

product

alternative nation

Sound marks of the century

Flashback 1968 By Eugene Coffey

The Beatles

1968 Apple

Produced by George Martin

Eponymous my arse. To most of Western civilisation, this is known as *the White Album*, but we must respect these little formalities.

Revolver and *Pepper* are great records, but *the White Album* demonstrates fully the sheer range of the Beatles' art and the debt contemporary music owes to the band. John, Paul, George and yes, even Ringo are in their creative primes here. The record's thirty songs were written largely during the famous two month sabbatical in India when the band were being 'enlightened' by the maharishi.

Rock parody is evident in "Back in the U.S.S.R", surrealism in "Happiness is a warm gun" and phantasmorgia in "Helter Skelter". Indeed, this is a truly kaleidoscopic offering. The standard is so high and so varied, the album only failing is its sheer hugeness, in sonic, artistic and realistic terms.

History has recorded that the band were in fairly unpleasant competition from 1967 onwards. Lennon in particular was extremely miffed with the recognition Paul received for *Sgt. Pepper's* (although "A day in the life" is hardly filler material). However, in aesthetic terms at least, he redeemed himself in "Revolution 1", "Glass Onion" and "Julia". After this, the band imploded and managed to bring out just one other good album, *Abbey Road*. Ah well, time to reminisce on past glories then.

Best track: "Long long long"

Most revealing line: "Half of what I say is meaningless, but I say it just to reach you" - "Julia"

Also worth checking out: Nirvana *Bleach*, Spiritualized *Lazer-Guided Melodies*, Tha Dogg Pound *Dogg Food* and Cypress Hill.

LIVE REVIEW

THE O'MALLEYS : Dolans Warehouse

There are certain variable rites or procedures one should undergo before venturing into the wacky world of the O'Malleys. Mine included four strong cocktails (tequila sunrises) and a couple of bottles of wine.

Suitably liquored up I made my way to Dolans where I managed to feign dignified sobriety long enough to gain admission. The O'Malleys were already in full flight and fine fettle and were basking in the adulation of a positively bubbling Dolans crowd. Musically the O'Malleys served up a familiar blend of their own and other peoples countrified folk rock. Goodtime music played by goodtime people for goodtime people. Nobody even cared about the occasionally ropy sound, though it was frustrating to see somebody with the undoubted keyboard skills of Jim Hanley up on the stage but not be able to hear him.

Next to tunes like the old Elvis Costello classic 'Please Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood' Peter and Co. treated us to (ahem) a song they wrote for Van

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Morrison called 'Shanabooly Road' which hit a warm chord with an auld Balla ' boy like myself and which contained the beery ponderable '...there are forty shades of green -each one I've counted...'

In the O'Malleys unique and inimitable style that sees them float effortlessly between acoustic laden pub rock and theatrical comedy, they also gave us an eastern European opus and an interpretation of the career of Clannad that had you admiring their musical virtuoso one minute and rolling in the aisles splitting your sides the next. The only thing missing from the set was the classic 'An Puc' which they may even have played early on as I missed the first few minutes. Oh well, maybe next time ...and I will certainly be back next time. You should be too.

Singles

Unfinished Business: 'C'Mon the Hoops' (Big Cat)

Words fail me ...this alleged anthem for Celtic fans is simply the worst record I've heard in my entire quarter-century on Gods green Earth.

Sounding not unlike Gazzas' unique reworking of Lindisfarnes' 'Fog on the Tyne' this equally disgusting record has a backing track that would disgrace a Yazz & the Plastic Population b-side. It also features a singer who sounds like a ninety year old Jack from Coronation Street after taking a point blank range shotgun blast in the gut. I would've guessed that the gunman was the studio engineer who considered it his social duty to spare society this gruesome record. But that theory is unsound as I suspect that this thing was never anywhere near a professional recording studio. More likely it was all done on a Casio keyboard in someone's toilet. That's where it should've stayed.

0/10

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