

The Beatles

-- A Nov. 18 release of "Let It Be ... Naked," a de-mixed and remixed version of the "Let It Be" album originally released in May 1970. --

BACKGROUND:



Probably the most popular, influential and enduring rock group of all time, the Beatles almost single-handedly reshaped rock 'n' roll from a genre of throwaway singles by faceless stars to an artistic medium with recognizable images and idols. The Beatles placed the emphasis on a group, rather than a single individual (like Frank Sinatra or Elvis). They also set an example for all rock acts to follow with their strong sense of self-determination, going against their record company and management on many issues, even refusing to tour at the height of their popularity. Their countless hit singles have become modern-day folk songs, covered by hundreds of individuals and groups and inspiring countless more, and have sold more copies than those of any other band in history.

The roots of the Beatles date back to Liverpool, England in the late 1950s. Inspired by the growing British skiffle craze, John Lennon bought a guitar in March 1957 and formed a skiffle group called the Quarrymen, named after his high school, Quarry Bank. The lineup changed frequently, but by October 1959 it consisted of Lennon, his younger classmate Paul McCartney, George Harrison and drummer Colin Hanton. By March of 1960, Lennon's art school classmate Stuart Sutcliffe joined the band on bass and suggested the name the Beetles, a response to Buddy Holly's group the Crickets. By that summer they were the Silver Beatles, settling on the Beatles in August. That month the Beatles departed for Hamburg, West Germany, with their new drummer Pete Best, to try to establish

themselves in Europe. The band became a popular local act, performing at various clubs until they were expelled from the country in November because George Harrison was underage. The Beatles returned to Germany in early 1961 to record as a backup band for singer Tony Sheridan; these sessions were later released during the mid-'60s as "new" Beatles material, taking advantage of unsuspecting fans. Meanwhile Sutcliffe had left the band to pursue his art career, with McCartney taking over on bass. Sutcliffe died of a brain hemorrhage the following year.

Throughout 1961 the Beatles played clubs in Britain, becoming an underground sensation; they were particularly famous at the Cavern Club in their native city of Liverpool. Though they played mostly covers, Lennon and McCartney began writing original songs together, agreeing to forever share songwriting credits, even though they only co-wrote a handful of tunes during their entire career as the Beatles. By the end the year, Liverpool record store owner Brian Epstein had become the band's manager, and quickly began trying to find them a record contract. On January 1, 1962 the Beatles auditioned for Decca Records, performing 12 covers and three originals for A&R assistant Mike Smith. The group was rejected, however, and told that "guitar groups are on the way out." Undaunted, Epstein got the group an audition at Parlophone, an EMI subsidiary, with producer George Martin, who signed the Beatles on May 9, 1962. After one recording session, Martin suggested that drummer Pete Best be replaced, and the Beatles brought in Ringo Starr (born Richard Starkey), a well-known local drummer, as his replacement. By October 1962 their first single, "Love Me Do" b/w "P.S. I Love You," was a U.K. Top 20 hit, allegedly because Epstein bought 10,000 copies himself to ensure that it would chart. The band began regular guest spots on the BBC, performing over fifty times between 1962 and 1964.

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In February of 1963 the Beatles returned to the studio to record 10 songs (in one day!) for their first album, *Please Please Please Me*, which was released the following month. It became an instant hit, staying at No. 1 in Britain for 30 weeks and by October, female fans were screaming at their performances -- the start of "Beatlemania." Following an early November performance before the royal family, Parlophone released a second Beatles album, *With The Beatles*. By the end of the year the group had sold over 2.5 million albums in Britain, and had a string of million-selling singles.

Naturally, word about this amazing new act soon spread to America. Yet, ignoring the British success of the Fab Four, EMI's U.S. partner, Capitol, declined to issue the first few Beatles singles, which were instead picked up by the Chicago-based indie label Vee Jay Records. Vee Jay packaged the early singles as *Introducing the Beatles*, their first U.S. LP. During the second half of 1963 it was the only Beatles material available in America, and sold incredibly well; by 1964 a court awarded the rights to *all* Beatles recordings to EMI/Capitol, and the record went out of print, only to become one of the most counterfeited albums in music history.

In January of 1964 Capitol released their first U.S. Beatles LP, *Meet the Beatles*, containing remixed material from their two British albums. Following a landmark three-weekend stint on the Ed Sullivan show in February of 1964 (viewed by over 73 million people), the Beatles were the biggest band in America -- "Beatlemania" had taken hold of the U.S., also paving the way for other "British Invasion" groups. To capitalize on their incredible popularity, the Fab Four were made the stars of a comedy film, *A Hard Days Night*, which, surprisingly, earned good reviews and, not surprisingly, spawned a hit soundtrack album. Following the release of the movie in July, the band embarked on their first North American tour, performing 25 stadium dates in the U.S. and Canada. By the end of the year *Beatles For Sale* was in British stores, part of EMI's plan to have a

new Beatles album out every six months, while their previous albums and singles still clogged the U.S. and U.K. Top 10. In 1965 the band appeared in a second movie, the James Bond spoof *Help!*, which also spawned a soundtrack album. Another huge U.S. tour followed.

Not content with their unprecedented commercial success, the Beatles began to take their music more seriously, shifting from covers and upbeat pop love songs to more introspective, experimental material, highlighted on December 1965's *Rubber Soul*. The next U.S. Beatles album, *Yesterday...And Today*, was released on June 15, 1966 and featured a shocking cover featuring the handsome Fab Four surrounded by raw meat and butchered baby dolls, a protest against Capitol's "butchery" of their albums in the U.S. market. Complaints from retailers immediately rolled in, and the album was withdrawn, reissued the following week with a new, mundane cover of a steamer trunk. (Today copies of the album with the original cover are worth thousands of dollars.)

Following the release of *Revolver*, their most mature effort to date, in August 1966, the Beatles embarked on their final U.S. tour, playing their last live show at San Francisco's Candlestick Park on August 29th. Henceforth, the band announced, they were going to eschew live



performances to concentrate on more elaborate studio recordings. Rumors of a breakup were spread in the media as the band disappeared from the public. The Beatles spent much of early 1967 in the studio, recording their magnum opus, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. This groundbreaking concept album completely changed the way rock albums created: it used numerous studio effects, placed the emphasis on the album as a whole rather than on singles, and rewrote the standard for cover art with its famous mannequin-based photo collage. *Sgt. Pepper's* later won four Grammys, including Best Album.

On August 27, 1967 Beatles manager Brian Epstein was found dead of a drug overdose, possibly intentional. The band was shaken, but decided not to hire a new manager, assuming complete control over their own career. Their first project without Epstein's guidance, the concept album and BBC TV special *Magical Mystery Tour*, was attacked by critics, and perhaps was the beginning of the end for the Beatles. By 1968 the group had formed its own record label, Apple, and was recording tracks for a new double album. Sessions were filled with tension as members of the group stormed out periodically and often failed to record together, turning in tracks recorded independently. The often bizarre result, popularly referred to as *The White Album* but officially called *The Beatles*, was released in November of 1968, and featured a guest appearance by Eric Clapton on "While My Guitar Gently Weeps."

In January 1969 the weary band began preparing to record a new album live in the studio, without any overdubs, tentatively entitled *Get Back*. For an accompanying film, the Beatles performed on the roof of their studio, their last public appearance ever. While preparing the album, the group began to fight over creative issues, and the project was shelved amid many bad feelings. On March 12, McCartney married American photographer Linda Eastman; several days later Lennon formally married Yoko Ono. By May the Beatles' situation worsened when the group appointed Allen Klein as their new business manager, despite objections by Paul McCartney, who wanted to give the job to his new father-in-law. Though conflict continued to plague the group, the Beatles returned one last time to EMI Studios to record *Abbey Road* with George Martin, an amazingly cohesive album. By early 1970 each of the four Beatles was working on a solo album, but each publicly denied rumors of a split. In September 1969, Lennon told his bandmates that he wanted to quit, but because the group was renegotiating with EMI at the time, the breakup was temporarily put aside. Meanwhile, rampant rumors spread across America that Paul

McCartney had died in an auto accident several years earlier and had been secretly replaced by a look-alike; the alleged "clues" hidden in lyrics and cover art were quickly proved to be the product of overactive imaginations.

Sadly, internal tension resurfaced in the Beatles when Allen Klein brought in Phil Spector to produce and overdub *Get Back* (released in May 1970 as *Let It Be*) against Paul's wishes, also demanding that Paul delay the release of *McCartney*, his solo debut, in order to avoid detracting from sales of *Let It Be*. In anger, McCartney released his album in April, before *Let It Be*, and publicly announced that he was quitting the group. On December 31, 1970 McCartney filed suit against Klein to break up the Beatles, which upset the other three, who had considered periodically recording as a group while continuing their solo careers -- now any chance of a reunion was gone, at least for quite a while. Apple Records became a financial and legal mess.

During the 1970s each of the Beatles released solo albums. McCartney, performing with wife Linda in the group Wings, was the most commercially successful; Lennon recorded on and off with Yoko Ono, and continued to attract attention for his radical politics (though he semi-retired from music in 1975 to spend time with his newborn son, Sean). Throughout the decade there was idle talk of a reunion, peaking around 1976 when a Beatlesque Australian group named Klaatu was rumored to be the Fab Four under a false name (they weren't, though their manager and record company encouraged speculation) and *Saturday Night Live* producer Lorne Michaels half-seriously offered the Beatles \$3,000 to perform on his show. Though all four Beatles did contribute to the 1973 Ring Starr song "I'm the Greatest," no genuine reunion ever took place. On December 8, 1980 all chances of that happening were ended when deranged fan Mark David Chapman shot and killed John Lennon outside his New York apartment.

Although the Beatles had not released any new albums since 1970, interest in the group

remained high into the '90s, their backcatalog selling millions of copies a year and providing Capitol with a large percentage of its annual income. Publishing rights to all Lennon-McCartney compositions were sold during the '80s for hundreds of millions of dollars, at one point passing through the hands of Michael Jackson. Though Capitol issued singles/out-takes compilations such as *Past Masters* and *Rarities*, a lot more unreleased material remained unavailable due to ongoing legal problems, and ended up on illegal bootlegs.

By the early '90s Paul, George, Ringo and Yoko Ono settled their contractual disagreements, permitting the re-release of long unavailable recordings. In 1994 Capitol issued a double CD of early Beatles recordings for the BBC. Phenomenal sales of *Live at the BBC* inspired more exploitation of the Beatles legacy. In 1995 the surviving Beatles came together to contribute to a TV documentary about the group and select material for a planned rarities anthology of out-takes and demos. While together, Paul, George and Ringo laid down music for two John Lennon demo out-takes, "Free as a Bird" and "Real Love." Though the sound quality was often abysmal, the material inferior, and the surrounding hype insulting, America's aging populace ate up the three 1996 double-album releases, *Beatles Anthology 1, 2, and 3*, which sold over 15 million copies in less than a year.

STORY:

(Billboard) - In spite of the album's title, it wouldn't have been right to "Let It Be," given the circumstances and outcome of the Beatles' January 1969 recording project.

Twelve thousand, seven hundred thirty-seven days after they started, that intent will be heard with the Nov. 18 release of "Let It Be ... Naked," a de-mixed and remixed version of the "Let It Be" album originally released in May 1970.

Surviving Beatles Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr had no creative input on the project, nor did Beatles producer George Martin. Instead, engineers Allan Rouse, Guy Massey and Paul

Hicks, of Abbey Road Studios in London, were given complete freedom to craft the "Let It Be ... Naked" de-mix and remix. Starting from scratch with 33 reels of EMI tape, they spent much of 2002 creating a very pure, true Beatles album. Upbeat, punchy and full of life, the essence of the Beatles -- a four-piece rock 'n' roll combo without Spector's strings -- has been uncovered.

Takes chosen for "Let It Be . . . Naked," most of them the same as those on the 1970 release, were transferred from original 8-track masters to Pro Tools, Rouse says.

In the digital domain of Pro Tools and software-based processing equipment, the team was afforded the opportunity to mute or delete considerable extraneous noise.

In addition to the unusual conditions under which the original sessions took place -- a film crew surrounding the Beatles as they worked at Twickenham Film Studios -- four "Let It Be" songs were recorded during the band's last performance, on the roof of their Apple Corps offices in London on Jan. 30, 1969. "Let It Be ... Naked" was mixed in Abbey Road's Studio Three on a Solid State Logic 9000 J Series console. "We also utilized the echo chamber that we reopened for the 'Anthology' project," Rouse adds.

Though they disbanded in 1970, the Beatles, with a little help from recording technology, continue giving: The "Anthology" albums offered a pair of unique recordings reuniting McCartney, Starr and George Harrison with the late John Lennon, who was killed in 1980, through recordings Lennon had made.

With "Let It Be ... Naked," this star-crossed project is complete -- to the satisfaction, finally, of its surviving participants. "Paul Hicks, Guy Massey and I worked on the album by ourselves," Rouse says. "When it was completed to our satisfaction, Apple sent CD-Rs to the Beatles for their comments and approval. We were expecting to make some alterations to the mixes and maybe even change the running order, which we had altered, but were very pleased when no such requests were made."

ENTERTAINMENT:**Film Review: Gothika**

(Reuters) - In "Gothika," Halle Berry plays a penitentiary criminal psychologist who awakens one morning to find herself incarcerated in her own psychiatric ward with no memory of having viciously murdered her husband. In pitch-speak, the slick supernatural thriller can be succinctly boiled down to "Girl, Interrupted" meets "The Ring," and, for a while there, Mathieu Kassovitz's atmospherically charged direction sucks the viewer into the story's hellish vortex.

That is until the film becomes possessed by an increasingly ludicrous beyond-the-grave element from which there is no rational return. Thanks to Berry's best efforts will probably attract some solid box office but nothing crazy.

Berry's Dr. Miranda Gray would appear to be the last person who'd lose her marbles. A respected psychologist at the Woodward Penitentiary for Women she never loses her logical cool. But after working late one dark and stormy night and forced to take a detour on the way home to be with her husband, Miranda almost runs into a frightened young girl standing in the middle of a bridge. She gets out of the car to offer assistance, and the next thing she knows -- that is, after the girl appears to burst into flames -- she's locked up alongside the other criminally insane and charged with a murder.

Watching Berry struggle to find a rational way out of her predicament keeps "Gothika" in the game long after the plot line loses its grip on reality. Stripped of her usual glamour, she throws herself into the role and trusts her better instincts (just as she did with "Monster's Ball"), leaving the fancy footwork up to her hotshot French director.

There comes a point in Sebastian Gutierrez's script where the stylistic flourishes can no longer distract from the mounting plot holes and progressively silly supernatural element. By the time "Gothika" reaches a particularly lame denouement, it, too, has become a ghost of its promising former self.

SPORTS:**Baseball**

Fresh off the thrilling playoffs and World Series, baseball blew a lot of goodwill with its report that 5 to 7 percent of the 1,438 anonymous steroid tests this season were positive. No one will be punished but the results triggered a step-up in the drug program. Starting next year, steroid users will be subject to suspensions or fines.

The fines are chump change to baseball's millionaire players, but the possible suspensions, though hardly Olympian, are not so trivial.

Starting with 15 days for the second offense and getting stiffer after that, a suspension would expose a player as a cheat and could wreck his career and image. Sammy Sosa's corked bat episode, the subject of so much scrutiny last summer, would pale beside a revelation that a Hall of Fame-worthy player tested positive for steroids.

The good news from baseball, or at least the best spin executives could muster, was that steroid use didn't seem nearly as rampant as Jose Canseco or Ken Caminiti claimed in admitting they were users.

Baseball has grudgingly gotten drawn into the anti-doping world, yet both the owners and the union still reject Olympic-style, random, year-round testing. Absent that the positive findings were probably only a fraction of those who used steroids. Players will be tested next year, like this year, starting in spring training and on through the season. That means they can cycle drugs through the fall and winter, pump up, and taper off in time to submit clean urine samples in training camp. If they're tested a second time during the season and pass that, they can go back to doping without fear of getting caught.

Doping makes dollars and sense to players. Musclemen hit homers, and home run hitters drive Hummers. Pitchers, too, can cash in with steroid boosts to bounce back between outings, even if they don't have a sculpted physique.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY:

November 17, 1558

Elizabethan Age Begins

Queen Mary I, the monarch of England and Ireland since 1553, dies and is succeeded by her 25-year-old half-sister, Elizabeth.

Under the early guidance of Secretary of State Sir William Cecil, Elizabeth repealed Mary's pro-Catholic legislation, established a permanent Protestant Church of England, and encouraged the Calvinist reformers in Scotland.

With increasing English domination at sea, Elizabeth encouraged voyages of discovery, such as Sir Francis Drake's circumnavigation of the world and Sir Walter Raleigh's expeditions to the North American coast.

The long reign of Elizabeth, who became known as the "Virgin Queen" for her reluctance to endanger her authority through marriage, coincided with the flowering of the English Renaissance, associated with such renowned authors as William Shakespeare. By her death in 1603, England had become a major world power in every respect, and Queen Elizabeth I passed into history as one of England's greatest monarchs.

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BIOGRAPHY / FEATURE:

Elizabeth I

Elizabeth was born near London on Sept. 7, 1533. Her father was Henry VIII; her mother was Anne Boleyn, the second of Henry's six wives. Henry's first wife, Catherine of Aragon, had only one surviving child, Mary. Henry wanted a male heir, so he asked the pope to annul the marriage. Because the pope refused, Henry broke away from the Roman Catholic Church and set himself up as head of the church in England. Then he married Anne. He was disappointed that Anne's

child also was a girl. Before Elizabeth was 3 years old, he had her mother beheaded.

Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour, gave birth to a son, Edward. Henry died when Edward was 10 years old, and the boy came to the throne as Edward VI. Elizabeth and Edward were both brought up in



Henry's new church. Their half sister Mary was brought up a Roman Catholic. When Edward died in 1553, Mary became queen and at once made Catholicism the state religion. Mary suspected Elizabeth of plotting with the Protestants to gain the throne and had her imprisoned for 2 months in the Tower of London.

When Elizabeth became queen in 1558, she rode at once to London from her country home, traveling in a slow procession to give the people a chance to see her. Guns boomed, bells rang, and the people cheered her and scattered flowers in her path.

At the beginning of her reign England was in despair. The country had been weakened by war and religious strife, and the treasury was empty. Spain and France were powerful, and both wanted to rule England. The people hoped their young queen would soon marry.

But Elizabeth at once took the government into her own hands; and, though she had many suitors and close friendships with several men, she steadfastly refused to marry. The young queen chose as her chief minister Sir William Cecil (Lord Burghley), who was cautious and conservative like herself. For 40 years he was her mainstay in both home and foreign affairs. Her favorite courtier was the charming and handsome Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester. When she died at the age of 69, she was still called the Virgin Queen. By then secure, England was enjoying its greatest literary period. English ships were sailing

into all seas, and the island kingdom had begun to establish its position as a world leader.

In religious matters Elizabeth steered a middle course between the extreme Protestants and the Catholics. She restored the Protestant service but retained many features of Catholicism, including bishops and archbishops. She hoped this compromise would produce unity in the state; but the Catholics, who formed a majority of her subjects, were not reconciled. From time to time some of them plotted with Spain or France to put Mary Stuart on the throne in place of Elizabeth. France and Spain were rivals, and Elizabeth was usually able to play one off against the other. She even used courtship as part of her diplomatic game. She refused to marry Philip II of Spain but held out hopes to more than one of his royal relatives when France seemed to threaten. Later, when Philip turned against England, Elizabeth encouraged French princes. To cut Scotland's ties with France, she gave secret help to the Scottish Presbyterians. She also aided the Protestant Netherlands when they revolted against Spain.

Mary Stuart returned to Scotland in 1561 after the death of her husband, Francis, king of France. In 1568 she was compelled to flee across the English border to ask Elizabeth's help. Elizabeth kept her a prisoner for 19 years. Finally Mary was accused of having a part in the so-called Babington plot to assassinate Elizabeth. Parliament demanded her execution. Elizabeth signed the warrant; and Mary Stuart was beheaded in 1587. In the last years of Elizabeth's reign, Catholics were cruelly persecuted and many were put to death.

During the first 30 years of Elizabeth's reign England was at peace. Commerce revived, and English ships were boldly venturing across the seas to the West Indies. There they came into conflict with Spain and Portugal, which owned and ruled the whole New World and claimed a monopoly of trade. English smugglers broke through the blockade and made huge profits by selling, in the West Indies, blacks they had seized in Africa. John Hawkins, Sir Francis Drake, and

other English seamen also waylaid Spanish ships on their way home and seized their gold. Elizabeth aided the English privateers with ships and money and shared in their profits and stolen treasure. Philip II finally decided to put an end to these attacks by invading and conquering England.

After years of preparation, Philip assembled a great fleet of his best and largest warships, called by the Spanish the Armada (that is, fleet). In 1588 the Armada sailed into the English Channel. The English were waiting for them and at once put out to sea. Their ships were of newer design, smaller than the Spanish galleons, but faster and more heavily armed. In a nine-day battle they inflicted terrible losses on the enemy. The ships that escaped ran into bad weather and only a few returned to Spain. English ships then carried the war to Spain. When the struggle ended--after the deaths of both Elizabeth and Philip--no Spanish fleet dared to contest England's command of the seas.

Elizabeth was 55 years old when the Spanish Armada was defeated. Her joy in the victory was soon followed by grief, because her great favorite, Leicester, died a few months later. In 1598 her faithful minister Lord Burleigh passed away. In her court appeared young men--Sir Walter Raleigh, brilliant and adventurous, and the earl of Essex, a handsome young soldier. Essex fell from favor and Elizabeth had him executed for trying to stir up a rebellion against her. She died two years later, in 1603, at the age of 69, and was buried with great magnificence in Westminster Abbey. Mary Stuart's son, James VI of Scotland, was proclaimed James I of England, thus uniting the crowns of the two kingdoms.

The things we think of chiefly as marking the reign of Elizabeth are the religious question, the defeat of the Spanish Armada, and the flourishing of literature. Also important, however, were hundreds of laws on shipping, commerce, industry, currency reform, roads, poor relief, and agriculture. These laws shaped the policy of England for more than two centuries after Elizabeth's reign had ended.

Quote of the Week:

And when the broken hearted people
 Living in the world agree
 There will be an answer
 Let it be
 For though they may be parted there is
 still a chance that they will see
 There will be an answer
 Let it be

Whisper words of wisdom
 Let it be

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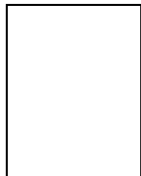
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