Rolling Stone®

THE 500 GREATEST ALBUMS OF ALL TIME

INTRODUCTION BY
STEVEN VAN ZANDT

FOREWORD

LET'S START WITH Number One – my Number One. *Meet the Beatles* – the first rock & roll album I ever bought; to me and most of my generation, the first great rock & roll album ever; and the essential reason why you're holding this book and reading these words – is Number 53 on this list. That can't be right. Everything on that record is the birth of nearly everything else here. • We know now that *Meet the Beatles* was the American version of the Beatles' second British album, *With the Beatles* – most of it, anyway. In those days, English albums had thirteen or fourteen tracks and usually did not include the hit singles. It wouldn't be cricket to expect fans to pay twice for the same song, would it? Well, guess what? We don't play cricket here, so American companies chopped up those U.K. LPs into ten-or-eleven-track platters, adding the singles and getting an extra album or three for every two English releases. • But the level of sophistication on *Meet the Beatles* is amazing. The Beatles did a lot of things, and they did them all well. But more than anything, they raised our standards, right from the start. The songwriting was completely original, coming from American rhythm & blues, but combined with those Everly Brothers harmonies and unique chord changes. This was also a band with four singers. You could have a relationship with any or all of them. If you didn't like John Lennon, you liked Paul McCartney. If you were quiet, you went for George Harrison. If you were a real outcast, you loved Ringo! And if somebody can explain to me how George Martin went from making comedy records to being the most brilliant rock & roll producer in the world in exactly five minutes, please do so.

Suddenly, we went from this narrow relationship with music and the stars who made it, moving from single to single, to this extraordinary concentration of genius. Elvis Presley and Buddy Holly had made exciting, important albums before that: *Elvis Presley* [No. 56]; *The "Chirping" Crickets* [No. 415]. This was different. The Beatles made Albums.

I don't think the Beatles were trying to make great albums then. I'm sure they were focused on writing hit singles. But their not-quite-hit-single material was still high-quality stuff. Even their covers – which made up half of their first British album, *Please Please Me* [No. 39] – were terrific reinterpretations of our own rockabilly and R&B.

The Rolling Stones hit that same peak right away. My second favorite album of all time is their second American album, *12X5*, which also didn't exist in England. So it's difficult for me to get too upset at the A&R guys who created the U.S. versions of those early, great British LPs, because they accidentally had great taste!

And I will forever argue that "I've Just Seen a Face" belongs on the Beatles' *Rubber Soul* [No. 5] rather than *Help!* [No. 328] – where you found it in England – because as the all-important opening song on our *Rubber Soul*, it heralded the Beatles' embrace of Bob Dylan and the Byrds' folk rock. *It feels better there, damnit!*

I hope you're happy now. You've got me all riled up.

But lists will do that to you. They are absolutely subjective, utterly frustrating, always incomplete – and they cause more arguments than religion and politics.

In other words, they're a lot of fun.

And we're not just taking on rock albums here. That would be too easy. We're throwing in folk, jazz, blues and gospel. But before we go any further, we should ask:

What is an album?

In the beginning, you got music two songs at a time, on these hard, ten-inch shellac discs that turned at 78 revolutions per minute. The word *album* comes from the photo-album-like books where you stored 78s. An album was literally a series of snapshots, musical pictures, bound in one place. The invention of the twelve-inch, long-playing record, spinning at 33-1/3, by the engineers at Columbia Records meant that you got a dozen of those images on a single disc. But the term stuck.

Albums were an adult thing too, in cost, content and attention span. Teenagers had their own technology: the seven-inch 45, the perfect fit for a two-and-a-half-minute rock & roll song. Even in 1964 and '65, I was still buying mostly singles. I wouldn't go into a store that way you do now, coming out with ten CDs at a time. An album was a serious investment ($3.79!).

The Beatles – and Dylan – changed that. Dylan's second album, 1963's *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* [No. 98], was the first example of an album being more important than a single, of a great album having no singles. By the mid-Sixties, I was buying *The Paul Butterfield Blues*

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MEET THE BEATLES!

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Band [No. 468], *Freak Out!* by the Mothers of Invention [No. 240], *Fresh Cream* [No. 102] and *Projections,* by the Blues Project – all important records for me that had no hit singles.

I must admit, I'm a sucker for a concept album. I love the art form used to its fullest potential, as Frank Sinatra first showed us in 1955, with *In the Wee Small Hours* [No. 101] – a coherent, theatrical experience in its performances and Sinatra's choice of songs. Miles Davis and Gil Evans explored the concept record instrumentally on 1960's *Sketches of Spain* [No. 352], with great success.

So I won't complain much about *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* being Number One. It's not only a wonderful album but a perfect reflection of the world around it at the time. That is something a quality record will do. Some, like *Sgt. Pepper,* go on to influence the culture as well. All of a sudden, that album was a way that people defined themselves and lived their lives, the Beatles included.

Sometimes it's hard to evaluate those things until years later. I didn't know the Ramones were special in 1976, although I do remember defending them to my friends at the New York rock station WNEW. The DJs thought that first album, *Ramones* [No. 33], was a joke. But I heard the influences, and I knew the influences were cool. And by the way, where is 1980's *End of the Century* – a collision of two legends, the Ramones and Phil Spector, yielding one of the greatest singles of all time, "Do You Remember Rock 'n' Roll Radio?" – on this list? Nowhere, that's where!

I now have an entire radio format based on the Ramones. But at the time there was so much going on in music, and I was a little busy playing with Bruce Springsteen and Southside Johnny (*wheeeere's* Johnny?). Sometimes, you need a little distance to know how important something is. Then again, I've always been impressed by simplicity. That, to me, is the highest form of evolution. It's much harder to write "Louie Louie" or "Gloria" than "Stairway to Heaven." Nobody understands that until they try it.

I played on three of the Bruce Springsteen albums here – *Darkness on the Edge of Town* [No. 150], *The River* [No. 247] and *Born in the U.S.A.* [No. 85] – co-arranging all three and co-producing two of them. I can't actually tell you what it's like to record a classic album, though. You never know you're making one at the time. You're just fighting to get the thing done, to get something you're happy with and, if you're producing, that the artist is happy with. "Classic" and "greatest" don't come into it.

My challenge on *The River* was to make a record that sounded live, the way Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band did in concert. We pretty much got there. The only problem was that Bruce then threw out twenty of my favorite songs from the sessions – most of which ended up on the *Tracks* boxed set, still one of my favorite records.

For *Born in the U.S.A.*, the idea was to really get down to basics and avoid overdubbing altogether. So we didn't rehearse. That was the concept. Bruce showed us the songs in the studio, and we recorded – before we truly knew the songs. We did fifteen songs in three weeks – one a day. We stayed totally disciplined. If Bruce wanted to sing the song again, we played it with him again. Then I left – and he spent two more years working on the record, on three more songs, one of which was the album's first hit. Did we know we had seven Top Ten singles there? No. We were doing the best we could at the time.

Occasionally, you know you're on to something. You take into account the desire, the will, to do something extraordinary, or at least attempt it. I remember Bruce telling me about wanting to sum up all he knew about rock & roll in "Born to Run." But that's very different from "I know I'm making a classic." You only hope you're making one.

So what makes a classic? Greatness? Historical significance? Influence? All of those things. But our list also includes emotional favorites – no intellect required. And you will quibble about the order and what got left out. If rock & roll is religion to you, as much as it is to me, you will more than quibble.

For example: I believe the Who's first album, *The Who Sings My Generation*, is still their best. What's it doing at 232? There aren't twenty rock records better than that, let alone 235. And the Kinks' 1965 album, *The Kink Kontroversy,* remains their best non-best-of record, in spite of the critical acclaim heaped on *The Village Green Preservation Society* [No. 252]. Naturally, *Kontroversy* isn't here at all.

Also, no Youngbloods? *Tapestry* [No. 36] before *Beggars Banquet* [No. 58] and *Disraeli Gears* [No. 114]? And how about them Carpenters sneaking in at 174 ahead of New York Dolls [No. 211] and John Mayall's Blues Breakers with Eric Clapton [No. 193]?

That aside, these are all terrific records, many of them from a time when music mattered, when it was an integral part of our culture and an essential part of literally surviving the day.

I should know – I'm one of the survivors.

Now if we could only get all of these records in mono, so we could hear them the way God intended . . .

LITTLE STEVEN

EDITOR'S NOTE

This book began in December of 2003, when Rolling Stone published the RS 500, an issue devoted to the greatest records of all time. Our list of albums was selected by a blue-ribbon panel of experts and true fans: the singers, songwriters, musicians, producers, label executives, artist managers and critics, among others, who have shaped rock & roll in its first half-century. The 273 voters spanned every decade and genre of popular music, from the 1950s to the present, including Billie Joe Armstrong and Tré Cool of Green Day, the Edge of U2, Fats Domino, James Hetfield and Lars Ulrich of Metallica, Beck, Carole King, Jackson Browne, Ray Manzarek and John Densmore of the Doors, Dion DiMucci, Shirley Manson and Butch Vig of Garbage, Adam Yauch of the Beastie Boys, Missy Elliott and Little Steven. The voters were asked to select and rank their fifty top albums of all time. The ballot was open – any album was eligible – and we cast our net wide: Both folk patriarch Pete Seeger and pop princess Britney Spears voted (you can see a full list of voters on page 218). The ballots were tabulated according to a weighted point system developed by the accounting firm of Ernst & Young under the supervision of the editors of Rolling Stone.

The 500 albums selected represent the most exciting and vital music ever recorded, from the shellac 78s made on November 23rd, 1936, by Robert Johnson in a San Antonio, Texas, hotel room – finally compiled on LP nearly thirty years after his death – to the twenty-first-century garage rock of the White Stripes. Our list was inclusive, but – our readers let us know – not perfect. Led Zeppelin fans were astounded that Zeppelin didn't crack the top 10; Deadheads were even more amazed that the Grateful Dead didn't crack the top 200. Other readers complained about the presence of compilation albums and greatest-hits packages, a fair criticism, but one that would have left out the pioneer artists who did their best work on singles in the days before the LP, including Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Howlin' Wolf, Hank Williams, John Lee Hooker and Muddy Waters. No list of the greatest rock & roll albums would be complete without these artists. Still, for this book version of the RS 500 I have eliminated a few compilation albums that simply repeated material appearing elsewhere on albums that made the list. I've also combined the two volumes of Robert Johnson's *King of the Delta Blues Singers* – the LPs on which many of the voters first heard Johnson (Bob Dylan is pictured alongside a copy of the first volume on the cover of *Bringing It All Back Home*) – into the more readily available *Complete Recordings*. That left room for eight new albums to bubble up from the bottom of our tally. I'm sorry to tell you that still leaves *Workingman's Dead* at No. 259.

But I can tell you that these 500 albums – which are credited to the labels that currently have them in print – have shaped and defined the music we call rock & roll. Country, blues, gospel, pop, soul, R&B, funk, hip-hop, acid-rock, heavy metal, punk – every way there is to scream and shout, soothe and seduce, get up to get down, and keep on moving – it's all here. Each of these albums have been crucial to rock's history, its present or its future. And each one testifies to how much the music has shaped and defined us. My guess is you'll find a lot your own history here. I know I do: The first albums I ever bought were Bruce Springsteen's *Born to Run* [No. 18] and Elvis Costello's *Armed Forces* [No. 474]. I started making my own list that day in 1979, and I haven't stopped since.

JOE LEVY
DEPUTY MANAGING EDITOR
ROLLING STONE

Sgt PEPPERS
LONELY HEARTS
CLUB BAND
BEATLES

1 Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

THE BEATLES *CAPITOL 1967*

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band is the most important rock & roll album ever made, an unsurpassed adventure in concept, sound, songwriting, cover art and studio technology by the greatest rock & roll group of all time. From the title song's regal blasts of brass and fuzz guitar to the orchestral seizure and long, dying piano chord at the end of "A Day in the Life," the thirteen tracks on *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* are the pinnacle of the Beatles' eight years as recording artists. John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr were never more fearless and unified in their pursuit of magic and transcendence.

Issued in Britain on June 1st, 1967, and a day later in America, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* is also rock's ultimate declaration of change. For the Beatles, it was a decisive goodbye to matching suits, world tours and assembly-line record making. "We were fed up with being Beatles," McCartney said decades later, in *Many Years From Now*, Barry Miles' McCartney biography. "We were not boys, we were men . . . artists rather than performers."

At the same time, *Sgt. Pepper* formally ushered in an unforgettable season of hope, upheaval and achievement: the late 1960s and, in particular, 1967's Summer of Love. In its iridescent instrumentation, lyric fantasias and eye-popping packaging, *Sgt. Pepper* defined the opulent revolutionary optimism of psychedelia and instantly spread the gospel of love, acid, Eastern spirituality and electric guitars around the globe. No other pop record of that era, or since, has had such an immediate, titanic impact. This music documents the world's biggest rock band at the very height of its influence and ambition.

"It was a peak," Lennon confirmed in his 1970 ROLLING STONE interview, describing both the album and his collaborative relationship with McCartney. "Paul and I definitely were working together," Lennon said, and *Sgt. Pepper* is rich with proof: McCartney's burst of hot piano and school-days memoir ("Woke up, fell out of bed . . . ") in Lennon's "A Day in the Life," a reverie on mortality and infinity; Lennon's impish rejoinder to McCartney's chorus in "Getting Better" ("It can't get no worse").

"*Sgt. Pepper* was our grandest endeavor," Starr said, looking back, in the 2000 autobiog-

raphy *The Beatles Anthology.* "The greatest thing about the band was that whoever had the best idea – it didn't matter who – that was the one we'd use. No one was standing on their ego, saying, 'Well, it's mine,' and getting possessive." It was Neil Aspinall, the Beatles' longtime assistant, who suggested they reprise the title track, just before the grand finale of "A Day in the Life," to complete *Sgt. Pepper*'s theatrical conceit: an imaginary concert by a fictional band, played by the Beatles.

The first notes went to tape on December 6th, 1966: two takes of McCartney's music-hall confection "When I'm Sixty-Four." (Lennon's lysergic reflection on his Liverpool childhood, "Strawberry Fields Forever," was started two weeks earlier but issued in February 1967 as a stand-alone single.) But *Sgt. Pepper*'s real birthday is August 29th, 1966, when the Beatles played their last live concert, in San Francisco. Until then, they had made history in the studio – *Please Please Me* (1963), *Rubber Soul* (1965), *Revolver* (1966) – between punishing tours. Off the road for good, the Beatles were free to be a band away from the hysteria of Beatlemania.

McCartney went a step further. On a plane to London in November '66, as he returned from a vacation in Kenya, he came up with the idea of an album by the Beatles in disguise, an alter-ego group that he subsequently dubbed Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. "We'd pretend to be someone else," McCartney explained in *Anthology.* "It liberated you – you could do anything when you got to the mike or on your guitar, because it wasn't you."

Only two songs on the final LP, both McCartney's, had anything to do with the Pepper character: the title track and Starr's jaunty vocal showcase "With a Little Help From My Friends," introduced as a number by Sgt. Pepper's star crooner, Billy Shears. "Every other song could have been on any other album," Lennon insisted later. Yet it is hard to imagine a more perfect setting for the Victorian jollity of Lennon's "Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite!" (inspired by an 1843 circus poster) or the sumptuous melancholy of McCartney's "Fixing a Hole," with its blend of antique shadows (a harpsichord played by the Beatles' producer George Martin) and modern sunshine (double-tracked lead guitar executed with ringing precision by Harrison). The Pepper premise was a license to thrill.

It also underscored the real-life cohesion of the music and the group that made it. Of the 700 hours the Beatles spent making *Sgt. Pepper* (engineer Geoff Emerick actually tallied them) from the end of 1966 until April 1967, the group needed only three days' worth to complete Lennon's lavish daydream "Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds." "A Day in the Life," the most complex song on the album, was done in just five days. (The oceanic piano chord was three pianos hit simultaneously by ten hands belonging to Lennon, McCartney, Starr, Martin and Beatles roadie Mal Evans.) No other Beatles appear with Harrison on his sitar-perfumed sermon on materialism and fidelity, "Within You Without You," but the band wisely placed the track at the halfway point of the original vinyl LP, at the beginning of Side Two: a vital meditation break in the middle of the jubilant indulgence.

The Beatles at the press conference for the release of "Sgt. Pepper's," May 19th, 1967. "It was a peak," John Lennon said. "Paul and I were definitely working together."

The Beatles' exploitation of multitracking on *Sgt. Pepper* transformed the very act of studio recording (the orchestral overdubs on "A Day in the Life" marked the debut of eight-track recording in Britain: two four-track machines used in sync). And *Sgt. Pepper*'s visual extravagance officially elevated the rock album cover to a work of art. Michael Cooper's photo of the Beatles in satin marching-band outfits, in front of a cardboard-cutout audience of historical figures, created by artist Peter Blake, is the most enduring image of the psychedelic era. *Sgt. Pepper* was also the first rock album to incorporate complete lyrics to the songs in its design.

Yet *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* is the Number One album of the RS 500 not just because of its firsts – it is simply the best of everything the Beatles ever did as musicians, pioneers and pop stars, all in one place. A 1967 British print ad for the album declared, "Remember, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band Is the Beatles." As McCartney put it, the album was "just us doing a good show."

The show goes on forever.

N-16156 A Capitol Re-Issue
MONOPHONIC

The Beach Boys Pet Sounds

Sloop John B./Caroline No
Wouldn't It Be Nice/You Still Believe In Me
That's Not Me/Don't Talk (Put Your Head on My Shoulder)
I'm Waiting For The Day/Let's Go Away For Awhile
God Only Knows/I Know There's An Answer/Here Today
I Just Wasn't Made For These Times/Pet Sounds

2 Pet Sounds

THE BEACH BOYS *CAPITOL 1966*

"Who's gonna hear this shit?" Beach Boys singer Mike Love asked the band's resident genius, Brian Wilson, in 1966, as Wilson played him the new songs he was working on. "The ears of a dog?" Confronted with his bandmate's contempt, Wilson made lemonade of lemons. "Ironically," he observed, "Mike's barb inspired the album's title." • Barking dogs – Wilson's dog Banana among them, in fact – are prominent among the found sounds on the album. The Beatles made a point of echoing them on *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* – an acknowledgment that *Pet Sounds* was the inspiration for the Beatles' masterpiece. That gesture actually completed a circle of influence: Wilson initially conceived of *Pet Sounds* as an effort to top the Beatles' *Rubber Soul.*

Wilson essentially made *Sounds* without the rest of the band, using them only to flesh out the vocal arrangements. He even considered putting the album out as a solo project, and the first single, "Caroline, No," was released under his own name. The deeply personal nature of the songs, which Wilson co-wrote primarily with lyricist Tony Asher, further distinguished the album from the Beach Boys' typical fare. Its luxurious sound conveys a heartbreaking wistfulness, as songs such as "I Just Wasn't Made for These Times" and "I'm Waiting for the Day" bid farewell to the innocent world of the early Sixties and to the Beach Boys' fun-in-the-sun hits.

The Beach Boys with a crucial collaborator

Unfortunately, Capitol Records proved no more enamored of *Pet Sounds* than had Love; the label actually considered not releasing the album at all. Not yet vindicated by history, Wilson withdrew further into his inner world. "At the last meeting I attended concerning *Pet Sounds,*" Wilson wrote in his autobiography (which took the name of the album's opening track, "Wouldn't It Be Nice") about his dealings with Capitol's executive brain trust, "I showed up holding a tape player and eight prerecorded, looped responses, including 'No comment,' 'Can you repeat that?' 'No' and 'Yes.' Refusing to utter a word, I played the various tapes when appropriate."

3 Revolver

THE BEATLES *CAPITOL 1966*

"I don't see too much difference between *Revolver* and *Rubber Soul*," George Harrison once said. "To me, they could be Volume One and Volume Two." *Revolver* extends the more adventurous aspects of its predecessor – its introspection, its nascent psychedelia, its fascination with the possibilities of the studio – into a dramatic statement of generational purpose. The album, which was released in August 1966, made it thrillingly clear that what we now think of as "the Sixties" was fully – and irreversibly – under way.

Part of that revolutionary impulse was visual. Klaus Voormann, one of the Beatles' artist buddies from their days in Hamburg, Germany, designed a striking photo-collage cover for *Revolver*; it was a crucial step on the road to the even trippier, more colorful imagery of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, which would come less than a year later.

And then there's the music. The most innovative track on the album is John Lennon's "Tomorrow Never Knows." Attempting to distill an LSD trip into a three-minute song, Lennon borrowed lyrics from Timothy Leary's version of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* and recorded his vocal to sound like "the Dalai Lama singing from the highest mountaintop." Tape loops, a backward guitar part (Paul McCartney's blistering solo on "Taxman," in fact) and a droning tamboura completed the experimental effect, and the song proved hugely influential. For his part, on "Eleanor Rigby" and "For No One," McCartney mastered a strikingly mature form of art song, and Harrison, with "Taxman," "I Want to Tell You" and "Love You To," challenged Lennon-McCartney's songwriting dominance.

Revolver, finally, signaled that in popular music, anything – any theme, any musical idea – could now be realized. And, in the case of the Beatles, would be.

The Fabs in 1966: On "Revolver" they mastered the studio. Next stop: "Sgt. Pepper."

STEREO
KCS 9189
Columbia

BOB DYLAN HIGHWAY 61 REVISITED

4 Highway 61 Revisited

BOB DYLAN *COLUMBIA 1965*

Bruce Springsteen has described the beginning of "Like a Rolling Stone," the opening song on Bob Dylan's Highway 61 Revisited, as the "snare shot that sounded like somebody'd kicked open the door to your mind." The response of folk singer Phil Ochs to the entire album was even more rhapsodic. "It's impossibly good. . . ." he said. "How can a human mind do this?" • Recorded in an aston ishing six days and released in August 1965, Highway 61 Revisited – named after the road that runs from Dylan's home state of Minnesota down through the Mississippi Delta – is one of those albums that, quite simply, changed everything. In and of itself, "Like a Rolling Stone," which was rumored to be about Andy Warhol acolyte Edie Sedgwick, forever altered the landscape of popular music – its "vomitific" lyrics (in Dylan's memorable term), literary ambition and sheer length (6:13) shattered limitations of every kind. But that was literally only the beginning. "Ballad of a Thin Man" delivered the definitive Sixties comment on the splintering hip/straight fault line: "Something is happening here, but you don't know what it is/Do you, Mr. Jones?" If anyone questioned whether or not Dylan had truly "gone electric," the roaring rock & roll of "From a Buick 6" and "Tombstone Blues" – both powered by legendary guitarist Mike Bloomfield of the Paul Butterfield Blues Band – left no doubt.

The album ends with "Desolation Row," a swirling eleven-minute surrealist night journey of indescribable power. Confronted with the dilemma of providing an ending to an album so bursting with ideas, Dylan evokes a Hieronymus Bosch-like season in hell that, in retrospect, seems to foretell all the Sixties cataclysms to come. "The *Titanic* sails at dawn," he sings wearily near the song's end. "Everybody is shouting, 'Which side are you on?' " That "Desolation Row" is an all-acoustic track – a last-minute decision on Dylan's part – is one final stroke of genius: a spellbinding new vision of folk music to close the album that, for the time being at least, destroyed folk music. The gesture was simultaneously touching and a devastating "Fuck you!"

Not that Dylan wasn't having fun all the while as well. The toy siren that opens the album's title track was keyboardist's Al Kooper's playful way of policing the recording sessions for *Highway 61 Revisited*. "If anybody started using drugs anywhere," he explained, "I'd walk into the opposite corner of the room and just go *whoooooooooo*."

5 Rubber Soul

THE BEATLES *CAPITOL 1965*

Released in December 1965 – and capping a year defined by groundbreaking singles such as Bob Dylan's "Like a Rolling Stone" and the Rolling Stones' "(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction" – *Rubber Soul* finds the Beatles rising to meet the challenge their peers had set. Characteristically, they achieved new musical sophistication and thematic depth without sacrificing a whit of pop appeal. Producer George Martin described *Rubber Soul* as "the first album to present a new, growing Beatles to the world," and so it was.

The band's development expressed itself in a variety of overlapping ways. On the U.K. version (the only one available on CD), "Drive My Car" presents a comic character study of a sort not previously in the Beatles' repertoire. More profoundly, however, Dylan's influence suffuses the album, accounting for the tart emotional tone of "Norwegian Wood," "I'm Looking Through You," "You Won't See Me" and "If I Needed Someone." (Dylan would return the compliment the following year, when he offered his own version of "Norwegian Wood" – titled "4th Time Around" – on *Blonde on Blonde*, and consequently made Lennon "Paranoid.") Lennon's "Nowhere Man," which he later acknowledged as a depressed self-portrait, and the beautifully reminiscent "In My Life" both reflect the more serious and personal style of songwriting that Dylan had suddenly made possible.

George Harrison's sitar on "Norwegian Wood" – the first time the instrument was used in a pop song – and Paul McCartney's fuzz bass on "Think for Yourself" document the band's increasing awareness that the studio could be more than a pit stop between tours. Harrison called *Rubber Soul* "the best one we made," because "we were suddenly hearing sounds that we weren't able to hear before." And as for why the band's hearing had grown so acute, well, that was another aspect of the times. "There was a lot of experimentation on *Rubber Soul*," said Ringo Starr, "influenced, I think, by the substances."

In Atlanta, 1965, under the influence of Bob Dylan and other substances