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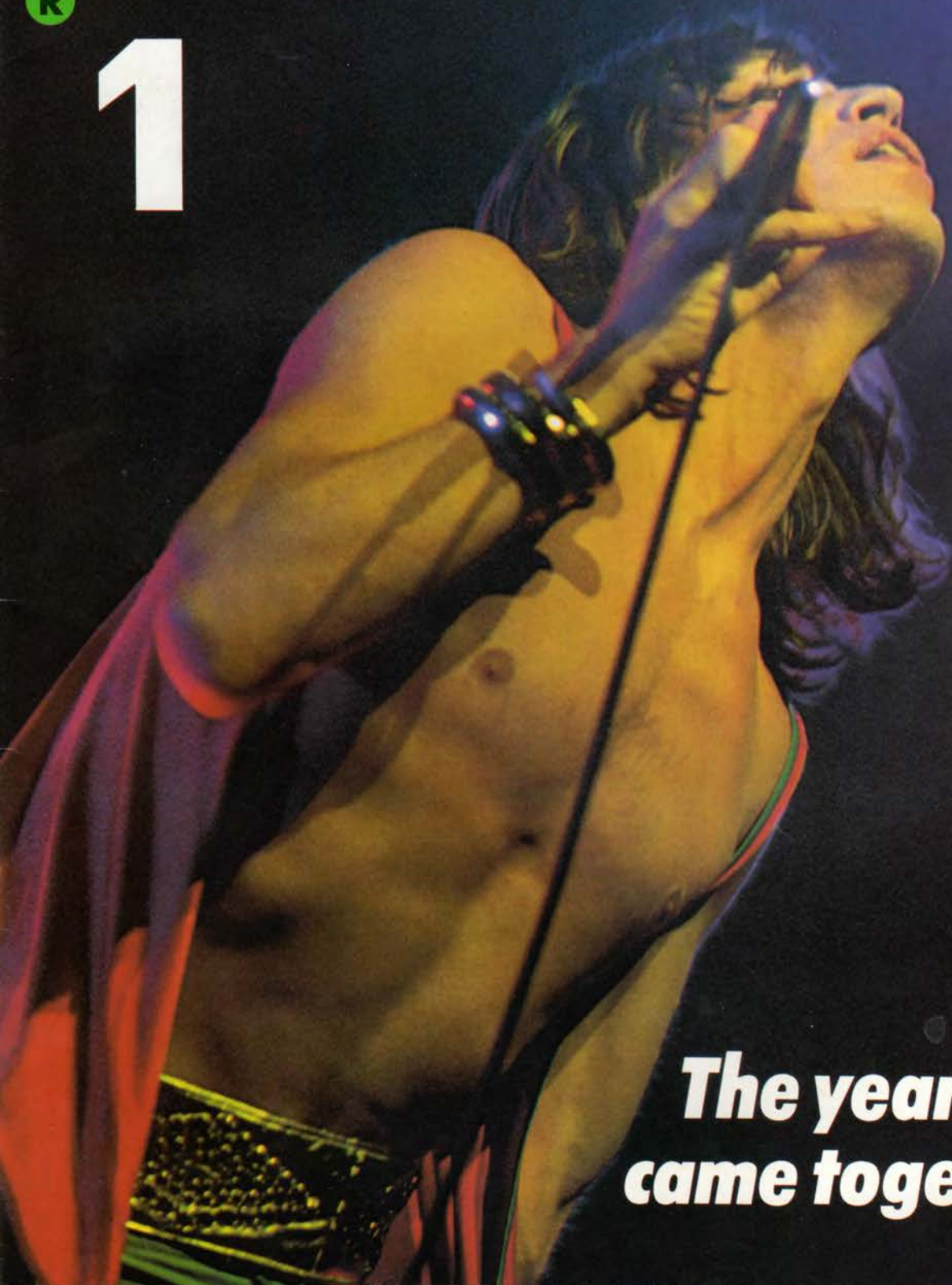
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THE HISTORY OF

# Rock

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***The year it all  
came together***



# THE HISTORY OF Rock

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# THE HISTORY OF **Rock**



Rock is Jimi Hendrix's guitar introduction to 'Hey Joe'; it is Mick Jagger strutting on stage; it is Bob Dylan singing 'John Wesley Harding'; it is the harmonies of the Beach Boys – and the menace of the Clash. It can express individual dreams and collective solidarity; political idealism and personal despair; fear, joy and love. When we asked Simon Frith to choose just one year to represent the excitement, the sense of creation, the emotional range and the possibilities of rock, there was no doubt about his answer: 1967. For 1967 was a year of wonders; those heady days saw established groups from the Fifties and Sixties break new ground as they suddenly began to feel themselves artists as well as entertainers. 1967 saw the successful emergence of new groups and solo performers whose careers were to stretch forward into the Seventies and Eighties; and it inspired the first fumbling attempts of hosts of performers destined to become famous worldwide. This was the year rock came of age: the last constraints of the old men of Tin Pan Alley were flung aside and for the first time musicians felt themselves in charge of their own destiny. What came before, and what was to follow, is the story of Rock.



### The mood of '67

In 1967 all the elements of rock that had been gathering momentum for over a decade were transformed by the atmosphere of a single extraordinary year, and gave birth to the music we know today. The 'atmosphere' of one year is elusive – impossible to recreate. Perhaps that of 1967 is best summed up in the word optimism. People – young people especially – felt that things could (and would) get better. Youth thought it could take over the world; and music was the mood of the moment.

By 1967, rock was a music with a distinct history. What musicians did in that year was often more ambitious or better-played than what had gone before; but it was part of a tradition that still continues. The power of Janis Joplin on stage was preceded by the charisma of the early Elvis Presley – and was to be followed by the stage pyrotechnics of Bruce Springsteen. The singing style of Smokey Robinson and the Miracles was in the line of Clyde McPhatter and the Drifters; the Beatles could hold audiences spellbound playing Little Richard tunes of 1956. Pete Townshend represented his generation just as Gene Vincent had 10 years before and as Johnny Rotten was to 10 years later. In 1967, rock musicians were more aware of their history than ever before and partly *because* they knew where the music came from there was an unprecedented interaction that led to new forms, new possibilities and new attitudes, and that determined the music to be heard in the Seventies and Eighties. The terms of the mid-Sixties – 'beat', 'surf', 'mod', 'soul', all under the heading 'pop' – were becoming outmoded: a new age was beginning. In 1967, 'rock' was defining itself.

The new excitement and widening relationships spread outside the music. Rock even evolved its own distinct visual sense; not just in the clothes and hairstyles of the performers, but in art. When the Beatles opened their Apple boutique in late 1967 it was covered with a huge mural in the psychedelic style. Clothes, record sleeves, posters, even cars, all bore the characteristic swirling motifs.

By 1967 folk-rock, the most striking combination of different traditions, had already become an accomplished fact. But 1967 saw combination and fusion accelerating, and working at all levels. The blues tradition and the expanded consciousness (and self-consciousness) of psychedelia came together in Cream and the Jimi Hendrix Experience that gave birth to the heavy metal sounds that dominated the early Seventies; the Seventies punk revolution was prefigured in the work of the Velvet Underground, whose emergence was a result of the interaction between the New York rock scene and Andy Warhol's organisation. Jazz-rock, too, was beginning as Miles Davis experimented with electric keyboards.

### Rock is . . .

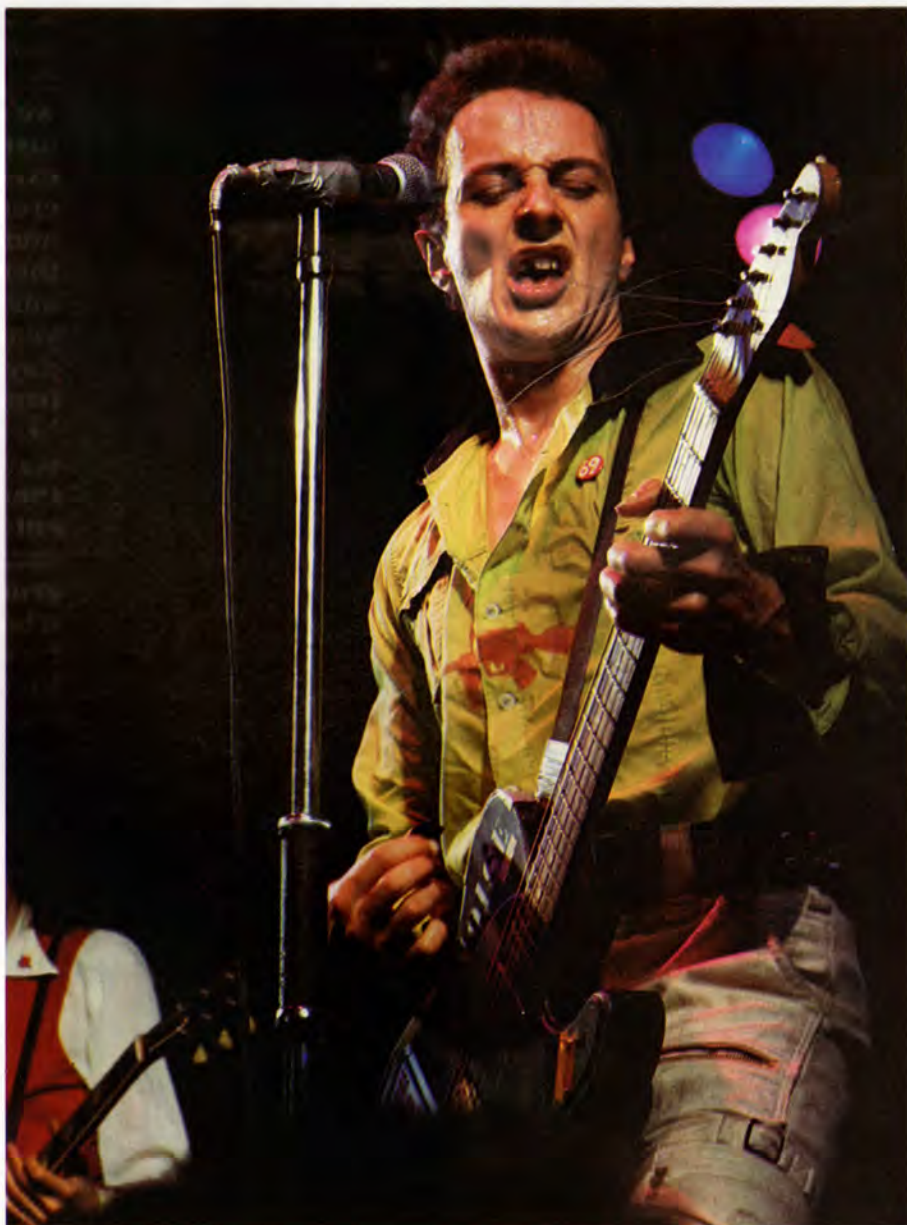
It is one thing to identify the various strands present at the beginning of 1967; but quite another to show how and why they were changed. Rock as a music can be defined academically in terms of dynamic repetitive rhythms and certain melodic and harmonic

structures, but ultimately it refuses to be pinned down, dissected and analysed. It has to be seen and heard, to be experienced. From 1956 to the present day, the same elements show through – Chuck Berry's guitar on 'Johnny B. Goode', and the sound of Jimmy Page on 'Whole Lotta Love'; the stage performances of Jerry Lee Lewis and David Bowie; Fats Domino's solitary piano and Rick Wakeman's battery of keyboards. They all, in their different ways, make rock music.

Rock is the result of contradictory forces – personal expression versus financial necessity; social comment versus commercial greed; the meticulous standards of the recording studio versus the wild anarchy of stage performance. But it acts as an acute and often liberating expression of generation-wide feelings and emotions. For above all, rock reflects its audience. The musicians are not isolated artists, working alone on something that is uniquely theirs, but neither can they be mere skilled manipulators, working on the orders of a record company. What happened in 1967 was that the audience was changing, at the same time as the musicians themselves were searching

*Previous page: Jimi Hendrix on stage. 1967 was the year that Hendrix exploded on the musical scene; his performance at Monterey showed the world his mastery both of the guitar and the music.*

*Below: Joe Strummer of the Clash: once the embodiment of punk he became the darling of music's radical chic.*







Above: Mick Jagger, still going strong after all those years. While most of the big groups of the Sixties fell by the wayside, the Rolling Stones carried on, a tribute to Jagger and Keith Richards' continuing inventiveness. Right: Jimmy Page, guitar hero of Led Zeppelin, heavy-metal axeman extraordinary.

for new levels of expression. Neither 'caused' the other – but they coincided and were inextricably linked.

#### A new audience

In 1967 young people were taking themselves more seriously than ever before. Various factors were at work: the Vietnam War and the growth of political consciousness; riots in the black ghettos and the civil rights movement in the USA; the extension of university education; growth in teenage purchasing power; and the general dissatisfaction with traditional institutions that was to erupt in Europe, especially in Paris, during the following year.

The centres of a new youth culture were 'swinging London' and California – Carnaby Street and Haight Ashbury. And in both, music – rock music – was all important.

The audience who had welcomed the Beatles three years before had not grown away from the music; but now they expected it to reflect different concerns. No longer was music merely an escape for a frustrated generation; it was becoming the symbol of a generation which felt that it might embody real change – either social, political or personal. Music had to become more expressive to reflect this.

If the audience was changing, so too were the musicians. Many of them wanted to do more than had previously been attempted in popular music, and now they had a golden opportunity to do so. This was not merely in

the application of the driving rhythms of rock to the more demanding or 'committed' lyrics of the folk tradition, but also in the development of more expressive instrumental techniques, and the attempt to articulate more complex emotional states in the sound of the music itself.

#### The Beatles

In 1967, then, people were expecting more, and they were being given more from the music. And in this process, the Beatles held a unique place. They were the undisputed kings of 'pop' music, and their influence on the development of new attitudes was immense – not perhaps so much in what they actually achieved, but because their innovations legitimised the process of reaching out for something new. Unlike Elvis Presley or any of the previous great names, they had not been content to follow a conventionally safe commercial path after their first wave of international success. Their LPs showed a distinct musical progression, cannibalising old styles and evolving new ones: their last LP of 1966, *Revolver*, for example, had a far harder edge than its predecessor, *Rubber Soul*. Their album covers had been influential in changing styles of presentation; even their films were a departure from the norms of previous 'pop' cinema. The Beatles were a catalyst of crucial importance in creating new expectations both in the audience and in other musicians.

In 1967, it seemed the whole world was waiting for something new, and the power of music was beyond doubt. Against this background, the most eagerly-awaited event of the year was the release in the summer of *Sgt Pepper*, the Beatles' new LP.







## 1967 The year it all came together

ALL WE'VE GOT NOW is a collection of well-mannered pop songs in a fading Pop Art sleeve, but at the time *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was an event, the greatest event, indeed, that pop had ever known.

The LP was released on 1 June, but had been news for months before. 'Strawberry Fields Forever'/'Penny Lane' was the taster, and we all knew – because the noise was leaking out of the studio, into the press – that the Beatles were making a masterpiece. *Sgt Pepper* was the sign of the summer of love before we'd even heard a note, and it headed the album charts for the rest of the year. Everyone, everywhere, listened to it. *Sgt Pepper* crossed class, age and cultural lines, and the Beatles' evangelical role was fixed finally by television, in the live transmission round the world of 'All You Need Is Love'; the power of the Beatles' music to create community was expressed by a jumble of stoned Beatles' friends chanting their all-embracing love in an eternal fade.

The Beatles' genius was to make music out of such conceits – 'All You Need Is Love' was a genuinely moving song, and *Sgt Pepper* was, at the least, a striking restatement of the Beatles' ability to throw sounds and ideas into a pop swirl and always emerge with instantly accessible, immediately pleasurable songs. John

Lennon and Paul McCartney's melodic ease and lyrical wit sparkled through the new effects – the sitars and farmyard noises, the electronic devices, the backwards-running tapes, the trumpets and strings. The Beatles' music was, as ever, appealing because of its very cleverness, as, for example, when Lennon turned a found poem, 'For The Benefit Of Mr Kite' into the musical equivalent of the reproduction Edwardian posters that were, by now, lining the King's Road. But *Sgt Pepper* was more than just another good pop LP. In making their own style out of the sounds of 1967 streets, the Beatles gave these sounds a shape, a form. *Sgt Pepper* made 1967 optimism concrete; it defined the year.

### The watershed

*Sgt Pepper* was, according to its producer, George Martin, 'the watershed which changed the recording art from something that merely made amusing sounds into something which will stand the test of time as a valid art form: sculpture in music, if you like.' In fact, *Sgt Pepper* can be seen as the last great pop album, the last LP ambitious to amuse everyone. And what made the record so successful an event was, precisely, its ambition. *Sgt Pepper* took 700 hours to record (remarkably, George Martin was still using only a

*The Beatles in 1967; all you need is love. They invited their friends along to share in the love, peace and flower-power of the happening. The world looked in.*

four-track machine) and cost £25,000 to produce; the Beatles' first LP had cost £1,250. Pop artists Peter Blake and Jan Haworth were commissioned to design the sleeve and it cost almost as much – EMI agreed the cover montage of 62 celebrities only when the Beatles guaranteed to cover the possible costs of up to £2 million should any of these famous faces sue. These facts and figures were part of the package – *Sgt Pepper* appealed because it was such an expensive, such an elaborate playful product.

Recognise the faces on the sleeve, read through the lyrics and spot the marijuana plants, unpick the acid language ('Lucy In The Sky With Diamonds'), laugh as the BBC banned 'Day In The Life' ('I'd love to turn you on . . .') – *Sgt Pepper* turned pop fans into cultists and, for a moment, changed people's sense of what pop meant. This was, gushed drama critic Kenneth Tynan, 'a decisive moment in the history of Western Civilisation'. *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was a new community of the young – classless and ageless too. This was pop's new purpose: to make out of pleasure a cultural, political optimism. Such ambition derived from the Beatles' authority – not just as skilled rock musicians, but skilled pop artists,



self-conscious, calculating their entertaining effects. But it derived too from their wonderful responsiveness to the audience itself. The Beatles were not the leaders of 1967 pop but its symbols. They were as fascinated as everyone else by what was happening on the streets; they were as keen as everyone else to be followers of fashion. Their importance in 1967 was to use their position as superstars to express a generation's new concerns. The Beatles had been scruffy teenage rock'n'roll fans in the Fifties. By 1967 they were reworking their adolescence; this time they had money to spend. They were in charge now – ordering up weird sounds, dressing the hired symphony musicians in evening suits and red noses, telling EMI what to do. The company's only contribution to *Sgt Pepper* was to have Gandhi taken out of the cover picture; the company couldn't risk the Asian market.

*Sgt Pepper* celebrated the Beatles' own success, which they were only now beginning to understand. They had begun, like hundreds of other British musicians in the late Fifties (from Cliff Richard and Tommy Steele to the Animals and the Rolling Stones), by imitating the American sounds of rock'n'roll, rockabilly, skiffle, rhythm and blues, soul music, each dreaming of being the British Elvis Presley. They were the children of rock's first great age. But by 1967 the Beatles had changed what it meant to be a pop star.

John Lennon and Paul McCartney could take their market for granted; they were turning consumption into a culture. This music did indeed articulate most strikingly, most stirringly, the mood of 1967. *Sgt Pepper* marked the triumph of mod, the British way of being young. Rock'n'roll had always been about the teenage experience (just think of the songs of Buddy Holly or Eddie Cochran); mod music was about being young and British.

### Swinging London

The Beatles no longer made a Liverpool sound. They had started as just another locally-supported provincial beat group, one among many (the Swinging Blue Jeans, the Hollies, the Fourmost, etc, etc) but they were now the centre of British pop. *Sgt Pepper* was London music, a shopping style: male boutiques (the Beatles' hand-made bandsmen's suits), sitar echoes and the smell of incense amongst the traffic noises of Carnaby Street and the King's Road, advertisements for swinging London, posing for provincial tourists, loitering on the pavements with the consumer élite.

1967's best pop songs were about London life and leisure – Jeff Beck's 'Hi Ho Silver Lining', the Small Faces' 'Here Come The Nice' and 'Itchycoo Park', Keith West's 'Excerpt From A Teenage Opera', Cat Stevens' 'Matthew And Son', the Zombies' 'Care Of Cell 44', David McWilliams' 'Days Of Pearly Spencer'. Mod songs in which play is hard work and work is just a

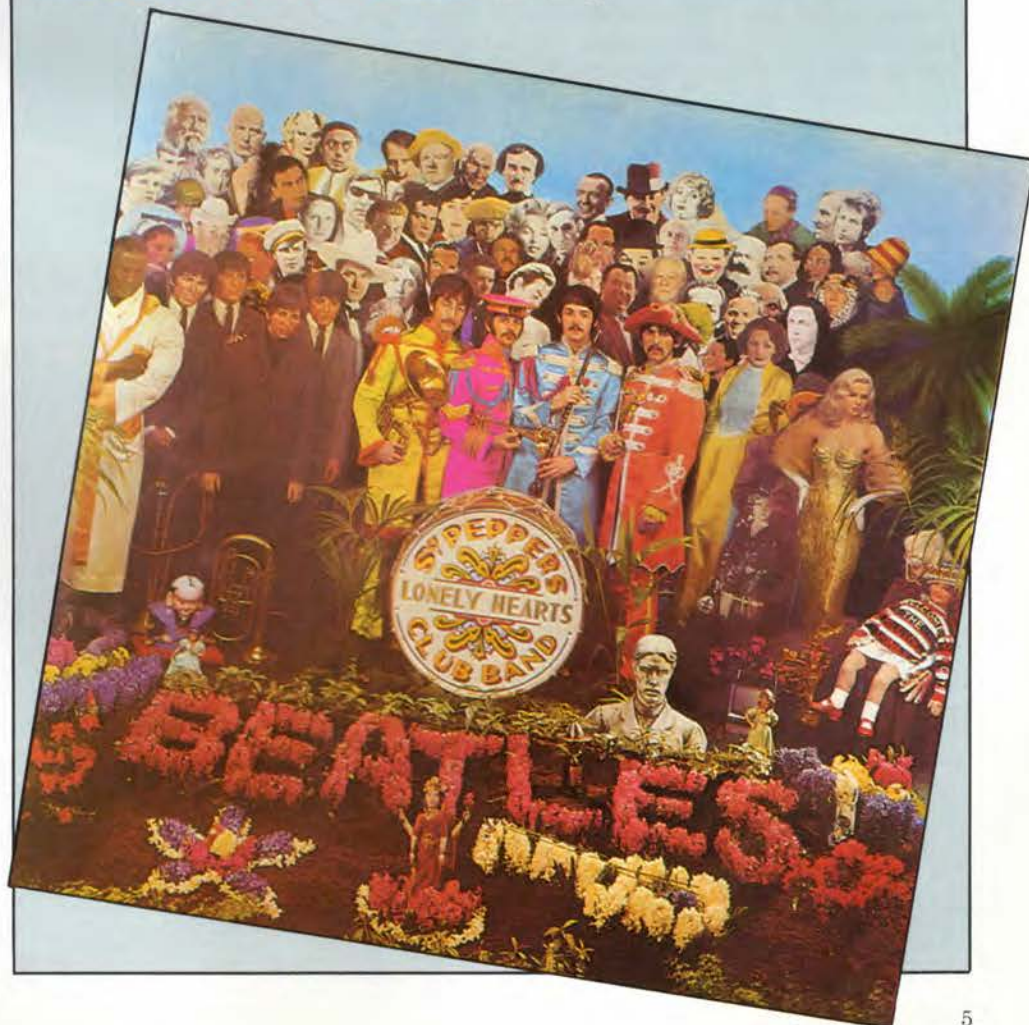


'When it came to putting the record out, the boys were convinced, rightly, that they had done something really worthwhile, which no one else had ever tried. They were determined that the cover should be equally original. So they got a man called Peter Blake to stage it for them. It cost a great deal. They wanted the faces of all the people they had ever admired to be in the photograph with them, together, just for the heck of it, with a lot of people they didn't admire at all. They borrowed wax models of themselves from Madame Tussaud's, together with the effigies of Diana Dors and Sonny Liston. Well, why not? Marlene Dietrich was there as a cardboard cut-out, along with D.H. Lawrence. Then they added all the things that they felt were indicative of their times: musical instruments, a hookah, a television set ... and marijuana plants. There was a row about that, naturally.'

**George Martin**



*Top: George Martin, production genius behind the Beatles. They dressed up as theatrical soldiers for Sgt Pepper (left), the cover of which featured their gallery of personalities. The presentation was jokey: a cut-out moustache and medal were given away with the LP. All in all, Sgt Pepper summed up the Beatles' position as the kings of pop who could do no wrong.*





chore; restless, knowing songs. The Kinks' 'Waterloo Sunset' held London in the going-home twilight: what if no-one asked you out to play?

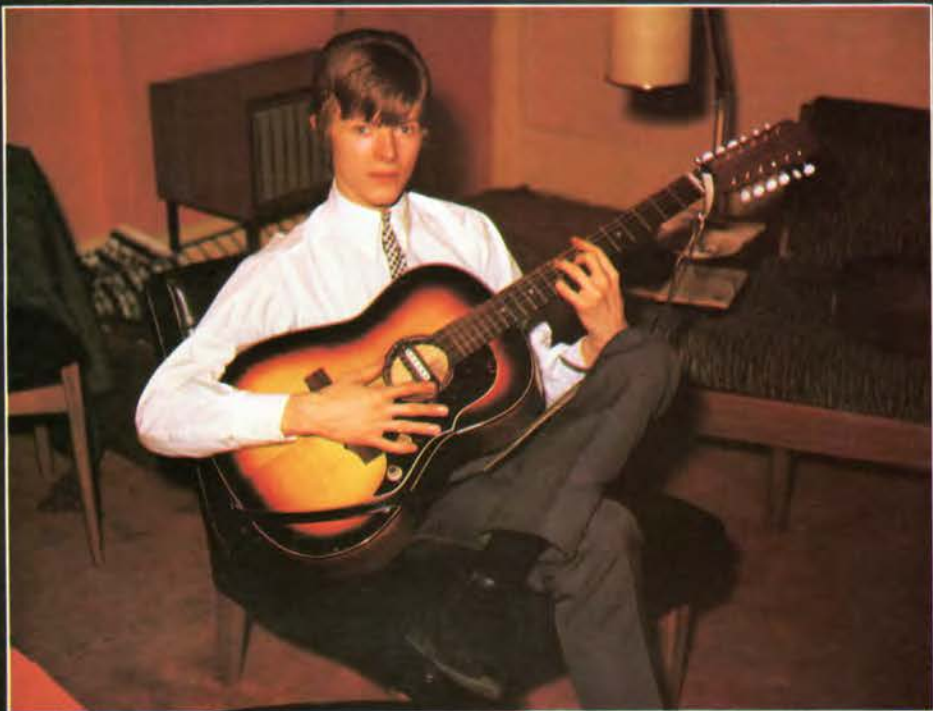
These records marked the turning point of British beat; the music was no longer crude or raucous, but smart in all senses of the word. The established groups – Herman's Hermits, the Hollies, Manfred Mann, the Tremeloes, Dave Dee, Dozy, Beaky, Mick and Titch – grinned, wore bright clothes and sang high, soft harmonies. Even the Troggs, previously known for their uncouth image, chimed in that 'Love Is All Around'.

British beat had become a popular form to be made, artificially, in the studio; it was no longer necessarily bounced off sweaty dance floors or jumping teenage crowds. The roots of Seventies glam and glitter rock lay in 1967's increasingly ironic, distanced approach to record making, to the use of form as content.

These new pop writers weren't just cleverer than the Denmark Street studio pros who'd been turning out teenage hits for years; they showed off their cleverness and weren't concerned to fake angst or intimacy. The game was to apply the form to any content – mining disasters as well as love disorders. The self-conscious performers who were to dominate British pop in the Seventies had arrived.

David Bowie was still singing his London songs in an acoustic, Anthony Newley style, while Marc Bolan was forming Tyrannosaurus Rex. Bryan Ferry had completed his Pop Art studies with Richard Hamilton (who was to design the next Beatles sleeve, the White LP), while Jeff Lynne had already formed Idle Race and Roy Wood was taking the Move into the charts with 'Night Of Fear', 'I Can Hear The Grass Grow' and 'Flowers In The Rain'. As Graham Gouldman left Britain to try his hand at American bubblegum, the Bee Gees arrived back to make their first LP. Elton John and Rod Stewart were singing back-up vocals in blues bands.

The finest of the London bands was the Who, the smartest of the 1967 theorists was Pete Townshend. *The Who Sell Out* was a buoyant, funny record with a sharper concept than Sgt Pepper's sentimental lonely hearts club band. The Who had always been self-conscious about their music, explicit about their role as the spokesmen of 'My Generation'. They had always credited the inspiration of previous teenage pop spokesmen like Eddie Cochran and the Beach Boys; now Townshend's and John Entwistle's songs were about music as commodity. The group took their links and jingles from a real station, Radio London, but they wrote their own ads, and their songs could just as well have been adverts. *The Who Sell Out*, featuring falsetto harmony and jangling guitar, was the Who's long-promised Pop Art LP, a mocking presentation of the group as product. It was, like *Sgt Pepper*, a supremely confident record: the group pro-



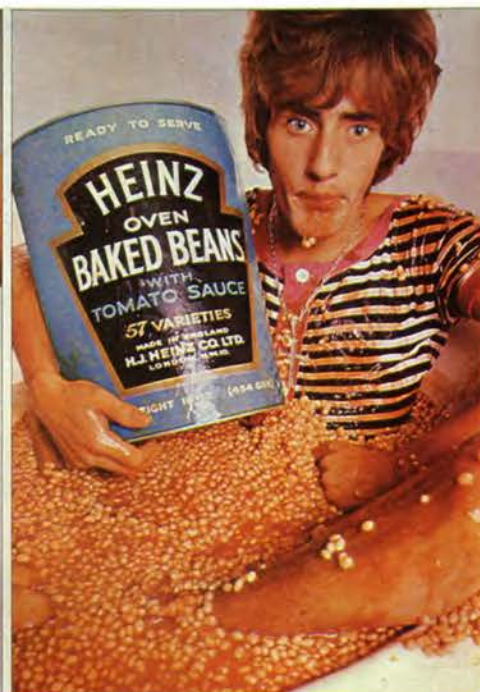


Mod London in 1967. A Pre-Space Oddity David Bowie strums acoustic guitar (inset left); Dave Dee, wearing yellow jacket, poses with his group and female fan (below); while the Herd mime to their single, 'From The Underworld' on 'Top of the Pops', the television show. Right: The cover of *The Who Sell Out* – mainstream mod meets Pop Art.



## THE WHO SELL OUT

Replacing the stale smell of excess with the sweet smell of success, Peter Townshend, who, like nine out of ten stars, needs it. Face the music with Odorono, the all-day deodorant that turns perspiration into inspiration.



## THE WHO SELL OUT

This way to a cowboy's breakfast. Daltry rides again. Thinks: "Thanks to Heinz Baked Beans everyday is a super day". Those who know how many beans make five get Heinz beans inside and outside at every opportunity. Get saucy.



vided their own commercial setting and so distanced themselves from it. Pete Townshend proclaimed his mastery of pop context as well as pop form – *The Who Sell Out*, like all his best work, was an account of a rock'n'roll fan, and looked forward to *Tommy*, the Who's triumphant statement of the power of rock music. Even in 1967, hippy days, Townshend was not anti-commercial. He argued that it was from commercial music that teenage solidarity and excitement derived.

The problem for mod music in 1967 was that it was finally tipping over and losing its balance – becoming just too commercial to embody teenage solidarity. Rock has always had a complex relationship with the established music industry. In 1956, the major record companies only reluctantly recognised rock'n'roll, and did their best to clean up the music; in 1976 they were unwilling to accept punk until forced to. In 1967, the establishment was enthusiastically embracing 'pop' and 'mod' music, which proved unable to resist the seductive lure of a comfortable future. This absorption by the establishment was symbolised by the creation of Radio 1 in the autumn. The BBC now undertook to fuel the youth market – and independent stations were squashed.

Radio in the USA had been essential to the emergence and spread of rock'n'roll (it was a radio DJ, Alan Freed, who popularised the term) and British pop music had

suffered from the BBC's neglect – teenage fans were dependent on the erratic reception of Radio Luxembourg or patronising 'youth' programmes like 'Saturday Club'. It had taken pirate radio stations, broadcasting British beat, to challenge the BBC's elderly approach, and by 1967 the pirates, always aimed at youthful consumers, had made their point; their DJs, from Tony Blackburn to John Peel, were now BBC staff.

The success of the establishment in taming large segments of pop music led – inevitably – to reaction. The BBC, for example, had to censor its new DJs, especially where song lyrics concerned drugs. Even the Beatles' tune 'A Day In The Life' could not be played. Drug-culture psychedelia and progressive rock were clearly now the essence of rock as revolt – the sharp edge of the music.

The most distinctive single of 1967 was Procol Harum's 'Whiter Shade Of Pale', which married a white soul vocal and a Bach organ exercise to a flatly obscure lyric. 'Whiter Shade Of Pale' hinted at a vital secret open only to people in the right, drug-determined, state of mind. But the most symptomatic single of the year was the Herd's 'From The Underworld', which took the same beat sound, added a touch of Townshend guitar and Beatle trumpet, and accurately captured the feel of mod going psychedelic. This state of mind could be bought over the counter.



## Psychedelia

Psychedelic rock had the mod concern for looking smart, but the shift of drugs, from pills to pot, was paralleled by a shift of aesthetic; there were new means of musical consumption – park concerts, multimedia happenings. Dancing became less important than listening and psychedelia developed its own clubs (UFO, Middle Earth), events (the 24 Hour Technicolour Dream) and radio shows (John Peel's 'Perfumed Garden'). The most obvious signs of psychedelia were not sounds but pictures, posters, sleeve designs. Primary, flowing colours, Asian motifs and fairy-story lines, elaborate symmetries and sci-fi bubbles turned up on the Rolling Stones' *Their Satanic Majesties Request* as well as on Donovan's *Gift From A Flower To A Garden*, on the Bee Gees' first LP as well as on the Incredible String Band's *5000 Spirits Or The Layers Of The Onion*, on Cream's *Disraeli Gears* and *Wheels Of Fire* as well as on Jimi Hendrix's *Axis: Bold As Love*.

Psychedelia was essentially élitist but



the joy of psychedelic pop was that it made everyone part of the élite. The musical implication was that only some people knew the truth of this art, but the social implication was that everyone had access to these musical mysteries. Hippy enlightenment was a state of mind that could be reached by all – through drugs, communes, meditation – and the British hippy cult soon had its own language, its own coded sets of references and attitudes, its own journals, *Oz* and *IT*. Partly because of this articulacy, the sheer weight of hippy words, psychedelia translated generational restlessness into an explicit counter-culture. And counter-culture meant artistic self-consciousness. Hippy musicians laid claim to superior knowledge as well as to superior musical skills, and musicians like Jimi Hendrix and Cream suggested possibilities of musical and artistic expression – though lengthy improvisation, more open harmonies, freer rhythms – that had never been dreamt of in three-minute pop songs. Musicians began to identify themselves with romantic artists generally – writers, painters, poets; they began to assume a culturally well-educated audience. Musicians moved from

show biz to bohemia; bohemians seized on music as one more means of self-expression. John Lennon and Mick Jagger showed up in art galleries and books of poetry came out in psychedelic covers.

The self-definition of musicians as artists marked the move from the 'pop' of the mid-Sixties to what we now call 'rock'. At issue was the purpose of music-making – to please and put together a mass audience or to please and put together oneself. In 1967 the Beatles showed most clearly what the move from pop to rock meant. Their year began with 'Strawberry Fields Forever', psychedelic pop. It ended (after the death of Brian Epstein and the Maharishi moment) with the 'Magical Mystery Tour', a wilfully inexplicable TV special which put most of the audience to sleep. The Beatles were no longer in control of their time. Whereas they had once been able to seize on any idea and 'Beatlefy' it, make it common currency, they were now running vainly after a trend that was determined to leave the common audience behind.

The confusion was even more obvious in what happened to the Rolling Stones. Their year began, traditionally, with a TV show row (they had to change the words of 'Let's Spend The Night Together' on the Ed Sullivan Show) but the coy sex and drug references of *Between The Buttons* took on a new meaning when Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and Brian Jones were each convicted in the courts for drug offences. The Stones became, almost despite themselves, hippy heroes; the problem was what this meant musically and, for a moment, Jagger and Richards' detached, selfish rock'n'roll commitment was shaken – 'We Love You' and the *Satanic Majesties* LP were too-obvious attempts to follow the Beatles' psychedelic trip. It wasn't until 1968, when youth politics got rougher, that the Stones made 'Jumping Jack Flash' and became *the* rock group, translating drug culture back into rock'n'roll terms.

An important source of the new psychedelic sounds was folk music. Donovan's 'Sunshine Superman' and 'Mellow Yellow' were, in one sense, just airy examples of London pop (produced by Mickie Most) but Donovan had begun as a folk club Dylan imitator and what he brought to psychedelia were folk qualities: a gentle voice and intimate acoustic appeal.



*Psychedelic Britain: The mural on the Beatles' Apple shop (above); the 5000 Spirits cover (left) and an early shot of Pink Floyd (below) with the legendary guitarist Syd Barrett seated centre. Opposite top: Cream (Clapton, Baker, Bruce). Opposite below: Donovan.*

The possibilities of folk-rock were further explored by the much more agile, ambitious and, in folk terms, authentic Incredible String Band, whose second album, the *5000 Spirits*, combined the psychedelic pursuit of innocence and the traditional themes – love and death – of folk bohemia. This combination – songs of innocence and experience – quickly became familiar, and marked the link between the British traditional folk revival of the early Sixties and the singer songwriters of the Seventies (like Roy Harper and Gerry Rafferty). Pentangle was formed in 1967 by the most influential folk bohemian, Bert Jansch, and that summer Fairport Convention, still under the influence of Bob Dylan's 1966 electric tour, began playing their own version of American folk-rock in the Middle Earth and UFO clubs. But the most original and immediately successful folk-rock group was Traffic, whose retreat from city noise to a cottage-in-the-country resulted in *Mr Fantasy*; Steve Winwood's soulful vocals were given a setting of psychedelic folk music.

## The Progressives

The second element of British hippie music was 'progressivism'. In 1967 Pink Floyd released their debut single, 'Arnold Layne', and their debut album, *The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn*. The group were UFO's most regular, most honoured performers. Syd Barrett's songs had the folk-rock combination of naivety and knowledge, but his music also had a menace, a sense that what was unsaid was too unset-





'Strange times – a kaleidoscope of allnighters at the Roundhouse and Middle Earth, La Fenêtre Rose in Paris and the Heliport in Rotterdam. Pink Floyd playing astral Bo Diddley, Tomorrow, Dantalion's Chariot, Mark Boyle's light show, overnight drives in an ancient Commer van.

The year came to a climax with the monster Christmas gig at Olympia – Hendrix, Traffic, Soft Machine and many others. I managed to set up the gear and then retired to bed for a week with flu, missing what was probably one of the best musical events of that famous year.'

**Hugh Hopper**, Soft Machine roadie







tling to be heard. Barrett had drug nightmares which came out in his guitar style, a free-form exploration of harsh electronic tones (an obvious precursor of the punk guitar style of the late Seventies). The other Floyds set Barrett's private dreads in a public drama – space sounds, galactic life-forms hurtling past the beat. Pink Floyd shows, featuring long, quirky instrumentals, depended as much on the group's technological as their musical imagination. They provided noises and lights to lie back and have visions to, and such soundtracks became the norm of British progressive rock. Steve Howe, for example, was only one of numerous musicians who in 1967 began the move from psychedelic pop (Tomorrow's 'My White Bicycle') to progressive atmospherics (with Yes).

The most influential British avant-garde group in 1967 was Soft Machine, whose first single was released that year. Leading lights were Kevin Ayers, the Terry Riley-influenced Mike Ratledge and Daevid Allen (who soon moved to Gong and European progressive rock).

This music was 'progressive' because it was expected to progress: the musicians were going to get better and technique and expressive skills were equated – the better they could play, the more complicated things they would say. And the rock audience was progressing too: as the music got more profound, the music's listeners were getting more sophisticated. The hippy audience defined itself as different from, superior to, the 'normal' mass audience, the mindless fans of mod and pop, whose music had gone commercial.

### Black sounds

The most widespread sound of commercial mod was Motown, the smartest, sharpest dance music around. Motown producers determined the sound of mod music: controlled emotion and a joyous beat, tentative voices with a sure support. The Supremes' 'Baby Love' and 'Where Did Our Love Go' had swept to the top of the British charts in 1964 and from 1964 to 1967 Motown was the sound everyone hoped to hear on the radio, to move to on the dance floor. By 1967 the company's hits had a relaxed sophistication, an emo-

tional depth, that has never been matched. There was Smokey Robinson and the Miracles' 'I Second That Emotion', Jimmy Ruffin's 'What Becomes Of The Broken Hearted', the Four Tops' 'Standing In The Shadows Of Love' and 'Seven Rooms of Gloom', the Marvelettes' 'The Hunter Gets Captured By The Game', the Temptations' '(I Know) I'm Losing You', and the Supremes' 'The Happening', Motown's own sly psychedelic reference.

But if Motown was as important as the Beatles in producing the sound of the Sixties, the company was, by 1967, becoming the victim of its own success. Motown went on having hits (in the next couple of years it was more successful than ever) but these increasingly reflected the company's absorption into the pop mainstream (this was symbolised in 1967 by Diana Ross' separate billing from the Supremes), and Motown became steadily less significant. Rock fans, concerned for 'authenticity' and art, suspicious of craft and calculation, began to set Motown music against deep soul, against the 'spontaneity' of James Brown and the rawer sounds of Stax. By 1967 the king and queen of soul were, for white audiences, Otis Redding and Aretha Franklin.

Otis Redding died in 1967, killed on 10 December in a plane crash just as he was becoming a rock star. His posthumous hit, 'Dock Of The Bay', reflected his move out of soul; the frantic struggle for words was replaced by cool commentary on feelings. But that was to come. In 1967 Otis Redding and the Stax-Volt package toured Europe and their shows weren't about detachment from anything. Stax live was a quasi-religious experience; Stax soul involved an emotional commitment that shook even mod cool; Stax music (celebrated in Arthur Conley's 'Sweet Soul Music' and Sam and Dave's 'Soul Man') was sweaty and public and involving.

Aretha Franklin's *I Never Loved A Man (The Way I Love You)* represented a different sort of soul magnificence – the magnificence of 'Respect', female strength and black pride, music made without concessions, racial or sexual, black music without white frills. Aretha Franklin's music, like Otis Redding's, had a black power that anticipated the great soul years of 1969–72, when musicians like Isaac Hayes (in 1967 still working backstage with David Porter on Sam and Dave), Norman Whitfield, Curtis Mayfield and Marvin Gaye used their musical craft to create not popular community but black consciousness.

There was a similar shift in Jamaican music. In 1967 Desmond Dekker had his first British chart hit, '007', Prince Buster had his only British chart hit, 'Al Capone', and Dandy Livingstone made 'Rudy A Message To You', a chart hit for the Specials many years later. The sound of ska was making its move from mod cult to skinhead youth club, while in Jamaica Bob Marley, Bunny Livingstone and Peter McIntosh, collectively known as the Wail-





ers, were recording 'I'm The Toughest'. Jamaican musicians were enjoying the post-rude boys relaxed rocksteady beat and beginning to develop the more political, spiritual, militant black sound of reggae.

The history of rock is inextricable from the history of Afro-American music – black Americans (and, more recently, Jamaicans) have provided rock musicians with their basic musical language. But

the relationship of black music to rock has never been easy. In the Fifties the rock-'n'-roll use of R&B songs and sounds often involved straightforward theft and it took the British beat groups of the mid-Sixties to reopen white American ears to music that had come to seem (after the brief success of Chuck Berry, Little Richard and Bo Diddley) 'crude' and 'monotonous'. By 1967 the possibilities of black and white musicians working together were open again, but the white-run music business continued to exploit black sounds as novelties.

During the Seventies, black and white music audiences, particularly in the USA, rarely overlapped. Black musicians had black concerns, and rock fans were hemmed in by their conception of art. Hippies stopped dancing to black music, and the collective excitement of late Sixties' soul was forgotten until the late Seventies rise of disco and rediscovery of funk. The possibilities for the development of a progressive British soul sound, still open in 1967,

vanished until the appearance of Dexy's Midnight Runners over ten years later. 1967 was the year of the Foundations' 'Baby Now That I've Found You' and P.P. Arnold's 'The First Cut Is The Deepest' (written by Cat Stevens). P.P. Arnold's backing group went on to be the Nice and, unfortunately, this move (and Keith Emerson's later step from the Nice to ELP) was defined as 'progress'. Black music was honoured only on the dance floor.



*The dancing sounds of '67 were those of Motown and soul – provided by stars such as Jimmy Ruffin (opposite top) the Supremes and Stevie Wonder (opposite bottom), Otis Redding (left) Wilson Pickett (right) and Ike and Tina Turner (below).*







## Back in the USA

By 1967 the USA had developed its own version of mod pop. Los Angeles was London's twin town; in its boutiques and clubs, on its radio shows and records the latest Anglo styles were posed and sold.

Buffalo Springfield's songwriters and singers, Steve Stills and Neil Young, had begun their musical life as folk singers. Their move into pop was an example of the Beatles' most important effect on American music, reclaiming the loyalties of thousands of disillusioned rock'n'roll fans (from Bob Dylan on down), who had abandoned teenage pop at the end of the 1950s for the 'adult' concerns of folk. Elvis Presley became a middle-of-the-road Hollywood star and Chuck Berry, Buddy Holly, Jerry Lee Lewis, Gene Vincent and the rest of the rock'n'roll pioneers had, in one way or another, been silenced and replaced by packaged teenage stars, but the fans were convinced by the new British sound that rock'n'roll was still exciting.

American Beatlemania further suggested that it was precisely its vast popular appeal that made rock'n'roll, compared to folk, an urgent, relevant political medium. As Bob Dylan soon discovered, there's no greater musical power than a Number 1 radio hit, and by 1967 everyone's ambition was to be a rock star – just as it had been in 1957 and was to be in 1977. American towns filled with teenage garage bands and punks making their own versions of the post-Beatle, post-Byrd, post-Yardbird psychedelic sound – fuzz tones, electric guitars, screamed vocals – which was, eventually, to become heavy metal.

It was ironic that the key influences on the British mod sound (which became the USA's mod sound) were also American. They were not much honoured in their own country either. In 1967 Phil Spector and Brian Wilson, their determination sapped by failure, withdrew from their role as America's pop pioneers. Neither ever returned to it.

Phil Spector's biggest pop successes had been with the records he made for the Crystals and the Ronettes but his crowning achievement was Ike and Tina Turner's 'River Deep Mountain High', which came out in 1966 to be a British hit. In the USA, though, it got little radio play and few sales. Spector's final integration of emotional and technological melodrama meant, apparently, nothing. He retired; Philles Records folded. Spector's ambitions for record production as an art form were to be central to the progressive rock of the Seventies; what didn't survive was



*The two sides of American rock. The Monkees (top left) were the darlings of teen magazines (centre left) and inspired adolescent demonstrations when Davy Jones was threatened with the draft (left). Bob Dylan (right and inset) was a different phenomenon entirely: the artist as a spokesman for his generation, an independent, often introspective commentator.*



his unique combination of megalomania, humour and pre-teen sentimentality.

Brian Wilson, like Spector, moved in the LA pop milieu, but whereas Spector had a commercially conventional role in this milieu, Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys tried to change the system. Wilson wrote his group's songs, recorded them himself, chose his own studios and musicians and engineers. He ignored his record company's usually dominant A&R (artists and repertoire) systems – the Beach Boys' Brother label, formed in 1967, pre-dated the Beatles' Apple by a year. The Beach Boys' independence reflected the position they had built since the 1963 release of 'Surfin' USA' as *the* American teenage group, but they soon showed they were much more than this. *Pet Sounds*, released like 'River Deep Mountain High' in 1966, was a record that the Capitol A&R department would certainly not then have been able to make for themselves; the record's use of painstaking overdubs, its 'non-musical' noises, its extraordinary ethereal atmosphere testified to Brian Wilson's claim to have invented 'art rock'.

*Pet Sounds* wasn't exactly a commercial failure – its premier track, 'Good Vibrations', was a huge hit on both sides of the Atlantic. Nevertheless, the Beach Boys continued to be regarded by the music world (including Capitol Records) as a party band who'd made a 'weird' record; *Pet Sounds* never got the critical acclaim

afforded to *Sgt Pepper*.

By 1967 Brian Wilson was torn between the ideas of his new, strange LA pop cronies like Van Dyke Parks, and the nagging of the rest of his family, who wanted their traditional success. On 2 May it was announced that the Beach Boys had abandoned Wilson's most ambitious project yet, *Smile*. What we got instead was the low-key eccentricity of *Smiley Smile* and the fresh but backward-looking pop of *Wild Honey*. Wilson had lost confidence in his own unequalled utopianism.

Phil Spector's and Brian Wilson's withdrawal from the LA music scene reflected their loss of faith in the mass market's ability to absorb their imaginations; the effect of their withdrawal was to accelerate a rock/pop split that has afflicted American music ever since. 1967 was, in fact, an excellent year for American pop music. There was a spate of Spector/Wilson-influenced hits, such as the Electric Prunes' 'I Had Too Much To Dream Last Night', the Turtles' 'Happy Together', Strawberry Alarm Clock's 'Incense and Peppermints', Tommy James and the Shondells' 'I Think We're Alone Now', Fifth Dimension's 'Up, Up And Away'. But these were isolated hits by ephemeral groups rather than routine offerings from established hit groups. American pop still meant teenage manipulation and, measured by that yardstick, the most successful group of 1967 was the Monkees.

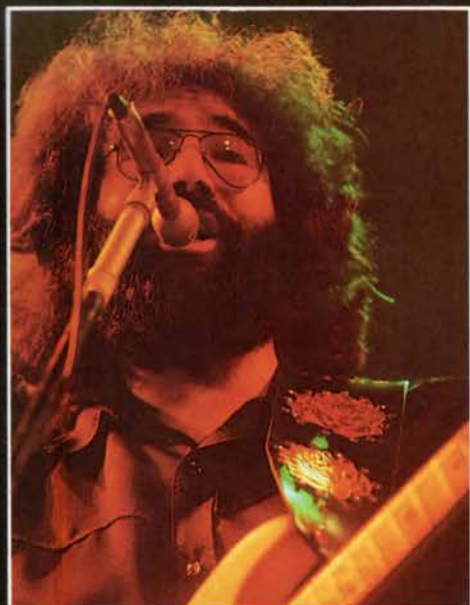
### TV and the Monkees

The Monkees were put together, an obvious imitation of the Beatles, for a TV show aimed, like *American Bandstand* 10 years earlier, at teenage girls. Their music was produced according to the traditional rules of teenage pop (rules that Phil Spector had helped to write) by Brill Building veterans Don Kirshner and Jeff Barry, using songs written by professionals like Neil Diamond and John Stewart. The Monkees were designed to be the latest in the long line of TV-made teenybopper stars that began with Fabian and Frankie Avalon in the late Fifties and was to continue with the Osmonds, David Cassidy and the Bay City Rollers in the Seventies. The irony of the Monkees' success was that two members of the group, Peter Tork and Mike Nesmith, were themselves anti-pop ex-folk singers who had been hanging out in the LA scene with many of the people who were to become the 'authentic' rock stars of the Seventies like Steve Stills, who also tried for the Monkees but failed his audition. As it was, the Monkees came to stand for the way of making music against which rock was a revolt.

So, in a different way, did Los Angeles' second most successful group in 1967, the Mamas and Papas. The Mamas and Papas equally represented the LA combination of folk singers and old music biz pros but they wrote their own songs and had a







San Francisco, the heart of American psychedelia. Jerry Garcia and the Grateful Dead (above and advertised on poster far right) were the counter culture in music. The Fillmore West (above centre) became the focus of the SF bands, and the most successful of the groups was Jefferson Airplane (below centre). Bass player Jack Casady (right) and lead singer Grace Slick (far right) personified the band's image.



'The rock bands created a tribal, animal energy. We were a religion, a family, a culture, with our own music, our own dress, our own human relationships, our own stimulants, our own media.

And we believed that our energy would turn on the world.'

Jerry Rubin







more grown-up charm. They were in their own way hippies, but their music involved a soft-focus commercialisation of the Californian beach scene and as performers the Mamas and Papas rarely moved out of the middle of the road. Their songs and their sound were exhilarating; but when the American rock revolt began they too, as LA pop stars, were compromised. For American rock arguments came from San Francisco, a self-consciously anti-commercial, anti-pop musicians' community.

#### San Francisco

By 1967 San Francisco's hippies were being celebrated in song: Scott McKenzie's 'San Francisco', the Flowerpot Men's 'Let's Go To San Francisco', Eric Burdon's 'San Francisco Nights', songs which sold San Francisco as a natural product, like sunshine and flowers, available, like all pop, to the young at heart. The basis of the San Francisco community, though, was the city's artistic tradition. San Francisco music was made out of non-pop forms, blues and folk and jazz, and addressed non-pop issues; the San Francisco sound was, at heart, the sound of beatniks.

The San Francisco sound was, from the beginning, just one of a jumble of artistic activities – the beat/hippy connection was most obvious in Ken Kesey and the Pranksters' Acid Tests: music and lights and dance and drama and LSD were combined to achieve a total transformation of the senses.

The result was a new sort of music show which reached its climax on 14 January 1967 in the Human Be-In, a 'gathering of the tribes' of 20,000 people in Golden Gate Park, a free concert which featured the beat poetry of Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder and Michael McClure and the new Bay Area rock bands – the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Quicksilver Messenger Service, Moby Grape, Steve Miller Band, Country Joe and the Fish and Big Brother and the Holding Company. The music these bands made reflected the needs of their acid-dropping audiences. It was rambling, loud, multi-textured and raw, with loose melodies and a heavy beat.

In counter-cultural terms, what mattered most about the San Francisco sound was not its content (loosely meaningful lyrics went with the loosely meaningful music) but its form. The SF bands made a new sort of popular music for a new sort of popular audience; they represented a new organisation of American leisure. What emerged from San Francisco was, in fact, a new style of commercialism. The most significant people in the Bay area music community weren't the musicians but the entrepreneurs. The most important rock-'n'-roll entrepreneurs previously had been outsiders, seizing on stars opportunistically (Colonel Parker with Elvis Presley, the Chess brothers with Chicago R&B). The San Francisco operators, in contrast, emerged from within the new audience itself.

#### Concerts, radio and the press

Tom Donahue, a disc jockey and radio businessman, used the newly-freed FM wavelength to develop a new sort of music radio. His station, KMPX, featured album tracks, quiet disc jockeys, long spells of uninterrupted music; its concern (which soon had plenty of advertising support) was to organise the consumption of the Bay Area's hip community. Promoter Bill Graham turned hippy concerts, the trips, festivals and be-ins, into the money-making formula of the Fillmore night out – light shows and posters courtesy of the local artistic community, rock bands offered every technical facility, audiences guaranteed an efficient transcending experience. Journalist Jann Wenner started *Rolling Stone*, a rock fortnightly designed to fill the gap between the music trade press and the teenybop magazines by taking the new musicians and their audiences as seriously as they took themselves. The *Rolling Stone* approach was soon apparent too in the British music press, as *Melody Maker* and the *New Musical Express* began to change from pop papers, identifying with the business, to rock papers, identifying with the audience. These new ideas were symbolised by a single 1967 event: the Monterey International Pop Festival.

#### Glimpse of a new world

The Monterey Festival was the Los Angeles response to the Human Be-In. It was, in part, a sincere attempt to recreate the San Francisco event and to give the Bay Area bands (and their hippy message) a wider audience. But the Festival's central organisers (John Phillips of the Mamas and Papas, publicist Derek Taylor, entrepreneur Lou Adler) also had a clear sense of the Festival's commercial implications. They sold the film and TV rights in advance and made sure that Monterey was a showbiz gathering as well as a fan event – record company executives were pressured to come and see the wares.

For them the Festival was, in the words of Clive Davis of CBS, 'a glimpse of a new world', and the stampede to sign the Bay Area bands (all the Be-In acts were at Monterey) and give them national promotion accelerated. Jefferson Airplane had signed to RCA for 25,000 dollars in 1966, but now 'Somebody To Love' and 'White Rabbit' were Top Ten hits; so on the strength of their San Francisco base the Steve Miller Band were offered 75,000 dollars by Capitol, who also took Quicksilver Messenger Service. The hottest property at Monterey was Big Brother and the Holding Company or, rather Janis Joplin (managed now by Albert Grossman, Bob Dylan's manager). Clive Davis eventually got her for CBS. Her advance, an astonishing 250,000 dollars confirmed that the rock 'revolution', far from being anticommercial, was going to transform American popular music into an even bigger business.





The festival was a new sort of music-making event and symbolised rock as a new sort of relationship between performers and audience. Unlike the traditional package show tour, put together for the fans out there, festivals – in their length, their size, their settings – were attempts to provide materially the experience of community that the music expressed symbolically. Monterey stood too for pop as a multi-national community. The Festival's advisory panel (which included Brian Wilson, Brian Jones, Paul McCartney, Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel) was deliberately broad in its suggestions for performers. The San Francisco musicians on the five-day bill were joined by the Who and Jimi Hendrix from London, by the Byrds, Buffalo Springfield and the Mamas and Papas from LA, by blues bands like Canned Heat and Electric Flag, by the folk singer/songwriters Simon and Garfunkel and Laura Nyro, by Ravi Shankar and Otis Redding. The Festival was a statement of both rock's roots and rock's future.

### Hendrix and Joplin

The performers who made the biggest stir at Monterey were Jimi Hendrix and Janis Joplin. Jimi Hendrix's importance for black and white musicians and audiences was immense. Together with Sly Stone (himself a member of the San Francisco scene, who signed to CBS in 1967) Hendrix opened up a place in rock for black musicians and, unlike Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Ray Charles, Muddy Waters or any of the Motown or Stax musicians, he became a teen idol. Also, he found a place in black music for rock devices – electronics, flamboyance, the rock'n'roll beat. After Hendrix (via Miles Davis) came jazz rock and the funk fusion. But Hendrix's significance at Monterey was as a guitar hero; his amazing technical and imaginative skills were inextricable from his personality and his supposed prowess as lover.

Hendrix's British success ('Hey Joe' and 'Purple Haze' were hits in 1967) was not,

at first, easy to translate into American market terms – he was only put on the Monterey bill at Paul McCartney's insistence and had been booked to tour the USA as support to the Monkees! Both Hendrix's Monterey appearance and his Monkees tour proved that American teenage music didn't have to be teenage pop: the idea of rock musicians as artists, as technical virtuosi, had arrived.

Jimi Hendrix wasn't the only source of the heavy metal sound. The Yardbirds – by 1967 on their way to becoming Led Zeppelin – had an equally direct influence on the garage bands, and the evolution of white blues from a purist, historical form (Eric Clapton had left the Yardbirds because they had become too commercial) into a crowd-pleasing technique was pioneered in Britain by Cream, formed by Clapton himself, Jack Bruce and Ginger Baker in 1966. Their music, lengthy electric improvisations and obscure lyrics courtesy of poet Pete Brown, had obvious parallels to that of San Francisco bands like the Grateful Dead. But Cream's music was more disciplined, more imaginative, more assertive and as Cream, following Hendrix, began to tour America they found, like him, a huge market – a market serviced by the new rock institutions: the Fillmore, *Rolling Stone* and FM radio.

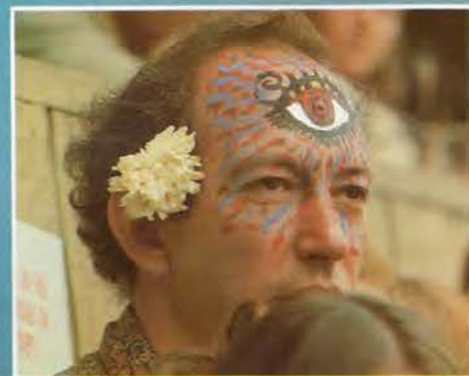
Janis Joplin had much less musical influence than Jimi Hendrix, but her symbolic importance was as great – compare, for example, her confident, aggressive energy with the simpering 'sexy' sounds still expected from female pop singers in 1967 (the year of Sandie Shaw's aptly-titled 'Puppet On A String' and Sandy Posey's 'Single Girl') or with the pure tones of a female folk singer like Joan Baez. Joplin was not as good a singer as her fellow San Franciscan Grace Slick but she mattered more to her audiences because she challenged a wider set of assumptions about female glamour and attraction.

Janis Joplin trusted her audiences to such an extent that she held nothing back.

Little of this can be heard on record, where Joplin's technical and imaginative weaknesses become obvious, but the involving impact of her performances has only ever been matched by Bruce Springsteen.

Neither Joplin nor Hendrix survived the confusion of their public and private lives, but they set the problem that dominated rock musicians' lives for the next decade: how to guarantee the emotional impact of their performances night after night after night. The answer (most obvious in the Who's Woodstock performance) lay in technology, volume, a gradually-evolved repertoire of rock signs.

The paradox of Monterey was one of the paradoxes of rock: massive record sales were predicted (and achieved) on the basis of the experience of live performance (Hendrix's and Joplin's in particular). If a successful American mainstream LP had, until 1967, sold 300,000 copies, Jimi Hendrix established two million sales as the target. The most successful company in exploiting the rock boom was CBS, and its lead was followed by Warner Brothers, which took over Atlantic (and thus the American rights to Cream and Led Zeppelin) and went on to dominate the LA rock business.





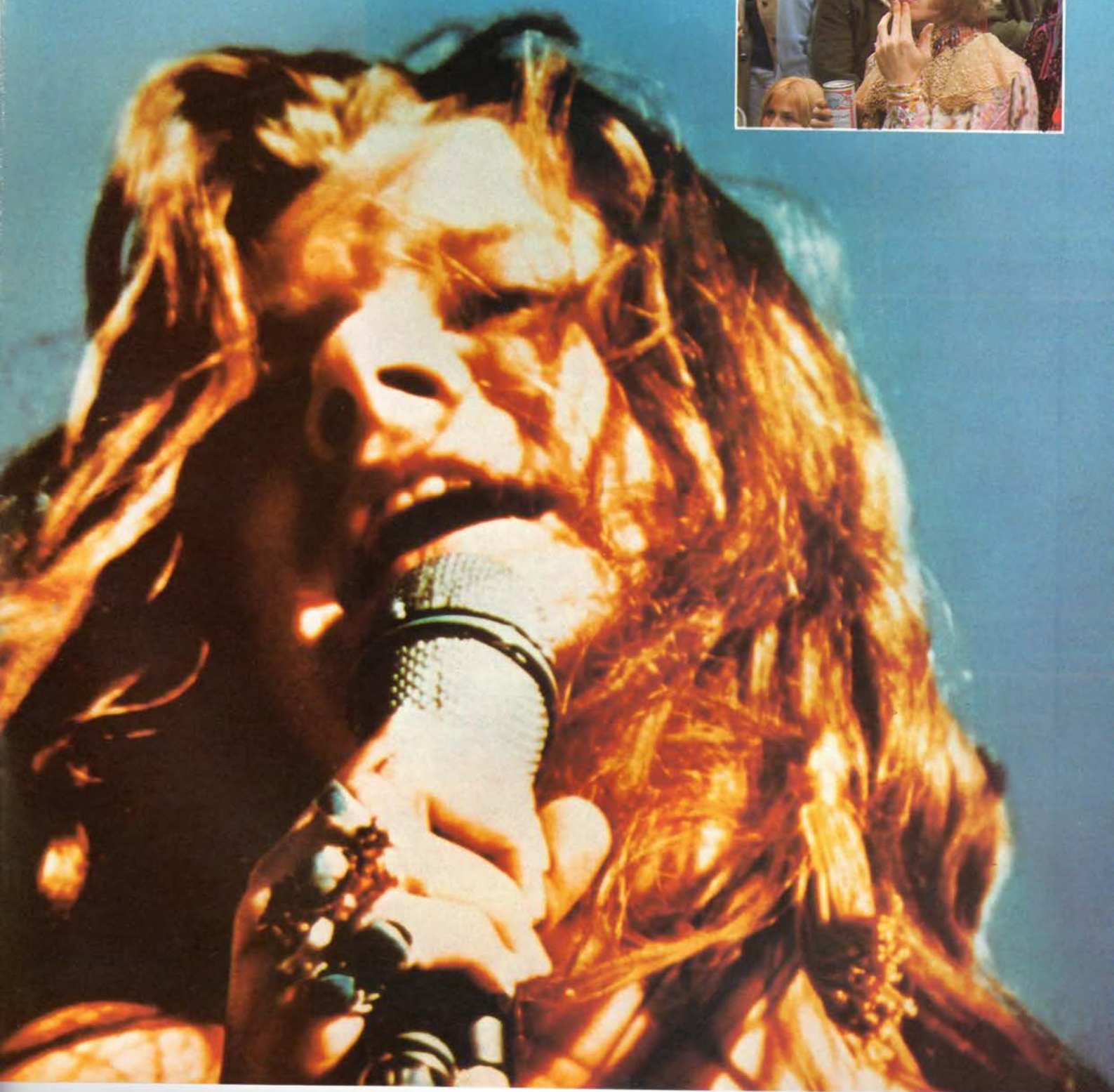


'Up there in the festival grounds it was like the greatest show on earth, all life and vigour and health and loud, loud music. It was good to be, it was good to be. There were hassles, but they were about nothing and no one. The Chief of Police said it had been like a dream and we gave him a necklace. There wasn't one arrest and there wasn't one injury

and the Mayor said she was very pleased with the young people who had come to her city. Music, love and flowers . . . the motto had come true and next year the city, remembering, decided such a thing must not happen again, and it hasn't since – not in Monterey. But once, it did happen in Monterey, a long time ago.'

**Derek Taylor**

*Scenes at Monterey: the Mamas and Papas (far left), a poster stall and spectator (left and below left), Brian Jones (right) and the one and only Janis Joplin.*





The success of the major record companies with rock meant success too for the numerous independent rock entrepreneurs (like Robert Stigwood, manager of Cream and the Bee Gees, and Chris Blackwell of Island Records) who emerged to service them. The results were new selling systems (LPs, FM radio, serious rock magazines, concert tours and hip record stores as against singles, AM radio, poster magazines and package tours) in both Britain and the USA. In Britain, for example, 1967 was the last year in which singles outsold albums, the last time the major British record companies (Decca, Pye, EMI) dominated the British charts. The year was the turning point of the relationship between English and American music established by the Beatles. In 1967 US record sales topped a billion and in the long rock boom that followed CBS and WEA (Warner Elektra Asylum) slowly but steadily took over world and British sales from EMI and Decca.

What began at Monterey as the exhilarating process of putting together a new open-minded audience soon became the less risky process of servicing particular markets. Rock musicians were happy to make money, but they resisted definitions of their work in terms of pleasing audiences, giving them what *they* wanted. In fact, rock musicians soon found that they could have it both ways – make lots of money by apparently pleasing themselves. Self-indulgence, a contempt for the idea of 'pop', whatever the actual sales figures, became in itself an aspect of rock's popular appeal.



### Personal visions

This sense of self-importance was most obvious in the American singer/songwriters inspired by Bob Dylan to use rock-'n'-roll for their own purposes. Bob Dylan himself was notable by his absence in 1967, having withdrawn into domesticity to make the Basement Tapes with the Band, but the shift from folk songwriting to rock songwriting continued apace. It was obvious among women writers where it was possible to be an independent female performer). While Joan Baez was spending 10 days in jail for a draft resistance



## The other side of '67

Left: We're Only In It For The Money, Zappa's satire on Sgt Pepper.

demonstration, Joni Mitchell was making the break out of the East Coast folk circuit. Her songs were taken up by established singers like Judy Collins, whose LPs *Wildflowers* and *In My Life* (arranged in an American version of Donovan's psychedelic folk by Joshua Rifkin) included not only Mitchell's 'Both Sides Now', but also Leonard Cohen's 'Suzanne'.

There had always been performers in pop who wrote their own songs but they had not previously been regarded as distinctive pop makers, as 'singer/songwriters'. Paul Anka's 'Diana', for example, had never been thought to express *his own* experience. Folk singers were contrasted to pop singers because they wrote and sang about the 'real' world of politics and individual experience.

Joni Mitchell and Judy Collins' music fitted comfortably into the 1967 sound of American pop; folk-rock breeziness had already been made popular by the Byrds and the Lovin' Spoonful. But 1967 also marked a shift of songwriting mood, *The Lovin' Spoonful* broke up amidst the recriminations that followed Zal Yanofsky's San Francisco drug bust (though John Sebastian's tie-dyed niceness survived in later stars like John Denver) and the

Byrds made the ironic, sour single 'So You Want To Be A Rock'n'Roll Star'. 1967 was also the year of Bobbie Gentry's 'Ode To Billie Joe'; the possibilities of the singer/songwriter were now being exploited in Nashville, where Kris Kristofferson was already hard at work. Hank Williams and country boogie had been major influences on early rock'n'roll, and now country was reclaiming its place as a major force in rock.

### Zappa and the avant-garde

Country music retained an unself-conscious populism as it took its place on the periphery of rock. Conversely, however, there was, by 1967, a self-proclaimed rock avant-garde concerned to make music about music, to comment on the process by which popular music became popular.

The most explicit rock elitist was Frank Zappa. The Mothers of Invention released *Absolutely Free* and *We're Only In It For The Money* in 1967, records with a sharp and savage sense of humour. Zappa was a nihilist who was rooted (and highly skilled) in avant-garde serious music. The Mothers of Invention used musical montages, tape cut-up techniques that were to influence progressive rock musicians for many years to come, and Frank Zappa was, in addition, an inventive electric guitarist with one of the most distinctive





Radio 1: The Class of '67. Tony Blackburn (1), Jimmy Young (2), Kenny Everett (3), Duncan Johnson (4), Robin Scott (5), David Rider (6), Dave Cash (7), Pete Brady (8), David Symonds (9), Bob Holness (10), Terry Wogan (11), Barry Alldis (12), Mike Lennox (13), Keith Skues (14), Chris Denning (15), Johnny Moran (16), Pete Myers (17), Pete Murray (18), Ed Stewart (19), Pete Drummond (20), Mike Raven (21), Mike Ahern (22) and John Peel (23).

1967, the year of optimism, had its other side. The Beatles' move towards transcendental meditation (above left) coincided with the death of manager Brian Epstein. The arrest of Mick Jagger (seen in the painting by Richard Hamilton, above, and a news photograph, right) was evidence of an irreconcilable conflict of lifestyles. The summer of love was not to generate a new world; the continuing power of the establishment was demonstrated when Radio 1 was founded.



instrumental styles in rock. The most important aspect of his music in 1967, however was its commentary on the hippy/rock community itself; *We're Only In It For The Money*, for example, was packaged as a sharp parody of *Sgt Pepper* – the Beatles were not amused. Zappa's argument was that psychedelia's flower punks and instant hippies were just as dependent on received opinions, on commercial clichés, as the parents of Middle America who had been the Mothers' original target. Long before the Dead Kennedys' 'California Uber Alles', Zappa was describing California as Camp Reagan and instructing his listeners to read Kafka's *In The Colony*.

The Mothers of Invention's early records are still funny, acute and rewarding. Ultimately, however, his contempt for all rock fans, including his own, raised the question of why he made the music in the first place. In the end, it was Zappa's friend Captain Beefheart who made an avant-garde rock sound that was inspiring as well as harsh and weird.

Frank Zappa's contempt for the rock world was shared, in a different musical setting, by another self-styled artist from Los Angeles, Jim Morrison. The Doors took their name from William Blake (via Aldous Huxley) and were the most militant exponents of the counter-culture's

romantic individualism. Morrison's image as a poet referred not just to his lyrics but also to his personality, his obsession with his own perceptions. He seized on the romantic ideal of decadence – it was Morrison's experiences of rock performance that mattered, not those of his audience.

Given musical form by Robbie Krieger, Jim Morrison's narcissism was compelling, and 1967 was dominated by the sound of 'Light My Fire', 'The End', the *Strange Days* LP. However, the rock audience became increasingly unimportant to Morrison as a source of sensation and, in the end, his legacy to rock, like Frank Zappa's, was merely a style of contempt.

#### Velvet Underground & Nico

Looking back, it seems clear that the most extraordinary record released in 1967 wasn't *Sgt Pepper* but *The Velvet Underground & Nico*. Both records made new arguments about what popular music could do, but *Sgt Pepper* was the culmination of a public process: the Beatles encapsulated the history of rock in their own careers. The Velvet Underground, by contrast, seemed to come from nowhere. New York doesn't feature much in accounts of 1967. Mod music and psychedelic pop was made in London and Los Angeles, hippy music and rock came from San Francisco. But New York had its own musical and

commercial traditions and its own bohemians who were, on the whole more cynical, more political, more aggressive (and more conscious of black culture) than anyone in California. The Fugs, for example, formed by New York beat poets Ed Sanders and Tuli Kupferberg, made angry music about American politics as well as romantic music about love and drugs. And if the Fugs mocked the pop scene, they also marvelled at it.

The Velvet Underground were 'discovered' amidst New York's lofty bohemian activists by Andy Warhol who, long fascinated by the cultural effects of British beat, instantly included them in the Factory's line-up for its own multi-media show, the Exploding Plastic Inevitable. Andy Warhol wouldn't have been seen dead with a flower in his hair and his idea of a rock event was rather different from that of the Grateful Dead's.

Warhol wasn't concerned to inspire a community or to provide a background noise for people tripping out gently among themselves. He wanted to stir people up and see what happened, and was drawn to the Velvets because they made such an unbearable din. His only creative addition to their show was the deadpan German vocalist Nico, who left the group when they left Warhol later in the year.

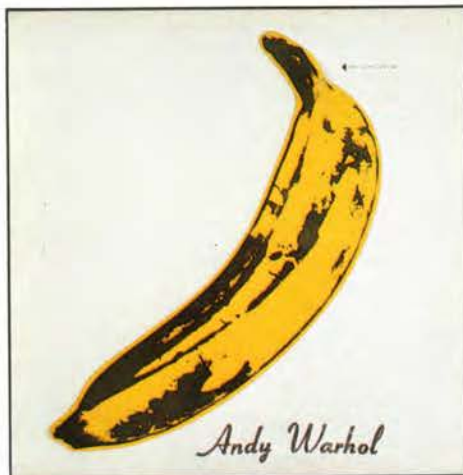
*The Velvet Underground & Nico* came



in a distinctive package. The front cover pictured a big banana and the name Andy Warhol; inside the gatefold there were quotes from the critics and information laid out as if in a film's credits list. For Warhol, the Velvet Underground were a work of pop art, not a rock group but a commentary on a rock group. The miracle was (not Warhol's doing) that the Velvet Underground *were* a rock group, to me one of the finest ever.

Lou Reed's songs were intense commentaries on the underside of bohemian city life – drugs as sickness and money, sex as jealousy and pain. His fascination with decadence was full of fears, fears caught up in the scrambled chords of his guitar. John Cale added to this an avant-garde obsession with textural repetition, with the impact amid such monotony of the smallest dissonance. The Velvet Underground's sound was harsh and very loud, its listeners were struck immediately by the feedback, by the band's screeching. But *The Velvet Underground & Nico* also revealed something much more carefully crafted: a demanding music made not out of melodies, hooks and choruses, but out of riffs, repeated phrases that built up their effects in layers, made their rhythmic and harmonic impact simultaneously. Each Velvet Underground song used a small cluster of notes that battered and battered against each other until feedback, a screech, was the only logical place to go. The Velvet Underground's music, unlike everything else in 1967, offered no escape.

*Sgt Pepper* was the most important LP of the year 1967 because it expressed most pleasingly, most cheerfully, the optimism that was central to the year's experience –



'... the Velvets played so loud and crazy I couldn't even begin to guess the decibels ... the Velvets played and the different-coloured hypnotic dot patterns swirled and bounced off the walls and the strobes flashed and you could close your eyes and hear cymbals and boots stomping and whips cracking and tambourines sounding like chains rattling.' **Andy Warhol**



the sense that youth was on the move. It encapsulated all that had gone before, and seemed to be opening the way to future delights. But as we lived through the Seventies, the Sex Pistols, the new political aggression, the rioting in the streets, it began to seem as if *The Velvet Underground & Nico* could be a sign not of what had been but of what was still to come.

SIMON FRITH

### One music

*Sgt Pepper* is 1967's optimism incarnate – the summer sunny side up – and *The Velvet Underground & Nico* is its very opposite, in its sound and the ideas behind that sound. But what is ultimately more important than this polarity is the fact that, opposed or not, both albums are part of the same tradition: they are both classic rock records. They both spring from the same source: the music revolution of the mid-Fifties, when from a variety of backgrounds a new sound – rock'n'roll – emerged. Exactly how that revolution took place, and how it gave birth to the electrifyingly diverse music to be heard all over the world today, is the story we will describe in the following pages.

*The sound – and look – of the future. In spite of the attempt to contain them in the art avant-garde by Andy Warhol (left) through such devices as the sleeve of the album *The Velvet Underground & Nico* (above left) the Velvet Underground (below) were at the heart of rock. From left, they were Lou Reed, Sterling Morrison, Nico, Maureen Tucker and John Cale.*





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"GRATEFUL DEAD" Photo by Herb Greene

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