time felt cheated by unsolicited reproduction of her work.<sup>43</sup> She considered the men her friends, not the Beatles.<sup>44</sup> Kirchherr had a profound veneration for her personal relationship with the Beatles, because of this she gave precious few interviews for many years, and the ones she did give were purposefully vague.<sup>45</sup>

With time, the frustration of her constant association with the band seemed to wear away. Kirchherr eventually published three limited edition books of photographs that all did very well and have come to be cherished by many Beatles fans. Kirchherr has also been more willing to partake in interviews and open up about her personal life with the Beatles. Kirchherr began working again in the 2000s on photography exhibitions. She has since become involved in selling pictures and other original prints and posters from her own archives.<sup>46</sup> Professional critics and Beatles fans alike have reviewed her recent publications and the consensus seems to be similar across the board. Her work is highly admired and revered. Even from critics with more unbiased reviews she has received great praise.<sup>47</sup> The more contemporary admiration seems to come from an honest place, as younger generations are removed from the Beatlemania that

43. Astrid Kirchherr, "Beatles Photographer," interview by Graham Reid, *Young, Free and Wild*, 1994, audio, <https://www.Elsewhere.co.nz/absoluteelsewhere/505/astrid-kirchherr-beatles-photographer-interviewed-1994-young-free-and-wild/>.

44. Mark Rozzo, "The Beatles of the Beach," *The New York Times*, September 2, 2011.

45. Kirchherr, *Young, Free and Wild*, interview.

46. Kirchherr, Retrosellers.com, interview.

47. Customers of Amazon.com, review of *Baby's in Black*, by Arne Bellstorf and Astrid Kirchherr; Community reviews Goodreads.com, review of *Yesterday: The Beatles Once Upon A Time* by Astrid Kirchherr; Community reviews Goodreads.com, review of *Astrid Kirchherr with the Beatles* by Astrid Kirchherr and Maurizio Guidoni, and Laura Davis, "Rare Beatles Images Revealed in Astrid Kirchherr Exhibition," *Daily Post*, August 25, 2010.

plagued Kirchherr and strained her confidence. Her photographs continue to receive commendation however, it seems to be founded in truth and respect for her artistic eye and impressive composition of photographs.

### Conclusion

The early years of the Beatles as a band were a fascinating time in the group's history. The band slowly built a reputation as they performed in clubs in Hamburg from 1960 through early 1962. Early relationships with individuals who entered into their lives set precedents and expectations that were echoed in later encounters. The Beatles gained valuable lessons in Hamburg that directly contributed to their success as they moved on to bigger stages. Long nights were spent in the pits of German dance halls. The band had to adapt to the feelings and responses of their audiences. Many of the writings on the Beatles prior to Hamburg describes the struggling group as one with little direction and a sound that missed the mark for general audiences. But that is the case with most endeavors; one cannot realize success without failure. The Beatles had certainly come into their own by the end of 1962, fully transformed into a band far different than the one from 1960.

The Beatles' time in Hamburg was defined in part by the friendships they made. Kirchherr left an enduring imprint on the Beatles through art and style. Her personal accounts, interviews and writings on the events of 1960 through 1962 provide deep insight into the band during this time. Despite having a reserved demeanor and making efforts to remain out of the limelight, Kirchherr is a leading voice in the history of the Beatles during these years because of her close association with each band member.

Kirchherr and the Beatles have a symbiotic relationship. The Beatles were her muse while she was a source of inspiration as her confidence and distinctive style rubbed off on the band. The trust placed in Kirchherr was founded on the fact she had honest admiration and friendship with the band. The friendship became valued as the Beatles' fame pushed them into a position that made them wary of new people. At the same time, fame

directed and hindered Kirchherr's life in unexpected ways. Her short time with the band altered her entire life's trajectory. Kirchherr could not trust the input of others and deeply questioned her abilities as an artist. She became very untrusting of the world as her association with the Beatles jaded many interactions. Despite this, Kirchherr remained true to herself and opened up later in life going on to become a respected and renowned photographer, author, and artist.



[9]

## Revolution 9: Yoko Ono and Anti-Feminism

**Shelby Canonico**

On November 22, 1968, the highly anticipated eponymous Beatles album that has come to be known as the *White Album* was released. This album was different than its predecessors in that it contained one very special song entitled “Revolution 9”. The song was a complete turn from the Beatles’ past; it contains primarily ambient noise, chanting, and crying from what sounds like a baby. Many described the song as the Beatles’ worst.<sup>1</sup> Yet the change in content was not the only reason this song was unique. The song also marked the contribution of a new player in the lives of the Beatles, and her involvement was soon to make her infamous. That controversial woman goes by the name Yoko Ono, and despite the manner with which the general public received this particular piece (which was in the end created by John Lennon himself and not Ono), Ono

1. For examples see, David Fricke, "The White Album: Still Full of Surprises," *Rolling Stone*, October 2014, 60.

was a true artist in her own right, and the piece was in fact revolutionary for the time.<sup>2</sup> Many saw this song as evidence of the changing direction of the Beatles and as a precursor to their breakup. The public blamed Lennon's edgy, artistic, then girlfriend for the breakup because of her influence and alleged manipulation. In reality, Ono was an avant-garde icon and a powerful feminist who became reduced to a scapegoat by a public that failed to understand her and her work. The open hatred of Ono, which has long persisted, rests on misplaced blame for the breakup. To rebut this common claim, I argue in this chapter that the open hostility against Ono was actually the result of internal and external biases against both women and people of Asian descent that have been ingrained in society. Ono did not break up the Beatles; she was, rather, a confident and established artist who helped Lennon develop the avant-garde impulses he had long held.

### Historiography

Yoko Ono has become fundamentally connected to the Beatles. She is remembered as the woman that tore them apart and destroyed their music. Yet her association with them was a relatively small portion of her life and should be seen as only a small portion of her legacy. Her association with Lennon, and thus the Beatles, began on November 9, 1966, when Lennon attended one of her art shows.<sup>3</sup> Following this interaction, their relationship quickly grew, and the two married in 1969. After their nuptials, they put on a highly publicized protest entitled *Bed-In for Peace* that has become a significant way in which Ono continues to be associated with the Beatles.<sup>4</sup> During the course of their relationship and prior to the breakup, Ono was present

2. For more information on the positives of the song see: David Thompson, "The Great Debate," *Goldmine*, 2008, 41-45, and Jann Wenner, "Review: The Beatles' 'White Album,'" *Rolling Stone*, December 1968.
3. For more information regarding Ono, her life, and her association with the Beatles see: Nell Beram, and Carolyn Boriss-Krimsky, *Yoko Ono: Collector of Skies* (New York: Abrams, 2012); Alan Clayson, Barb Jungr, and Robb Johnson, *Woman: The Incredible Life of Yoko Ono*, (New Malden, UK: Chrome Dreams, 2004); Ursula Macfarlane, *The Real Yoko Ono*, performed by Yoko Ono (2001; Soul Purpose Productions).
4. John Lennon and Yoko Ono, *Bed Peace*, performed by John Lennon and Yoko Ono (1969; Bag Productions).

constantly and often involved with the Beatles creatively. This creative tie is exhibited through her contribution to the *White Album* by way of the song “Revolution 9”.<sup>5</sup> In 1970, her association with the Beatles became infamous when the famous band split. Many blamed Ono for the split.<sup>6</sup> Nearly ten years later, Lennon was shot outside of their New York apartment. However, Ono continues to be involved in discussions involving the Beatles and has even published some of her late husband’s work.

This chapter is also concerned with racial and gender prejudices, particularly those regarding women and those of Asian descent. During the sixties, women were simultaneously living in times of change and experiencing much of the same bias they had long endured.<sup>7</sup> The sixties were also a turbulent time for Americans and Asians alike as tensions remained high following World War II and into the Cold War period.<sup>8</sup> Finally, this chapter addresses the art movements from the sixties through the present day that are associated with Ono.<sup>9</sup> The chapter focuses particularly on how female and Asian artists were portrayed during this time.<sup>10</sup>

5. The Beatles, “Revolution 9” recorded May-June 1968, track five on *The White Album*, Apple, compact disc.
6. For examples of hate see: Linda Winer, “SOUND: The Fact, Fantasy of John and Yoko,” *Chicago Tribune*, July 2, 1972, sec. II, and “Ambitious Yoko Caused Trouble, Court Informed,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, February 28, 1971.
7. For more information on feminism, anti-feminism, and changing political alignments during this time period see: Andrea Dworkin, *Woman Hating* (New York: Dutton, 1974); Leslie Bow, *Betrayal and Other Acts of Subversion: Feminism, Sexual Politics, Asian American Women's Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011); Rebecca Klatz, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Paul Lyons, *New Left, New Right, and the Legacy of the Sixties* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996); Michelle Nickerson, *Mothers of Conservatism: Women and the Postwar Right*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), and Marjorie Spruill, *Divided We Stand: The Battle Over Women's Rights and Family Values That Polarized American Politics* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2017).
8. For more information on the relationship between America and Asia (particularly Japan) during this time see: Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), and David Serlin, *Replaceable You: Engineering the Body in Postwar America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
9. For information on the changes in art during this time see: Amelia Jones, *A Companion to Contemporary Art Since 1945* (London: John Wiley & Sons, 2009).
10. For information on the depiction of and contributions of women and Asian artists during this time see: Andrea Terpenakas, “Fluxus, Feminism, and the 1960's,” *Western Tributaries* 4 (2017), and Lisa Tickner, “The Body Politic: Female Sexuality & Women Artists since 1970,” *Art History* 1, no. 2 (December 2013): 236–51.

### Yoko Ono Before the Beatles

Yoko Ono was born in 1933 in Tokyo into a family that seemingly straddled the line between being both Japanese and American during a time of unparalleled animosity between the two nations. She was born to a wealthy aristocratic family comprised of a successful pianist turned banker as a father and a painter turned socialite as a mother. Due to their affluence, Ono was sent to the best schools where she was educated in music and later all subjects. This wealth did not mean that Ono's childhood was a happy one free from strife and unrest. Even prior to the war, Ono felt ill at ease due to her relationship with her mother, who viewed her as an inconvenience that in many ways restricted her life.<sup>11</sup> As a result, Ono was isolated at home and threw herself into her art at an early age.

Ono also became isolated in other ways, as she found herself seemingly without a nationality. At two and a half, Ono journeyed to America for the first time in order to visit her father who was working in San Francisco at the time. From then on, Ono seemed to straddle the two cultures as she bounced back and forth across the Pacific. During this time, Ono's American friends viewed her as too Japanese, and her Japanese friends thought of her as "an American spy."<sup>12</sup> While in America, she was constantly exposed to the ubiquitous media saturation of villainous Asian figures, which often confused and discouraged her. She began to ask herself "am I a baddie?" The isolation Ono felt seemed to push her toward art in a way that opposed her upbringing.<sup>13</sup> While her parents, who were also artists, (her mother a painter, and her father a pianist) succumbed to the pressures of conformity due to the bonds and loyalty they felt to their culture. Yoko seemingly rejected these bonds and created her own standards. This behavior could perhaps be explained by the fact that she did not feel particularly connected to any one nation.

When Ono was just twelve, she was exposed to violence on an enormous scale. In the year 1945 her home city was bombed,

11. Beram and Boriss-Krimsky, *Yoko Ono: Collector of Skies*.

12. Beram and Boriss-Krimsky.

13. Beram and Boriss-Krimsky.

and her rich, aristocratic family was forced to transition into beggars of sorts. They searched and begged for food carrying all their belongings with them. They were forced to trade valuable jewelry for bags of rice just so that they could feed themselves. However, throughout these traumatic times, Ono continued to appreciate the world around her and was drawn to the sky and its beauty.<sup>14</sup>

As soon as she could, Ono returned to school to continue her studies. Ono graduated in 1951, despite the turbulence of her childhood, and became the first woman to ever be admitted into the philosophy program at Gakushin University.<sup>15</sup> She quickly bored of the rigid program and moved to New York with her family in order to attend Sara Lawrence College, where she studied writing and music. There she once again found that her professors often failed to comprehend her work, and she was pushed out of writing and toward music. As a result of this rejection, Ono found herself searching for a place in which she would fit, where she would be able to share her art and music with the world.

Ono refused to conform and sought out a place that would allow her to express her individuality; she found it in 1956 in the avant-garde art scene. She became fast friends with composer John Cage. He and other artists in this new scene were fascinated by Ono's Japanese background, and it was here that she finally found a place in which she was not judged by her ethnicity.<sup>16</sup> Around this time, Ono met another musician and composer by the name of Toshi Ichiyanagi, who encouraged her musical dreams. Ono then released her first musical composition entitled "Secret Piece". In this work, Ono asked the audience to choose their own notes but to accompany their chosen notes with the sounds of nature. In doing so, Ono blurred both the line between nature and music as well as the line between artist and composer.<sup>17</sup> This audience interactive element became a signature element of Ono's work throughout her life. Ono

14. Laura Fiesel, "Yoko Ono Biography, Art, and Analysis of Works," The Art Story, Accessed April 11, 2018, <http://www.theartstory.org/artist-ono-yoko.htm>.

15. Fiesel, "Yoko Ono Biography, Art, and Analysis of Works."

16. Fiesel.

17. Lindsay Zoladz, "Yoko Ono Has Arrived; A MoMA exhibit, a misunderstood artist, and the myth that deserves to die," Vulture, May 2015, <http://www.vulture.com/2015/05/yoko-ono-one-woman-show.html>.

moved to Manhattan with Ichiyanagi where they both intended to pursue their artistic dreams. During her time in Manhattan, Ono became a central player in both the Fluxus Movement and avant-garde art. She was so central to these movements that she even came to be known as “the High Priestess of the Happening”<sup>18</sup>

Around the year 1962, Ono’s artistic interests began to shift once again from the avant-garde to more pieces resembling Pop art. Many included strong audience participation, and it was in this avenue that she truly came into her own. Ono returned to Japan during this period with her then husband, Ichiyanagi, and truly revolutionized the Japanese art scene. She introduced the concept of “happenings”, concerts with an extremely interactive element, to Japan.<sup>19</sup> One such event was the “AOS- To David Tudor” in which she ended her piece by bringing performers to the stage to stare at the audience.<sup>20</sup> This eventually enraged the onlookers and a fight broke out. Her art demanded a visceral reaction from her audience and, therefore, received a strong reaction from critics as well. As a result of the conservative nature of the Japanese art world, Ono was met with criticism that painted her as an imitator of sorts of her male counterparts.<sup>21</sup> She challenged the boundaries placed upon her as not only an artist, but also as a woman that did not fit into the “normal” eurocentrist schema.<sup>22</sup>

Before leaving Japan, Ono first performed one of her most simultaneously criticized and lauded works, “Cut Piece”, at the Yamaichi Hall in Kyoto in 1964.<sup>23</sup> In “Cut Piece”, Ono attempted to demonstrate the importance of giving by inviting audience members to come up on stage, cut pieces of her clothing off, and then take those pieces home with them. However, as Julia Bryan-Wilson states in her piece “Remembering Yoko Ono’s Cut Piece,” this idea of giving was not in itself an entirely pure

18. Fiesel, “Yoko Ono Biography, Art, and Analysis of Works.”

19. Klaus Biesenbach, Christophe Cherix, Julia Bryan-Wilson, and Jon Hendricks, *Yoko Ono: One Woman Show* (Museum of Modern Art, 2015).

20. Yoko Ono, “AOS- To David Tudor.”

21. Biesenbach, Cherix, Bryan-Wilson, and Hendricks. *Yoko Ono: One Woman Show*.

22. Gwendolyn Audrey Foster, “Self-Stylization and Performativity in the Work of Yoko Ono, Yayoi Kusama and Mariko Mori,” *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 27, no. 4 (July 2010): 267-275.

23. Yoko Ono, “Cut Piece” (1965).

one.<sup>24</sup> “Love it or hate it, Ono’s art is a two-way mirror, throwing your own reaction back at you,” Lindsay Zoladz argues, and this two-way mirror is particularly evident in “Cut Piece”.<sup>25</sup> Yoko sought to tell the audience something about themselves through her work, and the way they chose to treat her on stage told as much about her audience as it did about the art. The piece seemingly relies on strong feminist undertones in which Ono established the ever-present power dynamic between men and women, in which women live in a state of constantly “giving trust under a situation of vulnerability.”<sup>26</sup> Yet many viewed “Cut Piece” in an overtly sexual way, and even described Ono’s genuine and intimate performance as a “striptease”.<sup>27</sup> This depiction reveals a dangerous stereotypical dichotomy present that was pervasive throughout society during the 1960s and 1970s: the virgin and the whore.

This criticism was a source of great stress for Ono and brought her to a breaking point of sorts. She checked herself in to a mental institution in the hopes of regaining her confidence and receiving the care that she needed. During her time there, a man by the name of Tony Cox came and visited her, praising her work and telling her of his admiration. Once Ono left the hospital, she found herself still interested in the man who had seen her at her lowest point. As a result, upon exiting the institution, Ono began seeing Cox regularly, and the meetings soon turned romantic. Ono divorced Ichiyanagi, married Cox, and soon after the two were pregnant with a child who would soon bear the name Kyoko. This child brought unexpected challenges for the couple, particularly Ono. Ono was still trying to carve out her place in the art world, and a child required time that neither parent was entirely willing to give.<sup>28</sup>

During this period, Ono also created some particularly interesting works. One such piece went by the name “Fly Piece”.<sup>29</sup> The piece itself was of instructional nature much like Ono’s other pieces from the time; the instructions simply read

24. Julia Bryan-Wilson, “Remembering Yoko Ono’s ‘Cut Piece,’” *Oxford Art Journal* 26, no. 1 (2003): 101–23.

25. Zoladz, “Yoko Ono Has Arrived; A MoMA exhibit.”

26. Bryan-Wilson, “Remembering Yoko Ono’s ‘Cut Piece.’”

27. Sheldon Williams, “Miniature Philosopher - The Trials of Yoko Ono,” *The Contemporary Review; London* (May 1968): 263–69.

28. Beram and Boriss-Krimsky, *Yoko Ono: Collector of Skies*.

“fly”. In this work, Ono asked the audience to join her on stage and jump off a ladder. Ono believed that this jump would simulate the freedom of flight and would thereby liberate her audience, allowing them to free themselves from their emotional baggage. These simplistic pieces that required audience interaction were what Ono was famous for. She even published a book by the name of *Grapefruit*, which contained all of these instructions in the year 1964.<sup>30</sup> This book and the instructions it contained created a new relationship between the audience and the performer, which has been echoed by many artists since in the form of conceptual art.<sup>31</sup>

### Yoko Ono with John Lennon

In the year 1966, Yoko Ono and John Lennon’s lives changed on the day that Lennon attended Ono’s show *Unfinished Paintings and Objects*, climbed a ladder, looked through a telescope, and saw one word... “yes”.<sup>32</sup> It was this moment that brought Lennon and Ono together: not Lennon’s music, but Ono’s art. In fact, Ono was entirely unaware of who John Lennon was prior to their meeting. This fact is reinforced by later interviews with Lennon and Ono regarding their first meeting. Lennon stated that, “she [Yoko] didn’t even know about us the only name she knew was Ringo because it meant apple in Japanese.”<sup>33</sup> The public, however, rejected the idea that this woman could not have heard of the most famous band in the world. After all, how could this “menacing dragon lady” create art that could captivate the greatest musician in the world?<sup>34</sup> Ono said, “I just met him as another artist,” and this was the foundation of their relationship, a partnership that was distorted by the media.<sup>35</sup>

29. Yoko Ono, “Fly Piece,” in *Grapefruit: A Book of Instructions and Drawings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970).

30. Yoko Ono, *Grapefruit: A Book of Instructions and Drawings* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970).

31. Beram and Boriss-Krinsky. *Yoko Ono: Collector of Skies*. For more information on conceptual art see: Justin Wolf, “Conceptual Art Movement Overview and Analysis,” The Art Story, accessed April 16, 2018, <http://www.theartstory.org/movement-conceptual-art.htm>.

32. Yoko Ono, “Unfinished Paintings and Objects,” Exhibition at the Indica Gallery, London, UK, November, 1966.

33. leial7600, “John Lennon-on Yoko Breaking Up the Beatles,” YouTube video, 6:00, posted January 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IALrFZTSlyM>.

34. Terpenkas, “Fluxus, Feminism, and the 1960’s.”

America, and other parts of the world, were not prepared to accept a woman that demanded a partner instead of a master.

Soon after their meeting, Lennon and Ono began collaborating. The first of such collaborations came in the form of Ono's show entitled *Half-a-Wind: Yoko Plus Me* in which John was a patron of the show and also offered some artistic advice. The "Me" in the aforementioned title referenced Lennon himself. However, his name was kept out of the press so that the public would not accuse Ono of using Lennon for his fame and so that her work would be center stage and not overshadowed by his small contributions.<sup>36</sup> Despite these attempts at shielding herself from public ridicule regarding her relationship with Lennon, she would eventually fail. After this show, their relationship grew deeper, and eventually the two separated from their respective spouses and moved in together. The public responded by labeling Ono as a homewrecker even though Ono herself had also been married at the time of their affair, and, therefore they were equally to blame.

Another famous work that the two produced was the album entitled *Two Virgins*. In this album, John played instruments while Yoko created sounds, and they asked the audience to finish their unfinished work.<sup>37</sup> This was not what made the piece famous. Instead, it was the album art which shot this piece into the spotlight in a far from positive way. The album featured the couple standing looking at the camera entirely nude. This was not what was expected from the previously cookie cutter Beatle, and the world placed the blame on Yoko, claiming that she had corrupted Lennon, when in fact the cover had been Lennon's idea.<sup>38</sup> The negative critical response to *Two Virgins* once again demonstrated the extreme societal biases that permeated the societal subconscious. The obscure other, woman, must be the one responsible for breaking societal norms.

Racial prejudices were amplified tenfold once Ono met Lennon. People seemed to take issue with the fact that one of the most popular Caucasian men in the world chose to be

35. leial7600, *John Lennon-on Yoko Breaking Up the Beatles*.

36. Beram and Boriss-Krimsky, *Yoko Ono: Collector of Skies*.

37. John Lennon and Yoko Ono, recorded 1968, Unfinished Music No. 1: *Two Virgins*, compact disc.

38. Beram, and Boriss-Krimsky, *Yoko Ono: Collector of Skies*.

with a woman of Asian descent. When an interviewer inquired about the hatred that resulted from Lennon and Ono being an interracial couple, Ono responded saying, “it was a big lesson for the world that we were together, and it was a lesson for us too. We did not realize that there was so much racism in the world still.”<sup>39</sup> This statement not only illuminates the amount of race-related hate that Lennon and Ono were dealing with, but also demonstrates the level of positivity and optimism with which Ono handled these situations, despite the way the media twisted her image.

In 1969, Lennon and Ono married and immediately crawled into bed for one of their most famous joint pieces. They called the work “Bed-In for Peace” and for the week following their wedding, the couple remained in bed and invited reporters into their room to talk with them.<sup>40</sup> They did so to promote peace, an issue they were both passionate about, particularly Ono given her intimate experiences with war during World War II. During the week-long period, the couple was confronted by reporters with accusations that they were naïve to believe that their small act of protest could make any sort of difference in the fight for world peace. To these accusations Ono would simply replied, “there is no space and time for [...] negative thoughts... We are going to make it that’s all. We have to make it.”<sup>41</sup> These were Yoko’s central thoughts of her entire life: hope and positivity.

The public hatred only increased with the announcement of the Beatles’ breakup. While many may have attempted (and still attempt) to twist the breakup into a maniacal plot orchestrated by a wicked woman, the breakup was simply four men that had grown out of the band of their youth. The world found this difficult to accept due to the profitability and the popularity that the Beatles still enjoyed, despite the band members’ explanations. For example, Starr stated when asked about the breakup, “it was a bit of a drag that we broke up. Even though we all wanted it,” and later, “we’d all grown up a little more.”<sup>42</sup>

39. Eileen Prose, “Yoko Ono on John Lennon’s Assassination, Their Son Sean and Influencing the Beatles Breakup,” YouTube video, 12:52, posted June 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Suj8MCysBKQ>.

40. Lennon and Ono, *Bed Peace*.

41. Lennon and Ono, *Bed Peace*.

In a different interview, Harrison was directly asked about his feelings toward Ono and about her role in their breakup, to which he replied that he, Lennon, and Ono were all good friends and described the breakup by saying that, “the group had problems long before Yoko came along.”<sup>43</sup> Lastly, McCartney described the breakup of the Beatles by saying, “we came full circle.”<sup>44</sup> If every single member of the band had clearly vocalized their belief that the breakup was simply a natural evolution in their lives as individual artists, then why did Ono (and why does she still continue to) face such overwhelming negative criticism from the public?

While the Beatles themselves understood the complex reasons for their breakup, the media sought a scapegoat and found it in Ono who the media depicted as a “wedge” who purposefully separated the Beatles for her own gain, despite the protests of band members.<sup>45</sup> Newspapers all over the country sported headlines that decried Ono for her role in the breakup of the precious band. For example, one article entitled “Ambitious Yoko Caused Trouble, Court Informed” told a story in which Ono had created so much strife within the band that they had taken the issue to court.<sup>46</sup> Other articles claimed that Ono had ruined the creative dynamic of McCartney and Lennon through her mere presence. For example, in the article “Obituary or Rebirth?,” Jared Johnson wrote that, “the official Beatles biographer blames Yoko,” and he claimed that, “after Lennon met her the other Beatles didn’t matter anymore.”<sup>47</sup> Finally, the article describes Ono and Lennon’s music as “screaming garbage,” demeaning Ono and painting her as a woman that broke up the best band in the world only to turn its star musician into an artless loon.<sup>48</sup> Finally, countless articles pointed to the separation between Lennon and McCartney as the root cause of the breakup. However, as Ono states in a

42. Jonathan Blanco, “Interviews of Beatles, Why the Beatles Broke Up,” YouTube video, 4:50, posted May 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OSEoFby-hAy4>.

43. Blanco, “Interviews of Beatles.”

44. Blanco.

45. leial7600, “John Lennon-on Yoko...”

46. “Ambitious Yoko Caused Trouble, Court Informed.”

47. Jared Johnson, “Obituary or Rebirth?,” *The Atlanta Constitution*, April 18, 1970.

48. Johnson, “Obituary or Rebirth?”

2009 interview with *Rolling Stone*, “I don’t think you could have broken up four very strong people like them”, which means in the end it was Lennon’s choice, and, therefore, Lennon’s responsibility.<sup>49</sup>

Following the breakup, despite her own views, Ono was forced to endure extreme anti-feminist slander. She was labeled in confusing, contradictory ways. The media simultaneously claimed that Ono was controlling while calling her a follower, due to her involved role in Lennon’s life (particularly her attendance of band meetings). However, Lennon was in fact the instigator of Ono’s involvement in these meetings. Therefore, if Ono were to be a good, obedient woman, she would attend these meetings as per his wishes, but if she did attend these meetings, she was seen as manipulative and controlling. They decried both her independence and her codependence. This is a perfect example of the cage placed around women and supports the argument that Ono hate is, in fact, a symptom of female oppression.<sup>50</sup> These are the double binds that women all over the world have faced for centuries, and Ono was no exception.

After the breakup, Lennon and Ono remained together and produced several parallel and joint works. The first of which were two albums which mirrored one another, both metaphorically and physically. Lennon and Ono released both of these albums on December 11, 1970, Lennon’s entitled *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band* and Ono’s entitled *Yoko Ono/Plastic Ono Band*. The two albums also featured parallel covers.<sup>51</sup> John’s album received great amounts of praise while Ono’s was ridiculed. Later in 1971, Lennon released his smash hit “Imagine,” which was immediately accepted and appreciated.<sup>52</sup> However, what many did not realize is that it was Ono that had inspired this piece with one of her early pieces in which she instructed her audience to imagine different situations.<sup>53</sup> It was

49. Mikal Gilmore, “Why the Beatles Broke Up,” *Rolling Stone*, September 3, 2009.

50. Marilyn Frye, “Oppression,” in *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory* (Toronto: The Crossing Press, 1983).

51. John Lennon, recorded 26 September–23 October 1970, Apple, *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*, 1970, compact disc, and Yoko Ono, recorded 1970, Apple, *Yoko Ono/Plastic Ono Band*, 1970, compact disc.

52. John Lennon, “Imagine,” recorded 11–12 February–23 June–5 July 1971, Apple, *Imagine*, 1971, compact disc.

53. Yoko Ono, “Cloud Piece,” in *Grapefruit*

not until the year 2017 that Ono finally received the co-writing credit that she deserved.

Ono was not only a pioneer in the world of art but also a leader in the feminist movement. Ono emphasized the need for women to pursue equality to the fullest extent and the necessity of demanding freedom not only from men, but also from their internalized oppression. In her 1972 *New York Times* Article “The Feminization of Society” Ono states that, “the ultimate goal of female liberation is not just an escape from male oppression. How about liberating ourselves from our various mind trips such as ignorance, greed, masochism, fear of God and social conventions?”<sup>54</sup> Women, she argued, must acknowledge and fight against not only overt discrimination, but also stereotypes in media and restrictive societal expectations. Furthermore, Ono acknowledged the contributory role that women occasionally play in their own oppression. Women, due to exposure to negative depictions throughout their lives, often believe and even perpetuate damaging stereotypes placed upon them, and this self-hatred damaged the feminist movement as a whole.

### After the Beatles

On December 8, 1980, Ono was pushed into her post-Beatles life when her husband, Lennon, was shot and killed only feet away from her. After this tragedy, Ono was forced to reevaluate her life and move on for both her sake and the sake of her son. One step toward this closure is seen in her continued artistic innovations that began in the year 1981 when Ono released, *Season of Glass*.<sup>55</sup> This album featured yet another controversial album cover, as the bloody glasses of John Lennon dominate the composition. However, while many viewed this as distasteful and as a way to commercialize his death, this intimacy is a hallmark of Ono’s previous work. Ono believed in honesty and vulnerability, and the choice to feature his glasses on the cover was the paradigm of these previous values.

54. Yoko Ono, “The Feminization of Society,” *New York Times*, February 23, 1972.

55. Yoko Ono, recorded 1981, Rykodisc, *Season of Glass*, New York City, 1981, compact disc.

After all the violence and hate Ono experienced throughout her life, she continued to create art and spread messages of peace. Following the release of *Season of Glass*, Ono also released *It's Alright (I See Rainbows)* in 1982 and received a Grammy for her and Lennon's 1980 album *Double Fantasy*.<sup>56</sup> Next, Ono released *Milk and Honey* in 1984, which she had worked on with Lennon.<sup>57</sup> In the 1990s, Ono wrote and released an opera by the name *New York Rock* and a new album *Rising* in which their son participated.<sup>58</sup> Ono released her film *Gimme Some Truth: The Making of John Lennon's Imagine Album* in 2000 and received yet another Grammy in the year 2001.<sup>59</sup> Next, Ono released another album in 2001 that bore the name *Blueprint for a Sunrise*.<sup>60</sup> In the following years, Ono seemingly shifted her sights from art and music to fighting for the causes in which she had always believed. In 2002, Ono founded an organization committed to fighting for peace and named the organization after her late husband, calling it the "LennonOno Grant for Peace." Ono then founded "Artists Against Fracking" in 2012, continuing her lifelong career as an advocate for important issues. In recent years, Ono has created even more works and been lauded for her success. She released *Take Me to the Land of Hell* in 2013.<sup>61</sup> In the year 2016, Ono once again advocated for peace in Mexico City with her exhibit *Land of Hope*.<sup>62</sup> In the exhibit, Ono asked the audience to place stickers asking for peace all over a map in a show of solidarity against violence in the drug-war ridden country of Mexico.

It is incredibly important to note that the hate that surrounded Ono in her youth is ongoing. Many still use the

- 56. Yoko Ono, Polygram, *It's Alright (I See Rainbows)*, New York City, 1982, compact disc and John Lennon and Yoko Ono, recorded 7 August–22 September 1980, Geffen, *Double Fantasy*, New York City, 1980, compact disc.
- 57. John Lennon and Yoko Ono, recorded August–December 1980, 1983, Polydor, Geffen, *Milk and Honey*, 1984, compact disc.
- 58. Yoko Ono, Capitol, *New York Rock*, 1984, compact disc, and Yoko Ono and Ima, Capitol, *Rising*, 1996, compact disc.
- 59. *Gimme Some Truth: The Making of John Lennon's Imagine Album*, directed by Jonas Mekas and Andrew Solt, performed by John Lennon and Yoko Ono, (2000; Capitol records, 2000), DVD.
- 60. Yoko Ono, Capitol, *Blueprint for a Sunrise*, 2001, compact disc.
- 61. Yoko Ono Plastic Ono Band, *Take Me to the Land of Hell*, recorded 2012-2013. Chimera Music, 2013, compact disc.
- 62. Yoko Ono, "Land of Hope," Exhibition at the Museum of Memory and Tolerance, Mexico City, February 2, 2016.

phrase “don’t be a Yoko” to mean that women should not be controlling and should instead allow men to make the decisions.<sup>63</sup> There are still videos released to YouTube criticizing Ono spewing sexist, racist slurs.<sup>64</sup> There is still merchandise sold that seeks to profit from the hate Yoko Ono experiences.<sup>65</sup> There are still songs written about Ono that depict her as a passive follower of Lennon saying, “you can be my Yoko Ono; you can follow me wherever I go.”<sup>66</sup> There are still hashtags on twitter that blame Ono for the breakup of the Beatles and so many other things in life. While it may at first appear trivial, the excessive presence of something as simple as a hashtag that reads #blameYoko reveals a deeper meaning to the hate that goes beyond her association with the Beatles or their breakup. It demonstrates the psychological necessity for humans to find and utilize a scapegoat, and this scapegoat is easily chosen due to pre-existing societal biases.

### Conclusion

The hate that was directed towards Yoko Ono was misdirected, and this misdirection was a direct result of societal biases toward radical thinkers, women, and people of Asian descent. This is demonstrated through the utilization of damaging stereotypes and racial slurs by the media directed toward the artist. The media did not simply decry her as controlling, but instead referred to her as a “menacing dragon lady,” thereby invoking negative societal biases based on both her race and gender.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, the simple fact that the media and the public bypassed blaming Lennon for neglecting his bandmates and immediately jumped to blame this new, “carnal, evil, and other” “baddie” woman in his life is evidence of biases in society’s scapegoat selection process.<sup>68</sup> These beliefs that paint women and Asians alike in such a negative and manipulative light come

63. Terpenkas, "Fluxus, Feminism, and the 1960's."

64. SeeveSc, "Bill Burr - Yoko Ono and John Lennon," YouTube video, 3:16, posted November 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VD7-WHB8CBY>.

65. "Still Pissed at Yoko," Still Pissed at Yoko, accessed March 14, 2018, <http://stillpissedatyoko.com/>.

66. Barenaked Ladies, "Be my Yoko Ono" on *Gordon*, 1992, compact disc.

67. Terpenkas, "Fluxus, Feminism, and the 1960's."

68. Dworkin, *Woman Hating*, 26; Beram, and Boriss-Krimsky, *Yoko Ono: Collector of Skies*.

not only from negative sources in our lives, but also seemingly positive ones, such as children's books and movies. Due to this saturation, these ideas are accepted as fact by many and lead to unwarranted hate. Ono stated these ideas best herself in a 2010 interview with CNN. In the interview, Ono stated that she "was used as a scapegoat, a very easy scapegoat. You know, a Japanese woman and whatever," and then proceeds to say, "also just remember that the United States and Britain were fighting with Japan in World War II. It was just after that in a way so I[Ono] can understand how they felt."<sup>69</sup> This is what happened to Ono: the Beatles were not a victim of Ono, she was a victim of societal prejudices.

69. Yoko Ono, interview by Anderson Cooper, *CNN*, October 19, 2010.

[PART IV]

## **Globalization**



[10]

## "Go Home Beatles! Have a Haircut!": Postwar Japan's Backlash against the Fab Four

**Delanie Tarvin**

"It was upsetting," producer George Martin would later respond when asked about the Beatles' experience in Japan. Martin was present for the backlash the Beatles experienced in multiple countries during their 1966 tour, from the "More Popular than Jesus" controversy, to accidentally snubbing the First Family in the Philippines. Martin's conclusion, however, refers specifically to the death threats the band received for their scheduled concerts at the Nippon Budokan Hall in Tokyo. Set to perform five shows from June 30 to July 2, 1966, Martin recalls that the members received threats well before they even arrived in the country, noting, for example, that, "when George [Harrison] was in Germany he got a letter saying, 'You won't live beyond the next month.'"<sup>1</sup> These threats came from radical right-wing

1. The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002), 216.

nationalists in Japan. Upon their arrival, the members encountered protests from these same extremists. Along with this violent-natured criticism, the members received negative criticism from mainstream members of Japanese society; specifically, the media, the government, and older Japanese citizens bemoaned the location of their concerts as well as the behavior of their young fans.

To understand these criticisms, one must understand the nature of Japan's political, social, and cultural dynamics. This chapter looks at these negative responses, contextualizing the criticism within the sociocultural and political dynamics of postwar Japan in the years that led to the Beatles' arrival in 1966. First, it looks at Japan's immediate postwar undercurrents, considering the effects of the Allied Occupation and baby-boom on Japanese perceptions of Western culture and identifying the origins of generational shifts and right-wing backlash to democratization. Next, it looks at Japanese politics during the post-Occupation years from 1952 to the end of the 1950s, considering the impact of the implementation of the government's predominant party system, known as the 1955 System, which marked the rise of the conservative Liberal Democratic Party-led government. Moreover, it analyzes the right-wing reforms like the "Reverse Course" politics of the Yoshida, Hatoyama, and Kishi administrations.<sup>2</sup> Finally, this chapter examines the changes of the 1960s, considering the effects of urbanization, the rise of the middle-class, and the increasingly leftist youth of this time. Within this context, it reevaluates the criticism the Beatles received during their visit in 1966, places it within the generational gaps and ideological divides, and connects the backlash to the events throughout Japan's postwar years. In doing so, it shows that the negative response to the behavior of the Beatles' fans can be attributed to the generational gaps between the Occupation-raised baby-boomer generation and their more traditional elders who came to associate youths with leftist radicalization; moreover, the backlash to their use of the Budokan can be attributed to the

2. Shigeko Fukai, "Reverse Course," in *Modern Japan: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Nationalism*, ed. James L. Huffman (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 213.

post-Occupation right-wing resurgence and the 1964 Olympics, as traditional and right-wing nationalists associated the building of the Budokan with national pride.

### Historiography

This chapter explores the history of the Beatles in Asia, as well as the notion of the Beatles as a force of globalization. It draws on research by historians and anthropologists that have assessed the experience of the Beatles in Asia, as well as the reactions they provoked. Scholars have argued that the Beatles were a force of globalization, but also an outlet that made apparent the increasingly rebellious nature of a new generation.<sup>3</sup>

Additionally, this chapter explores historical accounts of the changing culture and politics in postwar Japan. Scholars have argued that the defeat Japan experienced in the Second World War and the restructuring of society from the Allied Occupation resulted in a search for new national identity. According to these scholars, this resulted in the establishment of multiple nationalisms within Japan that were disparate and based on ideological and value differences.<sup>4</sup> This chapter contributes to this field by contextualizing the specific experience of the Beatles in 1966 within these dynamics, connecting components of Japan's postwar undercurrents to explain the negative responses they received.

3. Some historians see the Beatles as a full force of globalization, while others tend to focus on the internal shifts within Japanese society. See, for example: Carolyn Stevens, *The Beatles in Japan* (London: Routledge, 2017); Sam Lebovic, "Here, There and Everywhere": The Beatles, America, and Cultural Globalization, 1964–1968," *Journal of American Studies* 51, no. 1 (February 2017): 48–65, and Hiromu Nagahara, *Tokyo Boogie-Woogie* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017) for three different interpretations of the Beatles' influence as a force of Westernization in Japan.
4. See, for example, the following works on postwar Japanese nationalism: Fumiko Sasaki, *Nationalism, Political Realism and Democracy in Japan: The Thought of Masao Maruyama* (Florence: Taylor and Francis Group, 2012), or Naoko Shimazu, *Nationalisms in Japan* (New York: Routledge, 2006). See examples such as the following for more general accounts of postwar Japanese history: Carmi Schooler, "History, Social Structure, and Individualism: A Cross-Cultural Perspective on Japan," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 39, no. 1 (1998): 1–32, or Scott Morton and J. Kenneth Olenik, *Japan: Its History and Culture* (New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing, 2004).

### 1945-1952: The Allied Occupation and its Lasting Effects

Immediately after the war, Japan experienced significant social and political restructuring during the Allied Occupation. This resulted in lasting effects like the resurgence of right-wing nationalism and generational shifts that later influenced the interpretation of the Beatles in 1966. Exacerbated by the simultaneous postwar baby-boom, a large, new generation grew up exposed to Western ideals due to the Occupation's reforms and diffusion of Western culture. As such, the Occupation resulted in generational gaps and the resurgence of right-wing nationalism.

Over the six-year period of the Allied Occupation, the Allies, led by the United States, attempted to restructure Japan politically and socially. They oversaw the drafting of a new constitution and implemented educational reforms to remove ultra-nationalist and militaristic rhetoric from the curriculum. This restructuring, along with the lingering feeling of defeat from the war, influenced the significant absence of national identity that plagued postwar Japan. Mikiso Hane expands on this idea, writing that, in seeking to get rid of fascism and extremist views with these reforms, the Allies also replaced Japan's former "patriotism, militarism, and loyalty," with American ideas of "freedom, democracy, and peace."<sup>5</sup> This resulted in a lasting "inferiority complex that lurked beneath the surface," of Japan that persisted until the 1960s, when events like the economic boom and the 1964 Olympics helped revive Japan's sense of unique identity.<sup>6</sup> This underlying search for identity would manifest itself, in part, through the resurgence of radical and mainstream right-wing nationalism that popped up after the Occupation and continued through the 1960s.

In addition to the search for identity that would lead to a new right-wing nationalism, the Occupation also had a significant impact on cultural dynamics, increasing the distribution of Western music to a new generation of Japanese youths. The Allied Occupation largely promoted the diffusion of Western

5. Mikiso Hane, "Showa Era (1926-89)," in *Modern Japan: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Nationalism*, ed. James L. Huffman (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 238.

6. Hane, "Showa Era," 238.

music in Japan. Due to radio broadcasts from the U.S. military bases that reached nearby areas, Japanese citizens had greater access to stations that played mostly U.S. and U.K. pop music. Even more, live performances of American pop songs by Japanese musicians in clubs inside U.S. military bases became increasingly popular, adding another avenue through which Japanese fans could access Western music.<sup>7</sup> The significance in the increased access to Western music is that it "not only spread the popularity of American musicians among Japanese listeners but also reshaped the Japanese popular music scene in both overt and subtle ways," as young Japanese musicians began covering Western pop songs and incorporating aspects of Western music into their own.<sup>8</sup>

This increased access to music and other aspects of Western culture resulted in a significant generational shift that later influenced the response by older generations to the Beatles and the behavior of their young fans in 1966. The younger and older generations responded differently to the influx of Western music that the Occupation facilitated. Describing this generational gap, Ian Condry notes that while the older generation preferred more traditionally Japanese music that evoked memories of the past and what it meant to be Japanese, the "younger generation found vehicles for imagining a new social order in rock, folk, New Music," and other forms of pop music they were increasingly exposed to.<sup>9</sup> The older generations, however, criticized the music of the youth. Hiromu Nagahara explains that this music was "immediately associated with contemporary trends such as the perceived Americanization," and many older citizens referred to the music as nonsensical and grotesque.<sup>10</sup> This generational shift in musical preference and interpretation, including the older generation's distaste for Western pop, lasted well into the 1960s.

The criticism of the behavior of the Beatles' fans fits well within this context. As Carolyn Stevens writes in her account

7. Nagahara, *Tokyo Boogie-Woogie*, 139.

8. Nagahara, 199.

9. Ian Condry, "Popular Music in Japan," in *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*, eds. Victoria Lyon Bestor, Theodore C. Bestor, and Akiko Yamagata (New York: Routledge, 2011), 241.

10. Nagahara, *Tokyo Boogie-Woogie*, 4.

of the experience, “elders of these Beatles fans were not as familiar with this international music phenomenon,” and the older generation in general felt “suspicious of their music and their fans.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, newspapers following the Beatles’ arrival illustrate this distrust, as they wrote about schools threatening to expel students for attending the Beatles’ concerts and of police arresting young fans for their behavior.<sup>12</sup> Interviews with the band also show this suspicious view of the fan behavior. The press questioned them about the “wild and frantic” behavior of their fans, to which the four members responded with little concern, noting the behavior was not much different from fans elsewhere.<sup>13</sup> Significantly, this shows not only the generational divide, but the similarities in youth culture internationally.

### 1952-1960: Right-Wing Resurgence and Urbanization

In the post-Occupation years, the resurgence in right-wing nationalism sparked by the Occupation manifested itself through the rise to power of the conservative LDP, the establishment of “Reverse Course” politics, and the formation of postwar radical organizations, such as the one that would later threaten the Beatles in 1966. These manifestations of right-wing resurgence further restructured Japanese politics and society.

In 1955, just over a decade before the Beatles’ arrival, the political structure of the Japanese government underwent a significant change, becoming a “predominant party” system in which the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) held most of the power. The result was a system dominated by the newly formed LDP for decades. There are two significant issues with this system. For one, as Chushichi Tsuzuki concludes, “the ‘55 System’ gave the LDP a monopoly of the government for thirty-eight years.”<sup>14</sup> There was no alternation of power. Additionally, it gave off the illusion of a unified system. Without alternating power, “there were ‘pseudo-turnovers’ of ruling power among

11. Stevens, *Beatles in Japan*, 15.

12. “Oita Students Get ‘Beatle’ Warning,” *Japan Times*, June 30, 1966, 3.

13. “Beatles Press Conference: Tokyo, Japan, 6/30/1966,” Beatles Interviews Database, accessed March 11, 2018, <http://www.beatlesinterviews.org/db1966.0630.beatles.html>.

14. Chushichi Tsuzuki, *The Pursuit of Power in Modern Japan 1825-1995* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 382.

the coalitions of factions within the LDP that controlled the cabinet.”<sup>15</sup> The issue with this is that, “battles for power previously fought among the multiple conservative parties were now carried on within the ruling LDP... [resulting in] intense competition and rivalry among factions within the LDP.”<sup>16</sup> Despite the predominant party’s façade of homogeneity, the LDP was anything but united. A simple glance at newspaper headlines from these years show multiple issues divided the LDP.<sup>17</sup> Unable to form unified positions, the government increasingly frustrated its citizens, polarizing far-left and far-right factions. Even party members criticized the system and called for the LDP to split. In 1966, for example, newspapers quoted senior LDP member Kento Matsumura as saying, “there is no point in keeping men with completely different political views under the roof of a single party.”<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the new structure of government, the post-Occupation right-wing resurgence manifested itself through “Reverse Course” politics and the formation of radical organizations. Throughout the post-Occupation years, there was a “reverse course” on the education system. As Shigeko Fukai explains, this was “essentially a nationalist reaction to foreign-imposed values and institutions,” which sought to restore the traditional values and institutions of pre-Occupation, or even prewar, Japan.<sup>19</sup> These reforms set out to reorganize Japan by undoing the restructuring of the Occupation. Left-wing citizens heavily protested these reforms, as they “branded these moves reactionary attempts to undo democratization and return Japan to prewar militarism and authoritarianism.”<sup>20</sup> Finally, these years saw the founding of new radical right-wing organizations, including the often-violent Greater Japan Patriots Party, the organization responsible for the death threats and protests against the Beatles. This

15. Nagahara, *Tokyo Boogie-Woogie*, 115.

16. Nagahara, 115.

17. See, for example: “LDP Trying to Unify Viewpoint on Pecking,” *Japan Times*, June 5, 1966; “Gov’t, LDP Split Over Producer Rice Price,” *Japan Times*, July 5, 1966, 1; or, Junichiro Suzuki, “Impatience with China Policy: Matsumura Repeats Same Theme, Ignores Context of Power Politics,” *Japan Times*, June 9, 1966, 12.

18. “Matsumura Favors Formal LDP Split,” *Japan Times*, June 7, 1966, 1.

19. Fukai, “Reverse Course,” 213.

20. Fukai, 213.

organization was founded by a radical right-wing nationalist Akao Bin in 1952.<sup>21</sup> The violent and tense relations between the polarized right and left showed the increasingly divided political climate within postwar Japan between the conservative government and left-wing youth.<sup>22</sup> The resurgence of right-wing nationalism and reform during these years set the stage for the radical protests of the 1960s, including those against the Beatles in 1966. Moreover, it helps account for the mainstream criticism against the Fab Four, as there was a mainstream right-wing in power.

Social structure also changed during these years, manifesting itself through rapid urbanization. This resulted in the mass movement of primarily young people to cities. As Jeff Kingston writes, with the “rapid economic growth during the 1950s and 1960s, young people were pulled into the industrial belts around the major cities along the Tokyo-Nagoya-Osaka metropolitan axis.”<sup>23</sup> Tokyo, then the highest and most densely populated area in Japan, was full of young people more likely to be familiar with the Beatles, enjoy their music, and behave differently than their older counterparts. Such a drastic influx of young people likely influenced the massive number of fans in Tokyo in 1966 and fueled the subsequent backlash.

### 1960-1966: Ideological Polarization and the Olympics

Politically, the 1960s witnessed a significant increase in leftist demonstrations within Japan. Perhaps most significant was the Security Treaty Crisis of 1960. Controversy over the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty dated back to its original inception in 1951, but it grew significantly more intense in 1960. The rightist nationalism that had been building since the Occupation became increasingly violent in response to these leftist demonstrations. Similar to the immediate post-Occupation years, as Oleg Benesch notes, Japan in the 1960s “also saw the growth of a new nationalism and even right-wing terrorism

21. J. Wayne Sabey, “Akao Bin (1898-1990),” in *Modern Japan: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Nationalism*, ed. James L. Huffman (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 8.

22. Nagahara, *Tokyo Boogie-Woogie*, 165.

23. Jeff Kingston, *Critical Issues in Contemporary Japan* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 559-560.

in response to leftist activities.”<sup>24</sup> These escalated so much throughout the decade that political figures like Mishima Yukio claimed there would be “a conclusive showdown between right and left.”<sup>25</sup> Similar to the negative leftist reaction to the “Reverse Course” reforms that began after the Occupation and the LDP-led government, the right-wing responded negatively to this increase in left-wing protest.

The radical right made their disapproval clear with retaliatory acts of violence. Members of radical rightist organizations carried out multiple assassinations and attempted assassinations. Young members of the Greater Japan Patriots Party, for example, carried out both the attempted assassination of leftist leader Shimanaka Jiken and the successful assassination of chairman of the Japan Socialist Party, Asanuma Inejiro.<sup>26</sup> As J. Victor Koschmann notes, both of these acts of terrorism are “often interpreted as elements of a right-wing nationalist reaction to the widespread protests led by the left wing earlier in 1960 against the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty.”<sup>27</sup> Sources such as a *New York Times* article from 1960 concur that the assassination of Asanuma was “preceded not only by the Left-Wing mob outbreaks but also by physical attacks on Socialist and Conservative leaders,” seeing this chain of events as indicative of the “new reign of terror by Leftist and Rightist extremists who are building up rival ‘storm troop’ organizations.”<sup>28</sup>

Japan’s polarized political situation of the early 1960s influenced the later criticism of Beatles fans in 1966. Large numbers of students participated in the leftist demonstrations against the Security Treaty, and, as was the case with the assassination of Asanuma, young people carried out right-wing acts of terror. The increasingly radical behavior of the youth in the years leading up the Beatles’ arrival resulted in serious measures taken against a fan culture that Japan had not

24. Oleg Benesch, *Inventing the Way of the Samurai: Nationalism, Internationalism, and Bushido in Modern Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 221.

25. Benesch, 221.

26. “Assassination in Japan,” *New York Times*, October 13, 1960, 36.

27. J. Victor Koschmann, “Shimanaka Incident,” in *Modern Japan: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Nationalism*, ed. James L. Huffman (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 230.

28. “Assassination in Japan,” *New York Times*, 36.

previously experienced. Consequently, older Japanese citizens associated this new fan behavior with the rise of student demonstrations and youth radicalism. As Stevens notes, “this was the first time authorities viewed youth as violent individuals to be controlled, rather than merely immature members of society who needed paternalistic guidance.”<sup>29</sup>

The political activism and terrorism that young people increasingly participated in raised the ire of a skeptical older generation. Indeed, the rhetoric of articles written about the Budokan concerts compared the behavior of fans to student protesters, noting that the Tokyo police, “well-drilled in handling boisterous young leftist rioters, worked out new techniques for controlling the delirious fans.”<sup>30</sup> Another article written before the Beatles arrived invoked a similar feeling, saying the “forthcoming Tokyo appearance of the Beatles is apparently causing more concern to the local authorities than any security problem here since violent street demonstrations prevented a scheduled visit by President Eisenhower in 1960” because of the number of fans trying to get tickets.<sup>31</sup> The emotional behavior of young Beatles fans added an additional reason for Japanese backlash to the Beatles, as the older generation and Japanese conservatives still linked the younger generation to the massive protests and radical behavior witnessed earlier that decade.<sup>32</sup>

With the significant growth of its middle class, Japan’s social structure also experienced significant change in the 1960s, further dividing already established generational gaps. The 1960s experienced an economic boom due to increased consumerism and growing foreign markets.<sup>33</sup> Along with other forms of media, music became a mass consumer commodity in Japan. Many critics of popular music during these years were social elitists preoccupied with hierarchies that were rapidly

29. Stevens, *Beatles in Japan*, 49.

30. Emerson Chapin, “Visit from the Beetorusu Gives Tokyo Police Hard Day’s Night,” *New York Times*, July 1, 1966, 38.

31. Robert Trumbull, “Tokyo is Girding for the Beatles,” *New York Times*, May 22, 1966, 12.

32. Stevens, *Beatles in Japan*, 49.

33. Joe B. Moore, “Labor Movement (Postwar),” in *Modern Japan: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Nationalism*, ed. James L. Huffman (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 127.

fading from the social structure. They were part of a traditional Japan that, as Nagahara notes, "clung to its prewar self-image of a society that was deeply divided by social, economic, and cultural hierarchies."<sup>34</sup> At the same time, however, the new mass-consuming middle class challenged notions of these elitist hierarchies, as they transformed the deeply divided postwar societal structure to one in which citizens increasingly identified as nothing more than part of the middle class.<sup>35</sup>

With the substantial growth of a middle class due to more equal income distribution, older Japanese elites who were unaccustomed to this new structure were quick to condemn the music – and fans of that music – including that of the Beatles. The older generation had a tendency to “other” the younger generation during these years. As David Slater notes, “older residents astutely lay claim to being the physical embodiment of both traditional culture and, more profoundly, of Japaneseness,” identifying with a traditional culture that they believed represented the superior alternative to new generation’s massive middle class.<sup>36</sup> Despite the changes in social structure, older Japanese citizens clung to prewar ideas of society and culture, stoking their critical view of youth culture.

Culturally, the 1964 Olympics created the perception by some Japanese of the Budokan as a symbol of Japanese cultural pride. The Budokan was built for the 1964 Olympics – the first to be held in an Asian nation; moreover, it was built specifically for judo competitions, the only Japanese sport included in the Olympic games that summer.<sup>37</sup> As such, some, including right-wing nationalists, interpreted the Budokan as symbolic of a returned sense of national pride that they had searched for since the Occupation years. Newspaper articles written during construction of the Budokan make this clear. The *Japan Quarterly*, for example, wrote that:

With the postwar recovery of the economy and a heightening of world interest in Japanese culture as her international contacts

34. Nagahara, *Tokyo Boogie-Woogie*, 158.

35. Nagahara, 5.

36. David H. Slater, “Social Class and Identity in Postwar Japan,” in *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*, eds. Victoria Lyon Bestor, Theodore C. Bestor, and Akiko Yamagata (New York: Routledge, 2011), 110.

37. Stevens, *Beatles in Japan*, 32.

increased, a natural desire arose at home in Japan for some sort of stable identity in the national culture, and in architecture, as in other fields of art, people began to seek after more national, specifically Japanese modes of expression.<sup>38</sup>

The success Japan had hosting the 1964 Olympics and building the Budokan made it a symbol of revived national pride,<sup>39</sup> something the nation had looked for since the end of the war.<sup>39</sup> As such, it was used solely for culturally relevant events such as martial arts; that is, until the Beatles' concerts in 1966.

The radical rightists were not the only ones to object to the use of the culturally significant Budokan by a Western rock group. Mainstream political leaders also added to this criticism. David McNeith, for example, writes that, "Prime Minister Eisaku Sato had publicly criticized the use of the hallowed Budokan... as an 'inappropriate' venue for a concert full of screaming teenage girls."<sup>40</sup> Other public figures in opposition included Tatsushi Nagashima, a promoter who originally helped organize the Beatles' concerts at the Budokan, and Matsutaro Shoriki, the first president of the Budokan who had initially agreed to host the concert. Despite their original roles of organizing the concerts, Nagashima and Shoriki changed their minds once they witnessed the Western, long-haired style of the Beatles and the emotional behavior of their female fans.<sup>41</sup>

Rightists – radical or moderate – were certainly not the only ones to express feelings of nationalism; rather, nationalism manifested itself in different ways in postwar Japan. This explains why primarily right-wingers took issue with the use of the Budokan. Others saw its style as reactionary and backwards rather than evoking the modern style of the society they wanted. As William Coaldrae notes, these citizens found it evocative of "buildings built in the 1930s by the military government to promote ultra-nationalism: ferro-concrete structures with features replicating traditional architecture and crowned by traditional-style tiled roofs."<sup>42</sup> Indeed, this was the

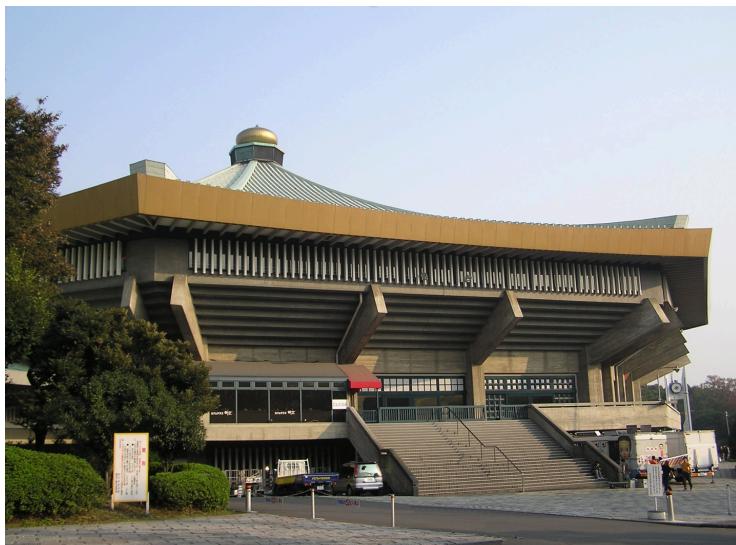
38. Yuichiro Kojiro, "Building for the Olympics," *Japan Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (1964): 442.

39. Shilby Nabhan, "Showdown at Budokan: It was 40 years ago today, and The Beatles were rocking Japan," *Japan Times*, July 2, 2006.

40. David McNeith, "The Day My Mum Looked After the Beatles," *Japan Times*, 2013.

41. Nabhan, "Showdown at the Budokan."

response Japanese critic Yuichiro Kojiro had to the building. In a 1964 article in the *Japan Quarterly*, Kojiro described the Budokan as having a fascist, unnecessarily reactionary style to it that embarrassed the country by evoking a prewar ultra-nationalism that risked portraying Japan as a backwards nation.<sup>43</sup>



"Nippon Budokan" by Morio ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nippon\\_Budokan\\_1\\_Kitanomaru\\_Chiyoda\\_Tokyo.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Nippon_Budokan_1_Kitanomaru_Chiyoda_Tokyo.jpg)) is licensed under CC-BY-SA-3.0 (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/legalcode>), from Wikimedia Commons.

### June 1966: Enter the Beatles

The Beatles arrived in the early hours of June 30, 1966, greeted by over fifteen hundred fans, five hundred police officers, and the flashing cameras of reporters.<sup>44</sup> Immediately after their arrival, the police escorted the Beatles straight to the Tokyo Hilton hotel, where they remained for much of their visit. The Beatles did not explore much of Japan during their stay as, with the exception of their five concerts, security required the band

42. William H. Coaldrake, "Contemporary Architecture in Japan" in *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 205.

43. Kojiro, "Building for the Olympics," 444.

44. "Beatles Arrive," *Japan Times*, 3.

to remain in their suite. George Harrison later recounted this experience, noting:

We were only allowed out of the room when it was time for the concert... everywhere we were going, there was a demonstration about one thing or another... plus people were demonstrating because the Budokan (where we were playing) was supposed to be a special spiritual hall reserved for martial arts.<sup>45</sup>

The radical right-wing protests continued throughout the duration of the Beatles' visit. Protesters attempted to greet the band at the airport and block them from entering the country, but police were able to intercept them before the Beatles' arrival.<sup>46</sup> They did manage to demonstrate outside of the Tokyo Hilton that morning, but the police still prevented the members from encountering them.<sup>47</sup> The right-wing radicals continued to make their opposition known during the Beatles' concerts, though they had to protest in nearby areas, as seventeen hundred policemen armed with "40 armoured vehicles, and between 70 and 80 police vans, army jeeps and patrol cars" banned them from the Budokan grounds.<sup>48</sup>

The media's criticism of the band also continued throughout the visit. The press was critical of the security-induced isolation of the band, as they thought it "prevented them from coming into contact with their fans."<sup>49</sup> The media even reported that fans protested outside of the Tokyo Hilton, holding signs that called on other fans to boycott the concerts of the band who clearly did not want to see them.<sup>50</sup>

The media's criticism was perhaps most apparent at the press conference held the day the Beatles' arrived. The press questioned the members on the "elaborate and pretentious security measures" taken on their behalf.<sup>51</sup> In response, Ringo Starr said he felt "very safe," and Paul McCartney said the measures taken were probably necessary to prevent anyone from getting hurt.<sup>52</sup> The press also asked the band about the

45. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 215.

46. "Beatles Arrive," *Japan Times*, 3.

47. Stevens, *Beatles in Japan*, 53.

48. Stevens, 60.

49. "Cops Sigh with Relief as Beatles End Visit," *Japan Times*, July 4, 1966, 3.

50. Stevens, *Beatles in Japan*, 70.

51. "Press Conference," Interviews Database.

controversy surrounding their use of the Budokan, implying the concerts sent a message to the nation's youth that Japanese cultural values were unimportant. The lack of concern in their responses, such as John's remark that music is more interesting than martial arts, did not do much to ease the criticism.<sup>53</sup>

Over the next three days, the media continued to report on fan behavior and security measures at the Budokan shows. One article noted that, "authorities said it was the first time such heavy precautions have been taken for such an event."<sup>54</sup> Another described that, "teen-age girls... rocked, bounced, tore at their hair, waved and shrieked... [and] a few sobbed helplessly."<sup>55</sup> Media outlets also reported more serious fan behavior, including alleged theft and arrests.<sup>56</sup>

On July 2, 1966, the Beatles left Japan, escorted by one thousand police officers. Though the band encountered no danger during their stay, the criticism continued through their departure from the country. Articles reported that police finally "breathed a sigh of relief" following the band's departure, and one quoted a police spokesperson who described the happiness and exhaustion the force felt after the band left.<sup>57</sup> The press continued to criticize the "VIP treatment" they felt the band received.<sup>58</sup>

## Conclusion

For some, including the protesters of the Beatles in 1966, the search for a national identity that began during the Occupation was resolved, at least to an extent, by the pride of the Olympics. This led them to attach that national pride to buildings such as the Budokan, which accounts for the negative reactions to its use by the Beatles in 1966. As for the negative response to fan behavior, the large number of youth participants in political demonstrations and radicalism helps explain the skeptical

52. "Press Conference."

53. "Press Conference."

54. "Beatles Draw 10,000 in Japan," *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, July 1, 1966, D15.

55. Chapin, "Visit from the Beetorusu," 38.

56. Stevens, *Beatles in Japan*, 60.

57. "Cops Sigh with Relief," 3.

58. "Cops Sigh with Relief," 3.

perspectives of the older generation and authoritarian figures. Moreover, the generational gaps in the interpretation of Western music dated back to the Occupation and also helped account for the response of the older generation. Additionally, the baby-boom of the immediate postwar years and later urbanization of primarily young people resulted in a large population of potential Beatles fans, which perhaps contributed even more to the negative response of the older generation. Altogether, the search for national identity dating back to the Occupation years, along with the increasingly apparent generational gap in ideology, expressions of nationalism, and interpretations of Western culture, help account for the negative reaction to the Beatles performances at Budokan and the behavior of their fans.

The nationalism that fueled some of the backlash to the Beatles shows that the radical nationalists and even members of mainstream Japan certainly saw the Western pop group as a force of Westernization. However, the backlash should also be attributed to the postwar dynamics that led to generational gaps and a national struggle to understand the new youth culture in Japan. These factors are linked, as Japan's youth culture did show similarities to youth cultures internationally. The Beatles' lack of concern over their Japanese fans' behavior suggests this, as the members described how similar their fans were internationally. Ringo, for example, noted that, "the east is becoming so westernized in clothes, it's doing the same with music, you know."<sup>59</sup> This link between youth culture and the Beatles shows the globalization of music occurring during this era. Thus, backlash to the band's 1966 visit to Japan can be attributed to the combination of nationalists interpreting the group as a force of Westernization, along with the struggle of the older generation to interpret the behavior of an increasingly globalized youth.

59. "Press Conference," Interviews Database.

[11]

## "We Are Never Going Back": The Beatles in the Philippines

**Iris Swaney**

"I hated the Philippines," Ringo Starr exclaimed. By 1966, The Beatles were known for creating a fan base obsessed with the Fab Four, known for the extravagant reactions to their presence anywhere across the globe. Yet despite this massive and dedicated fan base, the Beatles' July 1966 trip to the Philippines took an unexpected turn and proved disastrous. Due to miscommunication, the Beatles accidentally snubbed the First Lady of the Philippines, Imelda Marcos. This snub led to a traumatic experience for the members of the band and Beatles' entourage, leading them to vow to never return to the Philippines.

The Beatles' short but drama-filled trip to the Philippines fell between equally unnerving incidents. Their stop in Japan days before their Filipino trip was fraught, and the trouble did not stop there. From the moment the Beatles and their staff stepped foot on Filipino soil, nothing seemed to go smoothly,

despite their massive fan base there. The major incident, the snub of the First Lady, could ultimately be blamed on poor communication. Regardless of how it happened, the Beatles all decided that after their short stay in Manila, they would never return to the Philippines. Following the two-night stay there, the band headed to the United States, where their tour met with protest over John Lennon's comments about the Beatles being "more popular than Jesus." They had been producing and releasing albums one after the other and internationally touring for years while starting families back at home, and they were growing tired of the trappings of fame. These three series of events certainly influenced the Beatles' decision to end touring and their frequent live performances. Although the tour in the Philippines took a toll on the group, many Filipino fans in 1966 and today express regret for the way the group was treated. After not attending or responding to an invitation from Filipino First Lady Imelda Marcos to perform at Malacañang Palace, mobs of Filipinos turned against the Beatles for the remainder of their short stay in Manila. Media outlets across the globe swarmed to the incident despite Filipino officials quickly acknowledging that it was mostly due to miscommunication. Despite the way in which these events unfolded and how the members of the Beatles felt about their stops in Japan and the Philippines, the Beatles remain popular among young and old Filipinos alike. This chapter argues that although the Beatles were clearly prominent agents of globalization, their trip to the Philippines and the reactions to the events that occurred there showed that the Beatles were neither perfect cultural ambassadors nor immune to negative cultural reception.

### Historiography

The current historiography of the Beatles in the Philippines tends to use the trip, its events, and the subsequent reactions as a window into the Beatles as agents of globalization and Americanization. Scholars use the trip as part of a series of larger events that describe some of the hardships the band went through, instead of trying to classify the events in the Philippines on their own. Michael Frontani's *The Beatles: Image*

*and the Media* argues that the Beatles were both agents of cultural change and representatives of youth culture, especially in the United States. Regarding the trip to the Philippines, Frontani writes that, "the Beatles, contrary to manager Brian Epstein's wishes, had become more vocal in their opinions on a myriad of issues... their press office had proven itself quite adept at controlling the image, and had parlayed the band's popularity and commercial appeal into a favorable position vis-à-vis the press."<sup>1</sup> Caroline Stevens, author of *The Beatles in Japan*, places their tour to Manila inside the context of the political situation of the Philippines at the time, a stance that many others in articles and books do not emphasize, as opposed to looking at it from the context of larger Beatles touring.<sup>2</sup>

This chapter also adds to the current discussion of the globalization of rock 'n' roll. Media anthropologist Roy Shukar argues that meaning in popular music is created by those who make the music and the listeners, and that music and performances can be viewed as cultural commodities. "Meanings, or rather, particular sets of cultural understandings, are the result of a complex set of interactions," Shukar writes.<sup>3</sup> The ability to share music at a fast pace and the ability for popular musicians to perform across the globe allows cultures to interact and listeners to interpret music differently than the artist intended. The globalization of music can be understood by examining the Beatles' career because they were one of the first bands to grow to global fame. Historian Sam Lebovic claims that the Beatles were a "primary vector of pop culture's increasing globality in the 1960s."<sup>4</sup> Adding to Shukar's

1. For examples of the Beatles as agents of globalization and Westernization, see: Michael R. Frontani, *The Beatles: Image and the Media* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2009), 97–98; C. Williamson, "1966 and the Three Crises" of the Beatles," BBC World Histories 1 (November 30, 2016), 52–57; Candy Leonard, *Beatleness: How the Beatles and Their Fans Remade the World* (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, Inc., 2016); Babacar M'Baye and Alexander Charles Oliver Hall, *Crossing Traditions: American Popular Music in Local and Global Contexts* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2018).
2. Carolyn S. Stevens, *The Beatles in Japan* (New York: Routledge, 2017); David R. Reck, "Beatles Orientalis: Influences from Asia in a Popular Song Tradition," *Asian Music* 16, no. 1 (1985): 83–149.
3. Roy Shuker, *Understanding Popular Music*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2001).
4. Sam Lebovic, "Here, There and Everywhere': The Beatles, America, and Cultural Globalization, 1964–1968," *Journal of American Studies* 51, no. 1 (February 2017): 43–65.

argument, Lebovic discusses how the Beatles' rise to fame cannot be understood just as homogenization, but they "represented an increasingly unified and commodified culture that simultaneously served to reproduce cultural differences when different social formations projected their own meanings onto the hybridized group."<sup>5</sup> This chapter adds to this discussion by using the Beatles' trip to the Philippines as an example of the globalization and the way Western music and culture was perceived and understood by non-Westerners.

### Before the Philippines

The Beatles concluded recording their seventh studio album, *Revolver*, on June 21, 1966, at EMI Studios in London.<sup>6</sup> After wrapping the album, the group began their 1966 tour in Germany, a nostalgic choice, given the Beatles' beginnings and their pre-stardom residency in Hamburg, a city they had not visited since 1962. The decision to stop in Germany before departing for Japan and the Philippines probably proved valuable because the following week in Asia was filled with completely new stops and experiences in unfavorable conditions. The ability to buffer the legs of the tour to Japan and the Philippines with more familiar stops in Germany and returning home to the UK allowed the group to not feel drowned in unfamiliar tour venues and new fans, especially after working long hours in the studio on *Revolver*. This desire for a brief 1966 tour departed from their usual non-stop tours; compared to the 1965 tour, the Beatles wanted overall shorter legs so they could rest and be able to record in between some tour dates.<sup>7</sup>

After playing shows in Munich, Essen, and Hamburg, the Beatles departed for Japan. The group stepped off the plane in Tokyo. They climbed into "little 1940s-type cars" with policemen wearing metal helmets and were driven to their suite

5. For examples of the globalization of rock music, see: Lebovic, "Here, There and Everywhere;" Shakur, *Understanding Popular Music*; Ray Hudson, "Regions and Place: Music, Identity and Place," *Progress in Human Geography* 30, no. 5 (October 1, 2006): 626–34.

6. Robert Rodriguez, *Revolver: How the Beatles Re-Imagined Rock "n" Roll* (Montclair, NJ: Backbeat Books, 2012).

7. Stevens, *The Beatles in Japan*, 26–27.

at the Tokyo Hilton.<sup>8</sup> The group was only allowed to leave their suite when playing shows, and the Japanese promoters had planned out every move the band would make throughout their three days there. Throughout their stay in Tokyo, student riots and nationalist protests broke out because the Beatles were scheduled to play in the Nippon Budokan, an arena originally constructed for martial arts at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, since martial arts was considered a sacred practice in Japan. Although the Beatles' performance (they were the first non-Japanese band to play there) sparked controversy among right-wing Japanese, the Budokan has more recently become a site for pop culture celebration.<sup>9</sup> Despite demonstrations and death threats, the show went on. Under the tight restrictions of police, the crowd was more subdued than many of the crowds at European and American shows; they were not allowed to stand or act exceedingly wild. The actual performance was filled with microphone and tuning problems because the show was being recorded for television.<sup>10</sup> Departing Japan went smoothly, especially compared to the situation waiting for them in the Philippines.

### Contextualizing the Philippines Visit

The Philippines, just like any other country, has a long and storied past. Colonization under Spain, the United States, and Japan left the 7,000-island country poor and unstable when they gained full independence in 1946. Struggling to define itself as a sovereign, capitalist country and constructing a fully modernized state proved difficult. Ferdinand Marcos thought he could see that goal to fruition. Marcos, a charismatic and ambitious career politician, had a reputation as a war hero. This, coupled with his wife Imelda's charm, led to a successful presidential campaign in late 1965.<sup>11</sup> Years into his presidency, he faced widespread criticism due to allegations of corruption and suppression of the democratic processes. Throughout the

8. The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002), 215.

9. Stevens, *The Beatles in Japan*, 18.

10. Stevens, 63-65.

11. Oliver X. A. Reyes, "The Beatles' Worst Nightmare in Manila," *Esquiremag.ph*, May 24, 2017, <https://www.esquiremag.ph/long-reads/notes-and-essays/remember-the-beatles-nightmare-in-manila-a1542-20170524-lfrm10>.

country there were demonstrations against his actions from citizens of all kind, including street protests by students, labor unions, and civic groups. He imposed martial law from 1972 to 1981, but continued to rule in an authoritarian fashion for the remainder of his presidency, until he fled the country in 1986.<sup>12</sup>

Marcos' presidency was notably corrupt; he and his wife Imelda spent large amounts of money on lavish clothing and glamourous purchases. Although costly, their romanticized relationship and dazzling lifestyle allowed the couple, and by extension the country, to display a figment of wealth and emerging power. The Marcoses wanted to show the world that the Philippines were an up-and-coming country that had the ability to flaunt power in all arenas, including cultural, a task which mostly fell to Imelda. In the 1960s and 1970s, "the Marcoses sought to bring the 'world' to Manila through major cultural and sporting events. The Beatles' concert in 1966 was just the beginning of this campaign."<sup>13</sup> In an attempt to both Westernize the Philippines and show the world that they were in fact Westernizing, the Beatles trip to Manila was set to be a historic and positive visit for all parties involved. Yet the Marcos presidency had just begun months before the international stars arrived in Manila; the lack of protocol for this type and scale of visit would not help anyone involved.

### The Beatles in Manila

On July 3, 1966, the Beatles and their crew flew to Manila via Hong Kong. The day the band arrived, *Help!*, the comedy-action musical starring the Beatles, showed in theatres around Manila to help excite the fans. The band's manager Brian Epstein, along with Victor Lewis who helped Epstein with international planning, and Cavalcade Promotions, which organized the band's tour, booked the back-to-back concerts for July 4. Similar to the Tokyo stop, the Beatles were offered significant protection and personal security. Ramon Ramos reported that the government had secured one quarter of the entire police force

12. *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, s.v. "Ferdinand Marcos Biography & Facts," last modified March 23, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ferdinand-E-Marcos>.

13. Stevens, *The Beatles in Japan*, 77.

for the Beatles' arrival at Manila International Airport.<sup>14</sup> The amount of security was comparable to President Eisenhower's 1960s visit, leading one of the Beatles to ask if there was a war going on in the Philippines.<sup>15</sup> Ringo Starr noted that the atmosphere upon landing was "that hot/Catholic/gun/Spanish Inquisition attitude."<sup>16</sup> Hustled into a vehicle by armed men wearing civilian clothing, the four Beatles were separated from their crew and managers for the first time while on tour. George Harrison recounted that, "we were being bullied for the first time. It wasn't respectful... Everywhere else, even though there was a mania, there was a lot of respect... in Manila, it was a very negative vibe from the moment we got off the plane."<sup>17</sup>

The Beatles were both alarmed at the way that their arrival unfolded and worried about being arrested for the marijuana in their bags from which they had been separated on the tarmac. They were driven to the Filipino Naval Headquarters for a press conference, with Jean Pope, a reporter of the *Manila Times*. He noted that, "John Lennon peered over his arrogant nose at the crowd," while Joe Quirino, a popular Filipino TV personality and entertainment columnist wrote that he liked Ringo the best because he "gave serious answers and was respectful," compared to the other members of the band.<sup>18</sup>

The band reunited with Epstein after the press conference and proceeded to board a yacht, the *Marima*, and sailed out to sea. Harrison recounted that, "it was really humid, Mosquito City, and we were all sweating and frightened... we had a whole row of cops with guns lining the deck around this cabin that we were in."<sup>19</sup> Initially, Vic Lewis and Ramon Ramos planned for the Beatles and their entourage to stay on the *Marima* overnight to try to keep the fans away. They set up decoy rooms at the Manila Hotel, but their plans failed when the *Manila Times* reported the Beatles were planning to stay on the yacht. The Beatles approved of this plan after they heard they had their marijuana with them, but they later learned they would dock

14. Stevens, *The Beatles in Japan*, 78.

15. Steve Turner, *Beatles '66: The Revolutionary Year* (New York: HarperLuxe, 2016): 368.

16. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 217.

17. The Beatles, 217.

18. Reyes, "The Beatles' Worst Nightmare in Manila."

19. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 217.

the next day right before they were scheduled to play their first show. Epstein had been “cranky” throughout the evening and knew the band would need more time to prepare for the show, so they returned to the Naval Headquarters to head into Manila to stay the night at a hotel.<sup>20</sup>

The “pandemonium over the yacht” the previous night meant that the managers had not discussed the official schedule with each other or with the Beatles, which led to a confusing and contentious day.<sup>21</sup> Along with the schedule for the remainder of their trip, no one had mentioned the official request for the Beatles to perform for the First Lady. Arriving at the Manila Hotel around 4:00 am, no actual reservations had been made, so Lewis had to make some effort to secure the suites that the group was used to. Because of the long day they had from flying into Manila to the bizarre evening on the yacht, the group was still asleep when Filipino officials came to their suite to take them to Malacañang Palace.<sup>22</sup>

Reports of the incident regarding Imelda’s invitation to the Palace are mixed. Some say that Epstein officially declined the invitation while in Japan. The general manager of Cavalcade Promotions said that the Beatles had actually requested an “appointment to pay a courtesy” to the First Lady, which is doubtful given the Beatles’ past incidents with government officials. At the British Embassy during the Beatles’ first trip to the United States, one fan cut off a lock of Starr’s hair while other members were “manhandled.”<sup>23</sup> After this incident, Epstein decided that when overseas, the Beatles would not “take on roles that could be interpreted as representative of British government interests.”<sup>24</sup> Given this policy, it is doubtful that the band would perform for Imelda and Filipino officials, let alone go out of their way to ask to do so.

They were set to play their first show of the day at 4:00 pm and the luncheon was scheduled for 11:00 am, just hours before

20. Tony Barrow, *John, Paul, George, Ringo & Me: The Real Beatles Story* (New York, NY: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 2012), 191.

21. Barrow, *The Real Beatles Story*, 204.

22. Stevens, *The Beatles in Japan*, 79.

23. “Truth behind The Beatles 1964 British Embassy Visit Revealed,” *New Musical Express*, August 13, 2007, <http://www.nme.com/news/music/the-beatles-372-1340943>.

24. Stevens, *The Beatles in Japan*, 79.

the performance at Rizal Stadium. One Filipino writer explains the incident in terms of a cultural misunderstanding: Ramos who initially introduced the invitation, took the group's silence as confirmation of the request, while the band saw their silence as an easier way to decline an invitation. Adding to it all, Epstein originally thought the invitation was for an intimate luncheon and performance for the presidential couple, but in reality, the Beatles left hundreds of Filipino military and political officials' children crying, which was broadcast on national television.<sup>25</sup>

The Beatles came to the Philippines for their two shows at Rizal Memorial Football Stadium and nothing more. As officials arrived to pick up the band and take them to the Palace, John Addis, British Ambassador to the Philippines, called Epstein at the Manila Hotel and urged the band to go. He said that this was "not the right country" to refuse an invitation and that it was best not to insult them, but Epstein stood his ground.<sup>26</sup> The group arrived at the stadium to play the first of their two shows that afternoon.

The Beatles played for approximately 80,000 people (30,000 at the 4:00 pm show, 50,000 at the 8:30 pm show) at Rizal Stadium, the largest ticket-holding audience in the band's history. Seven popular Filipino pop bands played as opening acts, and both sets the Beatles played that day lasted approximately 30 minutes. They opened their show with a cover of Chuck Berry's "Rock and Roll Music" and followed with "She's a Woman," "If I Needed Someone," "Day Tripper," "Baby's in Black," "I Feel Fine," "Yesterday," "I Wanna be Your Man," "Nowhere Man," "Paperback Writer" and "I'm Down." Harrison remembered, "When we got there, it was like the Monterey Pop Festival. There were about 200,000 people on the site and we were thinking, 'Well, the promoter is probably making a bit on the side out of this.'"<sup>27</sup> At Rizal, an outdoor stadium, many fans listened from outside the gates. Videos of the performances showed a more subdued Beatlemania due to the heavy police and security presence in the stadium. Female fans demonstrated enthusiasm and awe, while the band played with

25. Stevens, *The Beatles in Japan*, 80.

26. Reyes, "The Beatles' Worst Nightmare in Manila."

27. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 218.

a choppy sound, though it is not clear if that is due to poor video quality or poor playing on the band's part.<sup>28</sup> Many reports of the performances discuss the sound quality, noting that although Cavalcade Promotions had installed two jumbo Vox amplifiers in the stadium, the sound was terrible.<sup>29</sup> Considering it was an outdoor venue not typically used for music performances, the Beatles probably did not have high expectations for sound quality and had other things to worry about, like angering the Filipino first couple and many officials.

In between the two shows, Epstein appeared on Filipino television to issue a formal apology, explaining that the Beatles had nothing to do with the misunderstanding, but the broadcast experienced technical difficulties so the audio was incomprehensible. Following the 8:30 performance, the Beatles were left without the security or police escort that Ramos worked so hard to procure. Leaving in their limousines proved far from easy; Tony Barrow, the Beatles publicist claimed that, "organized troublemakers pressed menacingly against our windows, yelling insults at the Beatles that none of us could understand."<sup>30</sup> The staff at the Manila Hotel even turned on the group, not serving food when the group had ordered room service later during their trip.

Adding to all the events that had already unfolded, the Filipino tax bureau contacted Lewis and Epstein late at night after the concerts demanding payment for income tax or returns on the unsold tickets. Although it is unclear why they demanded the tax, it was most likely instigated due to the presidential snub hours before. By the end of the negotiations, Epstein ended up paying P74,450 or £6,000, meaning the Beatles took a loss on the trip.<sup>31</sup>

Arriving at Manila International Airport the next morning, the band experienced yet another fiasco; there were no security measures, a far cry from the way they were treated in Japan just days before. On the way to the airport, a traffic director sent

28. Beatlepaulwindow, "The Beatles in the Philippines Live in Manila Concert 1966," video, 5:07, October 19, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJMA-MavME5w>.

29. Barrow, *The Real Beatles Story*, 206.

30. Barrow, 207.

31. Barrow, 208-9.

the driver around a roundabout a dizzying number of times until Neil Apsinall told the driver to stop circling and continue driving.<sup>32</sup> When the group arrived at the airport, they found all the elevators inoperable and had to lug their equipment up and down stairs unassisted. Waiting for their flight, gun-toting and civilian-dressed men just like the ones who had pushed them in a car upon their arrival to Manila began roughing them up. Harrison and Lennon hid behind Buddhist monks while Starr and McCartney hid behind Catholic nuns to protect them from the hatred spewed by many in the crowd. Finally, they boarded the plane to fly to New Delhi, India. Harrison said he felt a great deal of relief and McCartney said: "When we got on the plane, we were all kissing the seats. It was feeling as if we'd found sanctuary. We had definitely been in a foreign country where all the rules had changed and they carried guns."<sup>33</sup>

The entire trip garnered a huge amount of media attention, just like any Beatles event, but the difference was that the media did not quite know what to think of the events that unfolded. Filipino newspaper articles expressed distaste for the Beatles; *The Manila Times* headline on July 6 read "Beatles... Go Away!"<sup>34</sup> Other Filipino newspaper headlines read "Furor over Beatles Snub Dampens Show" and "Imelda Stood Up: First Family Waits in Vain for Mop-heads."<sup>35</sup> One *Los Angeles Times* article written just a week after their time in the Philippines used the incidents in Manila to ask if the Beatles were "on their way out" as pop superstars. "The real test for the Beatles will be to see if they still pull as many fans on their U.S tour," the author opined. That tour that was filled with protest and KKK demonstrations due to Lennon's "more famous than Jesus" comments.<sup>36</sup> One Chicago newspaper wrote that, "the incident *apparently* was triggered by what the Filipino press described as a 'snub' of the President's wife by the Beatles," though the wording seeming suspicious of the entire ordeal.<sup>37</sup> Another Chicago newspaper called it "a snub

32. Narratives of a Novice, "Hard Days and Fright: The 1966 Beatles Concert in Manila, Philippines." Ateneo De Naga High School 1980: January 2012 (blog), January 23, 2012, <http://adenu1980.blogspot.com/2012/01/>.

33. Narratives of a Novice, "Hard Days and Fright."

34. "Beatles... Go Away!" *The Manila Times*, July 6, 1966.

35. Barrow, *The Real Beatles Story*, 205-210.

36. Maris Ross, "Beatles Bugged by Unpopularity Talk," *Los Angeles Times*, July 12, 1966.

that virtually touched off an international incident," and that, "it was the first time in their career that the British entertainers ever faced abuse."<sup>38</sup> Most American newspapers were suspicious of everything that had happened in the Philippines.

Nan Randall, in *The Washington Post*, focused mainly on a contest they held in which Beatles fans sent in questions for the band in order to win tickets to a concert. The author who read through many entries wrote, "their fans obviously worry about what the Beatles think of them... others had heard that the Beatles didn't really care about their fans... Even if some Beatle fans are disturbed over some of the Beatle statements and the recent mess in the Philippines where everyone ended up insulted and unhappy, most Beatle fans retain their great loyalty."<sup>39</sup> Randall assumed that Filipino fans were disgusted with the snub and threw away all their Beatles records. This was probably inaccurate. Many Filipino commenters on YouTube videos of the Beatles' interviews or footage of the trip to Manila express regret about the way the tour played out and feel anger towards the Marcos regime: "It's embarrassing how they were treated over here. That of course wasn't the Filipinos' sentiment about them. It was primarily Imelda Marco's doing (former first lady). Ugh it was awful. Our deepest apologies," one wrote.<sup>40</sup>

Regardless of who ordered the abuse, the Beatles vowed to never return again. In a *Los Angeles Times* article, McCartney was quoted saying, "if we ever go back it would be with an H-bomb."<sup>41</sup> The Beatles said that they did not want to be involved in any diplomatic events, but they were, whether they liked it or not, representing their country, and by extension, much of the West. The Beatles comments about never wanting to return to the Philippines and wanting to drop a hydrogen bomb on the entire country were unfair, but the way the band was treated was also unfair. There was a level of celebrity that seemed to

37. "Beatles Cursed, Booed, Shoved," *Chicago Daily Defender (Daily Edition)*, July 6, 1966.

38. "Beatles Leave Philippines to Sound of Boos: Deny They Snubbed President's Wife," *Chicago Tribune*, July 6, 1966.

39. Nan Randall, "Beatles Contest: Fan Mail Proves Loyalty," *The Washington Post*, August 7, 1966.

40. Rada800, comment on "The Beatles return from the Philippines," from iconic, YouTube video, 2:02, November 30, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XxARln6WoOk>.

41. "Britain: Attack in Belfast Perils Queen," *Los Angeles Times*, July 10, 1966.

give fans blind allegiance to stars, which was possibly wrapped up with Beatlemania. It was a sign of the times—the Beatles gave so many people something they had never experienced, something that they connected with, something that made them feel part of something bigger than themselves.

### The Beatles as Agents of Globalization

The Beatles tied global communities together with their music. In the first ever satellite broadcast that was simulcast across the globe in 1967, the Beatles performed “All You Need is Love”. Their image beamed across the globe; their lyrics discussed universal themes, and their music borrowed freely from many cultures.<sup>42</sup> Although these were not new musical ideas, the Beatles embraced different cultures and performed in countries across the globe. The Beatles are often tied to ideas of globalization and Americanization. Historian Sam Lebovic writes that, “the Beatles emerged as a direct result of the postwar hegemony of US pop culture,” and in turn:

Nationalist audiences in Japan and the Philippines seemed to interpret the band as agents of Americanization... Just as diverse groups of Americans projected their own meanings onto the hybridized, international Beatles, so too did audiences in other parts of the Beatles’ international network.<sup>43</sup>

The Beatles used the tactics of many successful American musicians that had come before them, inserted themselves in a musical culture dominated by Americans, and then took over. The market for their kind of music was massive, a market that included the Philippines. The Beatles were seen as pioneers in the new “unified international cultural market.”<sup>44</sup> The globalized and Americanized culture they brought with them to different places around the world was interpreted by individual cultures, as seen in the Philippines.

Perhaps one reason there was such backlash to the Beatles snub of Imelda Marcos was that many Filipinos felt “a growing

42. Mike Weis, “The Beatles Were First Example of Modern Globalization,” interview by Amy Young, Illinois Wesleyan University, February 7, 2014, <https://www.iwu.edu/news/2014/02-beatles-early-globalization.html>.

43. Lebovic, "Here, There, and Everywhere," 43–65.

44. Lebovic, 56.

feeling of nationalism,” which, because of past relations with the United States, manifested itself in discontent towards the United States, and by extension, Western culture. In 1971, the US Bureau of Intelligence and Research wrote a report regarding growing movements in the Philippines, finding that “the leftist movement in the Philippines finds a principle basis for its appeal in anti-Americanism.”<sup>45</sup> This, coupled with the small but intense support for the Marcos regime, led to the rough treatment of the Beatles while they were there. The pervasive bitterness regarding the Westernization of their country led to an understandable backlash against the group.

### Conclusion

The Beatles’ trip to the Philippines was influenced by the political situation of the time and by the Beatles’ position in their own careers. The band’s treatment and reception by Filipinos represented the diverse politics of the time; the Philippines were undergoing a period of modernization while being ruled under an authoritarian regime. The trip revealed much about how Beatlemania took form in different places, and how nationalists, the Filipino government, and international press reacted to the trip and presidential snub. Although the way events unfolded and how the members of the Beatles felt about their stops in the Philippines, the Beatles remain popular among young and old Filipinos alike. This shows that regardless of the political situation of the Philippines, countries around the world and their attitudes regarding Westernization, the Beatles’ sound has remained iconic for decades. The Beatles proved to be unstoppable agents of the globalization of a Westernized culture, even if sometimes unwillingly.

45. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, “Philippines: The Radical Movements,” May 3, 1971, in *The Philippines: U.S. Policy During the Marcos Years, 1965-1986*, Digital National Security Archive, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., 9, [http://search.proquest.com/dnsa\\_ph/docview/1679142982/](http://search.proquest.com/dnsa_ph/docview/1679142982/).

[12]

## Music and Meditation: How the Beatles Brought Indian Culture to the West

**Matthew Remson**

When George Harrison was on the set of *Help!* in 1965, his curiosity struck when he saw a sitar sitting on the floor. As he picked it up, he did not know the impact that it would have on his life and Western culture as a whole. What comes to mind when a sitar is mentioned in music? Would it be someone playing this instrument in a classical Indian piece, or does 1960s rock ‘n’ roll take precedence? The latter is the case due largely to Harrison and the Beatles. Throughout the mid to late 1960s, they incorporated the sitar into many of their songs. With the help of renowned sitarist Ravi Shankar, Harrison was able to play this instrument in many famous Beatles songs. When the sitar is mentioned, songs such as “Norwegian Wood”, “Love You To”, or even “Paint it Black” by the Rolling Stones come to mind. There are many ways that this has come to fruition, and most of them can be related back to Harrison and the Beatles.

Furthermore, meditation and Indian culture was brought to the West through the influence of the Beatles. When the Beatles decided to take a trip to India, their followers noticed. Following in their footsteps, the actions of the Beatles spread to the West. Through the use of the sitar and the incorporation of Eastern culture in their lives, the Beatles helped the globalization of Indian culture in the West.

### Historiography

Much of the historiographical literature points to the role of the Beatles in the incorporation of Indian culture in the West. Not only do scholars mention the use of the sitar, but they also tend to talk about Transcendental Meditation (TM), yoga, and vegetarianism.<sup>1</sup> Rodrigo Guerrero argues that the Beatles most significant and overlooked contribution to society was their incorporation of Indian culture into their lives.<sup>2</sup> Many other works look at how George Harrison unintentionally began this movement by starting to learn the sitar. John Shand of *The Sydney Morning Herald* wrote that, “[Harrison] could never have foreseen how [the sitar] would change the course of popular culture, if not history itself.”<sup>3</sup> In addition to the Beatles helping bring Indian culture to the West, many scholars also believe that Indian culture helped the Beatles. Claire Hoffman of *Rolling Stone* magazine wrote that TM allowed the Beatles to become “happier, calmer, and more productive.”<sup>4</sup> Many scholars even believe that the Beatles were the reason that hippie culture took off, with one stating that *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* was the “catalyst” for the hippie movement.<sup>5</sup>

1. Sasha Ingber, “How the Indian City of Rishikesh Influenced the Beatles’ White Album,” Smithsonian.com, March 2016, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/rishikesh-india-beatles-white-album-meditation-smithsonian-journeys-travel-quarterly-180958447/>.
2. Rodrigo Guerrero, “The Role of the Beatles in Popularizing Indian Music and Culture in the West,” *Florida State University Undergraduate Research Journal*, (2015), <http://journals.fcla.edu/owl/article/view/84701/81709>.
3. John Shand, “How the Beatles changed history with a sitar,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, March 16, 2017.
4. Claire Hoffman, “How the Beatles in India Changed America,” *Rolling Stone*, February 18, 2018.
5. Kathryn Begaja, “The Summer of Love: Hippie Culture and the Beatles in 1967”, *TCNJ Journal of Student Scholarship Vol. XVI*, (April 2014), <https://joss.pages.tcnj.edu/files/2014/04/2014-Begeja.pdf>

## Indian Influences

The sitar is arguably the most well-known Indian instrument. Developed in the seventh century, it derived from the Hindustani musical instrument known as the veena.<sup>6</sup> It has been played in various genres of music, such as classical, folk, and Western fusion. Until the mid-twentieth century, it remained largely on the Indian subcontinent, not turning many heads in the Western world. Then came along Ravi Shankar, a sitar maestro and composer who completely changed this.<sup>7</sup> Shankar is credited with popularizing the sitar in the West in the 1950s.<sup>8</sup> By the mid-1960s, George Harrison started to become interested in classical Indian Music. On the set of *Help!* in 1965 he picked up a sitar for the first time and was instantly hooked.<sup>9</sup> He purchased a sitar soon after from a shop called Indiacraft on London's Oxford Street.<sup>10</sup> He used this to record a part of their upcoming song "Norwegian Wood", stating that the backing track "needed something."<sup>11</sup> Harrison had no experience playing the sitar. All he really did was pluck notes on the sitar just like a guitar. Looking at the tablature for "Norwegian Wood", its note structure is not that different from that of a guitar. The first verse of the song is a sixteen measure melody that is split into two eight measure melodies. The first half is played by John on the guitar, with the second half, identical to the first, played by George on the sitar.<sup>12</sup> Throughout the rest of the song, Harrison uses the sitar as a rhythm instrument. After the bridge of the song, the sitar can be described as a drone that is played on the downbeat of every four measures.<sup>13</sup> The rest of the song repeats, with the same motif. Even though Harrison's skill at playing the

6. Ramprapanna Bhattacharya, "My Music Diary: Origin of Sitar," last modified December 8th, 2007, <http://ramprapanna.blogspot.com/2007/12/origin-of-sitar.html>.
7. Margherita Stancati, "When Ravi Shankar Met George Harrison," *The Wall Street Journal*, December 12, 2012.
8. "Sitar Virtuoso Ravi Shankar, 92, Popularized Indian Music for Western Audiences," PBS News Hour, December 12 2012, 03:01, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/shankar-92-popularized-indian-music-for-western-audiences>.
9. Shand, "How the Beatles changed history with a sitar."
10. "Beatle George Harrison's sitar auctioned for £500," BBC, September 29th, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-41438617>
11. The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2000), 194.
12. John Robertson, *The Complete Guide to The Music of the Beatles* (New York: Omnibus Press, 1994), 345.
13. William J. Dowlding, *Beatlesongs* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 46.

sitar was elementary, it put the sitar on the pop map overnight.<sup>14</sup> His lack of experience, however, was expected. He had received no lessons at this time and was just experimenting. Over the next few months, he continued to further develop his skills as much as possible. Learning the sitar takes a lot of time; Shankar said that, “it takes more than a lifetime to learn the sitar.”<sup>15</sup>

The Beatles first exclusively Indian classical music song was recorded in April of 1966, called “Love You To” for the *Revolver* album. By the time the Beatles recorded “Love You To”, Harrison had perfected his sitar playing as much as he could. Although he did not have a lot of skills, it seemed to be more reminiscent of Indian classical music. Looking at the tablature of this song, its structure represented that of an actual sitar piece. Because Harrison had not received any formal training on the sitar, he was able to make it his own and develop a style that the Western world could enjoy. While recording, Harrison required minimum help from any of the other members of the band, and he incorporated another Indian instrument known as the tabla.<sup>16</sup> Unlike previous songs, this one did not just use the sitar as background music; it was exclusively written for the sitar. It was not an experiment anymore, but rather Harrison’s first attempt at composing for the sitar. The song starts with a sitar riff that is comparable with classical Indian pieces. When the first verse of the song comes, there is an exhibition of sounds that relate to Indian culture.<sup>17</sup> Throughout the entire piece, Harrison showcases his knowledge, but still retains with a lingering rock undertone. While he still had a lot of work ahead, this song was a huge step forward his sitar playing skills.

In June of 1966, Harrison met up with Ravi Shankar, who was touring in London.<sup>18</sup> Shankar immediately took a liking to Harrison, and they began to develop a relationship.<sup>19</sup> Shankar’s role in Harrison’s development as a sitar player was formative.

14. Charles Reid, "Ravi Shankar and George Beatles," *New York Times*, May 07, 1967.
15. John Rockwell, *The New York Times the Times of the Sixties: The Culture, Politics, and Personalities That Shaped the Decade* (Philadelphia, PA: Running Press, 2014), 78.
16. Kenneth Womack, *The Beatles Encyclopedia: Everything Fab Four* (Westport, CN: Greenwood, 2016), 349.
17. Mark Lewisohn, *The Beatles Recording Sessions* (New York: Harmony Books, 1988), 135.
18. "George Harrison Takes Sitar Lessons," *Racine Journal Times*, September 20, 1966.

"We must accept each other," Shankar told Harrison. "I will be your preceptor, your guru. You will be my shishya. Whenever I am in England, I will give you lessons when there's time to spare. And you must come see me in Bombay."<sup>20</sup> Later in the year, Harrison traveled to Mumbai for six weeks to receive sitar lessons from Shankar. Although they tried to keep his visit a secret, they were discovered and eventually had to flee to Srinagar and continue the lessons on a houseboat.<sup>21</sup> When Harrison met Shankar, he did not realize how much it would affect his life. What helped George Harrison the most was the fact that Shankar was not only his teacher, but also his close friend. In the beginning, Shankar thought that the sitar in Western music would just be a fad.<sup>22</sup> When Shankar was approached by Harrison, he believed that blending Indian music with pop music was going to be confusing, stating that sitar "had little to do with our classical music."<sup>23</sup> Although hesitant at first, Shankar decided that he would teach Harrison. At the time Shankar was fairly well known, but the fact that he became associated with the Beatles helped him in his career. By the time Harrison went to India to study for six weeks, he already became hooked on the Indian culture. Not only did he embrace Indian culture, he also adopted various ways of life that ended up spreading to the Beatles as a whole.

He wrote the song "Within You Without You" after his visit with Shankar. This song began the raga-rock phase of the 1960s. Harrison brought back an arsenal of Indian instruments from his trip, and they were all used in this song. Featured as the first track on the B-Side of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, it sent a message that this was now an important part of the Beatles new music. Although it seems to be a step backward in the sitar progression, it was getting closer to the playing and organization of classical Indian music. This song featured a

19. Ravi Shankar, *Raga Mala: The Autobiography of Ravi Shankar*, eds. George Harrison and Oliver Craske (Guilford, UK: Genesis Publications, 1997), 47.
20. Reid, "Ravi Shankar and George Beatles," 1967.
21. Philip Glass, "George Harrison, World-Music Catalyst and Great-Souled Man; Open to the Influence of Unfamiliar Cultures," *New York Times*, December 9, 2001.
22. Joseph Lelyveld, "Ravi Shankar Gives West a New Sound That's Old in East," *New York Times*, June 20, 1966.
23. Stancati, "When Ravi Shankar Met George Harrison."

dilruba, which played the main melody of the tune. The dilruba, also known as the modern version of the Esraj, is a string instrument that is played with a bow. Its showcase was a 55-measure instrumental that incorporates a number of Indian instruments.<sup>24</sup> The dilruba plays with some fillers of the sitar played by Harrison. Though it was released as a Beatles song, Harrison was the only Beatle who recorded it.<sup>25</sup> This song was not completely written by Harrison. His inspiration was actually a 30-minute raga written by Shankar. He condensed it and used riffs that he liked.

The winter of 1967 and 1968 brought one more song with Indian instrumentation, “The Inner Light”. This song contained a variety of Indian instruments such as sarod, tabla, santur, shehnai, sitar, and harmonium.<sup>26</sup> The sarod is one of the most popular Indian instruments, similar to the sitar. It is known for a deep sound, similar to the bass guitar. The tabla was another Indian rhythm instrument, similar to a pair of drums. The santur combines the use of mallets with a stringed instrument. The shehnai is a popular Indian instrument that is similar to the oboe. Lastly, the harmonium is similar to an organ. Throughout the song, each instrument works in harmony to produce a beautiful Indian tone that is very similar to Northern Indian classical music. While this song never made it onto an album, it remains a great example of Harrison’s skills at writing music with Indian influence. By this time, rock ‘n’ roll had adapted to the music and fully embraced the genre.

With their embrace of Indian music, the Beatles also decided to further investigate Indian culture. When Maharishi Mahesh Yogi visited London in 1967, the Beatles decided to go to a seminar and learn more about Transcendental Meditation.<sup>27</sup> This movement was founded by the Maharishi himself in the late 1950s. Based on ancient yogic wisdom in India, it can be related to a form of silent mantra meditation. Its practice

24. Robertson, *The Complete Guide to The Music of the Beatles*, 243.

25. Ian MacDonald, *Revolution in the Head: The Beatles' Records and the Sixties* (London: Pimlico, 1998), 215.

26. Robertson, *The Complete Guide to The Music of the Beatles*, 238.

27. “How The Beatles learned Transcendental Meditation – and what they thought about it,” Transcendental Meditation News & More, December 10, 2014, <https://tmhome.com/experiences/interview-lennon-and-harrison-on-meditation/>.

involves the use of a mantra (a simple word or sound) for fifteen to twenty minutes twice a day while sitting in silence with closed eyes. Each person's mantra is unique and confidential. Through this, one is able to avoid distracting thoughts and be in a state of relaxed awareness. The Beatles initially were interested in this because they saw it as an alternative to psychedelic drugs. Through more discussion and learning, the band decided to take a trip to Yogi's ashram at Rishikesh, in northern India.<sup>28</sup> The Beatles believed that the trip could be a spiritual journey, and if they discovered something in that realm, they might stay. They also decided that it would be a good trip and would help cope with the recent death of Brian Epstein. In February of 1968, they arrived in order to begin their training course at Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's ashram.<sup>29</sup> The Beatles brought their wives. Although this was the main reason for the visit, it also ended up being a productive time for their songwriting, and introduced some new aspects to their style. George Harrison also received more sitar lessons from Ravi Shankar. By this time, Shankar had told Harrison that he had caused "the great sitar explosion."<sup>30</sup>

They planned on spending around three months at the ashram, meditating and spending most of the day learning from the guru.<sup>31</sup> Although the compound that they were staying at was wired off, the press still managed to get some photo opportunities throughout the duration of the trip.<sup>32</sup> Not only where the Beatles able to relax and learn some new aspects of Indian culture, there were also able to write a number of new songs while vacationing. A few of Maharishi's teaching even inspired some songs. Songs from the *White Album* and *Abbey Road* were all written during this time and were heavily

28. Dipankar Sarkar, "50 years of Beatles in India: How George Harrison brought Indian classical music to Western Pop," Livemint, Jan 19, 2018, <https://www.livemint.com/Leisure/6ff691EQkHAxkhssHQjdIL/50-years-of-Beatles-in-India-How-George-Harrison-brought-In.html>.

29. Neha Kirpal, "How to remember 50 years of the Beatles' first trip to India," Daily O, February 8, 2018, <https://www.scribd.com/article/371112858/How-To-Memory-50-Years-Of-The-Beatles-First-Trip-To-India>.

30. Samanth Subramanian, "Ravi Shankar: the maestro of world music," *The National*, December 13, 2012, <https://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/ravi-shankar-the-maestro-of-world-music-1.364185>.

31. Kirpal, "How to remember 50 years of the Beatles' first trip to India."

32. "Rare Photos of the Beatles in India on Display," *News India-Times*, December 2, 2011.

influenced by Indian culture.<sup>33</sup> Although they all enjoyed the time in India, they had to leave eventually. Ringo left first, due to the fact he had children at home, and an unhappy wife. McCartney left about a month later, eager to get back to recording music and helping out at Apple, with Harrison's wife Pattie Boyd saying, "a month of meditating was enough for [Paul]." Harrison and Lennon left the compound suddenly after allegations that the Maharishi was "behaving improperly with a young American girl."<sup>34</sup> Although most of the Beatles were ready to head back to their Western lifestyle with the new incorporation of Indian ways, Harrison was the only one to retain a significant interest in Indian culture throughout the rest of his life.

When the Beatles left India, they brought back something new with them. They had changed, and their music would change with them as well. This lifestyle that incorporated Eastern values was adopted by their followers and picked up by the youth of the day. Aspects of Indian culture such as meditation, vegetarianism, and yoga, all became popular around this time. Although the Beatles were not directly responsible for each of these, their influence allowed for them to spread faster than they would have without them. Even though the Indian culture was becoming prominent in the West, it had its critics. Shankar and other Indian musicians did not like the fact that their music was being paired with psychedelic drugs. Hippies saw Indian music as something to listen to while tripping on LSD and other drugs, and the sitar was often seen merely as an accessory for rock music.

By the late 1960s popular artists such as The Monkees, Ricky Nelson, Scott McKenzie, The Turtles, and many more had begun to incorporate sitar into their music.<sup>35</sup> Even Elvis Presley used an electric sitar on four cover songs in the late sixties. These included "Hi-Heel Sneakers" (1967), "You'll Think of Me" (1969), "Stranger in my Own Home Town" (1969), and

33. Kai Schultz, "Rebuilding on the Beatles, an Ashram in India Hopes for Revival," *New York Times*, January 14, 2018.

34. Robin Bell, *The History of British Rock and Roll: The Psychedelic Years 1967 – 1969* (Robin Bell Books, 2017), 214.

35. Mark Brend, *Strange Sounds: Offbeat Instruments and Sonic Experiments in Pop* (Montclair, NJ: Backbeat Books, 2005), 154.

“Snowbird” (1970).<sup>36</sup> The list of bands that had begun to use the instrument was significant. They looked to the East, and their audience followed them. Bands experimenting with Indian elements were not doing musical experiments anymore, they were creating normal rock music. Sitar and other Indian instruments became more and more common in the West. By the late 1960s, this type of music had fully infiltrated Western music, even making it to music festivals. The Monterey Pop Festival in 1967 and the Woodstock Festival in 1969 both featured Ravi Shankar, an Indian outlier on an otherwise rock and folk ticket.

The full embrace of Indian culture can be seen during the well-known Woodstock festival. On August 15, 1969, about 250,000 youth convened in White Lake, New York, for a music festival that would go down in history.<sup>37</sup> Artists such as Janis Joplin, the Grateful Dead, Credence Clearwater Revival, and Jimi Hendrix all performed, showcasing the popular music of the time. The best way to convey that the Beatles helped introduce Indian culture to the West is the performer from 10:00PM to 10:35PM on Friday night of the festival, Ravi Shankar.<sup>38</sup> He performed with Alla Rakha on the tabla and Maya Kulkarni on the tambura. The sitar was so popular at the time that it was featured in the largest and most influential music festival ever. Although he enjoyed the exposure and opportunity, he was disappointed in the performance due to the actions of the spectators. The hippie culture of the sixties and seventies fully embraced this music, as well as the lifestyle to go along with it. Although Shankar and other prominent Indian figures in the West were happy about the incorporation of their culture, there were some complaints as well. Shankar was not happy that hippies, “were using [Indian] music as part of their drug experience.”<sup>39</sup> He further went on to talk about how the audience was “shrieking, shouting, smoking, masturbating and copulating – all in a drug-crazed state” and “you don’t behave

36. Ernst Jorgensen, *Elvis Presley: A Life in Music* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

37. Joseph Modzelewski, “Woodstock Festival draws large young crowd and causes traffic jam,” *Daily News*, August 16, 1969.

38. Jan Hodenfield, “Woodstock: ‘It Was Like Balling for the First Time,’” *Rolling Stone*, September 20, 1969.

39. Ravi Shankar, *My Music, My Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968), 94.

like that when you go to hear a Bach, Beethoven or Mozart concert.”<sup>40</sup>

Transcendental Meditation has also been adopted by the West and has spread throughout the world today. The Transcendental Meditation movement had about 900,000 participants in 1977, and more than 5 million in recent years.<sup>41</sup> In Fairfield, Iowa, around 3,000 residents practice TM daily, showing it still has a significant impact on the West.<sup>42</sup> If the Beatles were not to have embraced this lifestyle, it may have never spread to their followers and become what it is today.

## Conclusion

Throughout the late 1960s, the Beatles became invested in the Indian culture. Specifically, Harrison embraced the culture as well as the religion and made it an aspect of his everyday life. This all began with picking up a sitar at a movie set, and transitioned into a change in rock and pop music that proved lasting. Harrison’s relationship with Ravi Shankar helped him build his skills. Although the sitar spread throughout rock, most musicians failed to even scratch the surface of the sitars potential. After the Beatles brought back meditation from their trip to India, their followers started to embrace the Indian culture even more. If George Harrison were to never have picked up that sitar on the set of *Help!* in 1965, Indian music and culture would not be as widespread as it is today.

40. Mick Brown, “In truth, Ravi Shankar couldn’t stand the hippies,” *The Telegraph*, December 12, 2012.
41. Robert Siegel, “TM’s five million adherents claim that it eliminates chronic health problems and reduces stress,” NPR All Things Considered, 2002.
42. Elaine Woo, “Maharishi Mahesh Yogi; founded Transcendental Meditation movement,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 6, 2008.

[PART V]

## **Business**



[13]

# When the Beatles Played Businessmen: The Story of Apple Records

**Jason Arquette**

On December 7, 1967, the Beatles opened the doors to their very own London-based clothing store, Apple Boutique. After only eight short months of business on July 31, 1968, the band was forced to close the doors.<sup>1</sup> The idea behind the store was famously described by Paul McCartney as “a beautiful place where beautiful people can buy beautiful things.”<sup>2</sup> George Harrison, John Lennon, and Ringo Starr shared McCartney’s sentiments while also simply wanting a store that sold things they actually wanted to buy. These bright-eyed but loose ideas were as close to a legitimate business model as the Beatles got.

With no clear business direction other than to sell clothes, the Baker Street boutique suffered at the hands of the

1. Bob Spitz, *The Beatles: The Biography* (New York: Back Bay Books, 2006), 172.  
2. Peter Carlin, *Paul McCartney: A Life* (New York: Touchstone, 2010), 156.

inexperienced Beatles. Every month that the store was open, it hemorrhaged money as a result of flagrant theft. Despite the store's well-known reputation as a shoplifter's paradise, the Beatles reportedly thought it was "uncool" to do anything about it and simply endured the financial loss.<sup>3</sup> In the end, the band's incompetence in matters of business, in conjunction with their blasé attitudes toward the rampant theft in their store, led the Fab Four to cut their losses early and permanently close their boutique. Instead of liquidating the remaining merchandise to regain some fraction of their investment, the band decided to give the clothes away to the public for free.<sup>4</sup> Altruism aside, the decision to essentially lose money when there was an opportunity to make it revealed the band's limited ability to play businessmen.

Instead of learning from the numerous mistakes made at Apple Boutique, McCartney, Lennon, Harrison, and Starr managed to repeat them on an even larger scale when it came to the boutique's parent company, Apple Corps. Founded in January 1968, Apple Corps was originally designed as a conglomerate management company to help the Beatles organize their growing finances and offset the enormous income tax on their earnings.<sup>5</sup> The Beatles also had philanthropic reasons for creating Apple Corps. In addition to exploring interests outside of music through divisions like Apple Retail (the division in charge of Apple Boutique) and Apple Electronics, the Beatles sought to use their success to nurture up-and-coming new artists by alleviating them of the struggles they were subjected to themselves.<sup>6</sup>

On paper, Apple Corps was a utopia that the Beatles regarded as a win for everybody, and the icing on top was that the company simultaneously promoted the band's counterculture ideology. Mild forms of tax evasion and supporting artists without the desire for profit in return were textbook definitions

3. Dylan Hayley Leavitt, Antiques Roadshow, accessed March 24, 2018, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/stories/articles/2015/10/19/psychedelic-style-apple-boutique/>.

4. The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2000), 290.

5. Bruce Spizer, *The Beatles Solo on Apple Records* (New York: 498 Productions, 2005), 283.

6. "Apple - The Short, Strange Blossoming of The Beatles' Dream," *The Independent*, October 22, 2010.

of counterculture, as both actions opposed the prevailing societal standards for business and authoritative regulations. Under these simple principles, the Beatles expected Apple Corps to reinvent the way business was conducted, but soon after the company opened, the band was instead treated to a dose of *déjà vu* from their time with Apple Boutique.

Apple Corps' main focus eventually shifted almost exclusively to helping struggling artists, but this generosity came at great personal expense to each Beatle. Money was given out left and right to anybody who walked through the company's doors claiming to have an idea. Internally unreliable employees squandered even more of the band's earnings.<sup>7</sup> Despite the Beatles' best intentions, Apple Corps was built upon razor-thin business models that spawned an uncontrollable, chaotic business venture. Apple Corps was driven to near bankruptcy because of the abhorrent business and personal finance decisions the Beatles made during their sole ownership of the company, but it also represented a genuine commitment to the counterculture, or, more specifically, hip capitalism.

### Historiography

The story of Apple Corps is understudied in comparison to topics like their breakup or American television debut on *Ed Sullivan*, but the business has not by any means been lost to history. Apple Corps is frequently mentioned in larger discussions focusing on the Beatles and business in general, and this historiography provides a strong narrative outlining the company's history. The leading literature in this field of study includes Peter Doggett's *You Never Give Me Your Money*, Bruce Spizer's *The Beatles Solo on Apple Records*, and Courtney Richards' and George Cassidy's *Come Together: The Business Wisdom of The Beatles*. These three books have illuminated the discussion on the Beatles and Apple Corps by collectively shaping the main debates on the topic. Apple Corps, although largely set up as a means to offset income tax and manage their own finances, was a creative but ultimately naïve business endeavor that failed due to the Beatles' inept business decisions in their post-Brian

7. "Apple - The Short, Strange Blossoming of The Beatles' Dream."

Epstein years.<sup>8</sup> The Beatles' business historiography offers a sufficient rise and fall narrative of Apple Corps; however, without the inclusion of hip capitalism (also known as hip consumerism) to answer the imperative question of why the Beatles initially conceived the idea for Apple, the story remains incomplete.

The historiography of hip capitalism is small compared to that of the Beatles and business. The leading works on the subject belong to Matt Mason's *The Pirate's Dilemma: How Youth Culture Is Reinventing Capitalism* and Thomas Frank's *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and The Rise of Hip Consumerism*. According to this notion, the central ideology of modern consumerism is derived from the struggle between counterculture and consumerism. Consumerism's close association with conformity causes cultural rebels to avoid mainstream consumption; ironically, instead of successfully subverting the commercial industry, the images and styles of the counterculture movement are adopted by it to create a "hip consumer."<sup>9</sup> The Beatles had undeniable ties to the counterculture movement that they emphasized as their reason for creating Apple Corps, and especially its chief division Apple Records.

### The Origins of Apple Corps

If Harrison's song *Taxman* was any indication of how the entire band felt about taxation, it was no wonder they were willing to build an entire company to shield their money from Great Britain. By 1967, the Beatles' wealth had grown exponentially due to sold-out concerts and record royalties. Yet British income tax laws prescribed that any income greater than £2,000 would be taxed at higher rates in proportion to the total amount of income.<sup>10</sup> In an attempt to liberate the Beatles

8. Peter Doggett, *You Never Give Me Your Money: The Battle for the Soul of the Beatles* (New York: Vintage, 2010); Spizer, *The Beatles Solo on Apple Records*; Richard Courtney and George Cassidy, *Come Together: The Business Wisdom of The Beatles* (Nashville, TN: Turner, 2011).

9. Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998); Matt Mason, *The Pirate's Dilemma: How Youth Culture Is Reinventing Capitalism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009).

10. Finance Act, 1968, c. 44.

from their tax burden, the band's accountant Harry Pinsker advised that setting up a new company would help offset their tax liability.<sup>11</sup>

Pinsker served as the Beatles' accountant as soon as they signed Brian Epstein on as their manager in 1962. For years Pinsker utilized his expertise to conserve the band's assets and, more importantly, to protect the boys from their profligacy. The evasive tax maneuver Pinsker suggested in 1967 had the Beatles reinvest their earnings in a business; this way, instead of being subjected to income tax, their earnings were filtered through a business and thus only subject to corporation tax, which was much lower. Using this strategy, Lennon, McCartney, Harrison, and Starr could even reclaim their personal expenses by disguising them as company expenses.<sup>12</sup> When asked about his role in the creation of Apple Corps years later, Pinsker simply stated that the company was just a way to help four "scruffy boys who didn't want to pay tax."<sup>13</sup>

Under Pinsker's counsel, Epstein laid the foundations of a new Beatles company in April 1967.<sup>14</sup> Originally named The Beatles & Company, the new enterprise was designed to be governed by each of the Beatles and Epstein. In theory, The Beatles & Company was poised to serve its purpose and save the band's income from British taxes. However, the sudden death of Epstein on August 27, 1967, quickly skewed any chance of the new Beatles company serving its original purpose.

Epstein was far from the world's best manager. His preoccupation with the creative elements of management left the Beatles as a business entity susceptible to parasitic companies that could, and did, exploit Epstein's ignorance for larger than typical shares of the band.<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the biggest stain on Epstein's managerial record remains his disastrous attempt at licensing the Beatles' worldwide merchandising rights. Not

11. Peter Taylor-Whiffen, "The Beatles' Accountant 50 Years on: 'They Were Scruffy Boys Who Didn't Want to Pay Tax,'" *The Telegraph*, July 23, 2017.

12. Doggett, *You Never Give Me Your Money*.

13. Taylor-Whiffen, "The Beatles' Accountant 50 Years on."

14. Holly Tessler, "Let It Be? Exploring The Beatles Grey Market, 1970-1995," *Popular Music History* 9, no. 1 (January 2014): 48–63.

15. David Philip, "Magical Mystery Tour: Failures From The Beatles' Self-Managed Era and Lessons for Today's DIY Musicians," *Journal of the Music & Entertainment Industry Educators Association* 15, no. 1 (2015): 39.

only did Epstein's poor financial negotiations cost the Beatles millions of dollars in royalties, the lawsuits that erupted in the aftermath caused immeasurable stress for the band and, reportedly, around three tons worth of courtroom documents.<sup>16</sup> But for all his managerial faults, Epstein possessed several redeeming qualities that arguably made him the only person that could have elevated the Beatles to superstardom. Epstein did everything in his power to make good on his promise to the boys to turn the Beatles into a worldwide phenomenon; early Rolling Stones manager Andrew Loog Oldham even remarked that Epstein "would kill for them [the Beatles]."<sup>17</sup> By the time Epstein fulfilled his promise and the Beatles had their first string of number one hits, they placed so much faith in Epstein that Lennon, McCartney, Harrison, and Starr signed off on whatever contracts he slid under their pens without even reading them.<sup>18</sup> This trusting relationship eventually morphed into a dangerous dependence as the band's career progressed. The boys' tendency to sign first, read never, increasingly isolated them from the sensitive business aspects of their band. So when Pinsker proposed that the Beatles form a company to manage their finances and counteract their hefty income tax, Epstein took care of the details as usual. Epstein's tragic overdose in the midst of plans for The Beatles & Company immediately postponed its opening and, on a larger scale, left the band without any business guidance.<sup>19</sup> Lennon, McCartney, Harrison, and Starr were now without the insulation that Epstein provided from the ravenous entertainment industry. Perhaps even more dangerous, the Fab Four had no one to say "no" to their self-proclaimed great ideas.

### Apple's Fall and Fall

A few months after Epstein's death, the Beatles revisited the idea of opening their own company, but this time no idea was a bad idea. The Beatles & Company was renamed Apple Corps,

16. Stan Soocher, *Baby You're a Rich Man: Suing the Beatles for Fun and Profit* (Lebanon, NH: ForeEdge, 2015), 12.

17. Doggett, *You Never Give Me Your Money*, 43.

18. Soocher, *Baby You're a Rich Man*, 29.

19. Debbie Geller, *In My Life: The Brian Epstein Story* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2000), 167.

and the company's fields of interest were significantly expanded beyond their original scope.<sup>20</sup> Without Epstein to reign in the Beatles' non-stop creativity, every new avenue they could think of was brought to life through Apple Corps, and the original intent of offsetting taxes slowly diminished. This led to the creation of divisions within Apple Corps that the Beatles had no practical experience in, including Apple Tailoring, Apple Retail, and Apple Electronics.<sup>21</sup> The electronics division was by far the most expensive and simultaneously least profitable investment within Apple Corps. Alexis Mardas, or "Magic Alex" as Lennon nicknamed him, was placed in charge of inventions in Apple Electronics.<sup>22</sup> In a 1968 interview with American journalist Larry Kane, McCartney excitedly told Kane that Mardas, "has invented incredible things, so that'll be big." Lennon chimed in as well in response to a question about The Beatles' break from touring and said, "with all these incredible electronics who knows, we might come flying over New York one day to play."<sup>23</sup> Clearly part of the appeal of investing in Apple Electronics was the optimism surrounding the growth of electronics and technology in general. But unfortunately for the Beatles' money, advancements in these fields could only be brought about by someone competent enough to do so; Mardas certainly was not that someone. By the time his involvement with Apple Corps came to an end in 1969, his subpar inventions made no headway in the electronics market but still cost the Beatles over £300,000 (the modern day equivalent of approximately £3,000,000).<sup>24</sup> Yet the financial losses at Apple Electronics proved only to be the tip of a very expensive iceberg.

First-hand accounts of former Apple Corps employees, including secretaries, accountants, and assistants, all construct a singular, clear picture of what Apple Corps managed to accomplish upon opening: nothing. The company's inability to answer fundamental questions – who are we, what are we

20. Tessler, "Let It Be?," 53.

21. Soocher, *Baby You're a Rich Man*, 154.

22. Philip, "Magical Mystery Tour: Failures From The Beatles' Self-Managed Era and Lessons for Today's DIY Musicians," 43.

23. thebeatlesinterviews, *John Lennon & Paul McCartney New York, May 1968*, accessed March 22, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L\\_abWOyGl6c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L_abWOyGl6c).

24. Soocher, *Baby You're a Rich Man*, 32.

doing, and where is this all headed? – meant that its employees went into work every day directionless and failed to accomplish anything significant for the company.<sup>25</sup> For instance, in the 2017 Apple Corps documentary *The Beatles, Hippies, and Hell's Angels* by Ben Lewis, a former secretary of Apple Corps recalled seeing a man at work every single day that sat atop a filing cabinet doodling pictures of penises until it was time for all the employees to leave.<sup>26</sup> Fortunately, whoever this Michelangelo was, his work ethic made him an outlier amongst the other Apple Corps employees, but what they did from day to day did not necessarily offer significant contributions either.

A typical day at Apple Corps began with chardonnay and cigarettes being served to secretaries and “Apple scruffs” by girls who would wait in reception at Apple Corps to get even a glimpse of the Beatles.<sup>27</sup> When it came time for lunch, enough drugs would go around to ensure that everybody in the office was at least glassy eyed.<sup>28</sup> As if drugs and alcohol being used during the workday was not bad enough, Apple Corps paid for the alcohol, which meant that Lennon, McCartney, Harrison, and Starr were personally paying the massive £600 liquor bill each month.<sup>29</sup> On top of these party favors, employees spent hundreds of thousands of pounds on almost a monthly basis decorating their offices and the building with extravagant, overly ornate furniture. Even Neil Aspinall, the Beatles’ former road manager turned head of Apple Corps, thought it was entertaining to go overboard furnishing the boys’ offices and purchased four enormous “gold hand-tooled, leather top” chairs for them.<sup>30</sup> But the unnecessary expenditures did not stop at just alcohol and furniture; unauthorized flights from London to Paris and America, coupled with international phone calls dialed by non-employees that just wandered into the building,

25. Courtney and Cassidy, *Come Together: The Business Wisdom of The Beatles*, 67.

26. Ben Lewis, *The Beatles, Hippies, and Hell's Angels: Inside the Crazy World of Apple*, Documentary, 2017.

27. “The Beatles Documentary: Behind the Scenes at Apple Corps,” *The Independent*, June 18, 2017.

28. Lewis, *The Beatles, Hippies, and Hell's Angels*.

29. Richard DiLello, *The Longest Cocktail Party: An Insider Account of The Beatles & the Wild Rise and Fall of Their Multi-Million Dollar Apple Empire* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music, 2014), 71.

30. Jonathan Gould, *Can't Buy Me Love: The Beatles, Britain, and America* (New York: Harmony Books, 2007), 89.

all contributed to the chaos of Apple. The phone calls got so out of control at one point that Apple Corps was billed £4,000 for a single month.<sup>31</sup> These mammoth costs were left unchecked for months. As a result, the company was hemorrhaging money from every angle possible, and because its profits were essentially non-existent, these costs were paid month after month by the Beatles, with no profits from the company to compensate them. By September 1968, things were so chaotic at Apple Corps that its chief financial advisor resigned, stating in his resignation letter that his departure was due to the “slipshod manner in which the company was being managed.”<sup>32</sup> Soon after, the company’s second and only remaining accountant also put in his notice, writing: “your personal finances are in a mess. Apple is a mess.”<sup>33</sup> But even amongst the catastrophic day-to-day of Apple Corps, there remained one division that stood as a single bright spot among the rest, Apple Records.

The records division of Apple Corps was one of the few divisions that the Beatles could actually claim to have any legitimate expertise in and thus, one of the few divisions that had a chance to succeed. Similar to Apple Corps as a whole, the purpose of Apple Records, according to the Beatles, was to establish a creative environment that allowed artists to produce music without concerning themselves with equipment, money, or any other logistics. In the beginning, to find artists to sign to their label, the Beatles ran a simple advertisement asking people who were interested in their label to send in demo tapes so that the band could then select any talent they heard.<sup>34</sup> After receiving thousands of tapes within just a few days, the band quickly recalibrated and began to approach their talent search from a much more personal perspective. Of the thirty artists signed to Apple Records, almost all of them were personally brought on board by a Beatle. Looking back at the label’s discography, it was clear that the individual tastes of Lennon, McCartney, Harrison, and Starr were responsible for such a diverse catalog of artists.<sup>35</sup>

31. DiLello, *The Longest Cocktail Party*, 71.

32. Gould, *Can’t Buy Me Love*, 32.

33. Gould, 34.

34. The Beatles, “The Story of Apple Records Part One - YouTube,” accessed March 13, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spRcoGLqj2s>.

One of the first and most memorable artists to sign with Apple Records was Welsh folk-singer Mary Hopkin. McCartney recruited her directly after he saw her perform on a televised British talent show.<sup>36</sup> Hopkin immediately agreed to sign with the Beatles' label, and McCartney was so passionate about the newly signed artist that he produced her first single with Apple Records, "Those Were the Days", himself. The song hit number one on the charts in the U.K. and successfully launched Hopkin's career in the music industry.<sup>37</sup> Not all of Apple Records' music was as commercially successful as Hopkin's first single and subsequent albums. Apple's eclectic roster began when Starr brought British classical composer John Tavener to Apple Records. The label officially released his biblical-based album *The Whale* (based upon the allegory "Jonah and the Whale") to the world with a big green apple on it in late September of 1968.<sup>38</sup> Needless to say Starr's draft pick did not receive the same limelight as Hopkin in Great Britain for this biblical album, but *The Whale* has lived on to be re-distributed more than three times since its 1968 release.<sup>39</sup> Harrison continued the trend of diversity at Apple Records and was arguably the largest contributor to the labels growing collection of artists. Over the span of the Beatles' time at Apple, Harrison brought his love of Indian music to the studio and recorded Indian-influenced music while also signing rock musician Jackie Lomax and pop-soul singer Doris Troy.<sup>40</sup> Lennon even participated in his fair share of unconventional music at Apple Records. By 1968, Lennon began collaborating at Apple studios with his soon to be wife Yoko Ono. Together they created a musically avant-garde album entitled *Unfinished Music No. 2: Life with the Lions*. Strangely enough, even in the company of world music and 1960s British orchestral composition, the Ono-Lennon album still managed to be the most unorthodox.<sup>41</sup> There was also one

35. Spizer, *The Beatles Solo on Apple Records*, 92.

36. The Beatles, "The Story Of Apple Records Part Two - YouTube," accessed March 13, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=petBTU1qfPk>.

37. "The Beatles' Apple Records: 40 Years Later," NPR.org, accessed March 2, 2018, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=90437894>.

38. The Beatles, "The Story of Apple Records Part One - YouTube."

39. "News - Tavener's The Whale Re-Release - Music Sales Classical," accessed April 2, 2018, <http://www.musicsalesclassical.com/News/2138>.

40. The Beatles, "The Story of Apple Records - Part 3 (of 3) - YouTube," accessed March 13, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZP4L\\_9z8S0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZP4L_9z8S0).

other artist whose career Apple Records helped launch that continues to impact the world of music to this day: Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame inductee James Taylor.

In June 1968, Apple Records' head of A&R Peter Asher received word of an American singer-songwriter named James Taylor who was coming to London in search of a record deal. Through mutual connections, Asher eventually received a copy of Taylor's demo tape and immediately signed the young artist to Apple.<sup>42</sup> Taylor's self-titled debut album became the first non-British work published by Apple Records, and although it was not an instant hit in either America or Great Britain, his album initiated an enduring career that earned him five Grammy awards.<sup>43</sup> However, Apple Records can only claim credit for some of Taylor's massive success in the music industry.

After a year of working with Apple, even Taylor grew frustrated with the company's lack of competence and inability to conduct real business. He claimed that, "nobody at Apple had any sense at all."<sup>44</sup> By the time former Rolling Stones' manager and future Beatles' manager Allen Klein arrived at Apple, he released Taylor from his contract with the label, which ultimately cost the Beatles millions in royalties and production credits. Klein's decision to remove Taylor from the label was a part of his larger efforts to clean up Apple Corps, but by the time he was able to make himself a part of the Beatles' lives, the monetary damage done to the company was largely irreversible.

### Hip Capitalism and Counterculture

Despite their enormous financial losses, the Beatles persisted with Apple Corps because they wanted to create a company that was an extension of their anti-authoritarian philosophy and money, ironically, ceased to be the focus. The Beatles were somewhat notorious for their rebellious attitudes towards any form of authority, and in their world, record companies were an

41. Philip, "Magical Mystery Tour: Failures From The Beatles' Self-Managed Era and Lessons for Today's DIY Musicians," 45.
42. "Apple - The Short, Strange Blossoming of The Beatles' Dream."
43. "Biography: James Taylor," accessed April 3, 2018, <https://www.jamestaylor.com/biography/>.
44. Philip Norman, *Shout!: The Beatles in Their Generation* (New York: Warner Books, 1981), 284.

unequivocal authoritarian force. From early on in their career the Beatles were subjected to second-hand treatment at the hands of record labels for their novice status as a band. For instance, when Epstein finally did get the Beatles a record deal with producer George Martin at Electronic Musical Industries (EMI), issues with royalty payments (the Beatles were allegedly not receiving their share) arose from a contract that heavily favored EMI.<sup>45</sup> Even as recent as 2005, Apple Corps has continued to sue EMI on behalf of the Beatles for \$58 million in unpaid royalties.<sup>46</sup> These oppressive experiences helped refine the Beatles' anti-authoritarian philosophy and channel their frustrations into a company that was meant to challenge the status quo and be in the vanguard of a new, alternative capitalism.

Once Apple Corps opened to the public, the Beatles, particularly Lennon and McCartney, advertised the company to the world as a utopian ideal that offered anyone with an artistic dream the money they needed to make it a reality. McCartney dubbed this concept "western communism."<sup>47</sup> In the same press conference, Lennon further articulated McCartney's comment by declaring that Apple Corps was a "system by whereby people, who just want to make a film about ... anything don't have to go on their knees in somebody's office. Probably yours."<sup>48</sup> McCartney and Lennon were essentially convinced that Apple Corps could operate successfully from a grey zone that was neither a traditional business nor a charity. The band meant to give enough to aspiring artists that their ability to produce the art they envisioned would not be crippled by logistics, then to use some of the profits from these artistic products to reinvest in Apple to help other artists rather than simply earn income. This business strategy directly contradicted the standard profit-oriented models that a majority of record labels followed. The Beatles' conscious efforts to act against societal standards epitomized the counterculture movement of the 1960s. They sought to overturn the commercial record industry with a new

45. Keith Badman, *The Beatles: Off the Record* (London: Omnibus Press, 2009), 273.

46. Alex Mar, "Beatles Sue EMI for Millions," *Rolling Stone*, December 16, 2005.

47. "The Beatles Apple and Beyond Vol.2 - YouTube," June 1968,  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkYZHpBeFKE>.

48. "The Beatles Apple and Beyond 1968 Vol.2 - YouTube."

type of business that allowed artists the freedom to create without corporate entanglement.<sup>49</sup> However, instead of Apple Corps changing the commercial record industry, their anti-authoritative brand was actually adopted by the commercial industry for additional profit.

The notion of hip capitalism asserts that consumerism and commercial business practices represent conformity, an element of society that is constantly subverted by cultural rebels. According to Thomas Frank, one of the leading theorists in hip capitalism, this subculture of rebels is able to avoid being sucked in by mass-produced, everyday items in favor of authentic, culturally inspired goods.<sup>50</sup> By Frank's definition, the Beatles most certainly qualify as cultural rebels. As the Beatles' growing fame and success granted them the independence to become the artists they truly wanted to be, their style and art became a brand that was all their own. To the rest of the world, it was also clear that the Beatles had grown to be a symbol of counterculture. Their more radical music ("Taxman" and "Revolution") served as anthems to protests against war and government, which not only gave the Beatles an edgy public persona, but by the standards of hip capitalism it also made them "cool".<sup>51</sup> However being cool and unique were dangerous adjectives in the face of capitalism.

The timeline of hip capitalism begins with the creation of cool in society, typically through musicians or other prominent figures, and ends with the absorption of what makes these figures unique into mainstream capitalism.<sup>52</sup> In the case of the Beatles, Apple Records was already "cool" simply because the band's name was attached to the company; however, this division of Apple Corps had yet to find its place in mainstream capitalism. Once Apple Records was fully established, it became the official label for the Beatles' music, but their records were still distributed by EMI in Europe and Capitol Records in

49. Philip, "Magical Mystery Tour: Failures From The Beatles' Self-Managed Era and Lessons for Today's DIY Musicians," 45.

50. Frank, *The Conquest of Cool*, 9.

51. Doyle Greene, *Rock, Counterculture and the Avant-Garde, 1966–1970: How the Beatles, Frank Zappa and the Velvet Underground Defined an Era* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2016); Frank, *The Conquest of Cool*.

52. Joseph Heath, "The Structure of Hip Consumerism," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 27, no. 6 (2001): 1-17.

America.<sup>53</sup> Because the Beatles were still under contract, they could not fully escape the grip of their original record label, but the partnership between EMI and Apple appeared to be a reasonable compromise. Yet just beyond the surface of the collaboration between labels laid the beginnings of EMI's ingestion of Apple Records. Any music published by the Beatles during or post-1968 bore the iconic green apple, Apple Corps' logo, which gave the average consumer the impression that they were purchasing music from the Beatles' new, hip record company. However, since EMI and Capitol Records still served as distributors, their records could have been dressed in any sort of design and ultimately they would still benefit financially from it. EMI's strategic marketing and distribution of Apple Records precisely reflects the concept of hip capitalism. By draping profits in the appeal of the Beatles' new anti-authoritarian company, the capitalistic EMI was successfully able to use the band's attempt at subversion for their own financial gain. Although the marketing and distribution technique was the only attempt by EMI to use the Beatles to emulate hip capitalism, this perspective is often overlooked in the narrative of Apple Corps. But because this concept reflects both the countercultural elements to Apple Corps and the capitalistic world it was ultimately subjected to, it remains integral for a complete understanding of the Beatles' company.

### Conclusion

During a 1968 interview regarding the creation of Apple Corps, Lennon described the longevity of the company as a child's top: "we're going to just keep spinning and spinning and see how far it goes."<sup>54</sup> Much to the Beatles' surprise, it did not take long for the top to stop spinning. Apple Corps began as a tax dodge that was simultaneously meant to help the boys manage their growing finances. In the wake of the untimely death of the man who took care of everything, Epstein, the Beatles managed to spin the company into a business that dabbled in anything

53. Spizer, *The Beatles Solo on Apple Records*, 62.

54. thebeatlesinterviews, "John Lennon & Paul McCartney New York, May 1968," [https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=L\\_abWOyGl6c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=L_abWOyGl6c).

they found interesting in that particular moment in time and represented their own counterculture sentiments. The Beatles' interests drew them to fields that they had no business being in. Moreover, the lack of direction within Apple Corps at the outset created the cracks in their businesses from which thousands of pounds would spill out every month.

By January 1969, Lennon announced that, "we [the Beatles] haven't have half the money people think we have. We have enough to live on but we can't let Apple go on like this ... it doesn't need to make vast profits but if it carries on like this all of us will be broke in six months."<sup>55</sup> By the time the Beatles officially broke up the next year, Lennon, McCartney, Harrison, and Starr had all decided to officially leave the company but did not choose to dissolve it. In their absence, Neil Aspinall continued to manage Apple Corps. From his position, he has overseen several reissues of the Beatles' music and continues to keep their legacy alive by publishing material such as *The Beatles Anthology*.

Ultimately, the early years of Apple Corps were disastrous. Aside from the outpouring of money on ideas that never even materialized at times, the stress of maintaining a company like this constantly put excess pressure on the Beatles. Yet the initiative the Beatles expressed in creating something that was meant to be their own inspired other artists to do the same. Most notably the Rolling Stones created Rolling Stones Records as an answer to Apple Corps, and dozens of other artists followed suit. So while Apple Corps may have been a disaster through and through for the Beatles, their innovation and initiative propelled a new generation of artists to go into business for themselves.

55. Gould, *Can't Buy Me Love*, 78.



[14]

## "I'd Give You Everything I've Got for a Little Peace of Mind": The Beatles and Personal Security

**Karson Lyon**

In 1965, 15-year-old Sue Tebbutt found Paul McCartney's address. It was easy. After all, a description of the house had been printed in a fan magazine. Once they found the street, a local boy was more than happy to point out the exact house for half a crown. What did the Beatle do when he opened his door to find young Sue and one of her friends, he surprisingly told them where the other three Beatles lived. Soon, both girls were visiting the Beatles regularly. John Lennon even scolded his neighborhood's guards for trying to turn them away. He never wanted them to keep fans from his door again.<sup>1</sup> Fifteen years later, a fan murdered him outside of the Dakota, his New York City apartment building.

1. Valentine Low, "Do You Want to Know a Secret? What Paul Told Beatles Fan Who Turned Up at His Door," *The Times*, July 14, 2010.

The story of the Beatles is a story of modern celebrity culture gone haywire. While the Beatles followed many of the patterns of the 20th and 21st century global superstar, everything about their careers occurred on an unprecedented scale and has never been fully replicated. Of course, with unprecedented star-power comes greater security risks. The task of keeping the Beatles safe was passed on to different parties throughout the four men's careers. As their world changed, the dangers that they faced changed with it. Each stage of the Beatles careers, from the height of the Beatlemania phenomenon to the post-breakup years, brought new threats and required a new approach to their personal security. These changes in the band's relationship to security reflected the greater change in the nature of celebrity in the 20th century as the power to protect shifted from public policing to private security.

### Historiography

This chapter explores the Beatles' changing relationship with security over the course of their careers. This topic fits into the broader context of the dangers of fame in the 20th century. Scholars have argued that the 20th century saw the birth of a new type of stardom that caused celebrities to require more personal security. The Beatles, especially Lennon, appear repeatedly in the context of this field. The leading literature on the topic is Chris Rojek's *Celebrity* and John David Ebert's *Dead Celebrities, Living Icons: Tragedy and Fame in the Age of the Multimedia Superstar*. Both of these scholars argue that the 20th century saw the creation of a new level of celebrity obsession, which in turn created a new level of danger in the lives of celebrities. Ebert's work also interprets the public's obsession with iconic celebrities' deaths, a topic on which considerable scholarship has emerged.<sup>2</sup> That field of study expands on the

2. For information on the nature of celebrity in the 20th century and rise of infamy as a kind of fame, see: Chris Rojek, *Celebrity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001). For information on the veneration of dead celebrities as a cultural phenomenon, see: John David Ebert, *Dead Celebrities, Living Icons: Tragedy and Fame in the Age of the Multimedia Superstar* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010); Malcolm Foley and J. John Lennon, "JFK and Dark Tourism: A Fascination with Assassination," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 2, no. 4 (April 2007): 198–211; Erika Doss, "Rock and Roll Pilgrims: Reflections on Ritual, Religiosity, and Race at Graceland," in *Shrines and Pilgrimage in the Modern World: New Itiner-*

legacy of Lennon's death, which will be discussed later in this paper, through the lens of the public rather than the surviving Beatles.

### Beatlemania: 1964

1964 was the height of Beatlemania. It was the year the Fab Four left their native England to take America and the rest of the world by storm. Everywhere they went, they were greeted by thousands of screaming fans. These fans created a challenge for the people in charge of public security, the ones trying to keep their airports, hotels, stadiums and public streets from being destroyed by thousands of crazed teenagers and keep the Beatles safe. The near-universal solution was to get the police involved.

No one in New York City could have predicted the extent of the chaos the Beatles would cause when they arrived in the U.S. on February 7, 1964. Four thousand young fans swarmed John F. Kennedy (JFK) International, a new record for the airport. A hundred NYPD officers had to be called in to bolster the security personnel already at the airport.<sup>3</sup> The Plaza Hotel fared no better. Police barriers had to be erected outside, with additional police assisting security guards in patrolling the lobby and guarding the Beatles' door. Hotel management claimed that they would not have accepted the band's reservation if they had known who they were.<sup>4</sup> After all, most guests do not bring a throng of screaming teenagers with them. After a brief stay in the United States, during which they made their first appearance on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, the Beatles headed back to Great Britain.

As far as conscripting random employees for crowd control goes, JFK International was ahead of the game. In February, the Beatles left for London after their first trip to the U.S. The two hundred police and airport security guards on duty found themselves with a full-blown riot on their hands. Two police

*aries into the Sacred*, ed. Peter Jan Margry (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 123-142.

3. "Beatles Wing in; Welcomed by 4,000 Teens: English Singers Draw Record Crowd," *Chicago Tribune*, February 8, 1964.

4. Thomas Buckley, "Beatles Prepare for Their Debut: Police Patrol Their Hotel and Guard Theater," *New York Times*, February 9, 1964.

officers were injured in the commotion and had to be carried away from the four thousand screaming fans.<sup>5</sup> A hundred airport mechanics and baggage handlers had to be called off of the tarmac to help restore order.<sup>6</sup>

The Beatles caused no less commotion in their home country. Upon arriving in London, the boys were greeted with somewhere between eight and twelve thousand fans. Many of the teenagers spent the night at the airport, waiting for their idols to return. It became the police departments duty to ensure that the boys and girls remained separated. When the Beatles finally arrived, the police struggled to hold back the crowd, but managed to keep the damages to a few lost helmets, a shattered door, and a possible skull fracture.<sup>7</sup>

By the summer, Beatle-infested areas were enlisting the help of any group of adults within arm's reach. In Seattle, Washington, sailors assisted the police in holding back fans as they continuously rushed the stage. They came in handy when the police needed to sneak the band into the back of an ambulance after being trapped in their dressing room for nearly an hour.<sup>8</sup> Sailors and soldiers had to be called in to assist the police in Melbourne, Australia, as well. The three hundred man strong police force could do next to nothing against the 250,000 fans that overtook the city.<sup>9</sup> According to Lennon, one of those fans made it into the Beatles' hotel room: "This lad – Peter – walked in and said, 'Hullo dere,' and I said, 'Hullo dere,' and he told me how he'd climbed up the drainpipe, from balcony to balcony. I gave him a drink because he deserved one and then took him around to see the others, who were quite amazed."<sup>10</sup> At this time, the Beatles saw no harm in a single fan; it was the multitudes that threatened them.

Autumn brought no end to the Beatles' enthusiastic receptions as they once again toured the United States. Five

5. "Fans Riot in N. Y. as Beatles Depart U. S.," *Chicago Tribune*, February 22, 1964.

6. "Beatles Depart for Britain As 4,000 Admirers Scream," *New York Times*, February 22, 1964.

7. "British Teens Greet Beatles: Never Leave Us Again, Throng Implores," *Chicago Tribune*, February 23, 1964.

8. "Beatles Escape Howling Teens in Ambulance," *Chicago Tribune*, August 22, 1964.

9. "250,000 Hail Beatles in Australia," *Los Angeles Times*, June 15, 1964.

10. The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2000), 142.

hundred police officers were on duty when the Beatles came to Cleveland, two hundred more than when President Lyndon B. Johnson visited the city. Anyone who set foot in the lobby of the Sheraton-Cleveland Hotel was immediately subjected to questioning. The Senators, a major league baseball team from Washington, D.C., were staying in the very same hotel, with their unfortunate road secretary in the room next door to the Beatles' suite.<sup>11</sup> While staying next to the Beatles may have been exciting initially, the constantly patrolling security and the commotion caused by the fans, especially the clever few who managed to make it to that floor, got old quickly. The players had no need to worry about being bothered by baseball fans while the Fab Four were there.

Chicago was especially wary of Beatlemania in September of 1964. The city's mayor met with the local police, fire, and health departments to discuss plans and tactics for "B-Day," the day of the Beatles arrival. The police commander reassured the mayor that, "we've been in tight spots before. We'll handle the Beatles just like every other big emergency. It calls for a tight security and a stiff upper lip."<sup>12</sup> Their jobs were not made any easier by the fact that the time and location of the Beatles' arrival was leaked by their Chicago press agent not once, but twice.<sup>13</sup> It was too late to change plans a third time, so police and city officials just had to brace themselves for the coming battle at Midway Airport. Sixty police officers were ready to hold back the five thousand fans who turned up to welcome the musicians. A handful of the teenagers attempted to scale the fence around the runway. At the concert, three hundred police officers, a hundred and fifty firefighters, and two hundred ushers struggled to maintain order.<sup>14</sup>

The Beatles' popularity was not universally accepted as a positive in 1964, though. When the Beatles played Montreal, a local newspaper published a rumor that someone was planning to shoot Ringo Starr. The exact reason why is unknown; the

11. Bob Addie, "Chaos in Cleveland," *The Washington Post*, September 18, 1964.
12. Thomas Fitzpatrick, "Mayor, Police Huddle; Map 'B-Day' Tactics: Beatles' Arrival Being Kept Secret," *Chicago Tribune*, September 4, 1964.
13. Thomas Fitzpatrick, "The Beatle Battle Gets Early Start," *Chicago Tribune*, September 5, 1964.
14. Thomas Fitzpatrick, "Beatles Are a Screaming Smash Here," *Chicago Tribune*, September 6, 1964.

Beatles theorized that whoever was responsible thought he was Jewish (he is not) and that it was an anti-Semitic threat. A plain-clothes policeman sat onstage next to the drummer during the Montreal show, and the band flew to Florida immediately after rather than staying the night in Montreal as they had planned. According to Starr, "threats we took in our stride...but this was one of the few times I was really worried."<sup>15</sup> The Beatles recognized the danger that their fans put them in. After being asked what he thought would happen to the band without police protection, Starr responded with a smile, "I think they'd kill us."<sup>16</sup> Comments like this show that the band had a healthy fear of the screaming crowds, but they generally believed that individual fans would never hurt them.

### Bigger Than Jesus: 1965 and 1966

The year 1965 saw an escalation of Beatle-induced madness. The Beatles played the Hollywood Bowl in August, causing the usual hysteria. A hundred police officers and two hundred sixty security guards had to set up a perimeter around the stadium in order to keep over ten thousand ticketless fans from entering. Over a hundred people still tried their luck at seeing the band live and were arrested.<sup>17</sup> The Beatles had to be driven away from the Bowl in an armored truck. The escape was halted for about five minutes when two hundred fans surrounded the vehicle as they tried to get close to the band. Police and security guards had to clear the way with night sticks and over a dozen people were injured in the confusion.<sup>18</sup> Even staying at a private residence could not protect the Beatles from their Los Angles fan base. Teenaged girls, many accompanied by their mothers, found the location of the privately-owned manor where the Fab Four were staying and camped out front. Police and neighbors alike were frustrated by the noise and traffic problems caused by the loitering fans. The band had four private security guards

15. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 153.

16. Fitzpatrick, "Beatles Are a Screaming Smash Here."

17. Phil Fradkin and Dick Main, "Bowl Roundup: 100 Arrests Made While Beatles Sing," *Los Angeles Times*, August 30, 1965.

18. "Frenzied Youths Delay Departure of Beatles," *Los Angeles Times*, August 31, 1965.

staying with them, but the police recommended that they hire more in response to the growing crowd outside of their door.<sup>19</sup>

1966 brought more of the same, despite growing controversy. Lennon made his infamous comment in March of 1966 in which he claimed that the Beatles were "bigger than Jesus." It was printed in American newspapers five months later. Ticket sales for the group's North American tour hardly suffered and fans were still willing to go to extreme lengths to be near them. Fans tried to sneak their way into the Beatles' hotel rooms in Chicago, Toronto, Cleveland and even Bible Belt Memphis. One girl in Detroit even jumped off of a ledge in an attempt to touch Starr. The continued ardor of their fans could not save the Beatles from violent backlash, though. Their Memphis show was picketed by the Ku Klux Klan, and a firecracker was thrown at Starr's feet during the performance.<sup>20</sup>

The Beatles continued to be international sensations despite the controversy in the U.S. They made their first trip to Japan in June 1966. The Japanese had seen the chaos that the Beatlemania had brought down upon other cities over the past two years, so they were not about to take any chances. The Tokyo police department was ready with three thousand officers when the Beatles arrived at the airport and another two thousand and two hundred at the venue during their show, two hundred and fifty of which were on the stage with the band.<sup>21</sup> The Beatles visit was the biggest security problem that the police department had experienced since large-scale student protests prevented a visit from President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1960.<sup>22</sup>

For the entirety of their touring years, the Beatles primarily entrusted their safety to the local officials, whoever they may be. They would arrive and expect the city or business they were in to have enough common sense to provide a method of crowd control. Since business owners and city officials generally prefer not to have their property destroyed by crowds of teenagers,

19. Marilyn Caldwell, "Hideaway Secret Is Out: Mothers Join Girls Doing Beatle Watch," *Los Angeles Times*, August 24, 1965.

20. "Controversy Not Harming Beatles," *The Washington Post*, Aug 24, 1966.

21. "Japanese Police to Greet Beatles," *The Washington Post*, June 22, 1966.

22. Robert Trumbull, "Tokyo is Girding for the Beatles: Arrival June 30 - 30,000 Tickets Drawn by Lot," *New York Times*, May 22, 1966.

this system worked. However, it meant that the Beatles did not have their own security team. The closest thing they had was Malcolm “Mal” Evans.

The “gentle giant” Mal Evans was originally a telephone engineer in Liverpool before becoming a bouncer at the Cavern, the Liverpool nightclub where the Beatles got their start. Eventually, the band hired him full-time. He was the Beatles’ road manager and driver long before Beatlemania began in Great Britain.<sup>23</sup> This earned him a spot in their inner circle, which more or less consisted of the four band members, manager Brian Epstein, another roadie and eventual manager Neil Aspinall, and press officer Derek Taylor.<sup>24</sup> Once they got their big break, Mal Evans began acting as the bouncer for their dressing room. He would escort out anyone that the band no longer wanted to see, from celebrities to the handicapped.<sup>25</sup> He was also the man in charge of clearing the stage of whatever gifts the audience decided to throw at the Beatles’ feet or heads.<sup>26</sup>

### Out of the Limelight: 1967-1979

Reflecting on the insanity of Beatlemania, it really is no surprise that all four of the Beatles chose to retreat from the spotlight. They were essentially trapped everywhere they went, sometimes literally if the crowds were particularly enthusiastic. They were hustled from airport to hotel to venue and back again without ever really seeing the world around them. They became accustomed to being sheltered from the outside and the habit carried into their post-Beatles lives. Starr explained his reclusiveness in a 1972 interview: “During all of the madness we got out of the habit of going out because we always got our clothes ripped off and I’ve never got back into the habit.”<sup>27</sup>

Despite their best efforts, the Beatles could never completely escape the public or the press. In 1968, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi said that he was considering moving to the United States for privacy. His spiritual retreat in the remote Himalayan foothills

23. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 85.

24. The Beatles, 258.

25. The Beatles, 105 and 142.

26. The Beatles, 153.

27. Rex Reed, “It’s Not a Disguise; It’s the Real Ringo Starr!,” *The Washington Post*, December 24, 1972.

was no longer private thanks to the presence of the Beatles. He felt that he and his followers would be bothered by the police and press less often in the U.S.<sup>28</sup> George Harrison, the most private Beatle and the one with the greatest interest in transcendental spiritualism, was likely equally unhappy with the presence of outsiders at the retreat.

Not every encounter with the public was unwelcome during these years, however. McCartney seemed to be perfectly at ease with the crowds in 1976. He raised his glass of champagne to the five hundred fans and thirty-five police officers who walked beside his limousine as it crawled through Toronto traffic.<sup>29</sup> Out of the Beatles, McCartney was always the showman, the one most attracted to the celebrity lifestyle. Therefore, it is unsurprising that he would continue to be the most comfortable around his fans and in front of the paparazzi after the breakup. This is not to say that years of stardom had not dulled the appeal of fame. A 1976 article on his wife, Linda, described their life together at the time: "They maintain that they are an ordinary couple with three children, a comfortable Victorian house in North London, a farm in Scotland, and four big dogs, several horses, a turtle, some chickens, ducks, geese, fish, and sheep, scattered around their homesteads."<sup>30</sup> McCartney purchased their Scottish farm, High Park Farm in Campbeltown as an investment to offset income taxes in 1966. He and Linda began renovations to the farmhouse shortly after their wedding in 1969.<sup>31</sup> After the breakup, High Park Farm provided the McCartneys with a hideaway where they could spend their time away from the prying eyes of the world.

Lennon remained creatively active during his life after the Beatles. He and his wife, Yoko Ono, worked on multiple avant-garde projects together both before and after the breakup of the Beatles. They released the album *Two Virgins*, complete with the infamous nude photo of the couple on the cover, in

28. "Beatles' Guru Said to Weigh Moving to U.S. for Privacy," *New York Times*, February 25, 1968.

29. Maggie Daly, "McCartney in Jam, Toasts Fans," *Chicago Tribune*, May 11, 1976.

30. Judith Weinraub, "Tempo: Linda McCartney--Riches and Fame, Family and Farm," *Chicago Tribune*, December 22, 1976.

31. "Paul McCartney Purchases High Park Farm in Kintyre, Scotland," The Beatles Bible, accessed April 10, 2018, <https://www.beatlesbible.com/1966/06/17/paul-mccartney-purchases-high-park-farm-kintyre-scotland/>.

1968.<sup>32</sup> The Plastic Ono Band was a later musical collaboration between the two with a few other musicians. They debuted in Toronto shortly before the Beatles' breakup.<sup>33</sup> Lennon and Ono became a countercultural power couple. As their antics moved farther from the Beatles' mainstream appeal, their relationship to authority shifted dramatically.

While the police were the Beatles' main protectors in the 1960s, the tables turned for Lennon after the breakup. His first major problem with the law occurred in London in 1968. He and Ono were charged with drug possession after the police, led by celebrity drug-buster Sergeant Pilcher, raided their apartment. They were given a £150 fine. Sergeant Pilcher also caught Harrison in 1969.<sup>34</sup> In 1973, Lennon faced deportation from the United States, officially because of his previous drug offense, though it was believed that the real reasons were his and Ono's critiques of the Vietnam War and their generally countercultural lifestyle.<sup>35</sup> Richard Nixon, the president of the United States at the time, was famously opposed to any and all kinds of nonconformity.

A more tragic altercation between the police and the Beatles' inner circle occurred in 1976. Evans followed Starr after the breakup, though he was unemployed at the time. He was living in Los Angeles and had allegedly fallen into a depression. When his girlfriend noticed him going upstairs with a bottle of pills and a rifle, she called the police to report a suicide attempt. Two policemen responded to the call. When they arrived at the house and entered Evans' bedroom, they found him seated on the floor and pointing a rifle at them. They shot him six times, killing him instantly.<sup>36</sup> The Beatles and the rest of their inner circle were shocked. "It was so crazy, so crazy," Paul McCartney said. "Mal was a big loveable bear of a roadie; he would go over the top occasionally, but we all knew him and never had any problems."<sup>37</sup> Evans' death marked the end of the Beatles' trust in

32. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 300-302.

33. The Beatles, 347.

34. The Beatles, 303-305.

35. Anthony Astrachan, "John Lennon: 'Get Back,'" *The Washington Post*, March 24, 1973.

36. "Former Aide to Beatles Killed by Police in L. A.," *Chicago Tribune*, January 7, 1976.

37. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 85.

the police. From that point on, they relied on security that they had personally hired or they went without any security at all.

Despite their general desire to get away from the public eye, there is little evidence to suggest that any of the Beatles believed that they were in any real danger as a result of their celebrity status. In fact, it seems that there was a general belief that entertainers were safe from the assassins that stalked their political counterparts. A *New York Times* article published in 1972, declared: "We are told that any celebrity will do as a target – but Hollywood figures who live deep in our fantasies have not, by and large, been in danger of assassination...no marksmen polished off a Beatle in mid-song."<sup>38</sup> In the 1970s, a Beatle had less need for a personal security team than a junior senator.

### Life After Lennon: 1980-2018

The Beatles' world and the celebrity world in general, changed forever on December 8, 1980. Mark David Chapman, a twenty-five-year-old former security guard who lived in Hawaii at the time had flown to Manhattan to kill John Lennon. He stalked his target through the streets of Manhattan for three days before approaching him for an autograph in front of the musician's apartment building, the Dakota.<sup>39</sup> After getting his record signed, he sat back down next to the fan with whom he had been waiting for Lennon to emerge. When the other man decided to leave rather than wait longer to have his copy of the record signed, saying that he would come back later, Chapman ominously advised him, "I'd wait. You never know if you'll see him [John Lennon] again."<sup>40</sup> Later that day, as Lennon and Ono stepped out of a limousine in front of the Dakota, he shot his idol four times in the back with a short-barreled revolver.<sup>41</sup> This was the beginning of every modern celebrity's fear of the crazed fan.

The days following the Lennon assassination were as much

38. Garry Wills, "The Trouble Lies Deeper Than Mere Security," *New York Times*, May 21, 1972.

39. John L. Goldman and Ellen Hume, "Suspect, Fan of Lennon, Stalked Him," *Los Angeles Times*, December 10, 1980.

40. Michael Leapman, "Man on Death Charge 'Obsessed by Lennon,'" *The Times*, December 11, 1980.

41. Goldman and Hume, "Suspect, Fan."

of a media circus as the early events of Beatlemania. Several hundred people held a vigil outside of the Dakota building the day after the murder. Starr had to wade through a crowd of distressed fans in order to visit Ono. Harrison and McCartney were allegedly planning to visit her in the days after her husband's death as well, though they waited for the circus outside of her apartment to die down.<sup>42</sup>

Ironically, Chapman's trial required as much security as any other Beatles event. He was brought into the courtroom in a bulletproof vest. Guards checked his cell every fifteen minutes to make sure he did not commit suicide. Anyone connected to him was in danger as well. His court-appointed attorney wanted to be taken off of his case, allegedly after receiving death threats.<sup>43</sup> Security guards were posted outside of the Honolulu apartment where his wife and mother were staying.<sup>44</sup>

Nothing was the same for the remaining Beatles after Lennon's death. They realized that the dangers of celebrity status were no longer merely the annoyances of screaming fans and flashing cameras. They had reached a level of fame that rendered them inhuman in the eyes of many people, including Chapman. He admitted in a 2000 interview with Larry King that he "just saw him [John Lennon] as a two-dimensional celebrity with no real feelings."<sup>45</sup> The effect that Chapman's actions had on the surviving Beatles proved his view to be false. In addition to the grief that the three men felt over the loss of their friend, a new level of fear and paranoia became a part of each of their lives.

Harrison was already known to be wary of the public. Even before Lennon's death, his Henley-on-Thames mansion was equipped with a high-tech security system. His bandmate's murder prompted him to add high-powered lights to the set up. "After what happened to John I'm absolutely terrified," he told an interviewer.<sup>46</sup> In a separate 1999 interview, he explained that,

42. Leapman, "Man on Death Charge."

43. "Attorney for Chapman Seeks to Give Up Case: Death Threats Reported; Accused Killer of Lennon Appears in Courtroom Wearing Bulletproof Vest," *Los Angeles Times*, December 11, 1980.

44. Leapman, "Man on Death Charge."

45. Ebert, *Dead Celebrities*.

46. Tim Reid, "Fear Stalks the Lives of Modern Celebrities," *The Times*, December 31, 1999.

in addition to recently adding barbed wire to the fence around Friar Park, "I try to take precautions, especially if I'm in New York or going some place where they're expecting me. I like to look behind me and see who's following in the next taxi or whatever."<sup>47</sup> His fear was not unfounded. That same year, both Harrison and his wife Olivia were injured when a knife-wielding intruder broke into their home. The attacker managed to evade the razor wire and security cameras before breaking a window to enter the building.<sup>48</sup> The mansion's security staff were off-duty that night. A similar incident had occurred just days before. An intruder was found eating a frozen pizza in the kitchen of the Harrison's vacation home in Hawaii. Though the Harrison's staff called the house an "impregnable fortress," the woman was able to sneak in through an unlocked door.<sup>49</sup> Harrison died of lung cancer in 2001, twenty one years after Lennon was murdered and merely two years after being nearly murdered himself. It is likely that the last years, perhaps even the last decades, of his life were marked by an undercurrent of fear.

Starr was less security-conscious than Harrison. When asked about increasing security after Lennon's murder, he replied, "there's no need for *more* security – there's a need for *security*. Before it happened, we never gave it a thought." That interview took place in 1981, a year after his bandmate's death. In addition to the special security that the hotel provided for the interview, Starr was reported to travel with three personal bodyguards at all times.<sup>50</sup> Considering how lightly he took threats during his time with the Beatles, it is truly amazing how security-conscious he was in the years following Lennon's death.

McCartney continued to keep a relatively low profile immediately following Lennon's death. He did not let this stop him from continuing his career, though. In 1981, he managed to travel with Michael Jackson for two weeks while staying largely undetected. Security was reportedly extremely tight backstage at an Atlanta charity concert that the two performed at together,

47. David Sinclair, "Security-Conscious but Resigned to His Karma," *The Times*, December 31, 1999.

48. Bale McGrory and Joanna Daniel, "Harrison Stabbed in Battle with Intruder," *The Times*, December 31, 1999.

49. Bale McGrory and Joanna Daniel, "Stalker Found in Kitchen of Harrison's Hawaii Home," *The Times*, January 3, 2000.

50. Tony Kornheiser, "Ringo: Life After John," *The Washington Post*, March 30, 1981.

but other than that there is no mention of McCartney increasing his security for the trip. Jackson's spokesman claimed that Lennon's death "wasn't the main reason" for the extra guards backstage, but that it was more because "[t]hey were making a lot of presentations and things they don't normally do." McCartney kept a low profile throughout the tour by staying "semi-incognito with maybe dark glasses and a hat."<sup>51</sup> It is safe to say that he was less shaken by his ex-bandmate's murder than the other former Beatles.

Regardless of the intensity of their fear, each of the surviving Fab Four feared for their safety after John Lennon's assassination. Their fear was justified. While in prison in 1996, Chapman began to slip back into his old ways. He allegedly began to hear the same voices that originally told him to kill Lennon now telling him to kill the other three Beatles. He reportedly got a tattoo on his arm to remind him to do so, and often spoke to his cellmate with glee about his plan.<sup>52</sup> Though he is still in prison, having been denied parole nine times, Chapman continues to represent the danger of an obsessed fan.<sup>53</sup>

## Conclusion

The Beatles' way of interacting with the public changed throughout the decades of their careers. Their initial worry was crowd control as Beatlemania took hold of teenagers around the world. Their first three years of touring consisted of a constant need for protection, typically in the form of an army of policemen or security guards or, on occasion, actual soldiers. The peacekeepers had the dual responsibility of keeping the Beatles safe from the fans and the fans safe from themselves. By the end of the 1960s, the Fab Four had enough of being fab. They decided to go their separate ways in 1970, and all of them chose to retreat from the spotlight to varying degrees. It was during this time that their relationships with the police changed.

51. "Former Beatle Was in Atlanta Secretly with The Jacksons," *The Atlanta Constitution*, August 5, 1981.

52. James Bone, "Killer Targets Surviving Beatles," *The Times*, December 30, 1996.

53. "John Lennon's Killer Mark David Chapman Denied Parole for Ninth Time," *Rolling Stone*, accessed March 29, 2018, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/mark-david-chapman-denied-parole-for-ninth-time-w436955>.

A series of drug busts and the tragic death of their former road manager shifted how the four men approached their security. They felt that they could handle themselves and did not need much protection. That blissful sense of independence ended with Lennon's death. From that point on, the remaining Beatles invested in personal security guards and home security systems. They modernized their security measures in response to the changing world.

As celebrity culture evolved throughout the second-half of the twentieth century, the Beatles and their peers lost their innocent faith in the public. They had to adapt to the consequences of fame in the era of mass communication. The constant need for protection isolated them, creating an even grander and less-human image of them in the public eye. That image lives on, even though half of the Beatles are gone. It is that image that is worshipped, and it is that hero-worship that has always been the root of their problems. From screaming girls to Mark David Chapman, the Beatles always needed to be protected from those who could not see past their celebrity image. The changes in their preferred methods of protection reflected the Beatles' changing relationship with the outside world. As the years went on, they relied more on means of protection that they themselves controlled. Police gave way to private security guards; guarded hotel rooms became privately-owned fortresses. In response to their deification in the public eye, they retreated into themselves.



[15]

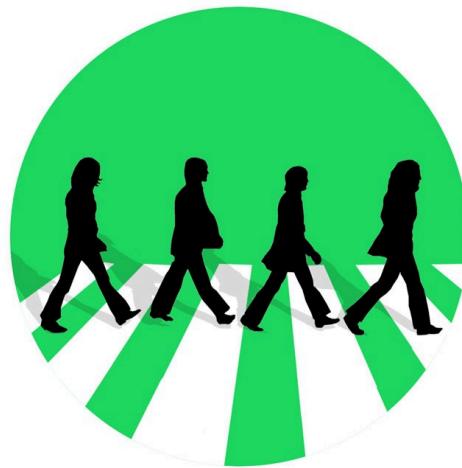
## Let It Stream: The Beatles and the Age of Music Streaming

**Kenny Miller**

On Christmas Eve 2015, the world received one of the greatest Christmas gifts ever: on demand access to the music of the Beatles through streaming platforms. As 2015 came to a close, Twitter news feeds were filled with little green dots. But these green dots were special. Inside the green dots, Twitter users saw a silhouette of the Beatles' iconic *Abbey Road* cover. Users found these emojis attached to almost any tweet with a hashtag about the Beatles. Social media buzzed with excitement about a soon to be landmark event in the music industry. For older users, the emoji brought back memories of screaming crowds and flowing hair. For younger users, it raised curiosity about a time they never experienced. Spotify, Apple Music, Google Play, and others brought digital streams of some of the sweetest tunes ever recorded to the ears of millions of listeners across the world.

Over the past half century, records, cassette tapes, compact

discs, and digital downloads all have fallen by the wayside as music streaming has become the most popular form of music distribution. Yet this highly successful form of distribution lacked one of the single greatest collections of music for the first five years of its existence, the music of the Beatles. At the end of 2015, companies such as Sony, Spotify, and Apple finally resolved the issues that arose from the Beatles' publishing rights and placed the Beatles music on streaming platforms. At the center of the publishing rights issues was the separation of profits between parties, because more parties were involved than in most music deals. The Beatles took a while to join music streaming, but since the music came onto streaming platforms, the Beatles' music has been wildly successful. Different songs draw greater interest today than in the 1960s, but the Beatles' music continues to be some of the most popular of all time. Streaming provides so many opportunities to listen to the Beatles' music, but streaming has also helped increase sales of vinyl records, reviving one of the oldest forms of music distribution. The history of streaming the Beatles illustrates less an unwillingness on the part of the Beatles to share their work than it does the complicated nature of intellectual property and battles over publishing rights in the digital era. This chapter traces the long and winding road to getting the Beatles' music on streaming platforms and the ways in which those new platforms have changed how the Beatles' music is appreciated by audiences new and old.



The iconic Abbey Road cover, reimagined as an advertisement for the addition of the Beatles' music to streaming platforms such as Spotify.

Lindsay Stein, "Seven Questions With Spotify On Beatles Twitter Campaign," *AdAge*, December 28, 2015.

## Historiography

Little scholarly work exists about the history of the Beatles publishing rights. Many of the most pertinent events related to the publishing rights have occurred very recently and therefore have severely restricted the amount of secondary material written about them. Most of the secondary material that has been written about the Beatles' streaming rights specifically comes from commercial news articles by organizations such as *Billboard*. Although not much has been written specifically about the Beatles' streaming rights, many scholars have written about their publishing rights as a whole.

Legally, music consists of so much more than just a single song; it can truly be described as a "basket of rights", publishing rights.<sup>1</sup> The idea behind publishing rights is to protect songwriters from having their songs used without their permission. By registering publishing rights, songwriters gain legal protections against plagiarism and piracy of their songs.

1. Simon Frith, "Copyright and the Music Business," *Popular Music* 7, no. 1 (1987): 57–75.

Some scholars believe that publishing rights represent necessary protections for creators of music.<sup>2</sup> Steve Winogradsky, for instance, claims that publishing rights ensure “fair use” of songs for those who created them.<sup>3</sup> Gary Sinclair and Julie Tinson go even further to argue that the idea of psychological ownership needs explicit legal protections like publishing rights, not only to protect music, but also other forms of art like film and painting. Without these protections, Sinclair and Tinson argue, investments into these works would decline; artists would no longer spend the time or money to create, because without publishing rights their work would no longer be theirs.<sup>4</sup> Other scholars, while conceding the importance of publishing rights, argue that publishing rights have become tools for publishing companies to take the music away from artists.<sup>5</sup> John Williamson and Martin Cloonan write that the music industry as a whole works against artists in an effort to maximize the profits of the companies that run the industry.<sup>6</sup> Roger Wallis and his colleagues argue that the difficulty that comes from registering and navigating the legal parts of publishing rights forces artists to go to collective administrators like publishing companies. Inevitably, these companies take advantage of the musicians that come to them for help.<sup>7</sup> These two points of view represent the main schools of thought about publishing rights, but neither includes full historical arguments about things such as how publishing rights came about.

2. Steve Winogradsky, *Music Publishing: The Complete Guide* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music, 2013); Gary Sinclair and Julie Tinson, “Psychological Ownership and Music Streaming Consumption,” *Journal of Business Research* 71, no. 1 (February 2017): 1–9.
3. Winogradsky, *Music Publishing: The Complete Guide*.
4. Sinclair and Tinson, “Psychological Ownership and Music Streaming Consumption.”
5. John Williamson and Martin Cloonan, “Rethinking the Music Industry,” *Popular Music* 26, no. 2 (2007): 305–22; Frith, “Copyright and the Music Business”; Roger Wallis et al., “Contested Collective Administration of Intellectual Property Rights in Music: The Challenge to the Principles of Reciprocity and Solidarity,” *European Journal of Communication* 14, no. 1 (March 1, 1999): 5–35; Robert Levine, “Between Rock and a Database: Streaming Services, Artists and Music Publishers Are Colliding,” *Billboard*, March 11, 2016.
6. Williamson and Cloonan, “Rethinking the Music Industry.”
7. Wallis et al., “Contested Collective Administration of Intellectual Property Rights in Music.”

## Streaming Changes the Music Industry

Since 2011, streaming services have become the most popular way to consume music, overcoming the popularity of compact discs and the even newer digital downloads. The streaming revolution started in 2011 when Spotify launched in the United States.<sup>8</sup> The Swedish company negotiated with record labels to make artists' music available without users purchasing individual albums or even individual songs and offered any song to users on demand without having to pay for any individual song. One early user described the service as, "the ultimate jukebox" that allowed them to listen to any given song at any time.<sup>9</sup> Spotify represents the earliest streaming platform and remains one of the most successful streaming platforms. Other streaming platforms soon emerged, including Apple Music, Google Play, Deezer, and Tidal. Apple Music's launch in 2015 signaled the beginning of the end of the digital download.<sup>10</sup> Apple's first music platform, iTunes, dominated the era of the digital download, and Apple's shift to music streaming solidified streaming's new position as the premier form of music consumption. Apple itself, the company that spearheaded the digital download, has now abandoned it for streaming.

Despite being the largest platform for people to listen to music, streaming does not include all music ever created, and for a long time, it excluded the Beatles catalog. Many artists, most famously Taylor Swift and Adele, kept their music off streaming services because they believed they could make more money off sales of CDs and digital downloads.<sup>11</sup> Adele's album 25, for example, sold over seven million albums in traditional forms of distribution in the first month after its release. Adele's older music, her albums 19 and 21, were available on streaming services, but by keeping 25 off them, she forced fans to purchase the entire album or individual songs as digital downloads or

8. Ben Sisario, "New Service Offers Music In Quantity, Not by Song," *The New York Times*, July 13, 2011.

9. Ben Sisario, "Spotify Opens Way for Apps To Point Listeners to Music," *The New York Times*, November 30, 2011.

10. Rhiannon Williams, "Apple Music vs Spotify: How Do the Two Streaming Services Compare?," *The Telegraph* (London, UK), March 17, 2016.

11. Leo Kelion, "Beatles Music Joins Streaming Services," *BBC News*, December 23, 2015.

CDs. The album has since been added to streaming platforms as well. The profits from these sales exceed the amount she would have received from this album simply streaming for the early time after the album was released.

The Beatles remained off partially for similar financial reasons, but also for issues created by their publishing rights. On Christmas Eve in 2015, these issues fell away as the Beatles' music became available on six different streaming platforms, including Spotify and Apple Music.<sup>12</sup> It took the Beatles almost five whole years before they finally decided to allow their music onto streaming platforms, specifically Spotify. Although money always factors into decisions like this, it did not solely dictate when the Beatles' music joined streaming services. The publishing rights of the Beatles' music complicated who actually owned the music and who could officially make the decision to allow Spotify and Apple Music to use the music.

The complicated ownership of copyright provides the backdrop of the Beatles' late arrival on streaming services. Songwriters often forfeit the rights of their own songs in order to get them published, and companies use their stake in publishing rights to make money. Publishing rights legally fall under the category of intellectual property rights. Anyone who creates a song can separately legally register their ownership rights over both the lyrics and the specific musical recording. This distinction is very important. Publishing companies often take the rights to the "musical works" of the songs so that their permission is needed to record live versions or cover version by other artists. They also can demand royalties off the distribution of original recordings. On the other hand, artists often remain in control of the "sound recordings," which means that they decide what happens with those specific recordings and how they are distributed.<sup>13</sup> Issues arise with this because the process of filing a copyright is long and difficult for individuals and bands who often need help producing and publishing the song. Companies, often publishing companies, sign artists to

12. Joe Coscarelli, "Beatles Catalog Goes on Streaming Services," *The New York Times*, December 23, 2015.

13. "Obtaining Copyright Permissions," University of Michigan, April 10, 2018, <http://guides.lib.umich.edu/permissions/music>.

contracts in which they agree to produce, advertise, and distribute an artist's music.<sup>14</sup> However, companies often place a clause in the contract claiming ownership of the musical works' publishing rights of all songs written and performed by the artist. These contracts essentially cut all ties between the creator and the created. By gaining ownership of song rights, companies augment their profits when they initially publish the music, but they also have control over what happens with the music for many years after. By controlling these rights, companies take large portions of the profits from the music. Early record deals for artists often leave them with very little profit, because the company takes the risk on the artist, so they feel they deserve the reward. For the Beatles, the reward ended up being huge.<sup>15</sup>

Young misinformed artists, like the Beatles in the early 1960s, did not understand the complicated world of music publication and were taken advantage of by these companies. John Lennon and Paul McCartney never intended to give up the rights to their music, and they did not want to be controlled by a publishing company.<sup>16</sup> However, early in their careers, they and their manager Brian Epstein did not know enough about the music industry to negotiate a favorable record deal. Instead, they accepted a deal that heavily favored the publishing company because they were eager to get their music out to the world. Electrical and Musical Industries (EMI) signed the Beatles to their initial record deal and took the ownership of the musical works rights to songs like "Love Me Do" and "P.S. I Love You," as well as others recorded early in their career.<sup>17</sup> EMI now owned the rights to the musical aspects of the songs themselves, but the Beatles owned their recordings. From this point on, the members of the Beatles had difficulty securing sole ownership of the publishing rights to their own songs.

14. Winogradsky, *Music Publishing: The Complete Guide*.

15. David Philip, "Magical Mystery Tour: Failures from the Beatles' Self-Managed Era and Lessons for Today's DIY Musicians," *MEIEA* 15, no. 1 (January 1, 2015): 37–64.

16. Dominic Utton, "The Beatles Lost Millions Because of Manager Brian Epstein's Blunders," *The Express*, August 23, 2017, <https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/life/844721/the-beatles-lost-millions-manager-brian-epstein-blunders>.

17. Brian Southall and Rupert Perry, *Northern Songs: The True Story of The Beatles Song Publishing Empire* (New York: Omnibus Press, 2006).

Music streaming not only changed the way that music is distributed but has also changed profits and profit separations. In 2011, after Spotify first launched, streaming accounted for less than 10 percent of the music industry's revenue. By 2016, music streaming became the industry's largest source of income; in all, platforms netted \$7.7 billion from streaming.<sup>18</sup> This made up 51 percent of all revenue in the music industry that year. This massive jump in percentage shows how quickly the new form of distribution took over as a primary way to listen to music. However, it also caused issues with artists. Most streaming platforms offer a two-tiered model. In the first tier, users can use the service in some capacity for free, but then the company riddles that version with advertisements (e.g. Spotify), or the service does not allow the user to listen to music in the order they want or listen to specific songs (e.g. Pandora). This tier makes the company money through advertisements. The second version, such as Spotify Premium or Apple Music, contains no ads, and users can listen to any song at any time they want. Users often have to pay a monthly subscription fee for this ad-free version, which creates revenue for the company that runs the streaming platform.<sup>19</sup> In both cases, artists make less money off streaming than through more conventional means of distributing their music. The best estimate for the average amount that a singer or band makes on streaming platforms is \$.007 per stream.<sup>20</sup> For hugely popular artists like the Beatles, they may make a greater amount per stream through contractual negotiations, and if people stream their music more, they still make considerable sums. However, average artists cannot justify the time, effort, and money that goes into making a song, EP, or album if people have to listen to the song 1,000 times to make just seven dollars.

18. David Lumb, "Streaming Made Last Year the Music Industry's Best since 2009," Engadget, March 30, 2017, <https://www.engadget.com/2017/03/30/streaming-made-last-year-the-music-industry-s-best-since-2009/>.

19. Tim Paul Thomes, "An Economic Analysis of Online Streaming Music Services," *Information Economics and Policy* 25, no. 2 (June 2013): 81–91.

20. Anthony Elliott, "Art Is Worth Less in the Age of Spotify – and Not Just Financially," The Conversation, July 3, 2014, <http://theconversation.com/art-is-worth-less-in-the-age-of-spotify-and-not-just-financially-28712>.

## The Long and Complicated History of the Beatles' Publishing Rights

Ownership of the Beatles' publishing rights has changed many times since the Beatles themselves tried, and failed, to gain total ownership in 1969. When *Please, Please Me* was published in 1963, the Beatles publishing rights belonged to Northern Songs, the company that published the album. Lennon, McCartney, and Epstein all became partial owners of Northern Songs and therefore partial owners of their own publishing rights. In 1969, the majority owner of Northern Songs Dick James decided to sell his part of the company to Associated Television (ATV) Music, the company that outbid Lennon and McCartney for that part of the company. Later that year, their personal financial issues forced Lennon and McCartney to sell their shares to ATV and full ownership of the Beatles publishing rights then shifted to ATV.<sup>21</sup> 1969 represented the first time that the members of the Beatles had no control over the publishing of their music.

The second major sale of the Beatles publishing rights involved another titan of the music industry, Michael Jackson. Early in the 1980s, McCartney and Jackson recorded multiple duets and became friends. During all their time in the studio, McCartney shared with Jackson his view of the benefits of investing in publishing.<sup>22</sup> Jackson, took McCartney's advice about investing in other musicians publishing rights seriously. Jackson's business associate Karen Langford recalls that, "[Jackson] wanted to be the number one publisher in the world."<sup>23</sup> In an attempt to achieve that goal, in 1985 he bought ATV Music and therefore the Beatles publishing rights for over forty-seven million.<sup>24</sup> McCartney and Lennon's widow Yoko

21. Dan Rys, "A Brief History of the Ownership of the Beatles Catalog," *Billboard*, January 20, 2017, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/rock/7662519/beatles-catalog-paul-mccartney-brief-history-ownership>.
22. Ken Kelley, "That Time Michael Jackson Outbid Paul McCartney for the Beatles Catalog," Ultimate Classic Rock, accessed March 19, 2018, <http://ultimateclassicrock.com/paul-mccartney-michael-jackson-beatles-catalog/>.
23. Tristram Fain Saunders "Digeridoos and Legal Blues: The Strange Story of how Michael Jackson Bought the Beatles," *The Telegraph* (London, UK), January 19, 2017.
24. Wm Knoedelseder, "Michael Jackson Pays Million for ATV Music: Beatles Song Catalogue Acquired," *Los Angeles Times*, August 15, 1985.

Ono attempted to purchase the publishing company with a bid of twenty million, but they were outbid by Jackson.<sup>25</sup> McCartney himself described Jackson's actions as "dodgy" because he befriended Jackson, and he "bought the rug [McCartney] was standing on."<sup>26</sup> McCartney's failure to secure this company allowed the publishing rights to get farther and farther from the control of the members of the Beatles. Jackson's unprecedented purchase of ATV showed the immense value of the publishing rights of the Beatles catalogue. However, Jackson's ownership did not last very long.

Jackson lived extravagantly during his lifetime, which led to many financial issues. These issues eventually led him to part with the Beatles' publishing rights. In 1995, Jackson needed money and was forced to merge ATV with Sony Music. The deal netted Jackson \$95 million, almost double the amount he paid just ten years earlier.<sup>27</sup> As this was a merger and not a pure sale, Jackson kept a stake in the Beatles' publishing rights along with the other rights that ATV owned, which included songs by Elvis Presley, Little Richard, and more.<sup>28</sup> Jackson still controlled half of the interest in the Beatles' publishing rights after this deal, which would continue to make him money until his death.

Music lost one of its largest stars on June 25th, 2009, when Jackson passed away due to complications from an overdose of propofol, a strong anesthetic.<sup>29</sup> Jackson's death complicated the history of the Beatles' publishing rights even further as he still owned half of Sony/ATV music and therefore half the rights. While his estate remained massively in debt due to the extravagant way that Jackson lived, his share of Sony/ATV remained a bright spot in his estate.<sup>30</sup> For the next seven years, Sony attempted to secure ownership of Jackson's half of the

25. "Jackson Now Owns Beatles Classics," *Chicago Tribune*, August 16, 1985.

26. Anandashankar Mazumdar, "Yesterday, Getting Publishing Rights to the Beatles Songs Seemed so Far Away," Bloomberg BNA, March 29, 2016, <https://www.bna.com/yesterday-getting-publishing-b57982069153/>.

27. "Sony and Michael Jackson Expected to Set Up Venture," *Wall Street Journal*, November 7, 1995.

28. "Michael Jackson Sells Rights to Beatles Songs to Sony," *The New York Times*, November 8, 1995.

29. Brooks Barnes, "A Star Idolized and Haunted, Michael Jackson Dies at 50," *The New York Times*, June 25, 2009.

30. Stephen Gandel, "Michael Jackson's Estate: Saved by the Beatles," *Time*, July 1, 2009, <http://content.time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,1908185,00.html>.

company, eventually succeeding in early 2016. Sony paid the Jackson estate \$750 million dollars for the half of the company previously owned by Jackson.<sup>31</sup> Sony/ATV had grown much past owning only the Beatles' publishing rights, but those remained the most valuable asset owned by the company. The Jackson estate made \$702.5 million in profit off his initial investment back in 1995. Over thirty years after McCartney and Jackson initially discussed the potential of investing in publishing, Jackson's estate closed one of the largest deals ever involving publishing rights.

These battles over the publishing rights of the Beatles complicated many decisions related to the music of the Beatles. Shortly after Jackson's death, iTunes, Apple's digital download service, began to offer the Beatles' catalogue for the first time.<sup>32</sup> The Beatles initially held out from the digital download revolution in the same way that they did the streaming revolution five years later. Publishing rights are crucial to determining what happens with the music itself because one or more entities get included in the decision-making. Profits normally go to publishers, bands or artists, and distributors. Yet because of the complications inherent in the Beatles' publishing rights, many different companies and owners had to come to a joint agreement. In order to add the Beatles' music to their platforms, Spotify and Apple Music needed approval from Apple Corps, the Beatles' representatives, and Sony/ATV Music; each of these companies received a portion of the profits. The rights to the recordings of the Beatles' music are owned by Apple Corps, so final decisions on the music rest with them. But because Sony owns the rights to the songs themselves, they are entitled to a portion of the profits as well. Additionally, for a time, the profits that Sony/ATV received ended up split even further because of the split ownership between Jackson's estate and the rest of the Sony owners. After the sale of Jackson's stake in the company, the publisher's take of the profits became

31. Ed Christman, "Sony Finalizes Acquisition of Michael Jackson Estate's Stake in Sony/ATV Publishing," *Billboard*, September 30, 2016, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/business/7526542/sony-atv-michael-jackson-publishing-acquisition-completed>.

32. Ben Sisario and Miguel Helft, "Working It Out: ITunes to Offer Beatles Catalog," *The New York Times*, 2010.

more consolidated within the company. Over time, the Beatles' catalogue has been one of, if not the most profitable collections of music. The era of music streaming continues that legacy as the Beatles remain one of the most profitable and one of the most popular catalogues of all time.

### The Beatles Dominate Streaming

December 24, 2015, represents the day that music streaming gained complete dominance of the music distribution industry when they finally made the Beatles' music available. The Beatles had a reputation for resisting the digital revolution already because they held out from iTunes and then held out from streaming.<sup>33</sup> When the Beatles first became available on iTunes, they sold over two million song downloads in the first week, and their start on streaming services was expected to succeed just as extravagantly.<sup>34</sup> And indeed, their early performance on streaming platforms exceeded all expectations. After only two days on Spotify alone, the Beatles' songs had been added to more than 673 thousand playlists and played more than a million times.<sup>35</sup> Across all six streaming platforms that carried the Beatles' music, listeners played their songs more than 250 million times just in the first month, January 2016.<sup>36</sup> Even in this extremely small sample size, the vast popularity of the Beatles remains evident. The timeless music of the Beatles obviously largely influenced the success on streaming platforms, but companies like Spotify and Apple also ran advertising campaigns to maximize that initial success.

Spotify, Apple, and Apple Corps wanted to make the most out of what they worked so hard to get and ran a vigorous advertising campaign to augment interest in the event. The

33. Coscarelli, "Beatles Catalog Goes on Streaming Services."

34. Elizabeth Chuck, "Finally! Beatles to Join Streaming Services on Christmas Eve," *NBC News*, December 23, 2001, <https://www.nbcnews.com/pop-culture/music/beatles-join-spotify-other-top-streaming-services-christmas-eve-n484986>.

35. "The Beatles Are A Big Hit On Spotify: Stats, Top Tracks," Hypebot, December 27, 2015, <http://www.hypebot.com/hypebot/2015/12/the-beatles-are-a-big-hit-on-spotify-stats-top-tracks.html>.

36. Keith Wagstaff, "Let It Stream: Beatles Set Record on Spotify Days After Debut," *NBC News*, January 22, 2016, <https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/mobile/let-it-stream-beatles-set-record-spotify-days-after-debut-n502361>.

advertising campaign took place on two main platforms, video and Twitter. The video aspect of the campaign consisted of a 35-second commercial produced by Apple Corps and was distributed in many different forms, including television and websites like YouTube. The video itself combines the Beatles' greatest hits as the background music while some of the most recognizable images of the band, including photos and album covers, cross the screen. The video closes with a white screen that displays the famous "The Beatles" logo and the words "Now Streaming."<sup>37</sup> The video raised interest in the addition of the Beatles' music, but streaming companies, specifically Spotify, wanted to target younger people and therefore decided to push their Twitter campaign hard.<sup>38</sup> Part of the campaign simply consisted of tweets about the Beatles coming to streaming. Spotify tweets encouraged their two and a half million followers to "rediscover" the lads from Liverpool.<sup>39</sup> Ringo Starr even used his twitter with 1.8 million followers to increase the interest in the Beatles on streaming platforms. The day before streaming started, he wrote the Beatles "are coming to you from out of the blue" with an attached promotional image announcing the Beatles entrée to streaming.<sup>40</sup> In addition to tweets as advertising, Spotify sponsored a custom emoji that would automatically follow the hashtag #BeatlesonSpotify. The emoji combined Spotify's logo and the Beatles' iconic *Abbey Road* cover. The emoji contains a solid green circle with the silhouettes of Lennon, McCartney, Starr, and George Harrison walking over white crosswalk lines.<sup>41</sup> Research conducted by Twitter's marketing department shows that targeted emoji use like the #BeatlesonSpotify emoji increases interest by ten percent.<sup>42</sup> These small images help to grab people's attention

37. The Beatles, *The Beatles Now Streaming*, accessed February 20, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8dooVupRSc>.

38. Stein, "Seven Questions."

39. Spotify, (@Spotify), 2015, "Rediscover The Beatles," Twitter, December 28, 2015, [www.twitter.com/spotify](http://www.twitter.com/spotify).

40. Ringo Starr, (@RingoStarrMusic), 2015, "The Beatles Now Streaming," Twitter, December 23, 2015, [www.twitter.com/ringostarrmusic](http://www.twitter.com/ringostarrmusic).

41. Stein, "Seven Questions."

42. "Best Practices for Supercharging Campaigns with Branded Emojis," Twitter Marketing, accessed March 22, 2018, <https://marketing.twitter.com/na/en/insights/best-practices-for-supercharging-campaigns-with-branded-emojis.html>.

and make them feel closer to the subject of the ad. By incorporating the cover art of *Abbey Road*, Spotify helped people to connect with the Beatles again and to want to listen to the music once it became available.

Since the Beatles started streaming, their music has proven, as it always has, that it is some of the best and most popular music of all time. In the first year, people listened to the Beatles' songs over two billion times on streaming platforms. As of 2018, listeners streamed Harrison's masterpiece "Here Comes the Sun" more than any other Beatles song. On Spotify, the song has been played almost 156 million times. That outpaces the second most streamed song by 40 million plays. "Come Together", the number two song, streamed 112 million times.<sup>43</sup> "Let It Be", "Hey Jude", and "Twist and Shout" round out the top five on Spotify, while "Blackbird" sits in the top five on Apple Music rather than "Hey Jude".<sup>44</sup> Individual songs far outweigh albums as a whole, but Spotify still tracks data on streams of entire albums, and that data shows that users listen to *Abbey Road* more than any other of the Beatles original twelve studio albums.<sup>45</sup> *Abbey Road* contained the song "Something", the only number one hit that Harrison wrote for the Beatles, and this made many associate Harrison's songwriting success with this album. The album also included the streaming number one hit "Here Comes the Sun", also written by Harrison.<sup>46</sup>

The Beatles' music has been popular in every era since they initially released their albums in the 1960s, but some songs are more popular on streaming than in the 1960s. Streaming users listen to "Here Comes the Sun" far more than any other Beatles song even though that song never became a number one hit in the 1960s. The Beatles had 27 number one hits and many others that performed well on the Billboard charts in the 1960s, but "Here Comes the Sun" did not crack the top 50 best performing songs by the Beatles.<sup>47</sup> "Hey Jude", "I Want to Hold

43. "The Beatles on Spotify," Spotify, accessed February 13, 2018, [spotify.com](https://www.spotify.com).

44. "The Beatles on Apple Music," Apple Music, accessed February 13, 2018, [apple.com](https://www.apple.com).

45. "The Beatles on Spotify."

46. Roger Friedman, "Beatles: George Harrison Gets Last Laugh as 'Here Comes the Sun' Most Popular on Spotify," Showbiz411: Hollywood to the Hudson, April 8, 2016, <http://www.showbiz411.com/2016/04/08/beatles-george-harrison-gets-last-laugh-as-here-comes-the-sun-most-popular-on-spotify>.

Your Hand”, and “She Loves You” remained at number one in the Billboard charts for nine, seven, and two weeks respectively. Billboard considers these three songs the Beatles most popular during the 1960s.<sup>48</sup> While “Hey Jude” remains very popular on streaming platforms, it does not maintain its spot as the most popular Beatles song. Many different factors may have effected this change. For example, the film *The Parent Trap* (1998), the widely popular remake starring Lindsay Lohan, Dennis Quaid, and Natasha Richardson, used “Here Comes the Sun” during a central part of the movie.<sup>49</sup> People who watched and loved this movie exposed themselves to the Beatles’ music without knowing it. The popularity of the movie likely impacted how younger generations view “Here Comes the Sun.” Other uses of the song in pop culture may have contributed to streaming users listening to this song as well.

Spotify released data that provides insight into what age groups listen to what songs by the Beatles. Nielsen, an independent data and statistics agency, estimates that just over 40 percent of the United States population uses one or more music streaming platform.<sup>50</sup> According to Spotify, 79 percent of people who listen to the Beatles were not alive in the 1960s and therefore never knew the Beatles as a single band.<sup>51</sup> This 79 percent equates to about 80 million people who were not alive when the Beatles first released their music. Almost all streaming listeners were born after the generation of original Beatles fans. The data that Spotify released shows that those age 17 and younger listen to “Here Comes the Sun” more than any other song, while those between the ages of 18 and 24 listen to “I Want to Hold Your Hand” more than “Here Comes the Sun.”<sup>52</sup> These two age groups far outnumber the rest in number of users on

47. “The Beatles’ 50 Biggest Billboard Hits,” Billboard, accessed March 23, 2018, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/list/5893869/the-beatles-top-50-songs-biggest-billboard-hot-100-hits>.

48. “The Beatles’ 50 Biggest Billboard Hits.”

49. Nancy Meyers, *The Parent Trap*, Comedy, Drama (Walt Disney Pictures, 1998).

50. “Music 360 - 2017 Highlights,” Nielsen, accessed February 27, 2018, <http://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/reports/2017/music-360-2017-highlights.html>.

51. Joe Lynch, “Spotify Data Reveals Favorite Beatles Songs for Different Age Groups,” Billboard, January 22, 2016, <https://www.billboard.com/biz/articles/news/digital-and-mobile/6851684/spotify-data-reveals-favorite-beatles-songs-for>.

52. Lynch, “Spotify Data.”

Spotify. This difference in age of users helps to show why the top songs on Spotify all together line up more closely with the younger users' top songs. For users over 45, the demographic that includes those that would have listened to the Beatles in the 1960s, the top songs include "Back in the USSR" and "Ticket to Ride", neither of which reach near the top of Spotify's overall chart.

Streaming has become the largest form of music distribution, but at the same time, it has helped revive the vinyl record industry. As of 2016, vinyl record sales reached their peak since the 1980s, when cassette tapes began to be the primary form of music distribution. Research conducted by ICM on behalf of BBC suggests that 45 percent of those people buying vinyl records first listen to the music on the album online, whether it be on a streaming platform or on other websites, such as YouTube.<sup>53</sup> The immediacy of streaming allows music fans to hear music and make a decision about whether they like an album or not before buying a vinyl record of that album. Before streaming, listeners could not do that. They had to purchase the album before hearing the music, unless they had heard it on the radio. For younger listeners, buying these vinyl records gives them an experience that they never had, while older listeners purchase these records for a sense of nostalgia for times like when the Beatles first created music.<sup>54</sup>

These vinyl sales, along with other issues, such as radio listeners and those who still listen to CDs and cassette tapes, makes it more difficult to accurately measure the Beatles' popularity as a whole in the twenty-first century. Streaming provides very concise and accurate data on who listens to what song at what time, but vinyl records cannot be tracked as accurately. In 2017, the Beatles sold more vinyl albums than any other band or solo artist; this shows how even more than streaming helping vinyl sales, the Beatles have helped vinyl sales. Two of their albums topped all album sales for the year.

53. Anton Spice, "It's 2016 – of Course Streaming Is Driving Vinyl Sales," The Vinyl Factory, April 18, 2016, <https://thevinylfactory.com/features/streaming-vinyl-sales/>.

54. Anton Spice, "Streaming Helps Drive Vinyl Sales to New High," The Vinyl Factory, April 14, 2016, <https://thevinylfactory.com/news/streaming-drive-vinyl-sales-2016/>.

*Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* sold 72,000 copies, the most of any album, and *Abbey Road* sold 66,000 copies, the second most of any album.<sup>55</sup> The continued success of the Beatles vinyl albums shows how the art of the music truly speaks to people and makes them want to not only listen to the music, but also to collect objects related to the music. The success in vinyl sales paired with the success on streaming services really highlights the modern popularity of the Beatles fifty years after the height of their career.

The Beatles music and popularity endure not only on streaming and vinyl, but also on radio. Many oldies stations and classic rock stations regularly play the Beatles' songs, but the ultimate tribute to the Fab Four came on May 18, 2017. Sirius XM radio gave the Beatles their own channel, further showing their relevance in 2017.<sup>56</sup> However, again this complicated tracking how popular the Beatles are. Radio and Vinyl sales fail to track the age of listeners or precisely how many times people listen to a given song or album. However, people continue to spend money to buy the albums or pay for XM radio, and money speaks when it comes to music popularity. McCartney, Starr, and the estates of Lennon and Harrison continue to draw profits from all the different uses of their music, whether it be streaming, digital downloads, vinyl sales, or radio. David Fiorenza, a Villanova economics professor, claims that "their financial impact today is bigger than any other artist, living or deceased."<sup>57</sup> Despite the issues surrounding the publishing rights of the Beatles' music, it continues to profit and inspire generations.

## Conclusion

The Beatles came from little and became the kings of the music industry for more than fifty years, and their story never stops

55. Jeff Giles, "The Beatles Take Top Two Spots in 2017 Vinyl Sales," Ultimate Classic Rock, January 4, 2018, <http://ultimateclassicrock.com/beatles-2017-top-vinyl-sales/>.

56. Randy Lewis, "Beatles to Get 24/7 Radio Station Starting May 18 on SiriusXM," *Los Angeles Times*, May 4, 2017.

57. Mark Koba, "Beatles Business: Still Making Money, 50 Years On," CNBC, February 7, 2014, <https://www.cnbc.com/2014/01/24/beatles-business-still-making-money-50-years-on.html>.

changing and evolving. The history of the Beatles' publishing right continues to this day. In 2017, McCartney sued Sony Music for ownership of the Beatles' catalogue.<sup>58</sup> McCartney attempted multiple times to regain the rights since losing them in 1969 but never succeeded. McCartney specifically targeted the rights of the Beatles' songs that he wrote or co-wrote. This would exclude songs like "Something" and "Here Comes the Sun" that Harrison wrote alone.<sup>59</sup> Early in 2018, both parties announced that they had reached a settlement concerning the case. Many details about the settlement remain unknown, but it is clear that Sony agreed to return the publishing rights of over 200 songs to McCartney.<sup>60</sup> After the transfer of ownership, McCartney will consolidate a large portion of the profits from the Beatles' music. Previously a portion of profits from streaming went to Sony, but now almost all that had gone to Sony will go to McCartney. Finally, the members of the Beatles are reclaiming the control of their music. The future of the Beatles' publishing rights remain unclear, and while this looks like the final chapter, there may be more yet to come regarding the music of the greatest band of all time.

In a world where technology infiltrates all parts of life, the Beatles have used that to their advantage to keep their music alive and profitable a half a century after they first created it. Music streaming provides a new way for fans to listen to the Beatles music, but it has also changed profit distribution in the modern music industry. The publishing rights of the Beatles' music complicates all decisions made about the music as well as the distribution of profits from that music. The Beatles are not unique in this; however, the Beatles' music echoes through generations and remains relevant today. This case study of the Beatles' music helps to show how publishing rights can influence decisions about music, and how those decisions can influence the popularity of the music.

58. Robert McLean, "Paul McCartney Sues to Get Beatles Songs Back from Sony," CNN, January 19, 2017, <http://money.cnn.com/2017/01/19/media/paul-mccartney-sony-lawsuit/index.html>.

59. McLean, "Paul McCartney Sues."

60. "Sir Paul McCartney and Sony Have Reached an Agreement over Who Owns Publishing Rights to The Beatles' Songs: He Had Gone to a U.S. Court to Regain the Rights to 267 of the Band's Classic Tracks," *Stoke Sentinel*, July 1, 2017.

[PART VI]

## **Legacy**



[16]

## The Beatles and the Government: A Relationship with the Aristocracy and the British Monarchy

**Brady Hess**

While the Beatles were essential to new trends that spread through the entire globe, an important relationship the Fab Four from Liverpool created was a lasting and complicated tie to the British monarchy. All four of the Beatles—John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr received their Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire award (MBE). Later on in their lives, two members, McCartney and Starr, were knighted. Before the Beatles acceptance of the MBE, it was rare for an entertainer to receive an award of the highest honor from the Queen of England. In 1965, when the Beatles were awarded their MBE, public opinion was split. Former MBE recipients returned their medals in protest, while citizens in other countries began to raise the question of whether their country had a sufficient way to honor their citizens like Britain had honored the Beatles.<sup>1</sup> Yet the

controversy and discussion was not exclusive to the MBE or the Beatles in 1965; the conversation surrounding the Beatles and their relationship to the aristocracy and the British Monarchy has not ceased over fifty years later.

Over the past half-century, the ways in which the Beatles intersected with British culture during the 1960s has been a subject of broad interest. The reactions to the Beatles receiving the MBE and the KBE can be traced to wider cultural disputes. For example, how well known the Beatles were within pop culture of the time, the relationship between pop culture and British royalty, the understanding of the MBE, and the debate over who should receive an MBE as well as the politics surrounding the award itself. The Beatles' relationship with the Monarchy is a prime example of a key variable within the changes of cultural expectations in Britain spanning from 1965 to the present day. The Beatles and their legacy have been the driving force in which the British monarchy and its citizens changed their perceptions of the role music can and should play in society. Years after their first trip to Buckingham Palace, the Beatles' impact on society are still evident. The Beatles set the tone and opened the door for musicians and entertainers alike to have a recognizable role within the eyes of the British monarchy and the people of Great Britain. Their inclusion in the aristocratic ranks blazed a path that many others have followed.

### Historiography

The story of the relationship between the Beatles, the aristocracy, and the British Monarchy has received considerable scholarly attention. The Beatles' relationship with the British monarchy is normally tied to four main events: the reception of the Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire; John Lennon's return of his MBE medal; the reception of the Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Paul McCartney; and the subsequent elevation of Ringo Starr to the same rank. Scholars see this relationship between the Beatles and the British government as a strong

1. Henry McLemore, "Medals for Shriekers," *Kenosha News*, June 28, 1965, 6.

influence in the debate over the awarding of honorifics from the British Empire. This relationship, helped in no small part by the Labour Party, created a progressive movement, which paved the way for new criteria to consider when a person is nominated for an award from the Queen. This chapter explores the history of the Beatles influence on the British monarchy and honorifics. The evidence suggests the Beatles were the ones who began the movement for musical acts to be honored for their hard work. The leading literature on this topic includes Ian Inglis' "The Politics of Stardust Or The Politics Of Cool: Popular Music And The British Honours System," Inglis' "Conformity, Status and Innovation: The Accumulation and Utilization of Idiosyncrasy Credits in the Career of the Beatles," and Tobias Harper's *Orders of Merit? Hierarchy, Distinction and the British Honours System, 1917-2004*.<sup>2</sup> These texts take a look into the social and cultural contexts in which these changes have taken place throughout the past fifty years.

In addition, the Beatles awards show how British aristocracy was reshaped in post-World War II England. Post-war Britain faced many changes socially and politically following the Second World War. With an empire in shambles, the British community became more of a liberal society. In Jeremy Black's *Britain from 1945 Onwards*, he argues that young people had turned the largest pre-war imperial power into a post-war world where significant cultural and societal changes took place.<sup>3</sup> In Inglis' "The Politics of Stardust Or The Politics Of Cool: Popular Music And The British Honours System," he touches on the relationship of the aristocracy regarding the reception of the British Honours to musicians and entertainers. According to scholars, political parties influenced the nominations that came down from the aristocracy.<sup>4</sup> This chapter will contribute to this

2. Ian Inglis, "The Politics Of Stardust Or The Politics Of Cool: Popular Music And The British Honours System," *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 41, no. 1 (2010): 51–71; Ian Inglis, "Conformity, Status and Innovation: The Accumulation and Utilization of Idiosyncrasy Credits in the Career of the Beatles," *Popular Music and Society* 19, no. 3 (September 1, 1995): 41–74, and Tobias Harper, "Orders of Merit? Hierarchy, Distinction and the British Honours System, 1917-2004" (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 2014).
3. Jeremy Black, "BBC - History - British History in Depth: Overview: Britain from 1945 Onwards," accessed April 13, 2018, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/overview\\_1945\\_present\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/modern/overview_1945_present_01.shtml).
4. Inglis, "The Politics Of Stardust," 51–71.

field by strengthening the argument that the Beatles had an influential role within the progression of the aristocracy, the British Monarchy, and their relationship with the musical successes.

### Understanding the MBE

The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire was established by King George V in June 1917. In 1918, the award was split into two divisions—military and *civil*.<sup>5</sup> The MBE is the fifth highest award in the British Empire. Being a Member of the British Empire ranks below being a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) and the Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE). Today, these awards are given to recognize an achievement or service to the community in any area, including the arts, charity, and education.<sup>6</sup> The Cabinet Office describes the MBE as an “outstanding achievement or service to the community.”<sup>7</sup> For many years, the MBE only went to those who had made a significant impact in the British war effort. The award was created amidst the conflict that was World War I.<sup>8</sup> In 1965, the MBE ranked 120th out of 126 titles of precedence. It was the most widely distributed award by the monarchy.<sup>9</sup> The British aristocracy includes in rank: Duke, Marquess, Earl, Viscount, Baron, Baronet, and Knight.<sup>10</sup> Many of these aristocratic titles are hereditary rankings of the aristocracy.<sup>11</sup> Hereditary titles are passed down from the royal family and passed to their spouses when they marry. The system is complicated but also simplistic at the same time. The longer the

5. Encyclopedia Britannica, s.v. “The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire | British Order of Knighthood,” accessed March 29, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Most-Excellent-Order-of-the-British-Empire>.
6. Laura Burnip, “What Is the Difference between an MBE, OBE, CBE and Knighthood and Which One Is the Highest Honour? All You Need to Know,” *The Sun*, March 12, 2018.
7. Burnip, “Difference between an MBE, OBE, CBE and Knighthood.”
8. Burnip, “Difference between an MBE, OBE, CBE and Knighthood.”
9. Dana Adams Schmidt, “John, Paul, Ringo and George, M.B.E.: Beatles Honored by Queen at Her ‘Keen Pad’ as Band Plays ‘Humoresque,’” *New York Times*, October 27, 1965.
10. “Aristocracy in England, Nobility, Peers, Peeresses, and Other People,” accessed April 17, 2018, <http://www.avictorian.com/nobility.html>.
11. “British Titles and Orders of Precedence,” Edwardian Promenade, July 10, 2008, <https://www.edwardianpromenade.com/resources/titles-and-orders-of-precedence/>.

award has been established, the more bearing it holds. Many of the deciding factors also deal with political party.<sup>12</sup> Honorifics such as Knighthood and the MBE are non-hereditary and are conferred by the Crown for life. The honorific may be used as soon as it is announced to the public even before the service takes place. The Queen gives out these awards fourteen different times annually during the months of February, March, July, October, and December.<sup>13</sup>

### The Beatles and Their Impact.

When the Beatles were honored with the MBE, there were many different reactions many of which were negative. These reactions did not seem to effect the Beatles popularity. The Beatles had eight number one hits prior to their reception of the MBE. After their reception of the award, the Beatles topped the charts nine more times before their breakup.<sup>14</sup> The group continued to tour until 1966, and they released albums until they disbanded in 1970. In 1969, John Lennon returned the MBE award that he had so cautiously taken in 1965; the initial controversy seemed to begin once more. Lennon returned his award as a result of his disagreement with the conflict in Vietnam and the Biafra civil war. This proved controversial because there was an unwritten understanding that if you had no intention of keeping the award, you should not accept it in the first place.

Although the Beatles might be perhaps the most famous members of the MBE club, when they were amongst the first few to receive an MBE for their musical contributions to the British Empire, they paved the way for numerous other musicians to gain recognition from the hierarchy. Members from the bands Queen, Led Zeppelin, and the Bee Gees, to name a few, have also received honorifics for their contributions to the arts within Great Britain.<sup>15</sup>

12. "Ranks and Privileges of the Peerage," Debrett's, accessed April 17, 2018, <https://www.debretts.com/expertise/essential-guide-to-the-peerage/ranks-and-privileges-of-the-peerage/>.
13. "The Knighthage," Debrett's, accessed April 17, 2018, <https://www.debretts.com/expertise/essential-guide-to-the-peerage/the-knighthage/>.
14. "The Beatles Full Official Chart History," Official Charts Company, accessed April 17, 2018, <http://www.officialcharts.com/artist/10363/beatles/>.

### The Beatles Reaction to Receiving the MBE

The Beatles took the world by storm in the 1960s, becoming the greatest musical group to ever be exported from Britain. In June 1965, Brian Epstein, the Beatles manager, was contacted by the Royal family to be informed that the Fab Four would be receiving the MBE at the Queen's Birthday Honours.<sup>16</sup> The Beatles were surprised when Epstein informed them of the monarchy's decision. The Fab Four were rather joyous about the award, but they were also shocked. Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson, who was from a suburb of Liverpool, encouraged the Queen to bestow one of the country's highest honors upon the four young lads from Liverpool. Wilson referred to the young band members as the "elder statesmen from Merseyside."<sup>17</sup>

On October 26, 1965, the Beatles made the trip to Buckingham Palace to receive their medals from Queen Elizabeth. In interviews, the Beatles joked about their trip to Buckingham Palace. They jested about a morning or evening suit, about getting a haircut, and even about smoking marijuana in the bathroom of the Queen's palace. John Lennon made the marijuana claim; however, George Harrison later disputed it, saying it was not a joint that the Fab Four smoked in the restroom, but a cigarette.<sup>18</sup> The band also quipped that MBE stood for "Mr. Brian Epstein," after the band's manager. Indeed, it was difficult to tell if they were sincerely appreciative of the award. John Lennon even noted that when he received the notice about the reception of the award, he put it with the rest of the fan mail that the band received. He thought that he was being drafted to the British military.<sup>19</sup>

It was no secret that some of the members of the band did not even know what the MBE was. "In fact, I know nothing about it.

15. Sarah Anderson, "You Can Call Me Sir - Musicians That Have Received Honours from the Queen," NME, November 25, 2011, <http://www.nme.com/photos/you-can-call-me-sir-musicians-that-have-received-honours-from-the-queen-1404480>.
16. Eddie Dezen, "The Day the Beatles Were Awarded MBE Medals," October 9, 2014, <http://www.todayifoundout.com/index.php/2014/10/day-beatles-awarded-mbe-medals/>.
17. "Even Beatles Amazed at Royal Honors," *Los Angeles Times*, June 13, 1965, sec. C.
18. Dezen, "The Day the Beatles Were Awarded MBE Medals."
19. Dezen, "The Day the Beatles Were Awarded MBE Medals."

Just that we've got it and it's nice to have," said Paul McCartney in an ITV interview. "It doesn't make you any more respectable or anything. I don't think... it doesn't make me anymore respectable, I'm still a scruff." McCartney's response was met with laughter from the rest of the band, which was on set for the interview.<sup>20</sup> While George, Ringo and Paul were excited for the award, John, on the other hand, was hesitant to accept the MBE. Lennon felt that he had sold out to the exact establishment that he was targeting with his politics and lifestyle. Lennon had been rebellious for the majority of his life, whether it was on the basis of religion or politics; he was never scared to share his point of view. Despite these reservations, he still accepted the award. After being awarded the medal, Lennon gave his medal to his Aunt Mimi. The award sat above her television for the next four years.<sup>21</sup>

When the Beatles met the Queen, there was considerable uncertainty while the jocularity continued. McCartney recalled that Queen Elizabeth asked the Fab Four how long they had been together, to which Ringo Starr jokingly responded "40 years."<sup>22</sup> The conversation with the Queen was unsurprisingly limited. It was apparent that neither the Queen nor the Beatles had an abundance of knowledge about one another. At the time of the pinning, all the members of the Beatles were younger than 25. Ringo and John were 24, and the other two only 22. One of the most famous lines from the interaction was when Queen Elizabeth first met the group; she asked Ringo if he had started the group. Starr responded to the Queen saying, "no ma'am, I was the last to join. I'm the little fellow."<sup>23</sup> The Beatles became the 382nd MBEs in the history of the award.<sup>24</sup>

### Media Coverage and Reaction to the Beatles

On the day, all were ecstatic. Paul McCartney said the group was "genuinely honoured." Crowds gathered outside the gates of the

20. "Beatles Interview: MBE Reaction 6/12/1965," The Beatles Ultimate Experience, accessed February 15, 2018, <http://www.beatlesinterviews.org/db1965.0612.beatles.html>.

21. Deezen, "The Day the Beatles Were Awarded MBE Medals."

22. Schmidt, "John, Paul, Ringo and George."

23. Deezen, "The Day the Beatles Were Awarded MBE Medals."

24. "Even Beatles Amazed at Royal Honors."

Buckingham Palace to, as one witness put it, “see the world’s number one band.”<sup>25</sup> Filmmakers described the loud shrieks of excitement: “everyone within five miles would know what was going on.”<sup>26</sup> A total of 189 British citizens received awards that October day. Despite the formality, around 50 of the 189 newly appointed members of the British empire, requested and received autographs from the Fab Four.<sup>27</sup>

Negative backlash followed the reception of the Beatles MBE. The majority of the negative reactions came from former MBE recipients, especially those that had served in the military. Much of this was a result of the negative reputation that came with rock ‘n’ roll and pop music. Press coverage of the event was global. The *Santa Ana Register*, for example, read, “the Beatles, MBE. If it were not so tragic, it would be funny.... it is simply pathetic.”<sup>28</sup> The same newspaper claimed the Beatles did not do anything to deserve the award. Thom Barley, the writer for the *Santa Ana Register*, proclaimed that there had never been so little done to achieve such an award.<sup>29</sup> People of all ages spoke of their distaste for the Beatles’ MBE. A young 16-year-old girl, Shirley Graham, said she liked the Beatles, but it was silly to give them a MBE. Walklett, 74, shared Graham’s view. “I think it is degrading,” said Walklett. “You cannot say that they have done anything for the country and I think the award should be made only to people who have done some good.”<sup>30</sup> Col. Frederick Wagg was one of the many protesters who sent his honorifics back to the Queen. Wagg sent back twelve medals that he earned fighting in both of the World Wars. “Decorating the Beatles has made a mockery of everything this country stands for,” he wrote in a letter. “I have heard them sing and play and I think they’re terrible.”<sup>31</sup> Many thought it was a political effort on the behalf of Harold Wilson and the Labour party. Some were

25. British Pathé, “Beatles at the Palace,” September 7, 2011, YouTube video, 1:16, February 20, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4\\_74XhHmlM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4_74XhHmlM).

26. British Pathé, “Beatles at the Palace.”

27. “The Day the Beatles Received Their MBEs.”

28. Thom Barley, “Briton Sees Investiture of Beatles As ‘Tragedy,’” *Santa Ana Register*, June 16, 1965, 34.

29. Barley, “Briton Sees Investiture,” 34.

30. “Should The Beatles Have Been Awarded MBEs?,” BBC Music, October 26, 2015, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/music/articles/ab4b44b7-b748-47cc-92cf-585300dccc142>.

31. “The Day the Beatles Received Their MBEs.”

puzzled by the decision, but had no negative reaction. Others thought that this was an example of how little the MBE stood for in the grand scheme of British life. A common thread in public opinion was that the Beatles had done nothing for the benefit of Britain. Soldiers returned their medals, as their way of protesting the Queen and her choice to grant the award to people who they believed did not deserve it.<sup>32</sup> Others, on the other hand, thought that prior to their reception of the MBE the Beatles had been inadequately rewarded.<sup>33</sup> Some thought that this was an example of the military being seen in too lowly of a fashion, and the arts and entertainment as being seen in too high regard.

The negative reaction from veterans and those who supported the return of medals were met with an equal reaction of those who supported the band receiving the award. Harold Hobson wrote in an opinion column in the *London Times*: “Thank goodness this time the MBE has been given to people one has actually heard of.”<sup>34</sup> Although, Hobson noted that the MBE was not the most distinguished of awards, the Beatles’ relationship with the award would be beneficiary to the award itself, more than for the group. Hobson praised the Beatles for being modest, noting they were “practically the first famous people to accept the MBE.”<sup>35</sup>

Some members of the Beatles responded to the backlash in a fashion that was similar to how the Fab Four approached receiving the award. “We’re going to keep ours,” said Paul McCartney. “Eventually we’ll be the only ones with them.” While McCartney brought a familiar comical Beatles feel to the subject, the public also began to see a more controversial side of John Lennon. “We think it’s much better to entertain people and get medals than to kill them and get medals for that,” the Beatles front man said. “One of those people that didn’t think we should get an award was the leader of the Ku Klux Klan in America. So

32. British Pathé, “Beatles at the Palace.”

33. British Pathé, “Beatles at the Palace.”

34. Harold Hobson, “Beatles in ‘Surprising Country’: Almost at the Bottom Their Modesty Admirable Behavior Outre Fashion,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, August 7, 1965.

35. Hobson, “Beatles in ‘Surprising Country’.”

if that's the type of person that doesn't agree with our getting awards, we don't mind that.”<sup>36</sup>

### Lennon's Return of the MBE

The controversy that once lay on the shoulders of the Beatles shifted to Lennon four years after they had taken their visit to see the Queen. On November 25, 1969, John Lennon returned his MBE to Buckingham Palace. Lennon's driver, Les Anthony, brought the award back to the Palace with handwritten letters from Lennon to the Queen, the Prime Minister, and the Secretary of Central Chancery. His letter to Queen Elizabeth resurfaced in 2009.<sup>37</sup> Lennon wrote: “Your Majesty, I am returning this MBE in protest against Britain's involvement in the Nigeria-Biafra thing, against our support of America in Vietnam and against Cold Turkey slipping down the charts. With Love, John Lennon of Bag.”<sup>38</sup> Lennon stated in a press conference that he had given the decision much thought over the past two years. Lennon claimed that he had not consulted with any of the Beatles before returning his award, citing that the only reason he accepted in the first place was Brian Epstein's persuasiveness. Amongst all the comments Lennon made, he stated that the British government's action in Biafra was disgraceful, and although he was patriotic, the actions had almost brought him to the point where he was ashamed to be an Englishman.<sup>39</sup> The 29-year-old Englishman encouraged the other three members of the Beatles to return their medals as well, but he was adamant that they had to make that decision for themselves.<sup>40</sup> While Lennon was one of the most famous people to receive the award, he is perhaps the most famous person to return his award. When asked to comment on Lennon's actions, Buckingham Palace released a statement saying, “of course, Mr. Lennon is free to do whatever he wants. This very rarely

36. “Beatles Arrive Tomorrow For Tour of U.S.,” *Tucson Daily Citizen*, August 12, 1965, 21.

37. “Lennon's Returned MBE Medal Discovered in Royal Vault,” *Asian News International*, January 6, 2009.

38. “John Lennon Returns His MBE to the Queen,” The Beatles Bible, accessed February 13, 2018, <https://www.beatlesbible.com/1969/11/25/john-lennon-returns-his-mbe-to-the-queen/>.

39. “John Lennon Returns Medal,” *The Washington Post*, November 26, 1969.

40. “John Lennon Returns Medal.”

happens, but it has happened before. In fact, several people returned their MBEs at the time the Beatles were awarded theirs.”<sup>41</sup>

### Knightoods for Martin, McCartney, and Starr

A knighthood is one of the highest honors the Queen of England may give. The reigning monarch holds the power over who receives a knighthood, but they often receive recommendations from people within their cabinet, such as the Secretary of State for Defense and the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.<sup>42</sup> After obtaining knighthood, one may add the word “Sir” or “Dame” to their name, if they so please. The first person in relation to the Beatles to receive a knighthood was producer George Martin. Her Majesty knighted Martin, who was often referred to as the fifth Beatle, in 1996. Sir Paul McCartney and Sir Ringo Starr are the only two members of the Beatles who have received the honor of Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, also known as the KBE. McCartney received his honor in 1997, while the Queen knighted Starr at the New Year’s Honours in 2018. Sir Mick Jagger and Sir Elton John also have been tapped for the KBE.<sup>43</sup> Honorary knighthoods (KBES) have been handed out to Microsoft president Bill Gates and United States presidents Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush.<sup>44</sup> The Queen can give an honorary knighthood to “foreign citizens” on the recommendation of the Foreign and Commonwealth Offices. The suggestion comes down to those who have made a large impact in the relations between their home country and Great Britain. One of the differences between the KBE and the honorary KBE is that foreign citizens may not attach “Sir” to their names.<sup>45</sup>

Less than a year after George Martin became a knight, Paul

41. “John Lennon Returns Medal.”

42. Ethan Trex, “How Does One Become A Knight?,” Mental Floss, accessed March 23, 2018, <http://mentalfloss.com/article/21056/how-does-one-become-knight>

43. Alison Hill, “10 Music Stars Knighted By The Queen Of England,” Listsaur, April 7, 2011, <https://listosaur.com/entertainment/10-music-stars-knighted-by-the-queen-of-england/>.

44. “Bill Gates,” Biography, accessed April 12, 2018, <https://www.biography.com/people/bill-gates-9307520>; Scott Thompson, “The Queen’s ‘Honorary Knights’ in America,” *EIR* 23, no. 22, (May 24, 1996), 21.

McCartney made his way back to Buckingham Palace with a similar feeling that he had 32 years prior when he received his MBE: he was nervous.<sup>46</sup> At the time, McCartney was 54. The scene out in front of Buckingham Palace was similar to the chaos that McCartney and his three friends experienced in 1965. After informing the surviving members of the Beatles, Starr and Harrison, of his knighting, McCartney said they referred to the new knight as “Your Holiness.” McCartney dedicated his knighthood to Harrison, Starr, Lennon, and the citizens of northwestern Liverpool. The former Wings frontman said he was proud to be British and that it had been a long journey from a little terrace in Liverpool. Even the most conservative British citizens considered the knighthood of McCartney as long overdue, a completely different reception than McCartney was met with in 1965.<sup>47</sup> This speaks greatly to the shift in the culture between the 1960s and the 1990s. Not only was this a shift within the United Kingdom, but evidence of a greater global liberalization over the years. The 1960s were only a couple decades removed from World War II, but the sixties brought significant progress, both in music, but also in the ways in which people spoke out against their government. Lennon showed his penchant to protest over the conflicts in Vietnam and Biafra, while across the pond, many Americans protested the Vietnam War as well. The Civil Rights Movement also was taking place within the sixties in the United States, and the Beatles pushed the boundaries in this debate as well. Unpopular views in the sixties grew on people over a thirty-year time frame. By the time the 1990s rolled around, the change that people had pushed for in the sixties was not only just an idea, but also widely accepted. Just as with many issues in society, after a certain amount of time goes by, visions change. When the youth are targeted, which is the case in mainstream music in the modern time as it was with the Beatles, past concepts can be replaced with new ideas. The opening up of the British aristocracy highlighted this change from an inherently

45. John Lettice, “UK Knighthoods for Foreigners – What It Takes to Get One,” *The Register*, January 29, 2004.

46. “Paul McCartney Knighted, March 11, 1997,” HISTORY, accessed February 15, 2018, <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/paul-mccartney-knighted>.

47. “Paul McCartney Knighted.”

conservative social order to a more inclusive and expansive notion of who deserved the honor.

### George Harrison's Reaction

Three years after the 1997 knighting of McCartney, Harrison was offered an OBE, Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, in 2000, but he reportedly refused. Harrison felt that this offer from the Queen was insulting and insensitive following McCartney's knighting. The OBE, one step up from the MBE, was one of the lowest awards granted by the British monarchy. The purpose behind the OBE was reportedly for Harrison's "four decade long career in show business." Harrison would not live to see an offer of knighthood after what he viewed as a snub with the OBE.<sup>48</sup> Neither Harrison nor John Lennon lived to see a nod for Knighthood. Lennon was shot and killed in New York City by Mark David Chapman in 1980.<sup>49</sup> Harrison passed away in 2001 at age 58 after a battle with lung cancer.<sup>50</sup>

### Ringo Starr's Long Wait

Ringo Starr had his patience tested as he awaited the call from Buckingham Palace. British journalists in 2015 went as far as to say Starr "had waited too long" to be knighted.<sup>51</sup> Starr had accomplished everything that one would think they would need to accomplish to receive a knighthood. The Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame recipient had made many contributions to the entertainment scene throughout his life. It seemed that a knighthood would be the cherry on top of a legendary career. When Paul McCartney was asked in 2011 about Starr's lack of a knighthood, McCartney's response was simple: "yeah, well don't look at me." McCartney went on to say that the last time he

48. Antonia Molloy, "Beatles Guitarist George Harrison 'turned down' OBE before His Death," *The Independent*, December 23, 2013.

49. "John Lennon Is Assassinated in New York City, December 8, 1980," HISTORY, accessed April 17, 2018, <http://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/john-lennon-is-assassinated-in-new-york-city>.

50. Allan Kozinn, "George Harrison, Former Beatle, Dies at 58," *The New York Times*, November 30, 2001.

51. Vincent Moss, "Beatles Legend Ringo Starr Should Be given a Knighthood as 'He's Waited Too Long,'" *The Daily Mirror*, September 26, 2015.

went by Buckingham Palace, the Queen was out; if she had been there, he claims he would have told her: “Look love, Sir Richard Starkey! Because I do think it’s about time.”<sup>52</sup>

In December 2017, Buckingham Palace announced that 52 years after receiving his MBE, Ringo Starr would be knighted for his services to music and charity at age 77.<sup>53</sup> The announcement was met with adulation from numerous people around the world. Most notably, Paul McCartney and Yoko Ono reached out via Twitter and Instagram to extend their congratulations to their old friend. On March 20, 2018, Ringo Starr became Sir Richard Starkey. “I’ll be wearing it at breakfast,” proclaimed a proud Ringo.<sup>54</sup> Starr went on to disclose how much the formal acknowledgement from the royal family had meant to him. “It means a lot, actually. It means recognition for the things we’ve done, musically and in life. So I was really pleased to accept this award.”<sup>55</sup> Starr said that Paul McCartney had given him tips about the ceremony when they had recently had dinner together in Los Angeles, California. He said that McCartney simply told him to keep smiling. Starr was the lone recipient at his knighting and proclaimed that he was “a bit shaky on my own.”<sup>56</sup>

### Conclusion

The history of the Beatles’ relationship with the Monarchy illustrates the vast changes that occurred in British culture between the sixties up to the present. The United Kingdom went from opening the door with the Beatles to letting the band set the precedent for the honoring of entertainers in the United Kingdom. The Monarchy gave them the MBE at a time when it was rare for someone to be honored for their musical contributions to Great Britain. The Beatles became one of the first to be recognized for their contributions to the arts and commerce. This incensed an older generation, and many

52. Moss, “Ringo Starr Should Be given a Knighthood.”

53. Andrew R. Chow, “Ringo Starr Tapped for Knighthood,” *The New York Times*, December 31, 2017.

54. Mark Savage, “Ringo Starr Receives Knighthood,” BBC News, March 20, 2018, <http://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-43472196>.

55. Savage, “Ringo Starr Receives Knighthood.”

56. Savage, “Ringo Starr Receives Knighthood.”

recipients gave back their MBEs because of their outrage. From that point forward, the Beatles were always a part of the mainstream culture of Britain. This has to do with more than music, but Paul, George, Ringo, and even John became faces of a country. The controversy that followed John Lennon after his return of his MBE was simply a reaction to a rare feat. All this paved the way for numerous acts to be rewarded in the same ways the Beatles were. The Beatles even set the precedent in having musicians knighted. After McCartney and George Martin were knighted, musicians including Mick Jagger, Elton John and many others reaped the benefits of knighthood. The Beatles set the precedent for entertainers and their expectations for relationships with the British monarchy. The 32-year and 53-year hiatus between the knighting of McCartney and Starr and their reception of the MBE shows that some sort of positive relationship has been accomplished with the monarchy. Although Harrison and the majority of Beatles fans would likely tell you that he was slighted at the end, the recent knighting of Ringo Starr makes the relationship one that remains strong and resilient.

Just like cultures have adapted and accepted new roles for members of society throughout the world, we see this as a prime example within the British monarchy and its citizens adapted to a changing world. Across the globe, the Beatles still resonate. They set the tone for musicians that would follow them by not being afraid to be themselves.



[17]

## The Show Must Go On: The Beatles' Lasting Influence on Shea Stadium

**Helen Goggins**

On August 15, 1965, a hysterical crowd of 55,000 cheered as the New York Mets' groundskeeper, Pete Flynn, drove an armored car containing John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr to the center of Shea Stadium for the Beatles' largest concert to date.<sup>1</sup> The Beatles' iconic concert at Shea became a benchmark performance for future artists, making Shea Stadium a sought-after, high-profile venue. The intertwining histories of the Beatles and Shea Stadium reflect the enormity of that evening's concert. The Beatles' first performance at Shea Stadium cemented their status as rock 'n' roll icons in the world of American popular culture, created the modern stadium music tour, and marked a major milestone in both the history of the Beatles and of the American stadium concerts.

1. Murray Schumach, "Shrieks of 55,000 Accompany Beatles: 55,000 Fill Shea to Hear Beatles," *New York Times*, August 16, 1965.

## Historiography

The Beatles played a pivotal role in introducing the world to Shea Stadium when they played the stadium for the first time. Their iconic performance enhanced the venue's image as a world-class concert arena. Their initial concert at Shea in mid-August 1965 is frequently referenced in Beatles literature as one of their breakthrough performances in the United States due to the size of the venue and the crowds. Historians note the importance of the concert as part of the Beatles historic rise to fame. *The Beatles at Shea Stadium: The Story Behind Their Greatest Concert* and *The Arena Concert: Music, Media and Mass Entertainment* both capture the importance of the Beatles' concert at Shea with interviews of those present at the concert and analysis by Beatles historians. Both secondary sources explore the importance of the show and how it affected future stadium concerts across the globe.<sup>2</sup> The Beatles concert inspired other performers to come to Shea even when the stadium lost its modern appeal. The legacy left by the band lasted throughout the rest of Shea Stadium's operation.

The historiography concerning the intersection of sense of place and concert arenas deconstructs how space affects the overall understanding of the influence environment has on the communities which inhabit it. Ethen's, "A Spatial History of Arena Rock, 1964-79," and Sparacino's, "The Arena and Stadium Experience: The Individual, the Venue and the Culture Industry," examine the role of Shea Stadium, as a shared space and how it plays a vital role in the rising popularity of stadium concerts.<sup>3</sup> Baseball and rock 'n' roll historians view the Beatles 1965 concert at Shea Stadium as a turning point in the way the world went to hear music. The stadium helped foster a sense of community throughout its use and helped form a shared identity for baseball and music fans. Cultural geographers view

2. Benjamin Halligan, Kirsty Fairclough, Robert Edgar, and Nicola Spelman, *The Arena Concert: Music, Media and Mass Entertainment* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), and Dave Schwensen, *The Beatles At Shea Stadium: The Story Behind Their Greatest Concert* (Chicago: North Shore Publishing, 2014).
3. Michael Ethen, "A Spatial History of Arena Rock, 1964-79" (PhD dissertation, McGill University, 2012), and Anthony P. Sparacino, "The Arena and Stadium Experience: The Individual, the Venue and the Culture Industry" (master's thesis, City University of New York, 2014).

sense of place as an important key in establishing shared identity.<sup>4</sup> Haarja Saar and Hannes Palang argue that, “a sense of place roots us to the world.”<sup>5</sup>

### The Creation of Shea Stadium

In 1925’s *The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald described Queens as the “valley of the ashes.”<sup>6</sup> He described the desolate area, writing: “Ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and finally, with a transcendent effort, of ash-gray men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air.”<sup>7</sup> Although fiction, Fitzgerald’s words about the rundown borough across the East River from Manhattan described the poor living conditions of the industrial part of Long Island. The “valley of the ashes” did not last.

After the Second World War, Robert Moses led a tireless effort to rebuild New York as a modern metropolis.<sup>8</sup> Like many parts of postwar New York, Shea Stadium was the brainchild of Moses, the infamous New York “master builder,” and served as part of his larger vision for the future of New York. Moses began his work in public service under governor Alfred E. Smith as head of the State Council of Parks.<sup>9</sup> As time passed, Moses’ legacy grew as one of New York’s most influential city planners and builders. Lewis Mumford, one of Moses’ harshest critics, said that, “in the 20th century, the influence of Robert Moses on the cities of America was greater than that of any other person.”<sup>10</sup> His vision for the boroughs helped redesign the city’s skyline, state transportation, beaches, bridges, and parks.<sup>11</sup> Over the course of Moses’ tenure, he held positions in local and state

4. Maarja Saar and Hannes Palang, “The Dimensions of Place Meanings,” *Living Reviews in Landscape Research* 3, (2009): 5–24.

5. Quoted in Susan Hanson, *Ten Geographic Ideas That Changed the World* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 12.

6. Thomas Lask, “The Queens That Gatsby Knew,” *New York Times*, October 3, 1971.

7. Lask, “The Queens That Gatsby Knew.”

8. *The Last Play at Shea*, directed by Paul Crowder, Jon Small (2010; Virgil Films & Entertainment, 2014), Streaming. <https://www.amazon.com/Last-Play-at-Shea/dp/B004CYVZ36>

9. J. Y. Smith, “Robert Moses, Master Builder of Parks, Bridges, Buildings, Dies,” *Washington Post*, July 30, 1981.

10. Smith, “Robert Moses.”

11. Smith.

government including, parks commissioner of New York City, State Parks Council chairman, Long Island State Park Commission president, among others. By 1968 at his retirement, Moses had overseen construction projects totaling an astonishing 27 billion dollars.<sup>12</sup> Due to Moses' stature in state government and extensive building record, governor Nelson Rockefeller waived New York State's retirement laws for government officials to ensure Moses could continue his work in office.<sup>13</sup>

Moses' plans for reinventing the public's perception of Queens began decades before he proposed plans for Shea Stadium. Moses' first task began with the removal of the borough's infamous industrial ash dump. In 1930, as Parks Commissioner, Moses ordered the relocation of over fifty million cubic tons of garbage from Flushing Meadows.<sup>14</sup> After the trash removal, Moses began developing plans for the newly cleared land. World War II halted the vast majority of non-military building in the United States, delaying many of Moses' projects.<sup>15</sup> Following the end of the war, Moses began again to envision grand parks, museums, and stadiums for Flushing Meadows.<sup>16</sup>

The creation of Shea Stadium played a part in Moses' larger goal of bringing New York into the modern age. Moses oversaw the construction of highways, bridges, and roads that would connect Manhattan to Queens and the suburbs on Long Island. He wanted Shea Stadium and Flushing Meadows Corona Park to be accessible to the public and hoped they would become must see tourist attractions.<sup>17</sup> Moses played an integral part in bringing the World Fair back to New York in 1964. He wanted the World Fair and Flushing Meadows Corona Park to eclipse the popularity of Central Park.<sup>18</sup>

12. Smith.

13. Brian Moss, "When 'Master Builder' Robert Moses Lost His Grip on New York City," *NY Daily News*, August 14, 2017.

14. "Early History: The Swamp and Ash Dump," *Seminar 3: Science & Technology in NYC*, accessed April 2, 2018, <https://macaulay.cuny.edu/eportfolios/munshisouth10/group-projects/flushingmeadows/flushing-meadows-past/>.

15. Moss, "When 'Master Builder' Robert Moses Lost His Grip on New York City."

16. "Flushing Meadows Corona Park Highlights - Shea Stadium," *NYC Parks*, accessed April 2, 2018, <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/flushing-meadows-corona-park/highlights/12784>.

17. Moss, "When 'Master Builder' Robert Moses Lost His Grip on New York City."

In 1957, Robert Moses offered the Brooklyn Dodgers and the New York Giants a new stadium in Flushing Meadows Park, Queens. They refused his offer due to the proposed location.<sup>19</sup> After the parties were unable to reach an agreement, the Dodgers and Giants both decided to leave New York and took up their new residencies in Los Angeles and San Francisco.<sup>20</sup> Moses needed to find a new major league baseball team for his stadium, so he enlisted the help of William Shea, a native New York lawyer.<sup>21</sup> When Fred Wilpon, Mets owner, reflected on the legacy of Mets at the beginning of their last season at Shea Stadium, he stated that, “the Mets simply do not exist without the extraordinary vision and passion of Bill Shea.”<sup>22</sup>

Before Shea offered the Mets a new stadium, they played at the Polo Grounds, an outdated field, home to a variety of local teams including the Titans, now known as the New York Jets.<sup>23</sup> In 1962, the Mets were the worst team in the league with a historic 120 losses and lacked a strong fan base.<sup>24</sup> After securing Shea Stadium as their future home, the Mets gained attention from many New Yorkers looking for a new major league baseball team to root for. New York City officials, including Majority Leader Eric Treulich, Minority Leader Angelo Arculeo, along with Councilman Thomas Cuite, and Edward Sadowsky, proposed and voted on naming the stadium William A. Shea Stadium, due to Shea’s tireless efforts in securing a team for Robert Moses’ nineteen-million-dollar stadium.<sup>25</sup>

In the weeks leading up to opening day, construction crews

18. Lisa Colangelo, “1964 World’s Fair: When the World Came to Queens,” *New York Daily News*, accessed March 30, 2018, <http://creative.nydailynews.com/worldsfair>.
19. “Council Studies Proposal to Name Stadium for Shea,” *New York Times*, October 31, 1962; “Flushing Meadows Corona Park Highlights - Shea Stadium,” *NYC Parks*.
20. Hoge Warren, “Unelected City Power,” *New York Times*, April 8, 1976.
21. David Margolick, “William A. Shea, 84, Dies; The Lawyer Behind the Mets,” *New York Times*, October 4, 1991.
22. Brian Baxtor, “Shea’ It Ain’t So: Final Season for Stadium Named After N.Y. Lawyer,” *Law.com*, April 9, 2008, <https://www.law.com/almID/900005561257/Shea-It-Aint-So-Final-Season-for-Stadium-Named-After-NY-Lawyer/>.
23. Ken Belson, “Memories of Polo Grounds on Anniversary of Final Opener,” *New York Times*, April 8, 2013.
24. Arash Markazi, “How ‘Meet the Mets’ Endures as Team’s Anthem,” *ESPN*, October 27, 2015, [http://www.espn.com/mlb/story/\\_/id/13984204/how-catchy-jingle-meet-mets-endured-team-anthem-good-bad-s](http://www.espn.com/mlb/story/_/id/13984204/how-catchy-jingle-meet-mets-endured-team-anthem-good-bad-s).
25. “Council Studies Proposal to Name Stadium for Shea.”

rushed trying to complete their work before the Mets' first game. A few days before the stadium's official opening a reporter wrote, "it seemed hardly possible that the Stadium would be completely ready for the opener."<sup>26</sup> He noted issues with the layout of the stadium, puddles accumulating across the entire field, and the disorganized mess to be found in every corner of the stadium.<sup>27</sup>

Shea's dedication brought a large crowd to opening day, including New York City Mayor Robert F. Wagner, Jr., who upon his visit exclaimed, "[Shea is] one of the most modern and beautiful sports facilities in the world."<sup>28</sup> Moses wanted his stadium to echo the Roman Coliseum, with its round shape and stacked seating; he envisioned Shea being a modern classic piece of architecture. His vision fell flat; many of the stadium seats ended up being unsellable because they were a bad vantage point from which to watch the game.<sup>29</sup> "There are a lot of great moments here, created by the team," Peter Gammons, a broadcast analyst for ESPN said. "I guess what I am trying to say is that I think it was outdated by its third or fourth year."<sup>30</sup> The following year, the year of the Beatles' concert, the New York Mets went 12 games out of 162 during their 1965 season.<sup>31</sup>

In April of 2006, the Mets introduced a proposal for a new stadium, Citi Field. Plans showed the new venue would be built next to Shea Stadium.<sup>32</sup> After forty-five years of baseball and concerts, Shea Stadium closed at the end of the New York Mets' 2008 season. On Shea's last day of baseball, the Mets were one win away from earning the last playoff spot in the National

26. Robert Lipsyte, "Work Being Rushed on Final Touches to Shea Stadium: In a Meadowland of Hopes and Dreams a Stadium Called Shea Stands," *New York Times*, April 12, 1964.
27. Lipsyte, "Work Being Rushed."
28. Rory Costello, "Shea Stadium (New York)", *Society for American Baseball Research*, accessed April 1, 2018, <https://sabr.org/biopproj/park/476675>.
29. Mike Vaccaro, "Bye, Shea, You Glorious Dump," *New York Post*, September 28, 2008.
30. Kristian Dyer, "Shea Stadium: New York's Other MLB Home Bids Farewell, Too," *ESPN*, September 24, 2008, <http://www.espn.com/espn/thelife/news/story?id=3595733>.
31. "Mets Year-By-Year Results," *New York Mets*, accessed March 29, 2018, [http://newyork.mets.mlb.com/nym/history/year\\_by\\_year\\_results.jsp](http://newyork.mets.mlb.com/nym/history/year_by_year_results.jsp).
32. "Shea Stadium - History, Photos and More of the New York Mets Former Ballpark," *Ballparks of Baseball - Your Guide to Major League Baseball Stadiums*, accessed April 3, 2018, <https://www.ballparksofbaseball.com/ballparks/sheastadium/>.

League; there was hope until the very last inning for Mets fans who wanted one more game at Shea Stadium.<sup>33</sup>

### Establishing a Sense of Place in Queens

The sudden departure of the Dodgers and Giants left New York's working class searching for a new team. Shea Stadium helped form a sense of group identity and place for many New Yorkers because it provided a location where people could congregate. The stadium's location drew blue-collar crowds that did not identify with the New York Yankees because they saw them as the cross-town rivals. When the New York Mets began playing at Shea, the stadium filled with fans singing, "Meet the Mets", and cheering for their team.<sup>34</sup> The public's love for Shea Stadium as both a baseball stadium and concert venue, promoted a strong sense of place over its forty-five years.

Shea Stadium housed countless hours and innings of baseball; it welcomed people to come and be a part of the game, and despite all of its flaws, many players and fans note the character of the stadium. Former New York Mets outfielder, Darryl Strawberry, recalled the famous quote about Shea: "It's a dump... but it's our dump."<sup>35</sup> In the beginning, no one wanted to play at Shea, except for the Mets, but after over forty years of complaining about the shape, size, and layout of the stadium, fans were not ready to say goodbye.<sup>36</sup> The stadium fostered a sense of community, the feeling of togetherness helped make Shea into a beloved stadium despite its many flaws.

### Before the Big Show

Brian Epstein, the Beatles' manager and fellow Liverpudlian, orchestrated the Beatles' performance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Epstein and Sullivan reached an agreement for three appearances throughout 1964 at \$10,000 a show.<sup>37</sup> The Beatles'

33. Mike Lupica, "It's Hard to Believe Mets Collapse Again," *NY Daily News*, September 28, 2008.

34. Markazi, "How 'Meet the Mets' Endures as Team's Anthem."

35. Glenn Gamboa, "'Last Play at Shea' Tells Stadium's Story," *Newsday*, accessed April 20, 2010, <https://www.newsday.com/sports/baseball/mets/last-play-at-shea-documentary-tells-stadium-s-story-1.1872400>.

36. Vaccaro, "Bye, Shea, You Glorious Dump."

first performance on *The Ed Sullivan Show* on February 9, 1964, garnered the attention of 73 million viewers; 38 percent of the United States population tuned in to see the Beatles' first television performance.<sup>38</sup> The Beatles television appearance capitalized on their newfound popularity in the United States.<sup>39</sup>

Sid Bernstein, an American promoter and producer, read about the rise of the Beatlemania in Europe in 1963. He contacted Brian Epstein, the band's manager, asking for his permission to promote the Beatles in the United States. Bernstein booked the Beatles for Carnegie Hall on February 12, 1964, without informing the venue of the genre of music they would be playing.<sup>40</sup> The day of the concert, the Beatles welcomed 2,900 screaming fans. Dan Daniel, a longtime American radio disc jockey, noted that, "it was the most piercing, uncomfortable sound I'd ever heard."<sup>41</sup> Fans came in droves to hear the band at Carnegie Hall because the concert occurred three days after the band's famous appearance on *Ed Sullivan*.<sup>42</sup> Bernstein saw the Beatles' early success in America and wanted to elevate the band's performances by booking stadiums, instead of concert halls and bars; he wanted the Beatles to play at Shea Stadium.

### The Beatles' Performances at Shea Stadium

The Beatles first concert at Shea Stadium occurred on August 15, 1965, and kicked off their second American tour. When it was time to go on stage, Pete Flynn, the Mets groundskeeper, drove the Fab Four to center field where Ed Sullivan introduced the Beatles to the hysterical Shea crowd.<sup>43</sup> Their show broke box

37. "Products Page," *Ed Sullivan Show*, accessed March 31, 2018, <http://www.edsullivan.com/artists/the-beatles>.
38. "Products Page," *Ed Sullivan Show*.
39. "Sid Bernstein, Promoter Who Brought the Beatles to Carnegie Hall, Dies Aged 95," *Telegraph*, August 21, 2013.
40. "Beatles Make Bedlam Out of Carnegie Hall," *The Atlanta Constitution*, February 13, 1964.
41. Bob Spitz, "The Beatles Invasion 50 Years Ago: Wed., Feb 12, 1964," *Time*, February 12, 2014, <http://time.com/5845/the-beatles-invasion-50-years-ago-sunday-feb-9-1964/>.
42. "Beatles Make Bedlam Out of Carnegie Hall."
43. "Beatles Press Conference: New York City 8/13/1965 - Beatles Interviews Database," accessed March 13, 2018, <http://www.beatlesinterviews.org/db1965.0813.beatles.html>.

office records and was quickly elevated to an iconic status in the public imagination. Beatles biographer Bob Spitz described the event: "It was madness. Nobody had ever seen that many screaming kids assembled in one place."<sup>44</sup> The Beatles' performance transformed the perception of Shea Stadium from just a baseball stadium to a much sought-after concert venue.

Before Shea, there had never been a concert of a similar magnitude. Elvis' concert at the Cotton Bowl October 11, 1956, with about 26,000 people in attendance, held the record for largest concert until the Beatles' concert at Shea with an estimated 55,000 fans.<sup>45</sup> While Shea broke records for the largest concert, it only marked the beginning of the Beatles' 1965 summer tour, which sold out stadiums across the United States. The rise of stadium concerts following the Beatles' concert at Shea led to a host of new problems. Sound systems proved unable to capture and project the music for the audience. Due to the lack of modern speaker technology, bands and concert goers were often unable to hear the songs. "We always used to use the house PA," Starr later reflected. "That was good enough for us, even at Shea Stadium. I never felt people came to hear our show – I felt they came to see us."<sup>46</sup>

Their performance created a new public perception of Shea, elevating the venue beyond being just another baseball diamond. It had character, and the memory of the Beatles' famous concert lent it a certain magic. Performers flocked to play Shea.<sup>47</sup> Shea quickly became known as one of the best stadiums for concerts even though the facility was viewed as a dump and an eyesore for baseball.<sup>48</sup> Music brought people together from different racial, political, and social backgrounds. As a young girl, Whoopi Goldberg, Oscar winning actress,

44. "The Beatles At Shea: A Sports Stadium Revolution", and Jane Stern and Michael Stern, "You Know You Should Be Glad," *New York Times*, November 27, 2005.

45. Robert Philpot, "Back in the Day, Elvis Rocked and Rolled DFW," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, March 2, 2016; "Beatles Play Shea Stadium, 1965," *NY Daily News*, August 16, 1965; Matt Hurwitz, "The Beatles Made Music History at Shea Stadium," *Variety*, September 15, 2016, <http://variety.com/2016/music/spotlight/beatles-music-history-shea-stadium-1201861551/>.

46. The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002), 186.

47. Jon Pareles, "Rock: Police Perform for 70,000 at Shea Stadium," *New York Times*, August 20, 1983.

48. Vaccaro, "Bye, Shea, You Glorious Dump."

reminisced about watching the Beatles and feeling like they were “colorless.” For her, the band was able to work beyond race, and their message was for all people.<sup>49</sup>

The Beatles returned to Shea a year later, on August 23, 1966, and were greeted by 45,000 fans, a 10,000 decrease from their concert at Shea a year prior.<sup>50</sup> According to Beatles biographer Bob Spitz, the next appearance at Shea “was all screaming.”<sup>51</sup> The show emitted enough sound that it rivaled the decibels of a jumbo jet or thunder crashing.<sup>52</sup> Following their 1966 tour, the band grew weary of the constant screaming at their concerts because fans could not hear the music; their frustration led to their retirement from live performances at the end of their 1966 tour.<sup>53</sup>

Shea had only been in operation for two years before the Beatles’ first concert, and it gained a lot of attention as a potential concert venue following the Beatles’ show. Jeff Jones, Apple Corps chief executive, believed the band’s performance at Shea marked the height of their live performances, even though the show took place at an early point in their career.<sup>54</sup> Many Beatles enthusiasts also noted the importance of their Shea performance, because it introduced the band and the rest of the world to stadium touring. The Beatles had larger and grander shows following Shea Stadium, but the show lives on as one of their most iconic, because it welcomed the Fab Four to America and because it welcomed in a new era of stadium concerts. Advertisers saw the increase in venue space as a way of increasing ticket sales and overall revenue.<sup>55</sup> Years after the Beatles broke up, Sid Bernstein recalled talking to John Lennon

49. “Film Review: The Beatles: Eight Days a Week – The Touring Years,” Consequence of Sound, September 13, 2016, <https://consequenceofsound.net/2016/09/film-review-the-beatles-eight-days-a-week-the-touring-years/>.

50. Paul L. Montgomery, “The Beatles Bring Shea to a Wild Pitch of Hysteria,” *New York Times*, August 24, 1966.

51. “The Beatles At Shea: A Sports Stadium Revolution,” *wbur*, August 8, 2015, <http://www.wbur.org/onlyagame/2015/08/08/beatles-concert-shea-stadium-1965>.

52. Tufayel Ahmed, “The Beatles Were Louder Than a Jumbo Jet At Shea Stadium, Data Reveals,” *Newsweek*, September 14, 2016, <http://www.newsweek.com/louder-beatles-fab-four-made-more-noise-jumbo-jet-data-reveals-498285>.

53. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 229.

54. Hurwitz, “The Beatles Made Music History at Shea Stadium.”

55. “The Beatles At Shea: A Sports Stadium Revolution.”

who said, "I saw the top of the mountain when we were at Shea," and Bernstein agreed, "So was I."<sup>56</sup>

### The Acts that Followed

Many artists cite the Beatles' 1965 show as the reason they wanted to play at Shea Stadium. The Beatles' concerts changed the way the music industry perceived venue space.<sup>57</sup>

In the years following the Beatles, many other performers came through Shea Stadium, wanting to share their music with their fans in a place where the Beatles once played. On August 6, 1970, 20,000 concert-goers flocked to Shea for the Festival for Peace.<sup>58</sup> The concert aimed to raise money for candidates who opposed the war in Vietnam.<sup>59</sup> At one point during the 12-hour concert, the master of ceremonies, Pete Yarrow of Peter, Paul, and Mary, led the crowd in a chorus of, "All We Are Saying is Give Peace a Chance," John Lennon's first released solo while he was still a member of the Beatles.<sup>60</sup> As the marathon concert progressed, one attendee, 16-year-old Sherri Chamoff, said, "this is an unbelievable lineup, better than the Mets."<sup>61</sup> The Festival for Peace introduced Shea to another group of people and tied the stadium to a cause.

For a while, Shea did not hold a steady string of concerts. The Who marked the glorious return of rock 'n' roll to Queens on October 12 and 13, 1982. Before their concert, the last band to play Shea was Jethro Tull in 1976. The concert began with The Clash opening up for the headliners. During their second concert, The Who's encore paid tribute to the Beatles; they played, "I Saw Her Standing There" and "Twist and Shout".<sup>62</sup>

The next summer Shea once again welcomed rock 'n' roll

56. "History of Shea Stadium," New York Mets, accessed February 20, 2018, <http://newyork.mets.mlb.com/nym/ballpark/history.jsp>.

57. "The Beatles At Shea: A Sports Stadium Revolution."

58. John Darnton, "20,000 Youths Attend Rock 'Festival for Peace' Here," *New York Times*, August 7, 1970.

59. Deirdre Carmody, "Music Festival to Aid War Foes: 12-Hour Concert Is Planned for Shea Stadium Aug. 6," *New York Times*, July 19, 1970.

60. Newseum, "Vietnam Music Monday: 'Give Peace a Chance'", Newseum, October 12, 2015, <http://www.newseum.org/2015/10/12/vietnam-music-monday-give-peace-a-chance/>.

61. Darton, "20,000 Youths Attend Rock 'Festival for Peace' Here."

62. John Curley, "The Who: Live at Shea Stadium 1982," *Goldmine*, September 16, 2015, <http://www.goldminemag.com/reviews/live-shea-one-memories>

royalty, Simon and Garfunkel, for a highly publicized concert on August 6, 1983, during their reunion tour.<sup>63</sup> Less than two weeks later, the Police came to Shea for their August 19 concert and completely owned Shea Stadium during their historic performance.<sup>64</sup> Their concert broke records when they crammed over 70,000 fans into the stadium.<sup>65</sup> The concert opened with R.E.M., whose performance at Shea helped launch their career. The concert began with the Police's frontman Sting saying, "we'd like to thank the Beatles for lending us their stadium."<sup>66</sup> Sting and the rest of the Police recognized and paid homage to the band that made Shea famous for its concerts. Following the end of the show, Sting said to guitarist Andy Summers: "It doesn't get any better than this. We should really stop." Summers agreed saying, "Yeah, you're right. It can only go down from here."<sup>67</sup>

Shea Stadium's famous concerts continued into the late summer and early fall 1989, when the Rolling Stones came to play the ballpark. Their six performances at Shea Stadium marked the band's return to New York after eight years.<sup>68</sup> The band held their residency in the stadium as a part of their North American stadium tour. Over the course of their concerts, the Stones sold 387,737 tickets at Shea, earning \$11,607,452 over the six nights.<sup>69</sup> Ron Darling, a member of the '89 Mets, discussed his disappointment when he missed the Stones concert. "They were my band when I was a kid," he said. "The Beatles were just too pretty for where I was from. The Rolling Stones were more like the people I knew—tough kids, tough language, tough music."<sup>70</sup>

Shea transcended the label of an iconic baseball and concert stadium when Pope John Paul II visited New York in early October of 1979.<sup>71</sup> The decision to have the papal mass at Shea

63. Rory Costello, "Shea Stadium (New York)."

64. Rory Costello.

65. Pareles, "Rock."

66. Pareles.

67. Rory Costello, "Shea Stadium (New York)."

68. Peter Watrous, "Reviews/Music; Icons Who Rock: The Stones Play Shea," *New York Times*, October 12, 1989.

69. Dan Epstein, "The World Series of Love: The Rolling Stones at Shea Stadium," *The Hardball Times*, December 30, 2016.

70. Epstein.

71. Michael Clair, "Groundskeeper Pete Flynn Drove the Beatles, Saw the Pope and

was made, in part, due to the stadium's iconic status and its strong ties to the people of New York. During the papal address at Shea on October 3, the Pope stated, "a city needs a soul if it is to become a true home for human beings. You the people must give it this soul."<sup>72</sup> His message addressed the audience and challenged them to come together as group and as individuals who care for one another. The mass held at Shea marked a momentous spiritual gathering of people at the stadium. The Pope brought people from all over New York and the rest of the country to Shea to celebrate in a shared identity.

Bruce Springsteen, "The Boss," took up a three-day residency at Shea during early October 2003, playing to three sold out audiences. Springsteen had strong ties to Shea Stadium, because many of his diehard fans hailed from New York and New Jersey, and many also happened to be Mets fans.<sup>73</sup> Following the show, Jon Landau, Springsteen's manager, noted the show as one of the highpoints of Springsteen's thirty plus years touring.<sup>74</sup> Landau's comments about the magic of Shea echoed similar sentiments from many other bands and performers who played the iconic venue over the years.

### Billy Joel Helps Fans Sing Goodbye to Shea

The summer before Shea's demolition, Billy Joel, a native New Yorker and rock 'n' roll legend, had the honor of performing the last concert at Shea as part of the historic venue's send off.<sup>75</sup> Joel headlined the final two concerts on July 16, 2008, and invited musicians of many different genres to help him. Fans everywhere said goodbye and payed homage to Shea Stadium and all who had played there.<sup>76</sup>

"Had Water Fights with Jerry Koosman," Major League Baseball, accessed February 27, 2018, <http://m.mlb.com/cutfour/2015/01/09/106059062/groundskeeper-pete-flynn-drove-the-beatles-saw-the-pope-and-had-water-fights-with-jerry-koosman>.

72. Anna Quindlen, "At Shea, A Moving Goodbye," *New York Times*, October 4, 1979.

73. Daren Gregorian, "Extra Inning at Shea For Bruce," *New York Post*, September 9, 2003.

74. David Swanson, "Springsteen's Big Finish," *Rolling Stone*, November 13, 2003, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/springsteens-big-finish-20031113>.

75. Vaccaro, "Bye, Shea, You Glorious Dump."

76. "About Billy Joel's 'The Last Play at Shea,'" Billy Joel Official Site, accessed February 20, 2018, <http://www.billyjoel.com/billy-joels-the-last-play-at-shea/?path=billy-joel-last-play-at-shea>.

Billy Joel's concert earned the nickname "The Last Play at Shea." The shows were scheduled mid-July while the Mets were in California playing the Los Angeles Angels.<sup>77</sup> The 110,000 tickets for Joel's last concert at Shea sold out in the first forty-five minutes. Demand for Billy Joel at Shea led people to scalp tickets for astronomical amounts; one particularly inflated ticket had a price tag of \$99,215.<sup>78</sup> New York Mets and rock 'n' roll fans demanded another concert because they wanted their own tickets for Shea's last concert. Fan outcry led to an additional concert being added on July 18. Joel addressed the controversy of having two, "Last Plays at Shea" at the July 16 concert saying: "I know. I suck. A lot of scalpers got a hold of tickets and a lot of people who wanted to go couldn't get in."<sup>79</sup>

Both nights, Joel played to sold out crowds. Fans came for different reasons. Many wanted to say their goodbyes to their beloved ballpark, while others took the opportunity to see Joel perform, and yet others did not want to miss saying goodbye to the stadium where they were first introduced to the Beatles.<sup>80</sup> Throughout the night, Billy Joel welcomed stars including, Tony Bennet, Garth Brooks, John Mayer, among other famous performers that played Shea over the years.<sup>81</sup> Before the end of the night, Paul McCartney came on stage and sang some of the Beatles biggest hits with Joel. McCartney flew from Quebec and had to be rushed through customs to make it to the show. He had a police escort from the airport to the stadium to ensure he would be able to play in Shea one last time.<sup>82</sup> After Joel finished "Piano Man" and left the stage, he approached McCartney and asked if they could play "Let it Be" as the encore; he wanted to

77. "2008 New York Mets Schedule," Baseball-Reference.com, accessed April 2, 2018, <https://www.baseball-reference.com/teams/NYM/2008-schedule-scores.shtml>.

78. "Billy Joel's Shea Stadium Ticketing Snafu May Make Him the New Hannah Montana," idolator, February 18, 2008, <http://www.idolator.com/357559/billy-joe-she-a-stadium-ticketing-snafu-may-make-him-the-new-hannah-montana?chrome=1>.

79. "Billy Joel's Epic Shea Concert Moves Us to Tears," Vulture, July 17, 2008, [http://www.vulture.com/2008/07/billy\\_joels\\_epic\\_shea\\_concert.html](http://www.vulture.com/2008/07/billy_joels_epic_shea_concert.html).

80. "Fan who saw Beatles play Shea's first concert will see Billy Joel play last," NY Daily News, accessed April 2, 2018, <http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/music-arts/fan-beatles-play-shea-concert-billy-joe-play-article-1.350497>.

81. "Billy Joel's Epic Shea Concert Moves Us to Tears."

82. "Paul McCartney Speaks about Return to Shea Stadium," NME, July 28, 2008, <http://www.nme.com/news/music/the-beatles-343-1328491>.

end the night and all the years of music at Shea with a Beatles' classic.<sup>83</sup>

### Conclusion

The Beatles' played Shea twice, and their concerts were crucial in elevating the venue to its iconic status. "This stadium is such a special place to us," McCartney reminisced after the final concert. "We'll never forget it and its memory will live on."<sup>84</sup> His quote helped capture the specialness of the stadium; it was a place where people went to be with one another, whether they were enjoying baseball or rocking with their favorite performers. Shea encouraged shared community. Although the stadium had its many faults, it always seemed to invite people into a shared experience of celebrating a common passion, whether it was music or sports, Shea had a way of bringing people together.

83. "Billy Joel: Live at Shea Stadium | PBS," *Great Performances*, February 23, 2011, <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/billy-joe...-concert/1078/>.

84. "Paul McCartney Speaks about Return to Shea Stadium."



[18]

# The Rooftop Concert: The Lasting Effects of the Concert on the Beatles' Legacy

**Richard Pedro**

When the Beatles made their way on to the rooftop on a cold winter day like any other in 1969, little did they know that the performance they were about to give to a handful of Apple Corps employees would go down as one of the most iconic moments in music history. As truly incredible musicians and performers, they never ceased to amaze their crazed fans. The Beatles started out playing in bars, moved up to the *Ed Sullivan Show*, and finished their last scheduled concert at Candlestick Park. The Rooftop concert, considered by many to be the most memorable, was a spur of the moment decision that was intentionally kept away from the public. Nothing was written in the papers, word was not spread around to fans, and no one outside of the Beatles inner circle knew about it. In January 1969, the Beatles decided that they would play a live concert on the roof of their multimedia business corporation, Apple Corps.

The Rooftop concert was the perfect way for the Beatles to say goodbye. The Rooftop concert is often misunderstood. Rather than a publicity stunt or a new beginning, the Rooftop concert represented an improvised, haphazard final hurrah from a band in the throes of its own disintegration.

### Historiography

Given the significance of the rooftop concert, surprisingly little has been written about it since 1969. Neither the media nor fans were aware that it would be taking place until it was actually happening, and it was written about in few newspapers. There have been several books published by the people who were around the Beatles during the lead up to the concert and during the concert itself. In *The Beatles on the Roof*, Tony Barrell examines the ways in which the Beatles interacted with each other and their staff in the context of 1969. He interviewed the fans, roadies, Apple Corps employees, policemen, and filmmakers that took part in the rooftop concert. Barrell examines the political climate in 1968, when peace gave way to protest and when the promotion of music began to involve reality TV. He examines the Beatles' relationships, why the Rooftop concert happened, why it happened the way it did, and why it was so significant in music history.<sup>1</sup> Books such as *The Beatles: from the Cavern to the Rooftop* go into depth about the Beatles' original concert venues all the way up to when they played on the rooftop. The author takes the reader through time to show how the Beatles grew as a band and examines how they changed the way music was written.<sup>2</sup>

A lot has been written about the break up of the Beatles in the late 1960s. *The Beatles: Off the Record* by Keith Badman and Hunter Davies combines references and quotes that help to tell the story of the Beatles.<sup>3</sup> They show that the Beatles were becoming increasingly fed up and frustrated with each other. The book covers several years up to 1970 when they split.

1. Tony Barrell, *The Beatles on the Roof* (London: Omnibus Press, 2018), and Steve Matteo, *The Beatles' Let It Be* (London: Continuum, 2004).
2. Allan Kozinn, *The Beatles: from the Cavern to the Rooftop* (London: Phaidon Press, 2010).
3. Keith Badman and Hunter Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record* (London: Omnibus Press, 2008).

Badman and Davies tracked down the remarks that the Beatles made back in the sixties and presents them in chronological order. They take the reader through time and see how each member of the band grew as a musician and a person since they first burst out on the scene. Another book about the Beatles breaking up is *The White Book: The Beatles, the bands, the Biz: An Insider's Look at an Era*. The book is a memoir that was written by Ken Mansfield, a friend, observer, and employee of the Beatles. Mansfield writes about his experiences with the Beatles.<sup>4</sup> Building on this extant literature as well as an exclusive interview with Ken Mansfield, this chapter places the Rooftop concert in its proper context and corrects some common misperceptions about this final, historic concert.

## 1968

1968 proved to be a tumultuous year; it marked the height of the Vietnam War as North Vietnam launched the Tet Offensive against South Vietnam; Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy were both assassinated, and Tommie Smith and John Carlos caused a political uproar during their protest against racism at the summer Olympics.<sup>5</sup> It was a tough year for the Beatles as well. After the album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* came out in 1967, the members of the Beatles felt like they could not do big live concerts anymore or recreate what they were able to do in the recording studio, because they felt like people expected too much of them.<sup>6</sup> They first wanted to recover from their *Magical Mystery Tour* that had failed to entertain Christmas TV viewers.<sup>7</sup> The members of the band started to split, and each artist began to dabble with his own solo projects. It would have made sense for them to break up and start solo careers, but with the creation of the new Apple Corps company, they had a joint business to run.

The Beatles financed the creation of Apple, but it was Derek Taylor, their press officer, who ran Apple Corps. When it came

4. Ken Mansfield, *The White Book* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2007).

5. Katie McLaughlin, "Eight Unforgettable Ways 1968 Made History," CNN, July 31, 2014, Accessed March 27, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2014/07/31/us/1968-important-events/index.html>.

6. Ken Mansfield, telephone interview by Richard Pedro, March 19, 2018.

7. Barrell, *The Beatles on the Roof*, 1.

to Derek Taylor, there was rarely a dull moment. He was known for being energetic, handsome, and charismatic.<sup>8</sup> Richard DiLello put it best: "Besides The Beatles, I thought Derek had the best job in the world. He knew he had the best job in the world. And there's no question that Apple would have been a radically different experience had anyone other than Derek Taylor been The Beatles' Press Officer at Savile Row."<sup>9</sup> Derek Taylor went on to play a substantial role in helping with the creation of the Rooftop concert and keeping it secret.

In 1968, both John Lennon and Paul McCartney started romantic relationships, which inevitably had an impact on the entire band. John said after meeting Yoko Ono that, "I had never known love like this before, and it hit me so hard that I had to halt my marriage to Cynthia."<sup>10</sup> John became so involved with Ono that he was receiving heat from the members of the band and the media. John left his life with Cynthia and Julian for Yoko, which resulted in Paul taking the sorrow from the situation and creating a song "Hey Jude." The song became the first single of Apple Records and the Beatles' biggest selling single.<sup>11</sup> Ken Mansfield explained that he had to convince Paul to release it as the label's first single. Paul was concerned that it would not get any airplay because it was a longer song.<sup>12</sup> As 1968 came to an end, tensions were high among band members.

### Ken Mansfield

Ken Mansfield was the executive in charge of the U.S. Apple Records operations. Whenever the Beatles came to the United States on their tours, Mansfield worked closely with them. Mansfield was an executive at Capitol Records and a close-man for the west coast. Mansfield organized a press conference with them in Hollywood in 1965, and since they were all young guys, they hit it off; everyone the Beatles had been working with were grey-haired executives in suits. Working with them the following year when they were on tour, Mansfield said it felt like

8. Richard DiLello, *The Longest Cocktail Party* (Chicago, IL: Playboy Press, 1976), 13.

9. DiLello, *The Longest Cocktail Party*, 14.

10. Badman and Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record*, 886.

11. Barrell, *The Beatles on the Roof*, 2.

12. Mansfield, telephone interview.

working with old friends. So when the Beatles decided to create Apple Corps, they asked Ken to come to London and help set it up with them and then run the American branch.<sup>13</sup>

When Ken accepted the job offer, one of his responsibilities was to start setting up the label in America. For the Beatles and a lot of music artists, America was their primary market. For the label to succeed and withstand the test of time, it needed to be a success in the United States. Part of setting up the label in the United States included creating a promotion team. George Harrison played a significant role in the promotion of the label. He would often come over to the United States and help Mansfield. He was involved in helping pick out the labels first single, "Hey Jude". Once the label was established, Ken was responsible for overseeing all releases in America.<sup>14</sup>

### Inner Conflict

In 1969, three of the Beatles lived in different towns in Surrey. George traveled from Esher, taking him a quarter of an hour to commute on a good day. Ringo commuted all the way from his new home in Elstead, which would take upwards of an hour. John and Yoko were living in Ringo's last home a half an hour away from the studio. Paul, the only Beatle to live in London, had a house on Cavendish Avenue, a little street that was a short drive from Abbey Road. Despite being one of the most popular artists in the world, Paul used public transport to get to work.<sup>15</sup> Because of their commutes, the Beatles were often unable to get to work on time for their rehearsal duties. In January, the sun did not come up until 8 am and would go back down at 4 pm, which affected the mood of the band, because they would leave for work in the dark and arrive back at their homes after sunset.<sup>16</sup> Having to commute to work and arrive on time brought unpleasant memories for the members of the band, reminding them of teenage jobs they did not enjoy.

Their goal in January of 1969 was to continue writing new material for their album and movie *Let It Be*.<sup>17</sup> *Let It Be* fell

13. Mansfield, telephone interview.

14. Mansfield, telephone interview.

15. Barrell, *The Beatles on the Roof*, 45.

16. Barrell, 46

under the working title of *Get Back* and filmed at Twickenham Studios.<sup>18</sup> The bands' equipment was stored where Magic Alex, head of Apple Electronics, had his workshop in Westminster. The Beatles had used Twickenham before for their "Hey Jude" film. The studio was pretty much empty. The Beatles set up in the middle of a huge empty film stage to play.<sup>19</sup> With Michael Lindsay-Hogg as the director, the idea of the project was to document the Beatles rehearsing, playing together, to show how things were typically run behind the scenes and the preparations before a final concert.<sup>20</sup> The entire point of the movie *Let It Be* was to film a live concert.

Originally, the team at Apple Corps wanted to hold a little concert in a small club or bar under a false name to get the film they needed for the movie. There also was talk about shooting it on an island or a coliseum somewhere so it could be kept secret, away from the media's intrusive gaze. Due to the popularity of the Beatles, the managing team at Apple Corps realized that it would be nearly impossible to get the footage for the movie they wanted without fans finding out.<sup>21</sup>

Not only was their work schedule taking a turn for the worse, so were some of the members' personal relationships. George Harrison had been living with his wife of three years, Pattie Boyd, and their friend Charlotte Martin, a Parisian model. Charlotte had been welcomed with open arms into the Harrison household because she had just recently broken up with Eric Clapton. Eric ended things with Charlotte because of his attraction to Pattie, George's wife. Around the same time, George and Charlotte had begun an affair.<sup>22</sup> John and Yoko's relationship was only growing in intensity with the start of their new career as international political agitators.<sup>23</sup> The two had also gotten into hard drugs, resulting in John becoming slothful and lethargic. The other Beatles felt like John's behavior had put a restraint on his creative abilities. His songs started making

17. Barrell, *The Beatles on the Roof*, 47.

18. The Beatles, *The Beatles Anthology* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002), 315.

19. Kevin Harrington, *Who's The Redhead On The Roof...? My Life With The Beatles* (Forchheim, Germany: Apcor Books, 2015), 91.

20. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 315.

21. Mansfield, telephone interview.

22. Barrell, *The Beatles on the Roof*, 39.

23. Barrell, 41.

more references to heroin. Before, songs had referenced marijuana or LSD conservatively. Now John started talking about monkeys and fixes in the songs, and the rest of the band felt like he was slowing down the progress of their film *Let It Be*. This triggered considerable conflict between the four.<sup>24</sup>

The only Beatle that was fully committed to the filmed rehearsals was also the same one who initiated them, Paul. It was his belief that a project would spark enough enthusiasm in the Beatles to help them make it through the rough patch that everyone was experiencing. Paul wanted to stay continually occupied; John did not share this mentality. During a meeting about the film, Paul advocated for the movie to be made while John mocked him by acting surprised that Paul wanted to do work.<sup>25</sup> Paul tried to increase the workload after having the summer off. He finally talked the rest of the band in to *Let It Be*, but everyone started to have terrible arguments. Paul thought that the *Let It Be* film would end up filming the break-up of the Beatles instead of what the documentary was intended for. John Lennon described making the film as hell, saying that even the biggest Beatles fan could not have sat through the making of the film because it was so miserable.<sup>26</sup>

Since the 1967 death of Brian Epstein, the band's manager, Paul took up the mantle of being the driving force for new projects.<sup>27</sup> The whole band was very negative after Epstein's death. Paul compares it to the feeling of when you are growing up and your dad goes away at a point in your life and it is time for you to stand on your own two feet. Epstein was the disciplinarian for the group; now that he was gone, it was time for them to develop self-discipline. Paul was the one trying to pull together the Beatles.<sup>28</sup> The lack of cohesion and unity amongst members got so bad that only Paul consistently came to discuss anything involving the business or the band with Neil Aspinall, the head of Apple Corps. At one point, Paul was the only one living in London. Ringo owned an apartment in the

24. Barrell, *The Beatles on the Roof*, 42

25. Barrell, 43.

26. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 315.

27. Barrell, *The Beatles on the Roof*, 43.

28. Katie McLaughlin, "Eight Unforgettable Ways 1968 Made History," CNN, July 31, 2014, Accessed March 27, 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/2014/07/31/us/1968-important-events/index.html>.

city, but was never there. It seemed to everyone who worked at Apple that not only was Paul the only one who was available when things needed to be done, he was also the only one with enough energy to do it.<sup>29</sup>

To make things even worse at the start of the new year, George quit the band on January 10, 1969.<sup>30</sup> George had just spent a couple of months of 1968 producing an album with Jackie Lomax and hanging out with Bob Dylan and The Band in Woodstock, New York. When returning to the Beatles, he felt like it was an unhealthy and unhappy environment. He came to the realization that he was unhappy in the current situation at Twickenham. At one point or another, everyone had gone through the thought of leaving. Ringo had left at one point, and it was clear that John wanted out.<sup>31</sup> After a heated conversation at the studio's canteen during lunch, George walked out and immediately drove to Liverpool to see his parents right after he told John, Paul, and Ringo that he would see them around at the clubs. According to Ringo, George left the band because he got fed up with feeling like Paul was dominating. Ringo believed that this explanation was somewhat true because Paul was the favorite of Michael Lindsay-Hogg, the *Let It Be* film director. To George, that period was an all-time low. He had never let Paul's attitude bother him before. Even when songs that he composed were not being recorded, he always let Paul get his way. In front of the cameras, Paul started to give George grief about the way he was playing. George and Paul got into an argument, and that's when George had enough and left.<sup>32</sup> Paul admitted later that looking back at the film he could see how he could be easily viewed as someone coming on too strong, especially since he was just a member of the band.<sup>33</sup>

After George left, the relationship between the remaining Beatles remained tense. It troubled *Let It Be* project manager Lindsay-Hogg, who suggested that they just claim that George was sick for the concert. John suggested that if George did not come back by the following Monday that Eric Clapton could

29. Barrell, *The Beatles on the Roof*, 43.

30. Badman and Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record*, 1090.

31. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 316.

32. Badman and Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record*, 1090.

33. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 316.

fill in.<sup>34</sup> On January 12, the Beatles, including George, met up at Ringo's house in Weybridge. It resulted in George exiting abruptly and returning to Liverpool. Lindsay-Hogg suspected because of the turmoil in the band that the production would be delayed. On top of George leaving, Ringo was scheduled to start working on the film *The Magic Christian* when the *Get Back* shooting was completed. Michael Lindsay-Hogg thought of bringing in the Cream drummer Ginger Baker to replace Ringo, if he was forced to leave.<sup>35</sup> During an interview with Ray Coleman in early January of 1969, John admitted that Apple Corps was unfortunately not shaping up they way he had expected. John went on to explain that many people were under the illusion that Apple Corps was far more wealthy than they actually were.

At the beginning of Apple Corps, the Beatles had many ideas and projects that they were hoping to pursue. But not having a business mind behind all of the operations proved to be problematic.<sup>36</sup> Eventually in February 1969, the Beatles firm asked New York business expert Allen Klein to look into how Apple Corps was being run and plan for improvements. George Harrison had been recorded before saying that the Beatles were putting money in the hands of the wrong people. John Lennon also said that if Apple continued to lose money the way they had been, the band would all be broke.<sup>37</sup> On a brighter side of things, a few days later, on January 15, George returned to meet the other Beatles to inform them that he would only return to the group and the current *Get Back* project if the idea for a live performance was dismissed and the rehearsals for the new album moved to the basement studio at Apple.<sup>38</sup>

### Final Preparations

At the beginning of 1969, George had gone with Eric Clapton to see Ray Charles play at the Festival Hall where Charles introduced him to Billy Preston, who was dancing around,

34. Badman and Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record*, 1091.

35. Badman and Davies, 1092.

36. Badman and Davies, 1094.

37. "Business expert to aid Beatles," *The Times*, February 4, 1969.

38. Badman and Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record*, 1096.

playing the organ, and singing “Double-O Soul”. Harrison recalled seeing Billy in Hamburg in 1962 when he was just a young man. Now Billy had grown up to be six feet tall. George was so impressed that he put a message out to find out if Billy was in town and told him to stop by Savill Row. Soon after, the Beatles found Billy knocking on the door of 3 Savile Row when they were running through the song “Get Back”.<sup>39</sup> George asked Billy to play the piano with the band. It proved to be a refreshing change of pace; having the fifth person there offset the negative feelings that had been a constant. Billy and the band started pitching ideas back and fourth with each other.<sup>40</sup> George said that as soon as he hopped on the electric piano there was an improvement straight away to the vibe in the room.<sup>41</sup> On Sunday, January 26, during a break from filming and recording at Apple Corps, John came up with the idea that the concert could be held on the rooftop of their headquarters.<sup>42</sup> Saville Row was best known for the luxury bespoke suits produced there. Mansfield also describes the street as being an upscale, posh street for tailors and bankers.<sup>43</sup> Everyone at Apple Corps made sure that media knew nothing about it until it was going on.

Setting up the concert was no easy task. The recording studio was in the basement of the building, six floors below. All of the equipment, the cables, the public address system, and the instruments, had to be hauled up to the rooftop through a narrow stairway. The roof was not meant for a lot of weight. So, in one day, a crew constructed a whole new flooring on the roof and braced the ceiling of the fifth floor so it would not cave in on the offices. They could not get the bigger equipment up the narrow stairway, so they had to tear apart the skylight.

The employees at Apple Corps knew that the police coming was inevitable.<sup>44</sup> Their station was only about three hundred yards away, down at the bottom of the street.<sup>45</sup> Mal Evans, a Beatles roadie who became head of Apple Records, and the

39. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 318.

40. Badman and Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record*, 1101.

41. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 318.

42. Badman and Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record*, 1103.

43. Mansfield, telephone interview.

44. Mansfield, telephone interview.

45. Badman and Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record*, 1109.

director Michael Lindsay-Hogg actually set up a camera and sound in the entryway downstairs, but then locked the doors so the police could not get in.<sup>46</sup> The camera in the reception area was placed in a secret booth, matching in with the paint work and decorations so that they could use the footage of the police coming in. Alistair Taylor, Brian Epstein's former personal assistant, did not like this idea because the police always had been cooperative with the band by helping them in and out of hotels and airports.<sup>47</sup>

It was lunchtime on January 30 when the Beatles and Billy Preston went up on the rooftop of Apple Corps to play. Jean Nisbet, an Apple employee, explained that working at Apple came with all kinds of odd events. So when it came to seeing the band climb up on the roof with cameras, she was not fazed in the least. The music was so loud that her office ceiling began to vibrate. Alistair Taylor, who was on the corner of Saville Row, watched the concert with the gathering crowd. The Beatles set list consisted of thirteen songs: "Get back" (version 1), "Get Back" (version 2), "I Want You", "Don't Let me Down" (version 1), "Get Back" (version 3), "Don't Let Me Down" (version 2), "I've Got A Feeling" (version 1), "One after 909", "Dig A Pony", "God Save The Queen", "I've Got A feeling" (version 2), "Don't Let Me Down" (version 3), and "Get Back" (version 4).<sup>48</sup> Derek Taylor remembered hearing the music upstairs but not being phased. He was busy attending to the usual business of dealing with phone calls and the press. He recalls the phones ringing wildly because it was only a matter of time before everyone in London knew that the Beatles were performing on the roof. A majority of the calls he received were from the press, excited that the boys were playing once again.<sup>49</sup> At lunch, a film crew walked down Savile Row into crowds to collect comments from gawkers about the performance.<sup>50</sup> Many of the people interviewed on the street actually did not know that it was the Beatles playing because the PA system they were using distorted the sound slightly.<sup>51</sup>

46. Mansfield, telephone interview.

47. Badman and Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record*, 1109.

48. Badman and Davies, 1126.

49. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 321.

50. Badman and Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record*, 1110.

Although traffic came to a standstill and fans of the Beatles did not seem to mind at all, others did. The director of the cloth wholesalers Wain, Shiel & Son, Stanley Davis, thought that the concert was disgraceful, and he was not amused in the least. All of the work at his firm came to a standstill, and the switchboard operators could not hear anyone. By the time that the Beatles played the song "I've Got a Feeling", there were roughly thirty complaints filed.

The businesses below became distraught about the Beatles playing music because of the traffic jams and the people crowding down below to see what was going on.<sup>52</sup> The police showed up to Apple Corps after the song "One After 909". Mal greeted them at the door and explained the situation; the police did not care. They emphasized the fact that if the music were not turned down, there would have to be arrests.<sup>53</sup> The police eventually allowed the Beatles to finish and were actually excited to be apart of the experience.<sup>54</sup> George Martin was nervous the entire concert because he was sure he would end up in the Savile Row police station for disturbing the peace. Ringo, on the other hand, admitted later that he felt let down by the police. He had the exciting images in his head of being dragged off his drum set and kicking the cymbals to add excitement to the film.<sup>55</sup> Jean Nisbet remembers the entire encounter being very friendly and everyone went back to work. Nobody who was present for the concert knew that they had just seen the last of the Beatles.<sup>56</sup> Mansfield describes the moment as being a special one; no one knew that that would be the end of the Beatles' performances, but everyone involved knew that their time together was coming to an end. To the employees of Apple Corps, it was just another day at work.<sup>57</sup>

The Rooftop concert opened up a lot of different possibilities. Few ever believed that the Beatles would play live again. So when it actually happened, everything was up in the air again, including the idea for another concert.<sup>58</sup> Following the concert,

51. Badman and Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record*, 1111

52. Mansfield, telephone interview.

53. Badman and Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record*, 1116

54. Mansfield, telephone interview.

55. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 321.

56. Badman and Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record*, 1117.

57. Mansfield, telephone interview.

the Beatles and other staff piled into the basement studios at Apple to listen to the recordings and bounce thoughts about the show off each other. Other than John missing a line in “Don’t Let Me Down”, which was an easy edit to fix, the Beatles felt like it turned out fantastic.<sup>59</sup> The day after the concert, the filming and recording for *Get Back* was finished. In total, the Beatles recorded 160 hours of film and sound, which was edited down to a documentary and their next album release.<sup>60</sup> After having all of the opportunities that the world had to offer, there was still an underlying desire to be seen, communicate, and be loved and heard by screaming fans that drove the band forward to play again in public. The Rooftop concert was the conclusion of the film, but also a solution to the two-year debate on whether it would be a good idea to play live again. The unedited *Let It Be* film shows so much more than the actual documentary. It shows in much more depth what the Beatles went through with each other and their public images. The point of the film was to turn on the camera and capture as many moments of the band as possible. A movie could not have been made capturing every moment of the Beatles creating, working, and adding finishing touches to their music.<sup>61</sup> Yet the film helped to capture the final months of the Beatles together as a band.

## Legacy

For many, the Beatles were an escape from a world gone mad, a relief from all the tension and sadness going on in the world, a combination of musicians that the world had never seen before. The Rooftop concert was little planned; it was a spur of the moment decision. In the moment, those involved did not even realize what they had done nor that the concert would be remembered in their legacy.<sup>62</sup> It was a perfect way for them to say goodbye in a subtle way. There is a tradition in Washington State of holding a concert by Crème Tangerine, a Beatles tribute band. They play on the rooftop of The Hard Rock Café in

58. The Beatles, *Anthology*, 321.

59. Badman and Davies, *The Beatles: Off the Record*, 1128.

60. Badman and Davies, 1130.

61. McLaughlin, "Eight Unforgettable Ways 1968 Made History."

62. Mansfield, telephone interview.

Seattle annually in order to pay tribute to and commemorate the Beatles for everything they have done.<sup>63</sup>

The Rooftop concert was a one of a kind concert, just like the Beatles' career. When the Beatles climbed up on the rooftop to play for a selected audience, no one who was there that day really understood how time would prove the concert to be so significant. It was viewed as just another day at the office. The rooftop concert proved to be significant for several reasons. It was proof to the Beatles that they were able to get out and play a live concert together again and enjoy it. The concert was an escape from everything that was happening in each of the Beatles lives. John was madly in love with Yoko, neglecting the other members of the band to spend time with her. George was involved in a love triangle that was happening under his own roof. He was increasingly frustrated with the way the band was run and how Paul treated him, which resulted in him quitting and coming back shortly after; tensions were still high. Ringo was growing tired with frustrations within the band and was working on side projects as well. Besides starting a serious relationship at the time, Paul felt like he was the only member of band that cared anymore. Taking on new ideas and projects, it was difficult to help manage Apple and lead a band of musicians that were no longer deeply invested in one another.

For just less than an hour, the Beatles were able to escape all of the negativity surrounding the band and just enjoy playing music with each other. Although they did not know it at the time, it was the perfect way to say goodbye to the world. The concert was, in a sense, symbolism for the Beatles' entire career: one of a kind.

63. "The 7th Annual Seattle Beatles Rooftop Concert Celebration," *Creme Tangerine*, accessed April 01, 2018, <http://www.cremetangerine.com/7th-annual-seattle-beatles-rooftop-concert-celebration/>.