



ABBEEY ROAD

UK Release: 26 September 1969

US Release: 26 September 1969

Intl CD No: CDP 7 46446 2

Running Time: 46:54

SIDE ONE: Come Together; Something; Maxwell's Silver Hammer; Oh! Darling; Octopus's Garden; I Want You (She's So Heavy).

Apple PCS 7088

Apple SO 383

Producer: George Martin

SIDE TWO: Here Comes The Sun; Because; You Never Give Me Your Money; Sun King; Mean Mr Mustard; Polythene Pam; She Came In Through The Bathroom Window; Golden Slumbers; Carry That Weight; The End; Her Majesty.

The Beatles, now on the verge of splitting up after the bad feeling created during the ill-fated *Get Back* sessions (see *Let It Be*), briefly settled their personal and musical differences long enough to record *Abbey Road*, their last studio album. John suspended his Peace Campaign, Paul postponed a planned holiday, George broke off other recording sessions with Billy Preston and the Radha Krishna Temple and Ringo temporarily dropped his acting career.

The tension that had grown within The Beatles since the death of Brian Epstein had now reached the point where they could no longer agree on anything, particularly their music. John's concept of *Abbey Road* was for it to be a basic rock'n'roll album like *Get Back*. Paul, however, envisaged a pop opera of different songs edited together into one long medley. In the end both got their way.

Side One of the album fulfils John's concept of individual tracks that are basically rock'n'roll. He contributes 'Come Together' and 'I Want You (She's So Heavy)', Paul his gutsy 'Oh! Darling' and 'Maxwell's Silver Hammer', while George and Ringo contribute 'Something' and 'Octopus's Garden', respectively.

Side Two has Paul's now famous pop opera of ten different songs of which only eight are listed, edited together with George's 'Here Comes The Sun' and John's 'Because' to form the 16-minute medley.

The album contains some of The Beatles' most technically perfect recordings and features some of the most intricate harmony singing the group ever recorded. A number of tracks include the use of a synthesiser, an instrument suggested by George after he had recorded the album *Electronic Sounds*

using only a synthesiser. That album and his other solo venture *Wonderwall*, a soundtrack album consisting almost entirely of Indian music, showed that George's musical interests were no longer fitting into the framework of The Beatles. John, now discontented with being a Beatle, had also begun to pursue a solo career. With the help of Yoko Ono he had recorded *Two Virgins* and *Life With The Lions*, two albums consisting entirely of avant-garde sound. He had also issued a solo single, 'Give Peace A Chance', under the name of The Plastic Ono Band. He was to continue his solo career by issuing *The Wedding Album*, a third album of avant-garde sound; *Live Peace In Toronto*, a live recording of The Plastic Ono Band; and *Cold Turkey* all within weeks of the release of *Abbey Road*. Apparently John had wanted The Beatles to record 'Cold Turkey' as a new single, but neither Paul nor George were interested. John, along with Ringo, Eric Clapton and Klaus Voorman who were the first real line-up of the Plastic Ono Band, recorded 'Cold Turkey' and it was issued in direct competition with 'Something'/'Come Together' the first Beatles single to be issued in Britain from an album that had already been issued.

Abbey Road, named after the location of the recording studios where The Beatles made most of their recordings, including this one, was the first Beatles album to be issued solely in stereo. All previous Beatles albums up to and including *Yellow Submarine* had been issued in both mono and stereo. This decision was made because The Beatles felt that their music should be heard in stereo because the mono versus stereo argument of earlier years was over.

Photographed by Iain Macmillan on 8 August 1969, the sleeve of the album shows The Beatles walking across a zebra crossing in Abbey Road away from the recording studio. This, with the album's closing track 'The End', was regarded by many as being a cryptic message from The Beatles saying 'This is it, we've finished recording our final album, we're walking away and splitting up.' An announcement to that effect was to be made by Paul on 10 April 1970, almost six months after the release of this album.

SIDE ONE

Come Together (Lennon-McCartney) 4:16

Recorded: 21, 22, 23, 25, 29 and 30 July 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London

John Lennon: Rhythm Guitar, Lead Guitar, Tambourine and Lead Vocal

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar, Electric Piano and Harmony Vocal

George Harrison: Lead Guitar and Maracas

Ringo Starr: Drums

Written by John, this was originally intended to be a campaign song for Timothy Leary who at one time was proposing to run for the post of Governor of California. The idea was dropped after Leary decided not to run, and John changed the style of the song. It was eventually the subject of a law suit as Maurice Levy, owner of the American music publishers Big Seven Music, who hold the publishing rights to Chuck Berry's song 'You Can't Catch Me', claimed that John had used two of the song's lines in 'Come Together'. To save months of legal arguments John apparently agreed to record, and include, 'You Can't Catch Me' and 'Sweet Little Sixteen' also Berry's compositions and published by Maurice Levy's company, on his 1975 solo album *Rock And Roll*.

John also had another problem with the song; the BBC banned it because of a reference to Coca-Cola that they deemed to be advertising. The recording, completed in nine takes plus overdubs, features a lead vocal from John with harmonies in places from Paul. It also features two lead guitars, one played by John, the other by George.

Something (Harrison) 2:59

Recorded: 2 and 5 May, 11 and 16 July and 15 August 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London and Olympic Studios, Church Road, Barnes, London

John Lennon: Lead Guitar

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar and Backing Vocal

George Harrison: Lead Guitar and Lead Vocal

Ringo Starr: Drums

Billy Preston: Piano

Session Musicians: 21-piece Orchestra

Recorded in 36 takes plus overdubs, this dramatic George Harrison rendition of his own song that was inspired by his wife Patti, features a lead vocal from him with occasional backing vocals from Paul. Again, the recording makes use of the twin lead guitars of Lennon and Harrison and also features Billy Preston on piano. The song uses the title of James Taylor's 'Something In The Way She Moves' as its opening line and must surely rank alongside some of the best Lennon-McCartney compositions and is one of the finest songs The Beatles ever recorded.

Maxwell's Silver Hammer (Lennon-McCartney) 3:24

Recorded: 9, 10 and 11 July and 6 August 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London

John Lennon: Acoustic Guitar and Lead Guitar

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar, Piano, Synthesiser and Lead/Backing Vocal

George Harrison: Lead Guitar and Backing Vocal **Ringo Starr:** Drums, Anvil and Backing Vocal

George Martin: Hammond Organ

Paul's first song on the album features himself on lead vocal with harmonies in places from George; they also get together for the backing vocals. Recorded in 21 takes plus overdubs, the track includes Paul on piano, Ringo banging a hammer on an anvil and for the first time on the album the use of a synthesiser played by Paul. The song's final line, 'silver hammer man', features a three-part harmony from Paul, George and Ringo. The Beatles can be seen and heard rehearsing this song in the film *Let It Be*.

Oh! Darling (Lennon-McCartney) 3:28

Recorded: 20 and 26 April, 18, 22 and 23 July and 8 and 11 August 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London

John Lennon: Piano and Backing Vocal

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar, Lead Guitar, Piano, Tambourine and Lead/Backing Vocal

George Harrison: Lead Guitar and Backing Vocal **Ringo Starr:** Drums

Before recording the vocals for this dramatic track, Paul spent a week working at making his voice as harsh and gutsy as possible. Recorded in 26 takes with numerous overdubs, the track features John and Paul on two pianos and Paul and George overdubbed on lead guitars. The recording also features a wordless backing vocal harmony from John, Paul and George.

Octopus's Garden (Starkey) 2:49

Recorded: 26 and 29 April and 17 and 18 July 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London

John Lennon: Lead Guitar

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar, Piano, Sound Effects and Backing Vocal

George Harrison: Lead Guitar, Sound Effects and Backing Vocal

Ringo Starr: Drums, Percussion, Sound Effects and Lead Vocal

This is the second song written by Ringo to be included on a Beatles album. The first, 'Don't Pass Me By', was included 12 months earlier on the double album *The Beatles*. Although he found it difficult to

write songs, both are bouncy with infectious chorus lines. This song is reminiscent of *Yellow Submarine*, particularly as it uses the same sound effects of water swirling around and bubbles being blown into water. Another interesting sound effect is the gargling backing vocals from Paul and George. Ringo sings lead vocals with backing from Paul and George on this track that was recorded in 32 takes. As with other tracks on this album, two lead guitars are played by John and George, and Paul can be heard playing piano.

I Want You (She's So Heavy) (Lennon-McCartney) 7:49

Recorded: 22 February, 18 and 20 April and 8 and 11 August 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London and Trident Studios, Wardour Street, London

John Lennon: Multi-tracked Lead and Rhythm Guitars, Hammond Organ, Synthesiser, White Noise Generator and Lead/Harmony Vocal

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar and Harmony Vocal

George Harrison: Multi-tracked Lead and Rhythm Guitars, Conga Drums and Harmony Vocal

Ringo Starr: Drums

With the exception of 'Revolution 9' this is the longest recording issued by The Beatles. It is even 38 seconds longer than 'Hey Jude' that clocks in at 7:11. The track is really two separate songs, 'I Want You' and 'She's So Heavy' joined together but without a link. Each is sung in segments throughout the recording with 'I Want You' sung repeatedly, predominating, and 'She's So Heavy' inserted twice. Lead vocal and blues-style lead guitar are from John, with Paul and George harmonising here and there. The track, recorded in 35 takes with incalculable overdubs, features John and George both playing multi-tracked lead and rhythm guitars throughout. The ending features a persistent guitar riff being repeated maddeningly. John then adds a synthesiser, building up the sound seemingly forever until suddenly it stops.

SIDE TWO

Here Comes The Sun (Harrison) 3:40

Recorded: 7, 8 and 16 July and 6, 11, 15 and 19 August 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London

John Lennon: Not Present

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar, Handclapping and Backing Vocal

George Harrison: Acoustic Guitar, Lead Guitar, Harmonium, Synthesiser, Handclapping, Lead/Backing Vocal

Ringo Starr: Drums and Handclapping

Session Musicians: 17-Piece Orchestra

To escape the pressure of work, George took a day off from the recording session and sat in Eric Clapton's garden on one of the first days of spring and wrote this song. It's his second song on this album, on which he also sings lead vocal. Most of the instrumentation, with the obvious exception of the orchestral overdub, is also played by George, with only the bass guitar and drums being supplied by Paul and Ringo respectively. The harmonies and backing vocals also are sung by George with help from Paul. The song, recorded in 15 takes plus overdubs, starts on the left-hand channel with an acoustic guitar and synthesiser, then floats across the stereo sound stage to the right-hand channel as George begins to sing. This recording features the same instrumental break as 'Badge', a song co-written by George Harrison and Eric Clapton and recorded by Clapton's group Cream.

Because (Lennon-McCartney) 2:45

Recorded: 1, 4 and 5 August 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London

John Lennon: Lead Guitar and Lead/Harmony Vocal

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar and Lead/Harmony Vocal

George Harrison: Synthesiser and Lead/Harmony Vocal

Ringo Starr: Not Present

George Martin: Harpsichord

John got the idea for this song when he heard Yoko play Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata. John suggested that she play the chord sequence backwards, which she did. He then slightly restructured it and added lyrics. It features a close-harmony vocal from John, Paul and George with George Martin supplying the harpsichord and George adding a cleverly programmed synthesiser. Recorded in 23 takes, of which take 16 was selected as the master, the track also features John on lead guitar and Paul on bass.

You Never Give Me Your Money (Lennon-McCartney) 3:57

Recorded: 6 May and 1, 11, 15 and 31 July 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London and Olympic Studios, Church Road, Barnes, London

John Lennon: Distorted Lead Guitar and Backing Vocal

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar, Piano, Tambourine, Chimes and Lead/Backing Vocal

George Harrison: Lead Guitar and Backing Vocal **Ringo Starr:** Drums

This is a medley of four separate songs written by Paul. The first, 'You Never Give Me Your Money', features Paul singing solo and backing himself on piano. It was written about the boardroom squabbles at Apple and the arguments between The Beatles themselves. The second song, 'That Magic Feeling', features a honky-tonk style backing piano and Paul's vocals sound rougher, more like his Little Richard style. The third song, 'One Sweet Dream', is linked to 'That Magic Feeling' by a wordless chorus from John, Paul and George. This is another up-beat rock'n'roll song featuring Paul in fine voice. The fourth song comes in only as the track fades, John, Paul and George repeat 'One-two-three-four-five-six-seven, all good children go to heaven'. These four songs have been successfully welded together to form one. The track, recorded in 36 takes, of which take 30 was selected for use for later overdubbing, has a long fade-out overlapping the intro of the following track.

Sun King (Lennon-McCartney) 2:31

Recorded: 24, 25 and 29 July 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London

John Lennon: Rhythm Guitar, Organ and Lead/Harmony Vocal

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar, Piano and Harmony Vocal

George Harrison: Lead Guitar and Harmony Vocal **Ringo Starr:** Drums and Percussion

John claimed this song came to him in a dream. This might explain the lyrics that are a mixture of Spanish, Italian, French and nonsense. The sound of crickets chirping opens the track with a bluesy lead guitar played by George. John's vocals are multi-tracked for the lead and also for the backing harmonies on which he is joined by Paul and George. Recorded in 35 takes with later overdubs, this track features the same beautiful close-harmony vocals used earlier on 'Because'.

Mean Mr Mustard (Lennon-McCartney) 1:06

Recorded: 24, 25 and 29 July 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London

John Lennon: Rhythm Guitar, Organ and Lead/Harmony Vocal

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar, Piano and Harmony Vocal

George Harrison: Electric Guitar and Harmony Vocal

Ringo Starr: Drums and Percussion

This is The Beatles getting back to the three guitars and drums of earlier years and it's rather a pity the song didn't last a bit longer. Recorded in 35 takes together with 'Sun King', the previous song, the track also includes an organ and piano played by John and Paul respectively. Written by John while he was meditating in India, the song features a strong lead vocal from John in his best Liverpool accent with harmonies in places from Paul and George.

Polythene Pam (Lennon-McCartney) 1:13

Recorded: 25, 28 and 30 July 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London

John Lennon: 12-string Acoustic Guitar, Electric Piano, Lead Vocal

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar, Piano and Backing Vocal

George Harrison: Lead Guitar, Acoustic Guitar and Backing Vocal

Ringo Starr: Drums and Percussion

Again written by John while in India and again sung with a strong Liverpool accent, the song, recorded in 40 takes, is about a mythical Liverpool prostitute. The backing is based around a persistent 12-string guitar riff played by John with wordless backing vocals supplied by Paul and George.

She Came In Through The Bathroom Window (Lennon-McCartney) 1:58

Recorded: 25, 28 and 30 July 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London

John Lennon: 12-string Acoustic Guitar, Electric Piano and Backing Vocal

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar, Piano and Lead/Backing Vocal

George Harrison: Lead Guitar, Acoustic Guitar and Backing Vocal

Ringo Starr: Drums and Percussion

This song harks back to the days of The Beatles' early 60s American tours, when fans would almost do anything to see their idols. One in particular, undaunted by the fact that The Beatles were staying on the upper floors of a hotel, scaled a drainpipe and broke into Paul's suite through the bathroom window. Recorded, together with the previous song, in 40 takes, the track features a lead vocal from Paul who joins John and George for the wordless backing vocal.

Golden Slumbers (Lennon-McCartney) 1:31

Recorded: 2, 3, 4, 30 and 31 July and 15 August 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London

John Lennon: Not Present

Paul McCartney: Rhythm Guitar, Piano and Solo Vocal

George Harrison: Bass Guitar and Lead Guitar

Ringo Starr: Drums

Session Musicians: 30-piece Orchestra

During a stay at his father's home in Heswall, not far from Liverpool, Paul wrote this lilting melody with dramatic overtones. He took the lyrics originally from a 400-year-old poem written by Thomas Dekker from his step-sister's music book. He couldn't read the music to accompany himself on the piano so he improvised his own version. The track, recorded in 17 takes with various overdubs, features a solo vocal from Paul who accompanies himself on piano backed by George, Ringo and a 30-piece orchestra.

Carry That Weight (Lennon-McCartney) 1:37

Recorded: 2, 3, 4, 30 and 31 July and 15 August 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London

John Lennon: Not Present

Paul McCartney: Rhythm Guitar, Piano and Lead Vocal

George Harrison: Bass Guitar, Lead Guitar and Lead Vocal

Ringo Starr: Drums, Timpani and Lead Vocal

Session Musicians: 30-piece Orchestra

Paul McCartney reputedly wrote this song about the responsibility of keeping The Beatles together after Brian Epstein's death in 1967. The song was recorded together with 'Golden Slumbers' in 17 takes plus overdubs and is divided into three sections. It features a reprise of the second verse of 'You Never Give Me Your Money' that appears earlier on the album. The first section has a three-part harmony from Paul, George and Ringo. As mentioned, the second section is a reprise of 'You Never Give Me Your Money', and features a solo vocal from Paul. The track then returns to the original melody of 'Carry That Weight', with Paul, George and Ringo on vocals.

The End (Lennon-McCartney) 2:04

Recorded: 23 July and 5, 7, 8, 15 and 18 August 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London

John Lennon: Lead Guitar and Harmony Vocal

Paul McCartney: Bass Guitar, Lead Guitar, Piano and Lead Vocal

George Harrison: Lead Guitar and Harmony Vocal **Ringo Starr:** Drums

Session Musicians: 30-piece Orchestra

Recorded in seven takes with numerous overdubs. Starting with a one-verse solo vocal from Paul, this track features the first and only drum solo by Ringo on a Beatles record. The 16-second solo is followed by guitar solos from John, Paul and George in that order, who also sing a monotonous 'love you' 24 times. As this section stops after just under a minute, a piano begins and Paul, with harmonies in places from John, sings the final verse. There is 20 seconds' silence before the last short track.

Her Majesty (Lennon-McCartney) 0:23

Recorded: 2 July 1969, EMI Studios, Abbey Road, London

John Lennon: Not Present

Paul McCartney: Acoustic Guitar and Solo Vocal **George Harrison:** Not Present

Ringo Starr: Not Present

With a certain tongue-in-cheek irony, this three-take recording could be regarded as a re-written version of the British National Anthem with Paul on solo vocal and acoustic guitar. It is the last track on the last Beatles album.