



***Rubber Soul*, Album by: The Beatles**

Reviewed by: Keilly Work



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## Introducing The Beatles

Formed in Liverpool, England in 1960, The Beatles became one of the most influential rock bands in music history all around the world. The band consists of the members:

(Vocals,bass,  
songwriting)

(Vocals,Guitarist,  
songwriter)

(Drums)

(Lead guitarist)

***Paul McCartney***

***John Lennon***

***Ringo Starr***

***George Harrison***



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Within the early years of their formation, before knowing each other, John Lennon formed a skiffle group in 1957 called the Quarrymen. The summer of that year on July 6, John and Paul first met at a church fete in Woolton, Liverpool. Paul had put on a performance that really caught John's attention with his skilled guitar playing. Lennon was well impressed and asked Paul to join the Quarrymen. Shortly after, George joined as a lead guitarist for the band and Ringo later on had replaced Pete Best, the original drummer.

The band performed under multiple different names until the 1960s, when the group realized they needed a solid stage name. Buddy Holly and the Crickets highly influenced The Beatles at the time, and so did their unusual band name, being named after a type of insect. Stuart Sutcliffe (the bands original bassist) suggested the name "The Beetles" would be fun and a good nod to the Crickets, but Lennon with his creative wordplay chose to modify it to "The Beatles" referring to a music "beat" incorporated into the word Beetle.

Throughout their music career, The Beatles explored and experimented with multiple different genres and styles of music. Their earliest sound was influenced by skiffle, beat music, and rock and roll from the 50s.

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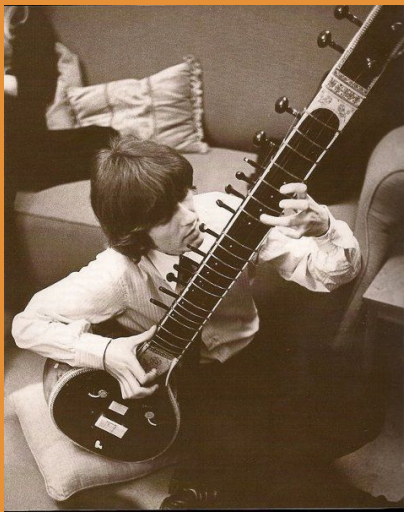
*Rubber Soul*, the Beatles sixth studio album in the UK and eleventh in the US, marks a huge moment in the band's transition into more complex music in 1965. Detaching from

their earlier, more mainstream pop tracks, the album hints that the band is maturing in music both lyrically and innovatively.

The Beatles crafted this album together with a much broader range of genres using not only pop, but a blend of rock, folk, and soul all in one.

Moving on from their original pop sound, in this album the Beatles experimented heavily with a wide range of new musical ideas such as:

## -New instruments



The sitar →



Fuzz bass →

After John suggested that George should use a **sitar** (a long stringed indian instrument) on one of the album's tracks- "**Norwegian Wood**", George was drawn to the unique sound of it and felt it resonated with him, describing it as "pure" and "familiar". He bought one of his own and began practicing, and eventually was able to nail his part in the song. Harrison enjoyed learning the sitar so much that he later travelled to India and visited master sitarist Ravi Shankar, spending time with him studying the instrument.

## -and new recording techniques ↓



## Tape manipulation →



The Beatles messed around with the **tape recordings** and **speed** in all kinds of new, unusual ways, one being recording at half-speed and then speeding up the playback to create the piano solo in the track "**In My Life**".

They also did this with the tape recording on Revolver's "Tomorrow Never Knows" by introducing reversed tape sounds— something a pop band never would have done before.



## ← Artificial double tracking (ADT)

The Beatles also experimented around with artificial double tracking for their vocals, which was created by Ken Townshend, Abbey Road's studio manager.

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With *Rubber Soul*, the Beatles not only pushed their own creative boundaries but were actually very prepared and eager to start making songs incorporating more interesting and deep themes in music. Paul stated:

“  
In October 1965, we started to record the album. Things were changing. The direction was moving away from the poppy stuff like ‘Thank You Girl’, ‘From Me To You’ and ‘She Loves You’. The early material was directly relating to our fans, saying, ‘Please buy this record,’ but now we’d come to a point where we thought, ‘We’ve done that. Now we can branch out into songs that are more surreal, a little more entertaining.’ And other people were starting to arrive on the scene who were influential. Dylan was influencing us quite heavily at that point.”

–Paul McCartney

### How did Rubber Soul get its strange name?

Paul had overheard a musician refer to Mick Jagger’s singing style as “plastic soul”, as in not real or authentic soul music. After hearing that comment, Paul decided to take a spin on it and call their next album “Rubber Soul” as a way of acknowledging their lack of authenticity compared to African-American soul artists the band favoured and admired.

## Tracklist

1. **Drive my car** - (Lennon/McCartney)
2. **Norwegian wood** (This Bird Has Flown) - (Lennon/McCartney)
3. **You won’t see me** - (Lennon/McCartney)
4. **Nowhere man** - (Lennon/McCartney)
5. **Think for yourself** - (Harrison)
6. **The word** - (Lennon/McCartney)
7. **Michelle** - (Lennon/McCartney)
8. **What goes on** - (Lennon/McCartney/Starr)
9. **Girl** - (Lennon/McCartney)
10. **I’m looking through you** - (Lennon/McCartney)
11. **In my life** - (Lennon/McCartney)
12. **Wait** - (Lennon/McCartney)
13. **If I needed someone** - (Harrison)
14. **Run for your life** - (Lennon/McCartney)



A few songs we will explore:



## 1. **Norwegian Wood** (This Bird Has Flown)

4.5/5

"Norwegian Wood" is a very mellow tune that gives off an acoustic feel. However, the meaning behind the song is much deeper and quite dark. The song tells a story from a married man's perspective who spends the night at another woman's house, expecting some type of intimacy after seeing her place is decked with this fine Norwegian wood. He has hope that an affair will take place, but he doesn't know for sure- due to her mixed signals. She is friendly, but also maintains an emotional distance between him and her. The man is told to take a seat anywhere, but there aren't any chairs available. Therefore, he chooses to rest on the rug, drinking her wine for hours while talking until 2 in the morning. The lady expresses it's now "time for bed". With little to no hope left, the man wonders if now they're finally going to sleep together. She decides to let him down easy and tells him she has work in the morning with a laugh. In humiliation, he crawls over to the bathroom to sleep in the bathtub. The tub is painfully uncomfortable to fall asleep in, but at this point in the song, he would rather sleep anywhere other than her bed. He awakens in the morning to realize she's gone- no note, "this bird has flown". In response to her absence and how the night played out in general, he says **"So I lit a fire, isn't it good? Norwegian Wood"**. This final line is purposely made vague for interpretation of a double meaning:

**Meaning 1.** He lit a warm fire to sit, recollect his thoughts and reflect on himself.

**Meaning 2.** He set the lady's house on fire out of revenge and bitterness due to rejection.

Listen yourself and see what you think


Norwegian Wood (This Bird Has Flown)

John later admitted that the song was inspired by the affairs he was having with Cynthia, and in an interview in 1980 he elaborated


"Norwegian Wood" was about an affair I was having. I was very careful and paranoid because I didn't want my wife, Cynthia, to know that there really was something going on outside the household. I'd always

had some kind of affairs going, so I was trying to be sophisticated in writing about an affair, but in such a smokescreen way that you couldn't tell. I can't remember any specific woman it had to do with."

## 2. **In my life** 5/5

In my life is an incredibly inspiring song that could be basically seen as a long poem. It's a **Lennon song** written about his childhood and past life growing up in Liverpool. According to John, it is English journalist Kenneth Allsop who made a comment to him that he should write songs based on his childhood, so you can thank Kenneth for this one. John started writing the song in a journal while taking an old bus route he used to take in Liverpool. The original lyrics consisted of places he passed by along the route, listing Penny Lane and Strawberry Field. John later on found them to be "ridiculous" and spent more time rewording the lyrics and adding more depth to exploring his past. During an interview in 1980, Lennon stated that the song was his "first real major piece of work" since it was his first time ever writing lyrics about his own personal life. The lyrics are very reflective, John takes you through a mini journey of his upbringing through sweet melodies. "In my life" is such a powerful and emotional track because it brings out themes of **nostalgia**— something as humans we all universally experience as we grow up. It also touches on the topic of how good things come and go. Whether it's people, places, or memories, the song sends a strong message of moving forward with love in your heart, no matter what life throws at you. Give it a listen 

 The Beatles - In My Life (Official Video)


Draft lyrics 



THERE ARE PLACES I'LL REMEMBER.  
 ALL MY LIFE, THOUGH SOME HAVE CHANGED  
 SOME FORGOTTEN BUT NOT FOR BETTER  
 SOME HAVE GONE AND SOME REMAIN.  
 PENNY LANE IS ONE I'M MISSING  
 UP LAURENCE TO THE CLOCK TOWER.  
 IN THE CIRCLE OF THE MOON.  
 I HAVE SEEN SOME HAPPY HOURS.  
 AND THE BUS INTO TOWN.  
 THE TRANSITS WITH NO TRAMS,  
 THE BUS INTO TOWN.  
 THE TRANSITS WITH NO TRAMS  
 ON THE BUS INTO TOWN  
 PAST THE DOCTOR AND ST. COLUMBUS  
 TO THE DOCTOR'S UMBRELLA THAT THEY  
 PULLED DOWN.  
 IN THE PAST I'VE SEEN SOME GOOD TIMES  
 AND SOME MORE LIKE THAT FOR A WHILE  
 BUT IF YOU WANT TO REACH MY FIRM  
 ALL THESE PLACES HAVE REMAINED  
 SOME WITH LIVES AND SOME NEW  
 SOME WITH LIVES AND SOME NEW  
 SOME ARE DEAD AND SOME REMAINING.

IN MY LIFE (N° SONG)  
 ① THERE ARE PLACES I REMEMBER  
 ALL MY LIFE THOUGH SOME HAVE CHANGED  
 SOME FORGOTTEN BUT NOT FOR BETTER  
 SOME HAVE GONE AND SOME REMAIN  
 ② ALL THESE PLACES HAD THEIR MOMENTS  
 WITH LOVES AND FRIENDS I STILL CAN RECALL  
 SOME ARE DEAD AND SOME ARE LIVING.  
 IN MY LIFE I'VE LOVED THEM ALL  
 ③ BUT OF ALL THESE FRIENDS AND LOVERS  
 THERE'S NO ONE COMPANIES WITH YOU  
 AND THESE MEMORIES LOSE THEIR MEANING  
 AND I THINK OF LOVE AS SOMETHING NEW  
 ④ THOUGH I KNOW I'LL NEVER LOSE AFFECTION  
 FOR PEOPLE AND THINGS THAT WENT BEFORE  
 I KNOW I'LL OFTEN STOP AND THINK ABOUT THEM  
 IN MY LIFE I'LL LOVE YOU MORE.  
 John Lennon.

### 3. Nowhere man 5/5

During the later stages of producing *Rubber Soul*, Lennon began to struggle coming up with ideas for the remaining songs. He spent hours and hours trying to think of something meaningful, eventually tiring himself out and having to lay down and take a rest. As he laid down, this feeling came over him as if he was some "nowhere man" sitting in some kind of "nowhere land". He chose to write a song about what he was feeling, but in a third person perspective. "Nowhere man" is one of the first songs by The Beatles that wasn't written about some form of romance. I would consider it to be one of the most mature songs on *Rubber Soul*, and one that hinted to everybody that The Beatles were more than swoony pop song writers. John's use of LSD also contributed to the "nowhere man" kind of mentality he was in at that time, and the questioning of his own identity and purpose in life. The lyrics include such real depth, such philosophical meaning. Not only is the concept of the song very interesting, but the harmony and melody is absolutely beautiful to the ears. John, Paul, and George all blend their voices together to create a smooth three-part harmony. The way the lyrics are delivered, it almost sounds like the lines are floating towards you, and then floating away. John makes sure to keep his raw and vulnerable emotion in his vocals too, really helping you understand the schedule of this "nowhere man" and what he's thinking inside. Have a listen and see what I'm talking about 





#### 4. **Girl** 4/5


Even though "Girl" was written before John and Yoko met, the song is said to be subconsciously written about her. In the 1970s, John would say that he was "always looking for Yoko" in the women he would date.

“ 'Girl' is real. There is no such thing as *the* girl; she was a dream, but the words are all right. It wasn't just a song, and it was about *that* girl – that turned out to be Yoko, in the end – the

one that a lot of us were looking for. ” - John Lennon

John also explained that the song was partly about religion and christianity, especially with the line:

 "Was she told when she was young that pain would lead to pleasure?" 

He believed "that was the basic idea behind Christianity: you have to be tortured to attain heaven" and found this deeply unfair. In this line, John is basically asking himself if she's been taught this same concept growing up. He figures the reason she's so out of reach emotionally is because she might have the idea in her head that true love must come with pain or suffering. The overall sound of the song is very melancholic, and maybe even a little haunting. It also includes a greek sounding guitar riff, which makes it sound even more unique. Just listen to the emotion in John's voice 



Thank you for reading my album review, based on one of my favourite albums of all time: *Rubber Soul*. Myself and many others would consider this album as not only amazing music, but a genuine work of art. No other rock band at that time was introducing that many traditional musical genres on one album. The whole album was something much different and unique, especially for The Beatles. The influence of it changed the music scheme a crazy amount in the 60s and further on. *Rubber Soul* will always be one of the best albums ever created and is marked as The Beatles huge step forward in music. I hope you enjoyed listening and learning more about The Fab Four.

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