

**BEATLES** in  
YOUR  SOUL

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# BEATLES<sup>in</sup> YOUR SOUL

DENNIS ALSTRAND



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# INTRODUCTION

*I think I've become so interested in this book because not only is Beatlemania the central pillar of my life, but I know it is for others too! I want people to realize that Beatlemania is a true part of their life and that they should embrace it and be proud! Don't hide it, there's so many of us in the world!*

~ Robyn Perry

In our distant past, a tidal wave swept from Liverpool out through the world. It affected us as none other had before. Now, we can only look back. Just one second is all we ask: One passing moment of those Beatles being back together again. Well, your Beatle moment is in this book, somewhere. As you read on, a long discarded memory will open its door and walk into the sunshine again. But read with care. You might find yourself laughing again at something you had long ago forgotten. Or your moment might be filled with bittersweet memories, as it did with my wife Sandi. I happened to walk into the room and found her in tears, reliving the death of John Lennon. It was an incident she had suppressed all of these years.

This project began about three years ago. Mike Montana (creator of the Facebook page *The Beatles' Universe*) and I were writing essays about various Beatle songs and albums. We worked well together, and had a blast doing them. The Beatles Universe responded from all parts of the world, each with different Beatle-shaped viewpoints and memories. It was the “*from around the world*” part that turned me on to compiling people’s thoughts. After all, The Beatles weren’t only big in America or England. Wouldn’t it be interesting to hear from someone who grew up in Finland, The Netherlands, Malaysia, Canada (barely?), China (yes, China), or Mexico? And what of Australia where the impact was the biggest of all? I set out to encapsulate how The Beatles affected the world, regardless of age or nationality.

I'm sad to say that two countries are not represented in this book: Japan and the Philippines. I had contact with only one person who was in Japan back in the day, but received no response. I know a number of elder Filipinos/Filipinas. The aftermath of The Beatles' infamous decision to decline a dinner party thrown by Imelda Marcos is imbedded deep in The Beatles' memory, but none of my Filipino friends remember it. They barely remember The Beatles.

Paul McCartney has said that he no longer reads Beatle books because they're always inaccurate. Paul, I wish you would read this one. Ringo, too. It cannot be inaccurate because these are *our* thoughts and memories. These are our love-letters to you along with John, George, Stu, Pete, Brian, the other George, and everybody who was involved in bringing us the dream. And sorry, John, but in compiling this book I've discovered that the dream is not over. The tidal wave that the four of you created over fifty years ago has not quite receded yet.

I recommend that you get your Beatles record collection ready as you read the book, especially the sections on the songs and the albums. We're going in depth!

Reader, this is your book. You might be in it. I hope it brings back at least one second of The Beatles alive and well.

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**BEATLES** in  
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## ♪ Chapter 5

# RANKING THE ALBUMS

What is your favorite Beatle album? Is it possible to even answer this question?

My initial reaching out for feedback for this book was done through survey monkey. This allowed some real focus on specific questions and responses. As part of that survey, I asked the respondents to rate the 12 British Beatle albums in order, giving each a number (1 for best).

Twenty-three people responded to the poll (hardly a legitimate sample size, I know, but still interesting). I've taken the number of their responses and averaged them all. If, for example, an album was ranked number one by all twenty-three respondents, the final number would be 1.00 I won't give away which album was ranked the best, but it had an average ranking of 4.17.

I should make note that these were the British albums. A number of the respondents were American and may not have recognized some of the album titles.

So, then, here are the albums, ranked in order by my unofficial poll along with comments I've since received from various people on each album.

**#12 YELLOW SUBMARINE**

*I'm starting to feel sorry for Yellow Submarine. Not only was it ranked, by far, the least favorite Beatle album, but no one ever sent me a comment on it. History has shown that it was the album The Beatles put their least effort into. "It became a receptacle for any song they deemed substandard," claimed Geoff Emerick.*

*I think it has some merit in that even some of their substandard songs were not bad ("Hey Bulldog" is one of my favorite Beatle tracks) and for the very nice score that George Martin recorded for the movie and the album.*

*Note: "Only A Northern Song" was originally written by George for Sgt. Pepper. George Martin says that he realized that The Beatles were making an incredible album and asked George Harrison to come up with something better. Had he not done that, we may never have heard "Within You Without You."*

**#10 (TIE) BEATLES FOR SALE**

*The conditions for making a new and super-Beatles album weren't right for Beatles For Sale. The Beatles had been for sale for too long and they had been on the go constantly for two years. "Success is a wonderful thing," said George Martin, "but it is very, very tiring." In 1964 alone, The Beatles had toured North America and Europe, made their first movie, written and recorded an album and an EP, and made countless TV and radio appearances.*

*Beatles For Sale was done in the middle of all of that hubbub and when you consider that it was all done with just seven recording dates, you would have wondered where they would have time to write anything new. Not only did they do that, they redefined themselves. No longer were they the super optimistic, happy Beatles writing simple songs of love—not that I minded those! Still, they were unable to fill an album with originals (as they had with their previous LP, A Hard Day's Night) so they stocked it with some good old rock and roll that they had done in the clubs.*

*Somehow, despite the madness of their schedule, The Beatles made a damn good album.*

*Note: it was the first Beatle album to be recorded start to finish on four tracks which allowed for a lot more overdubbing. George Harrison remembered that “our records were progressing. By this time we’d had loads of hits and were becoming more relaxed with ourselves, and more comfortable in the studio. We were beginning to do a little overdubbing, too, probably to a four-track.”*

KALYAN VALERIE MEOLA: This is my favorite album because “Eight Days a Week” has always been a favorite of mine. I love John’s voice on “No Reply” and “I’m a Loser.” I now see it as a transition album before the music began to take a turn.

LINDSAY PORTER: I can listen to it from top to bottom. The simplicity of it is wildly complex. The originals are a growth in songwriting. I think I like it because it really hits on that level of good old, standard, Rock and Roll influence.

LIAM GALLAGHER: They were getting in tune with themselves. They were taking more chances and being more honest. There’s something pure about *Beatles For Sale*: a nice feel, something clean about it. I know they were proper banging these songs out, in between touring and making movies and everything, but I think the recording side keeps you sane. (*Tell Me Why: The Beatles: Album By Album, Song By Song, The Sixties And After*, Tim Riley, 2002).

## #10 (TIE) WITH THE BEATLES

*I was somewhat surprised at the relatively low ranking of what I think is the most fun of all the Beatle albums. With The Beatles, recorded and released in 1963, was their second LP. It was also the first time they were given more than a day to record. It starts off, bang, right in your face with “It Won’t Be Long” and just keeps going from there. “All I’ve Got to Do” and “All My Loving” follow.*

*The Beatles had not made it in the rest of the world yet, but they were the reigning kings of England and on the verge, the precipice, of their dreams. They were on the go and driven and made one of my favorite ever albums.*

*My guess is that the low ranking is because many of those responding to the survey were Americans. We all grew up with Meet The Beatles and many have not converted to the British LPs.*

FABIAN CHAVES: *Maravilloso, como todo lo de los Beatles. simplemente perfecto.* (Wonderful, like everything from The Beatles. Just perfect.)

STEVEN VAN ZANDT: In America, we got this album in a different form—we got *Meet The Beatles! With The Beatles* was about half covers and half originals, but Capitol took off almost all of the covers, so the record we hear was this extraordinarily sophisticated bunch of original songs.

Everything (on the album) started in fast. Listen to the way “It Won’t Be Long” opens with the vocals. The intro on “I Wanna Be Your Man” is that one lick, just one chord on “All I’ve Got to Do.” It was all part of making the most impact you can, as quickly as you can. (*Tell Me Why: The Beatles: Album By Album, Song By Song, The Sixties And After*, Tim Riley, 2002)

*I’d never thought about it but Steven hit the nail on the head. There are no lengthy intros on this album, and no chance to say “Well . . . I don’t know. . .”*

## #9 LET IT BE

*I’ve sometimes thought that the less we knew about some of the dismal times making this album the better we might have liked it. As the Let it Be sessions approached, The Beatles, as always, had written great songs. The month long recording process left miles of recorded music and Beatle chat, and not much else.*

*Fortunately for us, Phil Spector waded through it all and came up with the beginnings of a very good, if off the original mission, album. Through the years, the orchestration and production has been a bother to Paul McCartney, the Beatle who*



*has always been most concerned about the group's legacy. He remembered the original intention of the album: a stripped down, back to their rock and roll roots album.*

*In the early 2000s, McCartney had a discussion with Michael Lindsay-Hogg, the director of the movie Let it Be, and out of that discussion came the impetus to create a new soundtrack to go with a possible re-release of the movie.*

*McCartney then solicited the assistance of Abbey Road engineers who went through the many tapes again, digitally cleaned up the selected tracks, removed Spector's orchestration, removed "Maggie Mae" and "Dig It," added "Don't Let Me Down," remixed and remastered the music and created Let It Be... Naked. At last, Let it Be as it was meant to sound. I recommend it if you haven't listened to it yet.*

*One aspect of the album that is never overlooked are the songs recorded during the climactic "rooftop" sessions. What a moment in history The Beatles left for us. The songs recorded live by the Beatles.*

DENISE: Every song wonderful. Never get tired of it.

ROCCO PROCIONE: Thank God for *Let it Be!* Especially the rooftop. The Beatles playing together live and enjoying it. Showing, once again, that when the four of them strapped on, there was an energetic connection that made us feel that anything was possible.

SUE SPIEKERMAN: Love most of the songs on this album. Watching the video of the rooftop performance, I had the feeling that they still had fun playing. It was just all of that nasty personal stuff that got in the way.

*They were having fun that day, despite the cold. One of my favorite moments, a defining moment for The Beatles playing live, happened during one of John's songs. From behind him, Paul pulled a rascally face. Somehow John knew it and smiled. These guys knew each other!*

MAXWELL MARTELLO: I wish they'd never released the whole movie, but just the rooftop concert. We didn't need to know the squabbles they were going through. I've said it elsewhere, but I think The Beatles suffered from depression and you can surely see it in this movie. But those lowest of lows become the highest of highs when they go upstairs and strap on their fucking guitars.

## #8 HELP!

*The Beatles knocked out this album in between everything else they were doing, including making a movie. You might expect, given the circumstances, that they would have decided to go the route of Beatles For Sale (recorded only short months before) and record a lot of their old covers. But no. Not these guys. They wrote and recorded an entire album full of very good songs. But the version released in America? Trying to come up with something nice to say about it and nothing's coming. It was terrible. You'd get a couple Beatle songs and then some incidental music from the movie.*

*I can just see the guys at Capitol records now, rubbing their hands together and saying "these bozos will buy anything. Why, we could even put the album out with incidental movie music on it between Beatle tracks and it will still sell a million."*

*"Brilliant! Let's do it!"*

DENISE: Album, song, movie. Thank you for that. Life is good.

ROCCO PROCIONE: (The Beatles) concocted a whole new direction in their original music with this album. The British *Help!* LP is a classic album for early 1965, from the title track to "I Need You" to "Yesterday" (only the most recorded song of all time) to "You're Going To Lose That Girl," this was a great album. As always with The Beatles, there were throw away "filler" tracks that other bands would have *killed* to have been able to write and record.

. . .

## ♪ Chapter 6

# RIGHT PEOPLE RIGHT TIME

The Beatles story is rife with people who came along at just the right time to keep their story alive and the flame burning. There were many who played roles behind the scenes to the four Beatles.

Brian Epstein was the Beatles manager during their heyday. He was the one who dressed them up and set them on their way. If you had to pick a man who was of the most importance to The Beatles, but was also the least appreciated by them, it would be Brian Epstein. The Beatles and Brian had a complicated relationship. On one hand, Paul was passive-aggressive towards him from the start, while John says he came as close to having an affair with him that you can come without actually having one. Had Brian not chanced to go see them at the Cavern one evening, who knows what fate would have bestowed upon the four aspiring lads? But he did go and see them, he did fall in love with them, and it was that love for “the boys” and his zest to bring them to the world that could not have been equaled in the story of The Beatles. Thank You, Brian Epstein.

“He was part of that perfect storm,” says Kalyan Valerie Meola with a quote that is the best. “It’s a matter of if this hadn’t happened, then. . . . It did happen and I am so grateful to the Universe that it did!” Ben Bettles says that Brian “jumped in at the right time, got Ringo to take over the drums, and the group never looked back.” “Brian,”

says Lindsay Porter, “was a very driven man who had a nose for business and a drive for success. It’s sad he was taken so soon. I am learning a great deal about Brian from readings, and he had a knack for being in the right place at the right time, and didn’t take no for an answer. What a personality.” Tom Dickson recalls that Brian “took them out of leather and created style icons, then let them concentrate on music which changed the way popular music was looked upon for evermore.”

“He believed in The Beatles from the beginning,” Darcie Reed reminds us. “He worked tirelessly to bring our boys to us. Cared about them as if they were family.” That he did. Brian was like the ever-giving, but not always appreciated, uncle. He believed in The Beatles and without him they never could have gone as far as they did: “To the toppermost of the poppermost” says JoAnn A. Grubbs, recalling John Lennon’s battle cry for the group.

Sue Spiekerman relates that Brian saw something special in them. “He made the effort to promote them, get a record contract, and make them known worldwide. While I won’t say that they couldn’t have done it without him, I don’t know if Beatlemania would have been as huge.”

“The great protector,” is what Michelle Ryder calls Brian. “He worked his ass off for the boys.” No doubt about that.

Some of the best comments are also simple and direct. Dennis Blair-Soares says that “Brian Epstein meant everything to The Beatles. When he died, John knew their run was over.” “Perfect vision,” says David Sales. Rich Allen has a few words about Brian: “Without his connections in the music industry and in London, without his tenacity and his hard work, I am not convinced that The Beatles would have become as big as they did. Brian fell in love with The Beatles the first time he saw them and, from that moment on, he gave 110% to making

them a success. His comment after landing their signatures on a contract was that he was going to make The Beatles bigger than Elvis. He meant that and he succeeded, but he worked extremely hard and was extremely dedicated from that first moment until his tragic death. Who knows what course The Beatles would have taken had Brian not passed. I suspect that starting Apple was the beginning of the end for the boys. I have the utmost respect and admiration for Brian. Brian's story is (one of) an incredible and exciting life, albeit far too short."

Mary Hyland fiercely believes that there would be no Beatles without Brian Epstein. "He persevered, for reasons he utterly believed, telling incredulous people they would be bigger than Elvis and listened to by kids in the year 2000. And boy, wasn't he right? I only wish, with all of my heart, that he could have had a happier life. Dear Brian . . . may he rest in peace." It's amazing what one man can do: what this one man did. With an organic mixture of heart and an eye for how things should look and be staged, he brought us a group that changed our worlds and invaded our souls. Denise Culton says simply, and I agree, "God bless him."

George Martin was the Beatles' producer from the start through to the end—with the exception of *Let it Be*. His role was to take their musical ideas and help turn them into recorded sounds that would be loved by millions for years and years. He played the role well. At first, he was the headmaster, giving instructions on what songs to record and how to play them. By the end, his role had changed into being more of an interpreter of ideas.

It took a number of years for it to happen, but George Martin's impact on the world of music has been realized. Aside from having the unmitigated gall of signing these four hopeful lads from Liverpool, and then allowing them to stay as a group without a front person (no group did that then), I still think his greatest contributions are unsung . . . well

make that “sung.” He had more to do with The Beatles’ vocal arrangements than many of us realize. “If I Fell,” “Here, There and Everywhere,” “I Am the Walrus,” and “Because” are just four examples of songs that he put his unique vocal arrangement stamp upon.

Note: Most of the comments collected here were written before Sir George Martin passed on March 8, 2016.

Tom Dickson watched it all happen from England. “In my estimation, Brian Epstein brought them out but George Martin gave them to the world. Both of these men were hugely influential on making The Beatles what they finally became. It was their music and their ability that blew us away.”

Rich Allen says George “was a genius and a true gentleman. It was Sir George who first took a chance on a group from Liverpool, a city that London and the recording industry looked down on. Add to that that The Beatles had already failed their audition at Decca and every other top recording company including EMI themselves, George Martin saw something in the boys and gambled on a gut feeling. Well, that worked out well for him!”

“I was angry,” says an angered Rocco Procione, his Italian blood getting the best of him. “George Martin had been there, year after year, hour after hour, day after day, recording The Beatles. It was not all fun. I’m sure the luster wore off, but he was always there and ready. Later, as the years went by, he never said much about his glory days with The Beatles. He could have made a lot of money doing it. Then, when he finally did start telling his Beatle stories, while most of us were sitting in rapt, open jawed attention, others criticized him for it. I thought, how dare you! Here is the man who opened his door to The Beatles and was *the man in charge* behind the scenes making these records sound good beyond perception. When I heard he was being criticized, I wanted to fight someone! *No one* mocks The Man.”

“A brilliant producer,” recalls Sue Spiekerman “It took 4 brilliant musicians, combined with his awesome studio talent, to make the brilliant records. They probably would have been great without him, but he made them amazing.”

Mary Hyland thinks that with George Martin, The Beatles would get the best of all worlds. George Martin was “a symphonic expert, someone who knew what *off the wall* meant, someone into experimenting and wanting the absolute best sounds he might curate for the boys. He was, and is, the absolute best.”

“Definitely the fifth Beatle,” says Ben Bettles, “Coming up with ideas for a lot of the songs and joining in on some of the instruments.” Michelle Ryder agrees. “#1 choice for the 5th Beatle. I love to listen to him speak about The Beatles. Ahead of his time and an amazing set of ears and mind.”

Lindsay Porter takes it a step further: “I wanted to be George Martin: To have that ear and intelligence for music. He showed that you can be successful in music without having to be on stage performing. He’s so brilliant. What an impact he has had on music production.”

Denise Culton calls George Martin “genius. I am in awe of this man” and Kalyan Valerie Meola wraps it up by saying that he was a “part of the magic! The coming together of the perfect people to make this astonishing music was the perfect storm!”

Mal Evans and Neil Aspinall’s names go together in The Beatles’ story like Frodo and Sam, inexorably linked. They were The Beatles’ roadies and gophers for years. They were the true ‘behind the scenes spirits’. They were always there for whatever The Beatles needed through the years. John also later realized how little the four Beatles appreciated these two men. There must have been some hidden animosity in them, but we never heard about it. Neil Aspinall went on to

become CEO of Apple Corps, the Beatles' music distribution company. He died of cancer in 2008 having firmly re-established The Beatles' brand in the world. Mal Evans was killed in a regrettable police situation in 1973.

Rich Allen calls Mal a fabulously likable and a gentle giant. "I would have loved to have met Mal. Yet another great person gone far too soon."

Denise Culton remembers Mal's appearances in the movie *Help!* where he comes through the ice asking for directions. "White Cliffs Of Dover? hehehee Loyalty and friendship. As for Neil, he was a magician with numbers, a logistical genius and a problem solver. He, also, I admire very much."

Darcie Reed calls Mal "an extremely loyal and devoted assistant to our boys. They depended on him to do so many things: hauling and setting up their equipment, getting them take out food while in the studio, running errands. Mal was basically at The Beatles disposal. Neil was also a loyal and devoted assistant to our boys. It was always Mal and Neil there to do what our boys needed."

Michelle Ryder says that, "Mal and Neil were as close to understanding The Beatles as anyone could ever be. Truly inner circle whereas George Martin and Brian were the adults."

Lindsay Porter thinks Mal was "adorable. I like that he was 'always there'. His contributions to the band were so important, but very behind the scenes." Lindsay refers to one of Neil's great achievements. "I always think of the Anthology when I think of Neil. He was dedicated to The Beatles, and his impact, even after the break up, is inspiring."