

"A compelling journey deep into the heart of Abbey Road." —ROLLING STONE

THE BEATLES

RECORDING SESSIONS

The Official Abbey Road
Studio Session Notes

1962-1970



MARK LEWISOHN

Introductory Interview with Paul McCartney

At last: the complete, official, inside-the-studio details of every Beatles recording session

Suspending microphones inside water jars, recording guitar solos backward, and cutting up tape and splicing it back together in random order, the Beatles experimented tirelessly. From the raw energy of their made-in-a-day debut LP *Please Please Me* through the technical genius of the seminal *Sgt Pepper* to the last album they recorded, the finely crafted *Abbey Road*, the Beatles sustained an unsurpassed level of creativity in the recording studio. They used the Abbey Road recording studio in ways no studio had been used before, and in the process they completely revolutionized popular music.

The photos, stories, and recording details in *The Beatles: Recording Sessions* open up this magic laboratory where the Beatles created the sounds that changed the world. For every day the Beatles ever laid down a track in the recording studio, this book details what songs they were recording, who was present, how many takes were done, what special effects or techniques were employed, and anything unusual that happened that day. Here are the Beatles as you've never seen them before: John Lennon asking to be suspended from the ceiling with a rope around his waist and spun over a microphone to achieve a unique vocal effect; George Harrison running around the studio holding a flaming ashtray over his head while Paul McCartney records the vocals of "Helter Skelter"; and rock-steady Ringo, after one of his rare foul-ups, grouching "We all make mistakes."

EMI Records, the Beatles' British record label, has made available to author Mark Lewisohn its unpublished documentation for every recording session the Beatles ever did, and has allowed him to listen to the hundreds of hours of alternative takes and unreleased tracks in their archive. From these sources, in combination with interviews with Paul McCartney and the producers, engineers, session musicians, and others who were in the studio with the band, Lewisohn has created a thorough, fascinating, and definitive record of the Beatles at work.

Featuring details of every recording session, more than 350 photos in color and duotone,

(Continued on back flap)

THE BEATLES

RECORDING SESSIONS

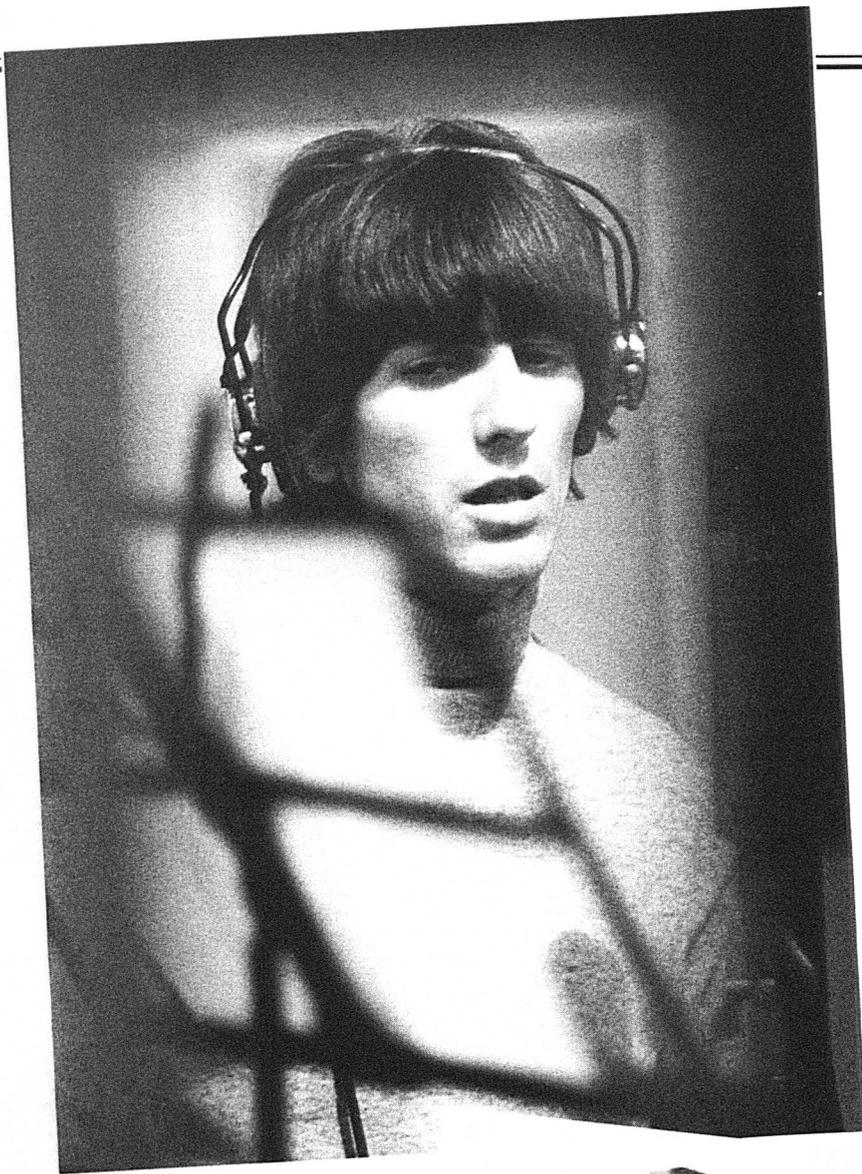
MARK LEWISOHN

Introductory Interview with Paul McCartney



HARMONY BOOKS

New York



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Very special thanks to Paul McCartney for a splendidly entertaining and illuminating interview.

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Finally, posthumous salutations to John Barrett, to whom this book is dedicated. I enjoyed the good fortune of meeting John before his sad and appallingly premature death and remember him well, as both a man dedicated to the project and a very fine recording engineer. Thanks, John.

Mark Lewisohn

Abbreviations

Abbreviations in this book are few, and they mostly occur in the initial information part of each date entry. There you may encounter the following:

P Producer

E Balance engineer. (See below.)

2E Second engineer, otherwise known as the Tape Operator/tea boy.

n/a Not applicable—ie, there was no producer on the session.

SI Superimposition, also known as overdub.

Special mention should be made of the role of the technical engineer, distinct from the balance engineer. While the latter would be positioned behind the recording console during a session, adjacent to the producer, the technical engineer would be there or thereabouts, on hand – or on call – to deal with any equipment problems or make suggestions in this area. There was, in the 1960s, and there remains today, a pool of such staff at Abbey Road, and each member would have contributed to Beatles sessions to some degree. But unlike balance engineers, whose names were noted for posterity on recording sheets and tape boxes, history cannot tell us which technical engineers were assigned to which sessions.

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Preface

Picture yourself as a motorist driving down Abbey Road, a quiet northwest London suburb when suddenly in the pouring rain you are confronted by a strange sight. In front of you standing on a zebra crossing are four tourists, one minus shoes and socks, being photographed by some poor bowler-hatted city gent holding an umbrella looking for all the world as though he has been hijacked especially for the occasion.

This is no rare event. Come rain, hail or shine, never a day goes by when one does not rush to the window following the screech of brakes to witness a similar sight. Why you ask yourself, some twenty years on from the time the Beatles used this same zebra crossing for their album cover, should there still be so much interest? Why also should our mail at Abbey Road Studios contain so many letters asking for information about the Beatles, and why should we have to paint over all the Beatles-related graffiti on our front wall every six months?

It was back in 1931 that the studios officially opened, having been built in the back garden of an old

property in St John's Wood. The list of artists, conductors and orchestras who have used the facility reads like a who's who of recording but none has ever captured the imagination of the entire world so much as the Fab Four.

This book really began in the early 1980s when one of our highly talented young balance engineers, John Barrett, became seriously ill. During the time he was undergoing chemotherapy, John asked if there was anything he could do to keep his mind occupied. My suggestion was that he listened through every Beatles tape and logged all relevant details; a job which he did to perfection. He produced a wonderful catalogue with all information colour coded with an attention to detail which was quite incredible.

The story continued in 1982 when Brian Southall, author of the book *Abbey Road*, and myself were asked to give a talk at the annual Beatles' convention in Liverpool. We took John along to sit on the platform and used his new catalogue to respond to any tricky questions. The audience were so enthralled at some of the information given that they asked if a book could be published.

Tragically, in 1984, John Barrett died. But Abbey Road's Kathryn Varley was determined that John's work should be published, and eventually Mark Lewisohn was commissioned to write the book. He has worked tirelessly in his quest for information, interviewing virtually everybody who had any association with the Beatles' recording schedules. Apart from his own extensive research, he has had to filter very carefully all he has been told, for it is amazing how quickly memories get tarnished with age. He has listened to hours and hours of playbacks, and the contents of this book are a tribute to his diligence. Finally it is thanks to Norman Bates, a key figure in EMI Records' Strategic Marketing, that a publishing deal was eventually concluded.

This is not just another Beatles' book. It is the first and only one to tell the story of their recording career. It will, I feel sure, become the definitive reference book for Beatles' fans everywhere. We at Abbey Road sincerely hope you enjoy it.

Ken Townsend

General Manager, Abbey Road Studios





Previously unpublished photographs of the Beatles outside EMI Studios, Abbey Road on 5 March 1963, taken by EMI staff photographer John Dove.

The Paul McCartney Interview

ML: Let me take you back to 6 June 1962. You were just back from your third trip to Hamburg, your first trip to the Star-Club. You still had Pete Best in the group and Brian Epstein had fixed up what was either a test or a session at EMI.

PM: We were told that it was an audition for George Martin. Brian had been going down to London for some time beforehand but we never used to go around with him. I remember endless times of him coming back to Liverpool only to say "Sorry, lads". We used to be at Lime Street station or in the Punch and Judy coffee bar, waiting for hours until his train came in. But it was on one of those occasions that there was some good news, and it was that George Martin had agreed "to think about it, possibly, maybe!". We didn't really get into many of the details although with all of these things we always asked "Did you have to pay any money?". Actually, we had had another audition before then, which was for Decca, with Tony Meehan, the Shadows' ex-drummer.

ML: Did you get to meet Tony at Decca?

PM: No, he was in the control room with Decca's Mike Smith. Brian went in but in those days we didn't go into the control room. It was strictly performance orientated. We were "studio", which was like the stage, and you just didn't go into the "front office". That was where The Big People lived.

ML: What do you remember about having to record 'Love Me Do' with Andy White, the session drummer?

PM: Well, George Martin didn't think that Ringo was a very good drummer. On all these Lita Roza, Alma Cogan records that were in vogue shortly before us, the drummers were pretty good show drummers, so producers were used to hearing a bass drum in the right place, locking in with the bass guitar like it would now. We weren't really bothered with that. Ours was very four in the bar — boom, boom, boom, boom — we used to try and break stages with it. That's what eventually got called the Mersey Beat. So Andy White was the kind of professional drummer that we weren't really used to, and George obviously thought that Ringo was a little bit out of time, a little bit unsteady on tempo. We never really had to be steady on tempo. We liked to be but it didn't matter if we slowed down or went faster, because we all went at the same time. So that was a major disappointment for Ringo.

When we *first* came down in June 1962, with Pete Best, George took us aside and said "I'm not happy about the drummer". And we all went, "Oh God, well I'm not telling him. You tell him ... Oh God!" and it was quite a blow. He said "Can you change your drummer?" and we said "Well, we're quite happy with him, he works great in the clubs". And George said "Yes, but for recording he's got to be just a bit

more accurate". Pete had never quite been like the rest of us. We were the wacky trio and Pete was perhaps a little more ... sensible; he was slightly different from us, he wasn't quite as artsy as we were. And we just didn't hang out that much together. He'd go home to his Mum's club, the Casbah, and although we'd hang out there with him, we never really went to other places together. So then we changed to Ringo, who'd been with Rory Storm and the Hurricanes, went back to London and found that George didn't even like him! We said, "But you're kidding! This is the best drummer in Liverpool, this guy, he's out of Rory Storm and the Hurricanes! This is class!" And George went, [eyes to the ceiling, stifling a yawn] "Oh yes? Well I still like Andy White!". So then Ringo got to play tambourine instead, which was very humiliating for him. God knows how he must have been brought down — you never can be in someone else's head.

I actually remember a lot of those early sessions. When we first came to the studio to do 'Love Me Do', Dezo Hoffmann, the photographer, was there to take some shots for black-and-white handout photos which we needed. George [Harrison] always hated those because he had a black eye. He'd been bopped in the Cavern by some guy who was jealous over his girlfriend! Anyway, we got on with 'Love Me Do'. We started playing it, [singing] "Love, love me do/you know I love you" and I'm singing harmony then it gets to the "pleeease". STOP. John goes "Love me .." and then put his harmonica to his mouth: "Wah, wah, wahhh". George Martin went "Wait a minute, wait a minute, there's a crossover there. Someone else has got to sing 'Love Me Do' because you can't go 'Love Me waahhh' . You're going to have a song called 'Love me waahh'! So, Paul, will you sing 'Love Me Do'!" God, I got the screaming heebiebies. I mean he suddenly changed this whole arrangement that we'd been doing forever, and John was to miss out that line: he'd sing "Pleeeeeease", put his mouth-organ to his mouth, I'd sing "Love Me Do" and John would come in "Waahhh wahhhh wahhhhhh". We were doing it live, there was no real overdubbing, so I was suddenly given this massive moment, on our first record, no backing, where everything stopped, the spotlight was on me and I went [in shaky singing voice] "Love me d0000". And I can still hear the shake in my voice when I listen to that record! I was terrified. When we went back up to Liverpool I remember talking to Johnny Gustafson of the Big Three and he said "You should have let John sing that line"! John did sing it better than me, he had a lower voice and was a little more bluesy at singing that line.

I also remember those great big white studio sight-screens, like at a cricket match, towering over you. And up this endless stairway was the control room. It was like *heaven*, where the great Gods lived, and we were down below. Oh God, the nerves! Anyway, it worked out well and from then on we

started to get a bit more confidence. So much so that ultimately we started to see what recording was about. George [Martin] was very, very helpful in the early days, he was the mastermind then. But as it went on the workers took over the tools more, and we started to say "We're coming in late, and we might not need you, George. If you can't make it, we'll go in on our own."

ML: In 1960 and 1961 the Beatles were playing every night, two/three times a day sometimes. Did you ever look ahead, long-term, and if you did, did you see yourself as gigging for ever until you stopped, or did you see your goal as being a recording outfit, with records in the shops?

PM: Recording was always the thing. Rather than TV and films. TV and films were a possibility, if we became stars, but records were the main objective. That was what we bought, that was what we dealt in. It was the currency of music: records. That's where we got our repertoire from, the B-sides, the 'Shot Of Rhythm And Blues', the lesser known stuff that we helped bring to the fore, the R&B stuff. Because it was just Cliff before that. I certainly wanted to be like Elvis. We admired very much all the black recording artists and could hear how basic all their recordings were. And Buddy Holly's three chords. We had nice ordinary ambitions really, just to be recording artists.

ML: You were obviously into hearing yourself on disc from the very early days. There were a couple of demo studios in Liverpool, there was one in Manchester, and I know that in 1958 you made recordings of 'That'll Be The Day' and 'In Spite Of All The Danger', which was what, incidentally, a McCartney-Harrison composition?

PM: It says on the label that it was me and George but I think it was actually written by me and George played the guitar solo! We were mates and nobody was into copyrights and publishing, nobody understood — we actually used to think when we came down to London that songs belonged to everyone. I've said this a few times but it's true, we really thought they just were in the air, and that you couldn't actually own one. So you can imagine the publishers saw us coming! "Welcome boys, sit down. That's what you think, is it?" So that's what we used to do in those days — and because George did the solo we figured that he 'wrote' the solo. That wouldn't be the case now: Springsteen writes the record and the guy who plays the solo doesn't 'write' it.

Any time we could get into those demo studios we would have done so. There was one in Hamburg, where we went with members of the Hurricanes to back Lou, who was their ballad singer, to do 'Fever', the Hurricanes' biggest number in the clubs. We all went and I think Rory — who was a bit of an entrepreneur — he probably got the money together. So that was a very early one. And then there was Percy

Paul McCartney interview

Phillips' place in Kensington [Liverpool] where we did 'That'll Be The Day' and 'In Spite Of All The Danger'. I remember we all went down on the bus with our instruments – amps and guitars – and the drummer went separately. We waited in the little waiting room outside while somebody else made their demo and then it was our turn. We just went into the room, hardly saw the fella because he was next door in a little control booth. "OK, what are you going to do?" We ran through it very quickly, quarter of an hour, and it was all over. I think we paid £5 for that. It was me, John, George, Colin Hanton on drums and Duff Lowe, five of us. Duff was a friend of mine from school who only played a couple of gigs but he got in because he could play the arpeggio in 'Mean Woman Blues' and only people who are trained to play can do that. Ordinary guys like ourselves can't do that! Anyway, John did 'That'll Be The Day', which was one of our stage numbers, and George played the opening guitar notes and I harmonised with John singing lead. Then on the other side I sang the lead, I think so anyway. It was my song. It's very similar to an Elvis song. It's me doing an Elvis.

ML: Any particular Elvis song?

PM: Yeah, but I'm a bit loathe to say which! "Yeah" is all I'm going to say on that. I know which one! It was one that I'd heard at scout camp when I was younger and I'd loved it. And when I came to write the first couple of songs at the age of about 14 that was one of them.

ML: When you signed to EMI and began making records professionally were you deliberately trying to recapture the Sun sound, or the Atlantic sound, or any specific sound?

PM: If the Beatles ever wanted a sound it was R&B. That's what we used to listen to, what we used to like and what we wanted to be like. Black, that was basically it. Arthur Alexander.

ML: That's *heavy* R&B.

PM: Right, heavy R&B. Bo Diddley, you know. When John and Stuart were art students and me and George were at the grammar school next door, we used to go around to John's flat and stay the night on Saturdays – be really wild and stay out all night! Well, we used to think it was very wild, it was very innocent actually. In the mornings I remember waking up with the light coming in and the cathedral out there and you'd been on a mattress on the floor all night, very studenty! Someone had a gramophone and they'd put on 'All By Myself', which was by Johnny Burnette but his brother Dorsey played on it too. Great moments. They were trying to be black. Elvis was trying to be Arthur 'Big Boy' Crudup. So I think we, the Beatles, were initially Elvis-y, Gene Vincent-y, Little Richard-y, Chuck Berry, Fats Domino – on one side. But on the other side it was all the lesser known people

who we secretly hankered after a little bit more: James Ray. 'If You Gotta Make A Fool Of Somebody' – Freddie [and the Dreamers] took that and made it into a comedy record but it was actually a rather serious little waltz song, the first time we'd ever heard waltz done in an R&B song. These were exciting moments for us. Whenever we were asked who our favourite people were we'd say "Black, R&B, Motown".

ML: Can you think of one of your own compositions where you tried to capture that?



PM: 'Love Me Do' was us trying to do the blues. It came out whiter because it always does. We're white and we were just young Liverpool musicians. We didn't have any finesse to be able to actually sound black. But 'Love Me Do' was probably the first bluesy thing we tried to do. 'Please Please Me' was supposed to be a Roy Orbison-type song [sings lyrics in typical Orbison style, adding guitar noises].

Come on, ching ching
Come on, ching ching
Come on, ching ching
Come on, ching ching
Please pleeeeeeaaase me!

It's very Roy Orbison when you slow it down. George Martin up-tempo'd it, he thought that it was too much of a dirge and probably too like Roy Orbison. So he

cleverly speeded us up and we put in the little scaled riff at the beginning which was very catchy.

ML: You say that George thought it was too much like Roy Orbison. There's no doubt in my mind that George was the right man – probably the only man – for the Beatles, but with his background – comedy, Charlie Drake, Bernard Cribbins...

PM: Guildhall School of Music too, a rather straight background.

ML:...what was it like when you said to him "We want to have a bass sound like in 'A Shot Of Rhythm And Blues' or a particular riff from, say, Little Richard's 'Ooh! My Soul

PM: Very sympathetic. He might not know the song but he was very cool. He was a super-sympathetic guy, George, still is, that is one of his greatest strengths. And it wasn't as if we were young nitwits and jobs, and that he wasn't interested in our opinion. It was exactly the opposite. George was never a cultist about jazz or serious music – although he did once or twice turn me on to bits of classical music, Debussy and other French composers. He was very, very good. George would always listen to oddball ideas, like *Sgt Pepper*: "We'll have a dog noise, a frequency only a dog can hear!". He was amused and we all laughed. It was never serious, but he was very, very sympathetic. For instance, he wanted us to do Mitch Murray's song 'How Do You Do It'. He *knew* it was a number one hit so he gave us it on a demo, a little white acetate. We took it back to Liverpool and said, "What are we gonna do with this? This is what he wants us to do, he's our producer, we'll have to do it, we'll have to learn it." So we did, but we didn't like it and we came back to George and said "Well it may be a number one but we just don't want this kind of song, we don't want to go out with that kind of reputation. It's a different thing we're going for, it's something new." I suppose we were quite forceful really, for people in our position. And he understood. George later took our demo and played it to Gerry [and the Pacemakers] and said "They don't want it, it's a major hit, you do it" and Gerry leapt at the chance. He kept it very similar in tempo to our version which was quite changed from the original demo because it was our arrangement, basically.

ML: Have you heard any of the Beatles' early BBC radio recordings lately? All the stage act material: 'The Hippy Hippy Shake', 'Clarabella', 'A Shot Of Rhythm And Blues' etc?

PM: Yes, some of them are not bad.

ML: Did you think of doing these on record?

PM: I think we probably played them all to George and said "How about this one?" 'Clarabella' was one.

Paul McCartney interview

ML: That was an obscure one, the Jodimars.

PM: Yeah, we all had little B-sides and we did the kind of thing that I did many many years later in Jamaica, which was to go in a record shop and look for offbeat stuff. You'd have a name like, let's say Johnny Burnette, then we'd know Dorsey Burnette was his brother because he sang on one of the tracks on the album that we liked. So when Dorsey Burnette himself had a single out it might be the B-side we'd be interested in. It was digging round the hacks of everything just to find an idea. I've recently recorded 'Cracking Up', the B-side of a Bo Diddley record, just jams and stuff, just rock 'n' roll, but it shows how deeply embedded all this stuff is. All the research we did then is our roots, our musical roots. Black people have gospel choirs. All we had was Sunday School and an absolutely ordinary C of E English upbringing until teenage years, then we went from Cliff Richard to all the very black, exciting and musically interesting stuff. I still know songs that could be hits. I still tell people to try 'Thumbin' A Ride' by the Coasters. A new version of that could be a hit. It's a great number.

ML: It would make a TV commercial hit these days.

PM: Yeah, it would probably be a good Levi's commercial.

ML: You did 'Besame Mucho' at the 6 June 1962 session, which was a staple of your stage act at that time. Now the Coasters did that, and you obviously liked the Coasters, yet your version was nothing like theirs. Where would you have got your arrangement from?

PM: We *were* well into the Coasters but I'm not sure how we came to do that one. It may have been our own arrangement. I looked at the recording scene and realised that a few people were taking offbeat songs, putting them into their acts and modernising them a bit. So I looked at a few songs with that in mind. 'Till There Was You' was one, no one was doing that except Peggy Lee so I thought that'd be nice to play.

ML: Where did you get 'The Honeymoon Song' from? That one always intrigued me.

PM: 'The Honeymoon Song' was Marino Marini, an Italian and his backing group. They used to appear on telly and the greatest thing about them was they had a volume pedal! 'The Honeymoon Song' wasn't a big hit but I liked it, thought it was a nice tune. I was the force behind that, the others thought it was a real soppy idea, which I can see now! I also did 'Falling In Love Again'. We modernised that because, again, it's a lovely song, the Dietrich recording. I used to spend time at home looking at B-sides of this and that and thinking "Oh, we could do a good version of that". And those songs then went down quite well with the club crowds, but when it came to the recording studio there had to be more integrity behind it. This is

another reason why we wouldn't do 'How Do You Do It'. We figured, "Now, wait a minute, we are now starting a reputation, a major reputation, hopefully, so we must be careful as to what we do". We wanted to do 'Love Me Do' first because it was bluesy' and we thought we'd keep our integrity with all the lads in Liverpool. They weren't going to say "Oh God, you've gone soppy on us, you've done 'Besame Mucho!'". Mind you, George Martin didn't like 'Besame Mucho'.

ML: What were your early impressions of the EMI Studios in Abbey Road?

PM: I loved it. I loved the variety of artists that went there. These days you go to a recording studio and you tend to see other groups, other musicians, because that's where the industry is now, that's where the money is. But then you'd see Sir Tyrone Guthrie, Barenboim. There'd be a lot of *acting*.

ML: A couple of people have told me how Sir Malcolm Sargent popped in to see you there.

PM: Yeah, in number two. We were working and he came in wearing his navy blue pin-striped suit, carnation, [adopts upper crust voice] "Hello!". George Martin said "Boys, Sir Malcolm Sargent wants to say hello". [Upper crust again] "Hello!", and there was a wave. "Hey, Mal, how you doin' son?" and all that, the irreverent bit. But we were quite pleased, he gave us a big grin and stuff, he seemed like a nice bloke. You'd see classical sessions going on in number one — we were always being asked to turn down because a classical piano was being recorded in number one and they could hear us. And the echo chambers, we used to have a laugh because you could patch in to other people's echo chambers. I remember a Paul Jones session going on and we nearly nicked his echo and put it in one of our 'I Am The Walrus' things. We thought 'We'll have Paul singing on our record!'. One of the great things about Abbey Road was that it almost became our own house, especially by the time *Sgt Pepper* was going on. A lot of people didn't work past ten in the evening and we did. We were pretty free on our time schedule because we weren't touring by then.

ML: Was working late a deliberate thing, so that no one else would be in the building and you'd have the run of the place?

PM: No, we'd just heard that Sinatra recorded late, that's all I can remember. Somebody said "Sinatra never records until ten in the evening" and we thought "That sounds groovy!". It was just a chance observation by someone that made us think "Great, we can have an evening out and then pop along later. Let's try it for a change." So we'd have the whole place, studios one, two and three and we'd move between all those studios. At one point I'd be mixing 'Ob-La-Di' in studio two with Ken Scott. John, I

think, was mixing 'Glass Onion' with Geoff Emerick and George Martin in three, and then I'd play them our mix, which wasn't very good, of 'Ob-La-Di', and their team would then come in and fix my mix up and then we'd go back to 'Glass Onion' and help fix that. We were operating in quite a zany manner. Actually the one thing John didn't like was that I took Ringo during a lull — they were doing something complicated, like a guitar solo or something — and I said to Ringo "Let's go in the other room", and we went into three, I think it was, and recorded 'Why Don't We Do It In The Road', just me and Ringo.

ML: You were also attending other sessions, for other artists, weren't you? Like an Alma Cogan session or Paul Jones or Cilia Black, Billy J Kramer, Cliff Bennett and the Rebel Rousers.

PM: They'd ask me. For example, Cliff Bennett and the Rebel Rousers were friends of ours from Hamburg. Because we were doing so well many people would stick their head around the door and say "Give a listen to this track for us, will you?" And of course if we gave the thumbs-up it was like a blessing, and made them feel better. Cliff Bennett asked me to produce and I loved it. The only reason I don't do all that now is that I'm married with kids. I just don't have the time. But that's something I do like, just to wander in and out of a studio and see who's doing what, "That's good, that guitar solo's no good, you ought to fix that" and just give a few pointers. Yes, I did do quite a bit of that.

ML: What about those songs that you gave away, like 'Bad To Me' and 'It's For You'? Some of those were pretty good songs!

PM: John and I were a songwriting team and what songwriting teams did in those days was wrote for everyone — unless you couldn't come up with something or wanted to keep a song for yourself and it was a bit too good to give away. John and I would get together, "Oh, we gotta write one for Billy J, OK [sings part of 'Bad To Me', simply] 'Birds in the sky will be...'" and we just knocked them out. In our minds there was a very vague formula and we could do it quite easily. I read something just this morning where Geoff Emerick was saying that he and George Martin could sit and not say anything throughout a whole session and people would think they were very weird. It was just that they read each other. It was the same thing with me and John about a Billy J song or a Fourmost song, a Cilla song. Cilia's 'It's For You' was something else, that was something I'd written. You sometimes would pull one out of the drawer and say, "Maybe this would be good for you". 'Misery' was for Helen Shapiro, and she turned it down. [Makes mock pain noise.] It may not have been that successful for her because it's a rather downbeat song, "world's treating me bad, misery". It was quite pessimistic. And in the end Kenny Lynch did it. Kenny used to come out on tour with us and he used to sing it, that

was one of his minor hits.

ML: With Bert Weedon on guitar as a session man!

PM: Was he? I know I've never been so surprised in my life as to find a chit in Abbey Road for Ivor Mairants, a session fee chit. I mean, he was a God to us. He had *shops!* You don't do sessions when you've got shops do you?! And I saw the MU form, signed by Ivor. He'd obviously just done a session.

ML: I'd like to throw one or two song titles at you and perhaps you could give me quick two-sentence answers about the writing and recording of them.

PM: You don't get couple-of-sentence answers with me!

ML: 'I Saw Her Standing There'.

PM: I wrote it with John in the front parlour of my house in 20 Forthlin Road, Allerton. We sagged off school and wrote it on guitars and a little bit on the piano that I had there. I remember I had the lyrics "just 17 never been a beauty queen" which John – it was one of the first times he ever went "What? Must change that..." and it became "you know what I mean". That's really the major recollection. To us it was just an opening line that, but – you see I told you you wouldn't get two sentences! – at the time we were 18, 19 whatever, so you're talking to all girls who are 17. We were quite conscious of that. We wrote for our market. We knew that if we wrote a song called 'Thank You Girl' that a lot of the girls who wrote us fan letters would take it as a genuine thank you. So a lot of our songs – 'From Me To You' is another – were directly addressed to the fans. I remember one of my daughters, when she was very little, seeing Donny Osmond sing 'The Twelfth Of Never' and she said "He loves me" because he sang it right at her off the telly. We were aware that that happened when you sang to an audience. So 'From Me To You', 'Please Please Me', 'She Loves You'. Personal pronouns. We always used to do that. 'I Want To Hold Your Hand'. It was always something personal. 'Love Me Do', 'Please Please Me'...

ML: P.S. I Love You'...

PM: 'Thank You Girl'.

ML: 'I'll Get You'.

PM: Exactly. We were in a rut, obviously!

ML: Why did you open the song with that "one, two, three, four!?" You didn't open any other songs with a count-in.

PM: There always was a count-in on the front of songs but I think that one was particularly spirited so we thought "We'll keep that one, sounds good".



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ML: What about 'Hold Me Tight'? You tried that for the *Please Please Me* LP but it didn't work out.

PM: I can't remember much about that one. Certain songs were just 'work' songs, you haven't got much memory of them. That's one of them.

ML: I suppose that when you've had about 500 compositions published you can't remember them all.

PM: That's what I mean. I remember the name of the tune. Some of them ... I wouldn't call them fillers but they were 'work' songs. You just knew that you had a song that would work, a good melody. 'Hold Me Tight' never really had that much of an effect on me. It was a bit Shirelles.

ML: 'All My Loving'. I always consider that as your first major, really major song.

PM: You know, that was on an album and the first person I heard single it out was the disc-jockey David Jacobs, who was pretty hip. Still is actually – he knows pop music. He was always quite an expert, for one of the older generation. I remember him singling it out on his radio show and I think from that moment it did become a big favourite for people. And I heard it differently. Till then I'd heard it as an album track. But when he played it on his radio show, and it went over to however many million people on network BBC, it was like "Woh! That is a good one". I always liked it. I think it was the first song where I wrote the words without the tune. I wrote the words on the tour bus during our tour with Roy Orbison. We did a lot of writing then. Then, when we got to the gig, I found a piano and worked out the music. That was the first time that I'd actually written that way.

ML: It's very advanced, quite complex, just one year on from 'Love Me Do'. The Beatles' advancement from year to year, album to album, never ceases to astonish me. It was so tangible.

PM: Yeah, the Beatles were a pretty good group! Not a bad group, I must say! I just heard 'Hello, Goodbye' on the radio this morning and it was very good. We *knew* we were good. People used to say to us, "Do you think John and you are great songwriters?" and I'd say "Yeah, it may sound conceited but it would be

stupid of me to say 'No, I don't' or 'Well, we're not bad' because we are good!". Let's face it, if you were in my position, which was working with *John Lennon*, who was, we know, a great, great man ... it's like that film *Little Man, Big Man*, the beginning of it, he says "We wasn't just playing Indians, we was *living* Indians!". And that's what it was. I wasn't just talking about it I was living it. I was actually working with the great John Lennon. And, similarly, he with me. It was very exciting. We wrote 'From Me To You' on the bus too, it was great, that middle eight was a very big departure for us. Say you're in C then go to A minor, fairly ordinary, C, change it to G. And then F, pretty ordinary, but then it goes [sings] 'I got arms' and that's a G Minor. Going to G Minor and a C takes you to a whole new world. It was exciting.

ML: And then there was the famous last chord of 'She Loves You', the Glenn Miller one.

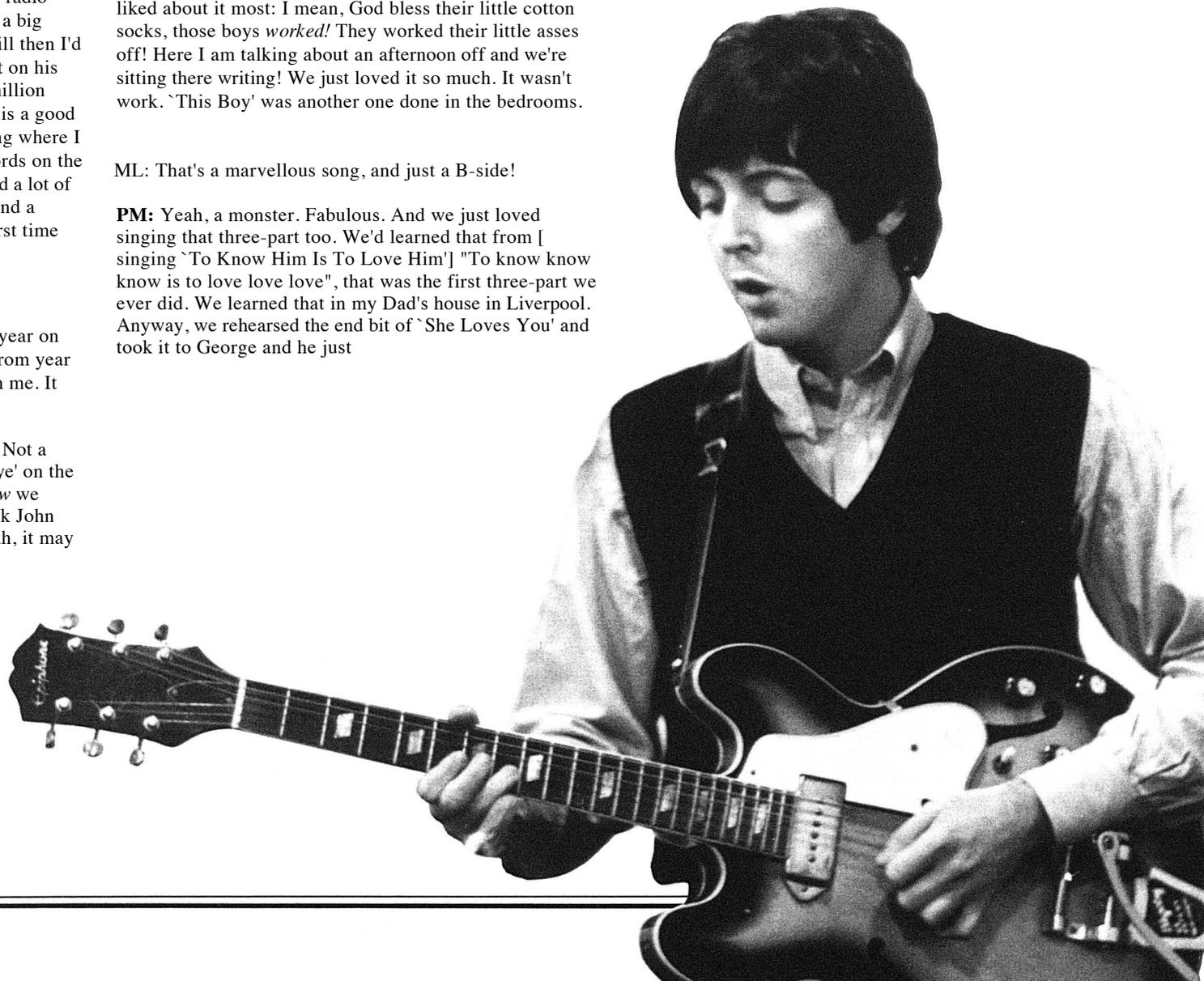
PM: That's right. We loved that bit and we rehearsed it a lot. John and I wrote that in a hotel room, on twin beds, during an afternoon off. Your book *The Beatles Live!* really gave me that feeling, that was one of the things I liked about it most: I mean, God bless their little cotton socks, those boys *worked!* They worked their little asses off! Here I am talking about an afternoon off and we're sitting there writing! We just loved it so much. It wasn't work. 'This Boy' was another one done in the bedrooms.

ML: That's a marvellous song, and just a B-side!

PM: Yeah, a monster. Fabulous. And we just loved singing that three-part too. We'd learned that from [singing 'To Know Him Is To Love Him'] "To know know know is to love love love", that was the first three-part we ever did. We learned that in my Dad's house in Liverpool. Anyway, we rehearsed the end bit of 'She Loves You' and took it to George and he just

laughed and said "Well you can't do the end of course, that sixth, it's too like the Andrews Sisters!" and we said "All right we'll try it without" and we tried it without and it just wasn't as good and – this is what I mean about George – then he conceded. "You're right, it's great." But we were both very flexible. We would listen to George's ideas too, because he was a producer and a musician and he obviously knew what he was talking about. There was good to and fro.

One really great thing about work in the early days was that they were better conditions than I enjoy now. If I go into a session now I'm invariably the artist, I'm probably the producer, I'm certainly the bass player and so on and so on. I'm involved with the remix engineer. I'm involved in all the steps. Whereas then the great thing was that you just went in, sang your stuff and then went to the pub. And then *they* mixed it, *they* rang you up if they thought there was a single, you'd just ring them up "Have we got a hit?" – that's all you wanted to know. Great, luxurious conditions if you think about it. Now, as I say, you take everyone's



job and kill yourself into the bargain. I sometimes look back to those days and think "God, which is right? No pay and a lot of time in the pub or a lot of pay and no getting away from the studio?" It's a fine thing to balance.

ML: Listening to the original tapes I was struck by the economy of it all. George Martin or Geoff Emerick or Norman Smith will put the red light on and John Lennon, who must have been very aware of the time, keeps saying "Oh, the red light's on, let's go, let's start".

PM: Oh yeah, whenever the red light was on that was it, we had to go, that was our signal. Now it's very relaxed. I've now got my own studio and we hardly ever put the light on. The other cute thing was that the engineers had to identify each recording. Geoff Emerick was so shy that he didn't want to speak on tape; some people hate to hear their voice on tape. Geoff and the others had to say "RM1", which was remix mono one, or "RS2", later, "remix stereo two", and Geoff would go [fast mumble] "RM1", pressing the button down. He hated doing that. Those are the things you don't get these days.

One thing I'll never forget at EMI was the "pop" "classical" switch on the right-hand-side of the console! And the control knobs were great big RAF things, that was the state of the technology then. We used to like them though, and actually they were much better than the fiddly little things these days because then if you put treble on you actually heard treble come on. Now you put treble on and it's nothing. I really do think those valve machines were more fun to work with. A lot of people think that, I know Geoff Emerick does, and I still keep some valve equipment myself because it gives you a record-y type sound. That's why a lot of people won't go to digital. Analogue is warmer, and you can defeat the machine. For example, one trick of our's - 'Ob-la-Di' is one of the songs I did this on - was to over-record an acoustic guitar, so you'd swing the needle into the red and it'd be there, hard, every time you'd played it. The engineer would say "No, no, no, this is not allowed, we have to keep it just before the red or a little into the red!" and we'd be firm and say "No". And the acoustic would come back like an electric, it wouldn't distort too much, it would just mess around with that original sound. It'd make it *hot*. You'd defeated the machine, you'd actually screwed it up a bit. They're harder than ever to defeat now. They've thought of all that. If you're going to work in the red now there's a little computer that comes in and says "Limit!", stops it and brings it back. They're all so clever these days and you can't actually screw up.

Norman Smith was a great engineer, we were all so sad when Norman became a producer because we wanted him as our engineer, he was dynamite. But Geoff was dynamite too, in fact that was the great thing about *all* of the EMI guys. Training. I still think



of it in the same breath as the BBC and the government. Anyone you get who's been EMI trained really knows what he's doing. They actually used to have to come to work in ties and suits and white coats which is lovely, like another age! But you listen to the early Beatle recordings, you listen to 'Twist And Shout', it's no less powerful than your current Curiosity Killed The Cat. There's power in John's voice there that certainly hasn't been equalled since, and I know exactly why: it's because he worked his bollocks off that day. We left 'Twist And Shout' until the very last thing because we knew there was one take. The whole album only took a day so it was amazingly cheap, no-messing, just *massive* effort from us. But we were game, we'd been to Hamburg for Christ's sake, we'd stayed up all night, it was no big deal. We started at ten in the morning and finished at ten at night, it sounded like a working day to us! And at the end of the day you had your album. There's many a person now who would love to be able to say that. Me included!

ML: Indeed the *Please Please Me* LP works *because* of the speed in which you did it. It has an urgency, it's a very "instant" album.

PM: That's right. You see I believe in throwaway as a great thing. A great comedian will throw his gags away and I think in music it's very similar. I often find that my demos turn out better than the finished recording. I did a demo for 'Come And Get It' for Badfinger which took about 20 minutes, it was before a Beatles session. Phil McDonald was there and I got in - I always used to get in early because I lived just around the corner - and all the equipment was set up from the day before so I ran in and said "Just do this, Phil, go on, it'll only take 20 minutes" and I threw it away, I mean it's really nice. I did two demos that I was very pleased with. That one and 'Goodbye', for Mary Hopkin, they were nice demos. And I said to Badfinger, "Look, lads, don't vary, this is good, just

copy this down to the letter. It's perhaps a little hit undignified for you, a little hit lacking in integrity to have to copy someone's work that rigidly, but this is the hit sound. Do it like this and we're all right, we've got a hit. No one will know anyway. And if they do say anything say 'Yes, Paul did the arrangement, big deal, it's not unheard of'."

ML: What do you remember of 'Leave My Kitten Alone'? Do you remember that one.?

PM: That was a Johnny Preston song that we'd rehearsed in Liverpool along with all our Cavern stuff and it was just in our repertoire. It wasn't a big one that we used to do, we'd pull it out of the hat occasionally, and we also recorded it.

ML: Do you remember 'Long Tall Sally' as one take? Because to me that's as remarkable as John doing 'Twist And Shout' in one take.

PM: Yeah, it's the same. John and I were very equal. You see, since John's death this thing has emerged - it's quite natural, you can't blame people - he's emerged as the martyr that he didn't want to be. I heard an interview, the day he died, in fact, where he said "I'm not gonna be a bloody martyr, they're all trying to make a martyr of me. I've just got a few things to say, thank you very much, I'll say 'em, goodnight." And obviously this has happened, it was inevitable. When I die the good sides of me will emerge. They'll say, "Oh, did you know he did that in one take? Hey, he wasn't so had," because I've become known as a sappy balladeer, and John of course did a lot to encourage that myth when we were having rows. He really tried to put that about but he knew otherwise. He was the guy, when I was having trouble with 'Kansas City' - it didn't come off on the first rehearsal - who said "Come on man, you can do it better than this, get up there!"

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We were equally raucous and equally balladeering actually. It has become a bit of a myth that I was the balladeer because of 'Yesterday' and John was the shouter because of 'Twist And Shout'. But he wrote songs like 'Good Night', for Ringo, which is the most sentimental little ballad you'll ever hear, and he wrote 'Julia' about his mother, that's a very sentimental piece. Obviously you can't knock his raucous 'Twist And Shout' but there's two sides to everyone.

ML: Tell me about 'I'll Follow The Sun', another very early song I believe.

PM: Yes, I wrote that in my front parlour in Forthlin Road. I was about 16. There's actually a few from then. 'Thinking Of Linking', ever heard of that one?

ML: I know of the title but that's all.

PM: 'Thinking Of Linking' was terrible! I thought it up in the pictures, someone in a film mentioned it [imitates an actor in a film] "we're thinking of linking" and I came out of there thinking "That should be a song. Thinking of linking, people are gonna get married, gotta write that!" But I could never really get past [singing]

Thinking of linking dah dah
Thinking of linking dah dah
Thinking of linking dah dah Can
only be done by two.

Pretty corny stuff! So 'I'll Follow The Sun' was one of those very early ones. I seem to remember writing it just after I'd had the flu and I had that cigarette — I smoked when I was 16 — the cigarette that's the "cotton-wool" one. You don't smoke while you're ill but after you get better you have a cigarette and it's *terrible*, it tastes like cotton-wool, horrible. I remember standing in the parlour, with my guitar, looking out through the lace curtains of the window, and writing that one.

ML: How come a song like that would take six years to be recorded? It's on your fourth album. Fifty songs had gone under the bridge by that time.

PM: It wouldn't have been considered good enough. I wouldn't have put it up. As I said before, we had this R&B image in Liverpool, a rock and roll/R&B/hardish image with the leather. So I think that songs like 'I'll Follow The Sun', ballads like that, got pushed back to later. We never released 'Yesterday' as a single because we didn't think it fitted our image. In fact it was one of our most successful songs. 'Michelle' we didn't want to release as a single. They might have been perceived as Paul McCartney singles and maybe John wasn't too keen on that.

ML: 'Yesterday' was a single in America in 1965, it was a number one, and the pop papers actually wrote "Paul McCartney is number one without the other Beatles".

PM: Ah, you see, I'd never thought of it like that. In a group, these jealousies don't take much to form.

ML: What about 'If You've Got Trouble', which you and John wrote for Ringo. There's a recording of that. One take and it went no further.

PM: [Laughs and pulls face.]

ML: It was for *Help!* but it didn't happen.

PM: Some of them we just couldn't get behind! I must admit, we didn't really, until later, think of Ringo's songs as seriously as our own. That's not very kind but it's the way it was. Ringo, in fact, had to be persuaded quite heavily to sing. He used to do 'Boys' and 'Matchbox' with us, and with Rory Storm he used to do a set. But generally we never thought of those songs as being that good. To some degree, 'Do You Want To Know A Secret' for George was that way too. I think John and I were really concentrating on "We'll do the real records!" but because the other guys had a lot of fans we wrote for them too. George eventually came out with his own 'Don't Bother Me' but until then he hadn't written one.

ML: What about 'That Means A Lot'? In the end you gave that to PJ Proby but you tried to do it yourself first. There are re-makes and all sorts of things at Abbey Road.

PM: There were a few songs that we were just not as keen on, or we didn't think they were quite finished. This was one of them!

ML: Around 1965/66 you started going to the mix sessions and started being a bit more involved on the production side didn't you?

PM: Yes, we'd started to learn what was involved. We figured that if anyone's going to know how much bass there should be on a record, or how loud the guitar solo should be, or whether 'Hey Jude' should be seven minutes or whether we ought to do the right thing and edit it, it ought to be us. And it was all so fascinating, being allowed to do it, being allowed to actually sit in the studio, because, as I say, on those first sessions you didn't feel you were allowed to join in. During that first audition with Tony Meehan we never even saw him! He was there but we let ourselves in the back door of Decca. But eventually we started to change things. As we got more power they started to let us sit there during a mix. Then you'd say "I don't want to interfere, Geoff, but push my guitar up!". Actually, that was one of the reasons they wouldn't have us there originally, or would prefer that we weren't there, because whoever was present wanted his instrument louder. With two guitarists, with John and George, it was always John saying "put that up a bit" and then George would come in and he'd put his up a bit, then George Martin would be saying "Can you turn the amps down, please?" and John would look at



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George and say "How much are you going down? Let's go down to five, alright?" John'd go down to six. "OK, I'm at five!" "You bugger, you're not! You're at six!" There was always this terrible rivalry! You just wanted to be louder. But it's nice to listen to the Beatle records now. There's more guitar than you'll ever hear on a record these days. When you mix now you always mix guitars out, and mix pianos out, it's as if they're only secondary instruments.

ML: There was a really big increase in the bass presence around 1966, wasn't there?

PM: That's right. On the original recordings you didn't really hear the bass much, but I started changing style and became more melodic.

ML: It's almost like lead bass on 'Paperback Writer'.

PM: Yeah. Brian Wilson was a big influence, strange really because he's not known as a bass man. If you listen to *Pet Sounds* there's a very interesting bass, it's nearly always a bit offbeat. If you've got a song in C the first bass note will normally be a C. But his would be a G. He'd put the note where it wasn't supposed to be. It still fitted but it gave you a whole new field. I'll never forget putting the bass line in 'Michelle' because it was a kind of Bizet thing. It really turned the song around. You could do that with bass, it was very exciting. The bass on 'Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds' and 'With A Little Help From My Friends' was good too. So yes, the bass became more important, and also we were listening to records that had more bass, in the discos.

ML: Tony Clark cut 'Paperback Writer' and he told me that when he cut it, with all that bass, EMI was

very worried about issuing a single like that, in case the stylus jumped.

PM: That's right. EMI had very firm rules about that, which we always had to break. It wasn't a wilful arrogance, it was just that we felt we knew better. "What do you mean we can't have bass? I was down the disco last night and I heard a record with that kind of bass!" They'd say "Well our rule book says..." and we'd say "They're out of date, come on, let's move!". We were always forcing them into things they didn't want to do. 'Nowhere Man' was one. I remember we wanted very treble-y guitars, which they are, they're among the most treble-y guitars I've ever heard on record. The engineer said "All right, I'll put full treble on it" and we said "That's not enough" and he said "But that's all I've got, I've only got one pot and that's it!" and we replied "Well, put that through another lot of faders and put full treble up on that. And if that's not enough we'll go through another lot of faders and..." so we were always doing that, forcing them. They said "We don't do that" and we would say "Try it. Just try it for us. If it sounds crappy, OK, we'll lose it. But it just might sound good." We were always pushing ahead: "louder, further, longer, more, different". I always wanted things to be different because we knew that people, generally, always want to move on, and if we hadn't pushed them the guys would have stuck by the rule books and still been wearing ties. Anyway you'd then find "Oh, it worked!" and they were secretly glad because they had been the engineer who'd put three times the allowed value of treble on a song. I think they were quietly proud of all those things.

ML: Did you buy your house in St John's Wood because of its close proximity to EMI Studios?

PM: No, it was nothing to do with that. I was looking for a nice freehold house in London and I was going out with Jane Asher at the time. Her Mum, Margaret Asher, found the house for me. It just happened to be around the corner from the studio so when I moved in there obviously it was very easy for me to get home, and if we wanted to take a break we could go around to my house. *The Girl Can't Help It* was on telly one night and we all bombed over to see it. Chris Thomas hadn't seen the movie and we said "You haven't seen *The Girl Can't Help It*? *It's the best, man, come on over!*" so we all went over to my house to watch it. We'd also use the house as a base. We'd meet at my place and then go around to the studio together. But it was very local, so if someone said "Will you help us produce?" – it wasn't "Oh, I have to come in from Oxford!", it was a pretty simple thing to do.

ML: I remember that the papers made a big deal out of the fact that when you produced the Cliff Bennett record you went around there in your bedroom slippers, you were that local that you just padded around there...

PM: Yes, that was the kind of thing I could do. The *Abbey Road* cover with my famous no shoes on: that was me padding around there in sandals. A nice summer's day, and I went around there with sandals and a suit. It looked fine to me, it seemed great. What the hell's wrong with a pair of sandals!

ML: You were originally going to call the album 'Everest' weren't you?

PM: Yeah, because of Geoff Emerick's cigarettes.

ML: And you were going to fly to the foothills of Everest and have a picture taken?

PM: I don't know. You see, when you're thinking of album titles a lot of loose talk goes around. It's what American film people or advertising people call "Off the top of my head". You have a lot of thoughts that are going to be rejected. We were stuck for an album title and the album didn't appear to have any obvious concept, except that it had been done in the studio and it had been done by us. And Geoff Emerick used to have these packets of Everest cigarettes always sitting by him, and we thought "That's good, it's big and it's expansive".

ML: It says quite a lot.

PM: Yes, it says quite a lot but we didn't really like it in the end. We said "Nah, come on! You can't name an album after a ciggie packet!" But during that time there could have easily been a bit of talk "We'll go to Mount Everest, we'll have that in the background and the picture of us in the foreground". It would have been quite nice, actually! But you'll find this with a lot of the Beatles myths. You know, wanting to put Gandhi on the cover of *Sgt Pepper* and them having

Paul McCartney interview

to tell us to take it off. More often than not these were just ideas that were just a bit left, or a bit right, of centre. We didn't want to do what everyone else wanted to do. Some of them were too expensive but others, like the 'Day In The Life' thing, made a great track. And that song will have earned a whole lot more than that session cost. I met one of the musicians recently, when I went back to Abbey Road — I go back there occasionally, it's a good place to record orchestras, particularly in number one studio — there was a guy who was off the original 'Day In The Life' session, and he said "Oh, I remember that. We came into the studio and down one end was a table with *every* conceivable drink on it." And I said "Oh yeah? I don't really remember that," because I was too involved in the music. I ended up conducting part of it. In fact I did a lot of work on the 'Day In The Life' crescendo because I was getting interested in *avant garde* things and I was generally the bachelor in London with the far-out interests. The others were a little bit more suburbanite, they lived out in Esher and Weybridge and they'd stay out there and not do an awful lot, watch movies or watch telly. And then John would come in and go "Wow! What've you been doing here, putting Beethoven to a home movie?" And I'd be playing him Stockhausen. I never got *known* for being that way because John later superseded me, "Oh, it must have been John who was the Stockhausen freak". In actual fact it wasn't, it was me and my London crowd — Robert Fraser, Miles of *IT* magazine, all those guys, John Dunbar, Peter Asher, the Indica crowd.

With 'A Day In The Life' I said "We'll take 24 bars, we'll count it, we'll just do our song, and we'll leave 24 bars. You could actually hear Mal counting it out, with more and more echo because we thought it was kinda freaky. Then I went around to all the trumpet players and said "Look, all you've got to do is start at the beginning of the 24 bars and go through all the notes on your instrument from the lowest to the highest and the highest has to happen on that 24th bar, that's all. So you can blow 'em all in that first thing and then rest, then play the top one there if you want, or you can steady them out." And it was interesting because I saw the orchestra's characters. The strings were like sheep — they all looked at each other: "Are you going up? I am!" and they'd all go up together, the leader would take them all up. The trumpeters were much wilder.

ML: The frustrated jazz bit coming out perhaps...

PM: The jazz guys, they liked the brief. The musicians with the more conventional instruments would behave more conventionally. But it made for a great noise which was all we wanted, a huge crescendo and we overdubbed it a few times. In studio one they had this facility called ambiophonics and you pick the sound up again. It appears to be a bigger room. As to why anyone would need a bigger room than that I can't imagine!

ML: Tell me about 'The Ballad Of John And Yoko'.

PM: John came to me and said "I've got this song about our wedding and it's called 'The Ballad Of John And Yoko, Christ They're Gonna Crucify Me'" and I said "Jesus Christ, you're kidding aren't you? Someone really is going to get upset about it." He said "Yeah but let's do it". I was a little worried for him because of the lyric but he was going through a lot of terrible things. He came around to my house, wanting to do it really quick, he said "Let's just you and me run over the studio". I said "Oh, all right, I'll play drums, I'll play bass" ... I'm not sure if I even played guitar...

ML: No, John played guitar.

PM: ... John played guitar. So we did it and stood back to see if the other guys would hate us for it. Which I'm not sure about. They probably never forgave us. John was on heat, so to speak. He needed to record it and so we just ran in and did it.

ML: What about the medley on *Abbey Road*?

PM: I wanted to do something bigger, a kind of operatic moment. There were a few people doing that. 'Teenage Opera' was one. We wanted to dabble and I had a bit of fun making some of the songs fit together, with the key changes. That was nice, it worked out well.

ML: John's 'Polythene Pam' and your 'Bathroom Window' were actually recorded as one, you put them together as one, didn't you?

PM: Yeah, we did that. The nice thing about the way we worked was there were never any rules. Any rules we found ourselves making we would generally try and break. It always seemed an unsafe idea to try and be safe, it never worked. So we did things every which way.

ML: What about Ringo's drum solo?

PM: Ringo would never ever do drum solos. He hated drummers who did lengthy drum solos. We all did. And when he joined the Beatles we said "Ah, what about drum solos then?", thinking he might say "Yeah, I'll have a five-hour one in the middle of your set" and he said "I hate 'em!". We said "Great! We love you!" And so he would never do them. But because of this medley I said "Well, *a token* solo?" and he really dug his heels in and didn't want to do it. But after a little bit of gentle persuasion I said "Yeah, go [taps out the medley drum solo], just do that, it wouldn't be Buddy Rich gone mad", because I think that's what he didn't want to do.

ML: That's the problem. When you do a solo you get compared with people.

PM: Exactly, he didn't like that idea. Anyway, we came to this compromise, it was a kind of a solo. I don't think he's done one since.

ML: Rather difficult to do a five-hour solo in a 30-minute live set, which is what you were doing by the mid-1960s!

PM: [Laughing] Yeah, but some people did those! It was only a 30-minute set but the drummer went on for ever, and lights flashed a lot. Everyone went off and had ciggies and got drunk. By the time the rest of the band came back they were paralytic!

ML: You brought in Glyn Johns for the *Get Back* sessions. What was your thinking behind that? Did you want him as producer?

PM: I don't know really. I just rang him and said "We're going to do some stuff, will you come down?" I think it was just as an engineer. I thought he was one of the best engineers and he was a mate, I knew him from around town. I find it difficult to remember. It might have been that we brought him in as producer, did a lot of work and then felt we ought to get George in. That's the only other thing I can think of, because I think George arrived a bit later.

ML: That period is very sketchy.

PM: To the best I can recall, George was actually the producer but he left us with Glyn to get it together: "All right, you get them all together and when you're ready to record them I'll come in and do it" but in actual fact we probably made a couple of tracks just waiting to record other tracks. It used to be a funny thing, actually, but if the producer went out of the room as, inevitably, they had to do to just take a phone call or something, it was always a very challenging moment. "Try and get it, before he gets back!" Even the engineer would work really fast to try and get the take so that we could say "Hey look, we got it. What took you so long?" when he got back.

ML: Like "Who needs you?"?

PM: It wasn't so much "Who needs you?" It was more like, "Come on, we showed yer!".

ML: Had the Beatles not split, do you think you would have stayed with George Martin or tried others, like Phil Spector? John certainly worked a lot with Spector afterwards, as did George.

PM: Well, I think the reason why we were moving away from George was 'familiarity breeding contempt'. It was just that. And then after that it would have been 'absence makes the heart grow fonder'. Every record we'd ever made had been with George. We'd had immense success, we'd had immense fun, it was great on every single level, but I think you go through ten years and then you stop and



Stockhausen!". There was only one, *Gesang der junglinge* – 'The Song Of The Young' – that was the only one I ever liked! I thought most of his other stuff was too fruity.

The way I see it, I lived a very urbane life in London. I eventually got my own house there. So I had the metropolis at my fingertips with all this incredible stuff going on, the '60s, and John used to come in from Weybridge in his coloured outfits and we'd meet up. And I'd tell him what I'd been doing: "Last night I saw a Bertolucci film and I went down the Open Space, they're doing a new play there", or "I had dinner with Jagger last night" and it was like "My God! I'm jealous, man." Because I was doing a lot of *avant garde* stuff – it turned out later to be *avant garde*, I thought it was just 'being different'. Making little home movies, showing them to people like Antonioni, it was very exciting, very creative. I do remember John coming in with his big chauffeur and Rolls-Royce, the big, lazy, almost decadent life out in Weybridge and saying "God man, I really envy you". He was starting to feel like he was getting middle-aged and that he was out of it.

ML: You were saying before that you heard 'Hello, Goodbye' on the radio. What do you hear when you hear that, or any Beatles song? Do you hear the recording session? Do you hear the writing of it? Do you hear your singing voice? Your bass guitar?

PM: I hear ... [thinks] ... all of it. All of those things. A little aspect of each one. The thing that lodges in my memory, in the writing aspect of 'Hello, Goodbye', was the "you say yes, I say no, you say hey, I say hello, you say black, I say white". It almost wrote itself because it was to be 'Hello, Goodbye'. I was thinking of that this morning. From the recording aspect I remember the end bit where there's the pause and it goes [sings] "heba, heba hello". We had those words and we had this whole thing recorded but it didn't sound quite right, and I remember asking Geoff Emerick if we could *really* whack up the echo on the tom-toms. And we put this echo full up on the tom-toms and it just came *alive*. We Phil Spector'd it. And I noticed that this morning and I said to Linda "Wait! Full echo on the toms, *here we go!* 'Heba, heba hello'" and they came in quite deep, like a precursor to Adam and the Ants.

ML: Do you remember doing the promo films too, at the Saville Theatre? Do you get the whole picture?

PM: Yes, because I directed them. I said "Look, can we get a theatre anywhere? How about Brian's? Is it ever empty for a minute or two? An afternoon? Sure, great." So we went down there, got some girls in Hawaiian skirts, got our *Sgt Pepper* outfits on, and I just ran out there "Get a shot of this! Do this for a bit now! Let's have a shot here! Get a close-up of him! Get the girls on their own! Go back there! Get a wide angle! We'll edit it, we'll make it work." It was very

thrown away. Nice to do stuff like that.

ML: Do you find it irksome that people still ask you Beatles, Beatles, Beatles? I'm here now asking you about B-sides and tracks which haven't even been released yet no one's asking you about 'Zoo Gang' or 'Check My Machine' or 'Lunch Box/Odd Sox'.

PM: That's all right! I don't mind this time!

ML: No, really. Do you not think, "I'm not ashamed of all that, in fact I love it, but, come on, let's live for the present!"?

PM: No no no, I really don't. What I'm finding about all that stuff, all my own contemporary B-sides and strange tracks, is that *it takes time*. People are only just discovering the B-sides of Beatles singles. They're only just discovering things like 'You Know My Name (Look Up The Number)' – probably my favourite Beatles track!

ML: Why on earth...?

PM: Just because it's so insane. All the memories ... I mean, what would you do if a guy like John Lennon turned up at the studio and said "I've got a new song". I said "What's the words?" and he replied "You know my name look up the number". I asked "What's the rest of it?" "No, no other words, those are the words. And I wanna do it like a mantra!" We did it over a period of maybe two or three years, we started off and we just did 20 minutes "You know my name (look up the number)", 'You know my name (look up the number)' and we tried it *again* and it didn't work. We tried it *again*, and we had these endless, crazy fun sessions. And eventually we pulled it all together and I sang [sings in jazzy style] "You know my name..." and we just did a skit, Mal and his gravel. I can still see Mal digging the gravel. And it was just so hilarious to put that record together. It's not a great melody or anything, it's just unique. Some people haven't even discovered that song yet so I figure that in time they'll get around to more recent stuff, 'Check My Machine', those funny little ones. My big favourite of all of my contemporary work is 'Daytime Nighttime Suffering'. I really think that's all right that one. It's very pro-woman.

ML: Yes, it should have been a double-A with 'Goodnight Tonight'. Before we leave 'You Know My Name', was that Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones or was it Brian Jones of the Undertakers playing sax? Because people have never been too sure.

PM: It was Brian Jones of the Stones. He turned up very, very nervous with a sax, and we said "Oh, we thought you'd bring a guitar!" and he'd brought a sax. I invited him to the session. Absolutely definitely Brian of the Stones. Unequivocally, as they say.

ML: Thank you.

re-assess. Times might have changed. "What am I really trying to do in life?" And John always had a hankering, as did a lot of us, to really produce the greatest, dirtiest rock and roll record ever, and maybe Phil, who'd done some of our favourite songs, the 'River Deep Mountain High' productions that we'd always loved, maybe he was the one. I think we probably wanted to make a 'River Deep Mountain High'. So we did move away occasionally, we often did little things without George. It hurt him when I did the Mike Leander thing on 'She's Leaving Home'. I was just impatient, it was like 'The Ballad Of John And Yoko' and 'Why Don't We Do It In The Road'. You get an idea and you get on fire. And you just think "I could put this fire out and wait but *what the hell! I can't. Come on man!*" Your drive is just too strong. Unfortunately it does steamroller some people's feelings and I always hate that aspect of it because I'm never really aware of it at the time, when you get on a streak and you're writing great. "I won't eat tonight, I just daren't!" If you stop and go back to it it's never quite the same.

ML: In very early 1967, when you were doing 'Penny Lane', you made a 14-minute, very bizarre recording of effects and noises for a 'Carnival of Light' at the Roundhouse. Like 'Revolution 9' but in 1966 rather than in 1968. You seemed to be the leader of that. Do you remember it?

PM: Yes, I was interested in that. I'm now becoming re-interested, in fact. There were millions of threads that we put down in the '60s that I never picked up again. There was a lot of experimental stuff that went on. George's Indian stuff and all of that. It was really just pushing frontiers, that's all we were doing. Everyone else was pushing frontiers too but perhaps we didn't necessarily like what, say, Berio was doing. There was only one Stockhausen song I liked actually! We used to get it in all interviews "Love