

Beatle-Maniac (appendix)

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I. Song Lyrics

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"Get Back"

Artist: The Beatles

Album: Let it be

Jojo was a man who thought he was a loner
But he knew it wouldn't last
Jojo left his home in Tucson, Arizona
For some California grass

Get back, get back
Get back to where you once belonged
Get back, get back
Get back to where you once belonged

(spoken) Get back Jo!

Sweet Loretta Martin thought she was a woman
But she was another man
All the girls around her say she's got it coming
But she gets it while she can

(spoken) Get back Loretta
Your mother's waiting for you
Wearing her high-heel shoes
And her low-neck sweater
Get on home Loretta

"Drive My Car"

Artist: The Beatles

Album: Abbey Road

Asked a girl what she wanted to be
She said baby, can't you see
I wanna be famous, a star on the screen
But you can do something in between
Baby you can drive my car
Yes I'm gonna be a star
Baby you can drive my car
And baby I love you

I told a girl that my prospects were good
And she said baby, it's understood
Working for peanuts is all very fine
But I can show you a better time

Baby you can drive my car
Yes I'm gonna be a star
Baby you can drive my car
And baby I love you

Beep beep'm beep beep yeah

Baby you can drive my car
Yes I'm gonna be a star
Baby you can drive my car
And baby I love you

I told a girl I can start right away
And she said listen babe I got something to say
I got no car and it's breaking my heart
But I've found a driver and that's a start

Baby you can drive my car
Yes I'm gonna be a star
Baby you can drive my car
And baby I love you

Beep beep'm beep beep yeah
Beep beep'm beep beep yeah
Beep beep'm beep beep yeah
Beep beep'm beep beep yeah

"The Last of the Famous International Playboys"

Artist: Morrissey

Album: Suedehead

Dear hero imprisoned

With all the new crimes that you are perfecting

Oh, I can't help quoting you

Because everything that you said rings true

And now in my cell

(Well, I followed you)

And here's a list of who I slew

Reggie Kray - do you know my name ?

Oh, don't say you don't

Please say you do, (oh) I am :

The last of the famous

International playboys

The last of the famous

International playboys

And in my cell

(Well, I loved you)

And every man with a job to do

Ronnie Kray - do you know my face ?

Oh, don't say you don't

Please say you do, (oh) I am :

The last of the famous

International playboys

The last of the famous

International playboys

In our lifetime those who kill

The newsworld hands them stardom

And these are the ways

On which I was raised

These are the ways

On which I was raised

I never wanted to kill

I AM NOT NATURALLY EVIL

Such things I do

Just to make myself

More attractive to you

HAVE I FAILED ?

Oh...

Oh, the last of the famous
International playboys
The last of the famous

Analysis of "Last of the Famous International Playboys"
From: LASID, <http://www.oz.net/moz/lyrics/lyricsin.htm>

Excellent single mythologising vicious London gangsters, brought into the limelight again in recent years after Morrissey sent a wreath to Ronnie Kray's funeral. Ronnie and Reggie Kray held a tight rein on 60's London with a network of crime, whilst maintaining public respect through legal businesses and charity events. They were eventually jailed in connection with the murder of Jack "The Hat" McVitie, as was dramatised in the excellent film "The Krays" featuring the Kemp brothers of eighties new-romantic outfit Spandau Ballet.

Elicits one of Morrissey's best vocal performances, as he lalts and flounces his way through the fine comical prose.

His careful altering of his question to Reggie when he asks Ronnie (becoming "do you know my face ?") seems a sly reference to Ronnie's much-discussed homosexuality. Looking carefully enough, as well as the blatant signs (for example The Smiths' single sleeves), there are plenty of subtle references in the whole canon of Morrissey's lyrics, a theme which continues in one form or another to the present day.

"Back in the USSR"
Artist: The Beatles
Album: The White Album

Flew in from Miami Beach BOAC
Didn't get to bed last night
On the way the paper bag was on my knee
Man, I had a dreadful flight
I'm back in the USSR
You don't know how lucky you are, boy
Back in the USSR, yeah

Been away so long I early knew the place
Gee, it's good to be back home
Leave it till tomorrow to unpack my case
Honey disconnect the phone
I'm back in the USSR
You don't know how lucky you are, boy
Back in the US
Back in the US
Back in the USSR

Well the Ukraine girls really knock me out
They leave the west behind
And Moscow girls make me sing and shout
That Georgia's always on my my my my my my my my mind
Oh, come on
Hu Hey Hu, hey, ah, yeah
yeah, yeah, yeah
I'm back in the USSR
You don't know how lucky you are, boys
Back in the USSR

Well the Ukraine girls really knock me out
They leave the west behind
And Moscow girls make me sing and shout
That Georgia's always on my my my my my my my my mind

Oh, show me round your snow peaked
mountain way down south
Take me to your daddy's farm
Let me hear your balalaika's ringing out
Come and keep your comrade warm
I'm back in the USSR
Hey, You don't know how lucky you are, boy
Back in the USSR
Oh, let me tell you honey

"Eight days a week"
Artist: The Beatles
Album: Abbey Road

Oh, I need your love, baby
Guess you know it's true
Hope you need my love, baby
Just like I need you
Hold me, love me, hold me, love me
Ain't got nothing but love, baby
Eight days a week

Love you everyday, girl
Always on my mind
One thing I can say, girl
Love you all the time
Hold me, love me, hold me, love me
Ain't got nothing but love, baby
Eight days a week

Eight days a week, I love you
Eight days a week
Is not enough to show I care
Oh, I need your love, baby
Guess you know it's true
Hope you need my love, baby
Just like I need you
Hold me, love me, hold me, love me

Ain't got nothing but love, baby
Eight days a week
Eight days a week, I love you
Eight days a week
Is not enough to show I care

Oh, I need your love, baby
Guess you know it's true
Hope you need my love, baby
Just like I need you
Hold me, love me, hold me, love me
Ain't got nothing but love, baby

Eight days a week
Eight days a week, I love you
Eight days a week
Is not enough to show I care.

"Girlfriend in a Coma"
Artist: The Smiths
Album: Strangeways, here we come

Girlfriend in a coma, I know
I know - it's serious
Girlfriend in a coma, I know
I know - it's really serious

There were times when I could
Have "murdered" her
(But you know, I would hate
Anything to happen to her)

NO, I DON'T WANT TO SEE HER

Do you really think
She'll pull through ?
Do you really think
She'll pull through ?
Do ...

Girlfriend in a coma, I know
I know - it's serious
My, my, my, my, my, my baby, goodbye

There were times when I could
Have "strangled" her
(But you know, I would hate
Anything to happen to her)
WOULD YOU PLEASE
LET ME SEE HER !

Do you really think
She'll pull through ?
Do you really think
She'll pull through ?
Do ...
Let me whisper my last goodbyes

Analysis of "Girlfriend in a Coma"

From: LASID, <http://www.oz.net/moz/lyrics/lyricsin.htm>

I know - IT'S SERIOUS

A mocking and "controversial" single, this excellent though lightweight song is an example of Morrissey clearly laughing at those who consider him shocking. His unnecessarily journo-baiting flippancy about death in this song is hilarious in context as he gravely sings "I know - it's serious" before the intentionally foot-in-mouth "there were times when I could have murdered her".

Morrissey makes it remarkably easy for anyone to see he is provoking controversiality by placing "murdered" and "strangled" in quotes - probably why this song didn't actually cause much of a media ruckus when it was released as a single.

"A Hard Day's Night"

Artist: The Beatles

Album: A Hard Day's Night

It's been a hard day's night, and I been working like a dog
It's been a hard day's night, I should be sleeping like a
log
But when I get home to you I'll find the things that you do
Will make me feel alright

You know I work all day to get you money to buy you things
And it's worth it just to hear you say you're going to give
me everything
So why on earth should I moan, 'cause when I get you alone
You know I feel ok

When I'm home everything seems to be right
When I'm home feeling you holding me tight, tight

Owww!

So why on earth should I moan, 'cause when I get you alone
You know I feel ok

When I'm home everything seems to be right
When I'm home feeling you holding me tight, tight, yeah

It's been a hard day's night, and I been working like a dog
It's been a hard day's night, I should be sleeping like a
log
But when I get home to you I'll find the things that you do
Will make me feel alright
You know I feel alright
You know I feel alright...

"Panic"

Artist: The Smiths

Album: The World won't listen

Panic on the streets of London
Panic on the streets of Birmingham
I wonder to myself
Could life ever be sane again ?
The Leeds side-streets that you slip down
I wonder to myself
Hopes may rise on the Grasmere
But Honey Pie, you're not safe here
So you run down
To the safety of the town
But there's Panic on the streets of Carlisle
Dublin, Dundee, Humberside
I wonder to myself

Burn down the disco
Hang the blessed DJ
Because the music that they constantly play
IT SAYS NOTHING TO ME ABOUT MY LIFE
Hang the blessed DJ
Because the music they constantly play

On the Leeds side-streets that you slip down
Provincial towns you jog 'round
Hang the DJ, Hang the DJ, Hang the DJ
Hang the DJ, Hang the DJ, Hang the DJ
HANG THE DJ, HANG THE DJ, HANG THE DJ
HANG THE DJ, HANG THE DJ
HANG THE DJ, HANG THE DJ
Hang the DJ, Hang the DJ, Hang the DJ
HANG THE DJ, HANG THE DJ
HANG THE DJ, HANG THE DJ
Hang the DJ, Hang the DJ, Hang the DJ
HANG THE DJ, HANG THE DJ
HANG THE DJ, HANG THE DJ
Hang the DJ, Hang the DJ, Hang the DJ
HANG THE DJ

Analysis of "Panic"

From: LASID, <http://www.oz.net/moz/lyrics/lyricsin.htm>

Catchy multi-themed single that caused little ripples of delight to any ardent fans who happened to live in the cities mentioned (I myself spent many glorious hours slipping down the numerous side-streets of nearby Leeds).

One of Marr's more basic compositions, and unfortunately accompanied by a lacklustre drum part of Joyce's. The inherent contradictory nature of the song is further displayed in the coda of children happily chanting the threatening refrain "Hang The DJ".

For anyone who doesn't already know the story, Morrissey wrote this song as a response to DJ Steve Wright's insensitive placing of Wham's vacuous "I'm Your Man" directly after a news report of the horrible Chernobyl disaster. Done live, Morrissey often twirled a noose around, wearing a T-shirt with the "zany" Steve Wright's face stamped, like a passport, with "HANG THE DJ". This song often prompted Morrissey to discourse on his hatred of "puerile" dance music, which he refers to in this song. Steve Wright penned an "hilarious" pastiche of Morrissey, which you can read at Stephane Daigles' site.

"Hairdresser on Fire"

Artist: Morrissey

Album: Viva Hate

Here is London, giddy of London
Is it home of the free -
Or what ?

Can you squeeze me
Into an empty page of your diary
And psychologically save me
I've got faith in you
I sense the power
Within the fingers
Within an hour the power
Could totally destroy me
(Or, it could save my life)

Oh, here is London
"Home of the brash, outrageous and free"
You are repressed
But you're remarkably dressed
Is it Real ?
And you're always busy

Really busy
Busy, busy
Oh, hairdresser on fire
All around Sloane Square
And you're just so busy
Busy, busy
Busy scissors
Oh, hairdresser on fire
(Only the other day)

Was a client, over-cautious
He made you nervous
And when he said
"I'm gonna sue you"
Oh, I really felt for you ...mmm...

So can you squeeze me
Into an empty page of your diary;
And supernaturally change me ?
Change me, change
Oh, here in London
"Home of the brash, outrageous and free"

You are repressed
But you're remarkably dressed
Is it Real ?
And you're always busy

Really busy
Busy clippers
Oh, hairdresser on fire
All around Sloane Square

And you're just too busy
To see me
Busy clippers
Oh, hairdresser on fire
(Only the other day)

Analysis of "Hairdresser on Fire"

From: LASID, <http://www.oz.net/moz/lyrics/lyricsin.htm>

Excellent cavorting B-side to Suedehead, based on an experience where Morrissey couldn't find an appointment with a hairdresser. He ludicrously turned this incident into this very catchy song, which works as well as a track on Bona Drag as a B-side. His intoxication with big city London is soon revealed as built on rocky foundations when he fails to be supernaturally saved by his Sloane Square hairdresser. Affirms that he has not lost his sharp wit by going solo.

"Piggies"

Artist: The Beatles

Album: The White Album

Have you seen the little piggies
Crawling in the dirt
And for all the little piggies
Life is getting worse
Always having dirt to play around in.

Have you seen the bigger piggies
In their starched white shirts
You will find the bigger piggies
You will find the bigger piggies
Stirring up the dirt
Always have clean shirts to play around in.

In their styes with all their backing
They don't care what goes on around
In their eyes there's something lacking
What they need's a damn good whacking.

Everywhere there's lots of piggies
Living piggy lives
You can see them out for dinner
With their piggy wives
Clutching forks and knives to eat their bacon.

"Rocky Raccoon"

Artist: The Beatles

Album: The White Album

Now somewhere in the black mountain hills of Dakota
There lived a young boy named Rocky Raccoon
And one day his woman ran off with another guy
Hit young Rocky in the eye, Rocky didn't like that
He said I'm gonna get that boy
So one day he walked into town
Booked himself a room in the local saloon

Rocky Raccoon checked into his room
Only to find Gideon's bible
Rocky had come equipped with a gun
To shoot off the legs of his rival
His rival it seems had broken his dreams
By stealing the girl of his fancy
Her name was Magil and she called herself Lil
But everyone knew her as Nancy

Now she and her man who called himself Dan
Were in the next room at the hoe down
Rocky burst in and grinning a grin
He said Danny boy this is a showdown
But Daniel was hot - he drew first and shot
And Rocky collapsed in the corner

Now the doctor came in stinking of gin
And proceeded to lie on the table
He said Rocky you met your match
And Rocky said, doc it's only a scratch
And I'll be better, I'll be better doc as soon as I am able

Now Rocky Raccoon he fell back in his room
Only to find Gideon's bible
Gideon checked out and he left it no doubt
To help with good Rocky's revival

"Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band"

Artist: The Beatles

Album: Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band

It was twenty years ago today,
Sgt. Pepper taught the band to play,
They've been going in and out of style
But they're guaranteed to raise a smile.

So may I introduce you
To the act you've known for all these years,
Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band
We're Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band,
We hope you will enjoy the show,
We're Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band
Sit back and let the evening go.

Sgt. Pepper's Lonely, Sgt. Pepper's Lonely,
Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band,
It's wonderful to see you here, it's certainly a thrill,
You're such a lovely audience,
We'd love to take you home with us,
We'd love to take you home.

I don't really want to stop the show,
But I thought that you might like to know,
That the singers gonna sing a song,
And he wants you all to sing along.

So let me introduce you to
The one and only Billy Shears
And Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.

"Give peace a chance"

Artist: John Lennon

Album: The John Lennon Collection

Ev'rybody's talkin' 'bout

Bagism, Shagism, Dragism, Madism, Ragism, Tagism

This-ism, that-ism, ism ism ism

All we are saying is give peace a chance

All we are saying is give peace a chance

(C'mon)

Ev'rybody's talkin' 'bout

Minister, Sinister, Banisters and Canisters,

Bishops, Fishops, Rabbis, and Pop Eyes, Bye bye, Bye byes

All we are saying is give peace a chance

All we are saying is give peace a chance

(Let me tell you now)

Ev'rybody's talkin' 'bout

Revolution, Evolution, Masturbation, Flagellation,

Regulation,

Integrations, mediations, United Nations, congratulations

All we are saying is give peace a chance

All we are saying is give peace a chance

Ev'rybody's talkin' 'bout

John and Yoko, Timmy Leary, Rosemary,

Tommy Smothers, Bobby Dylan, Tommy Cooper,

Derek Taylor, Norman Mailer, Alan Ginsberg, Hare Krishna

Hare Hare Krishna

All we are saying is give peace a chance

All we are saying is give peace a chance

(Repeat 'til the tape runs out)

"Happiness is a Warm Gun"

Artist: The Beatles

Album: The White Album

She's not a girl who misses much
Do do do do do do do do
She's well acquainted with the touch of the velvet hand
Like a lizard on a window pane.

The man in the crowd with the multicoloured mirrors
On his hobnail boots
Lying with his eyes while his hands are busy
Working overtime
A soap impression of his wife which he ate
And donated to the Nation Trust.

I need a fix 'cause I'm going down
Down to the bits that I left uptown
I need a fix cause I'm going down
Mother Superior jump the gun
Mother Superior jump the gun
Mother Superior jump the gun
Mother Superior jump the gun.

Happiness is a warm gun
Happiness is a warm gun
When I hold you in my arms
And I feel my finger on your trigger
I know no one can do me no harm
Because happiness is a warm gun
-Yes it is.

"Blackbird"

Artist: The Beatles

Album: The White Album

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these broken wings and learn to fly
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to arise

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these sunken eyes and learn to see
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to be free

Blackbird fly
Blackbird fly
Into the light of the dark black night

Blackbird fly
Blackbird fly
Into the light of the dark black night

Blackbird singing in the dead of night
Take these broken wings and learn to fly
All your life
You were only waiting for this moment to arise
You were only waiting for this moment to arise
You were only waiting for this moment to arise

"Everyday is like Sunday"

Artist: Morrissey

Album: Viva Hate

Trudging slowly over wet sand
Back to the bench where your clothes were stolen
This is the coastal town
That they forgot to close down
Armageddon - come Armageddon!
Come, Armageddon! Come!

Everyday is like Sunday
Everyday is silent and grey

Hide on the promenade
Etch a postcard :
"How I Dearly Wish I Was Not Here"
In the seaside town
...that they forgot to bomb
Come, Come, Come - nuclear bomb

Everyday is like Sunday
Everyday is silent and grey

Trudging back over pebbles and sand
And a strange dust lands on your hands
(And on your face...)
(On your face ...)
(On your face ...)
(On your face ...)

Everyday is like Sunday
"Win Yourself A Cheap Tray"
Share some greased tea with me
Everyday is silent and grey

Analysis of "Everyday is like Sunday

From: LASID, <http://www.oz.net/moz/lyrics/lyricsin.htm>

An absolutely classic song and probably the highlight of Viva Hate. Street's fine backing is transformed by Morrissey's incredibly well-realised vocal, and what I would hold up as an example of Morrissey's lyrical genius. Ironically enough, this song (as in the other classic fool's gold track, Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now) is often cited as an example of Mozzer's miserablism. Nothing could really be further from the truth, when it comes to this song, at least. None of the critics seem to have noticed that there is deliberately no space between the words "every" and "day". I suggest they look at the difference in meaning between "everyday" and "every day". Rather than moping about his whole life being dull, this song is a brilliant eulogy to finally escaping from an awful life best left behind. It's almost as if Moz had purposefully set a trap for the foot-in-mouth merchants, those who speak before even considering.

In the song, the protagonist is looking back at the bad old days when he was stuck in a dead-end seaside town. The usual holiday clichés are reversed, with Morrissey caustically commenting in a contemporary interview "The idea of a resort in Britain doesn't seem natural".

Regarding the strange dust, there are (of course) several theories as to the symbolism. I believe it is deliberately left open-ended so the listener may reach their own conclusions :)

The Cheap Tray mentioned is probably referring to the god-awful cheap holiday gifts you get in poky little shops in Scarborough.

Greased tea could be exactly what it says - greasy horrible tea from a "Greasy Spoon" beachfront cafe. Or a slightly more contrived theory is that it is a clever pun on the greased poles seen in team sport fun-day event things. The image of the nation's most comforting symbol, our national drink, as a dangerous and slippery item, is quite compelling. Or it could just mean tea with the attending sweet scones and jam.

Many people have commented on this song's resemblance to John Betjeman's poem "Slough".

Charles Blair suggests this song may be connected to the Neville Shute book "On The Beach".

William Kurt has this to say :

the world of "Everyday is like Sunday" takes place in

the town that wasn't bombed. Life seems to be imprisoning and dreary without the freedom and excitement that fearing the bomb had previously brought. The lines "Trudging slowly over wet sand/Back to the bench where your clothes were stolen" seem to clearly show this transition from freedom and joy to a duller, more miserable world. It seems as if the protagonist was formerly running joyously naked along the beach, as would be expected of the protagonist in "Ask", but after the fun is gone, he returns to find that his clothes have been stolen, leaving him naked and alone on the beach on a cold grey day. The rest of the song seems to be describing the walk of the protagonist hoping for the bomb to drop to put a quick end to things. Then the "Strange dust lands". I feel that what this 'strange dust' is is pretty clear: it's the dust from nuclear fall out. While the sudden flash of a nuclear bomb will eliminate your life in a quick and brilliant flash, nuclear fall out will slowly give you radiation poisoning, leaving you with a long painful death. That's also what I believe the 'greased tea' is. The grease give the image that the tea is tainted and sickly; basically it's radioactive tea, polluted and dirty, leading to a slow miserable death. Overall the entire song is much like when someone says 'life is long'; this is never viewed as something positive, as opposed to when someone says 'life is short'. A short quick life means that one can do whatever one wants and can ignore all the consequences, but a long life is full of responsibility and consequences for every action.

II. Band Information

A. The Beatles

B. The Smiths

C. Morrissey

(all information from <http://www.allmusicguide.com>)

A. The Beatles

So much has been said and written about the Beatles -- and their story is so mythic in its sweep -- that it's difficult to summarize their career without restating clichés that have already been digested by tens of millions of rock fans. To start with the obvious, they were the greatest and most influential act of the rock era, and introduced more innovations into popular music than any other rock band of the 20th century. Moreover, they were among the few artists of any discipline that were simultaneously the best at what they did, and the most popular at what they did. Relentlessly imaginative and experimental, the Beatles grabbed a hold of the international mass consciousness in 1964 and never let go for the next six years, always staying ahead of the pack in terms of creativity, but never losing their ability to communicate their increasingly sophisticated ideas to a mass audience. Their supremacy as rock icons remains unchallenged to this day, decades after their breakup in 1970.

Even when couching praise in specific terms, it's hard to convey the scope of the Beatles' achievements in a mere paragraph or two. They synthesized all that was good about early rock & roll, and changed it into something original and even more exciting. They established the prototype for the self-contained rock group that wrote and performed their own material. As composers, their craft and melodic inventiveness were second to none, and key to the evolution of rock from its blues/R&B-based forms into a style that was far more eclectic, but equally visceral. As singers, both John Lennon and Paul McCartney were among the best and most expressive vocalists in rock; the group's harmonies were intricate and exhilarating. As performers, they were (at least until touring had ground them down) exciting and photogenic; when they retreated into the studio, they were instrumental in pioneering advanced techniques and multi-layered arrangements. They were also the first British rock group to achieve worldwide prominence, launching a British Invasion that made rock truly an international phenomenon.

More than any other top group, the Beatles' success was very much a case of the sum being greater than the parts. Their phenomenal cohesion was due in large degree to most of the group having known each other and played together in Liverpool for about five years before they began to have

hit records. Guitarist and teenage rebel John Lennon got hooked on rock & roll in the mid-'50s, and formed a band, the Quarrymen, at his high school. Around mid-1957, the Quarrymen were joined by another guitarist, Paul McCartney, nearly two years Lennon's junior. A bit later they were joined by another guitarist, George Harrison, a friend of McCartney's. The Quarrymen would change lineups constantly in the late '50s, eventually reducing to the core trio of guitarists, who'd proven themselves to be the best musicians and most personally compatible individuals within the band.

The Quarrymen changed their name to the Silver Beatles in 1960, quickly dropping the "Silver" to become just the Beatles. Lennon's art college friend Stuart Sutcliffe joined on bass, but finding a permanent drummer was a vexing problem until Pete Best joined in the summer of 1960. He successfully auditioned for the combo just before they left for a several-month stint in Hamburg, Germany.

Hamburg was the Beatles' baptism by fire. Playing grueling sessions for hours on end in one of the most notorious red-light districts in the world, the group was forced to expand their repertoire, tighten up their chops, and invest their show with enough manic energy to keep the rowdy crowds satisfied. When they returned to Liverpool at the end of 1960, the band -- formerly also-rans on the exploding Liverpool "beat" scene -- were suddenly the most exciting act on the local circuit. They consolidated their following in 1961 with constant gigging in the Merseyside area, most often at the legendary Cavern Club, the incubator of the Merseybeat sound.

They also returned for engagements in Hamburg during 1961, although Sutcliffe dropped out of the band that year to concentrate on his art school studies there. McCartney took over on bass, Harrison settled in as lead guitarist, and Lennon had rhythm guitar; everyone sang. In mid-1961, the Beatles (minus Sutcliffe) made their first recordings in Germany, as a backup group to a British rock guitarist/singer based in Hamburg, Tony Sheridan. The Beatles hadn't fully developed at this point, and these recordings -- many of which (including a couple of Sheridan-less tracks) were issued only after the band's rise to fame -- found their talents in a most embryonic state. The Hamburg stint was also notable for gaining the Beatles sophisticated, artistic fans such as Sutcliffe's

girlfriend, Astrid Kirchherr, who influenced all of them (except Best) to restyle their quiffs in the mop-tops that gave the musicians their most distinctive visual trademark. (Sutcliffe, tragically, would die of a brain hemorrhage in April 1962).

Near the end of 1961, the Beatles' exploding local popularity caught the attention of local record store manager Brian Epstein, who was soon managing the band as well. He used his contacts to swiftly acquire a January 1, 1962, audition at Decca Records that has been heavily bootlegged (some tracks were officially released in 1995). After weeks of deliberation, Decca turned them down, as did several other British labels. Epstein's perseverance was finally rewarded with an audition for producer George Martin at Parlophone, an EMI subsidiary; Martin signed the Beatles in mid-1962. By this time, Epstein was assiduously grooming his charges for national success by influencing them to smarten up their appearance, dispensing with their leather jackets and trousers in favor of tailored suits and ties.

One more major change was in the offing before the Beatles made their Parlophone debut. In August 1962, drummer Pete Best was kicked out of the group, a controversial decision that has been the cause of much speculation since. There is still no solid consensus as to whether it was because of his solitary, moody nature; the other Beatles' jealousy of his popularity with the fans; his musical shortcomings (George Martin had already told Epstein that Best wasn't good enough to drum on recordings); or his refusal to wear his hair in bangs. What seems most likely was that the Beatles simply found his personality incompatible, preferring to enlist Ringo Starr (born Richard Starkey), drummer with another popular Merseyside outfit, Rory Storm & the Hurricanes. Starr had been in the Beatles for a few weeks when they recorded their first single, "Love Me Do"/"P.S. I Love You," in September 1962. Both sides of the 45 were Lennon-McCartney originals, and the songwriting team would be credited with most of the group's material throughout the Beatles' career.

The single, a promising but fairly rudimentary effort, hovered around the lower reaches of the British Top 20. The Beatles phenomenon didn't truly kick in until "Please Please Me," which topped the British charts in early 1963. This was the prototype British Invasion single: an

infectious melody, charging guitars, and positively exuberant harmonies. The same traits were evident on their third 45, "From Me to You" (a British number one), and their debut LP, Please Please Me. Although it was mostly recorded in a single day, Please Please Me topped the British charts for an astonishing 30 weeks, establishing the group as the most popular rock & roll act ever seen in the U.K.

What the Beatles had done was to take the best elements of the rock and pop they loved and make them their own. Since the Quarrymen days, they had been steeped in the classic early rock of Elvis, Buddy Holly, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Carl Perkins, and the Everly Brothers; they'd also kept an ear open to the early '60s sounds of Motown, Phil Spector, and the girl groups. What they added was an unmatched songwriting savvy (inspired by Brill Building teams such as Gerry Goffin and Carole King), a brash guitar-oriented attack, wildly enthusiastic vocals, and the embodiment of the youthful flair of their generation, ready to dispense with postwar austerity and claim a culture of their own. They were also unsurpassed in their eclecticism, willing to borrow from blues, popular standards, gospel, folk, or whatever seemed suitable for their musical vision. Producer George Martin was the perfect foil for the group, refining their ideas without tinkering with their cores; during the last half of their career, he was indispensable for his ability to translate their concepts into arrangements that required complex orchestration, innovative applications of recording technology, and an ever-widening array of instruments.

Just as crucially, the Beatles were never ones to stand still and milk formulas. All of their subsequent albums and singles would show remarkable artistic progression (though never at the expense of a damn catchy tune). Even on their second LP, With the Beatles (1963), it was evident that their talents as composers and instrumentalists were expanding furiously, as they devised ever more inventive melodies and harmonies, and boosted the fullness of their arrangements. "She Loves You" and "I Want to Hold Your Hand" established the group not just as a popular music act, but as a phenomenon never before seen in the British entertainment business, as each single sold over a million copies in the U.K. After some celebrated national TV appearances, Beatlemania broke out across the British Isles in late 1963, the group generating screams and hysteria at

all of their public appearances, musical or otherwise.

Capitol, which had first refusal of the Beatles' recordings in the United States, had declined to issue the group's first few singles, which ended up appearing on relatively small American independents. Capitol took up its option on "I Want to Hold Your Hand," which stormed to the top of the U.S. charts within weeks of its release on December 26, 1963. The Beatles' television appearances on The Ed Sullivan Show in February of 1964 launched Beatlemania (and the entire British Invasion) on an even bigger scale than it had reached in Britain. In the first week of April 1964, the Beatles had the Top Five best-selling singles in the U.S.; they also had the first two slots on the album charts, as well as other entries throughout the Billboard Top 100. No one had ever dominated the market for popular music so heavily; it's doubtful that anyone ever will again. The Beatles themselves would continue to reach number one with most of their singles and albums until their 1970 breakup.

Hard as it may be to believe today, the Beatles were often dismissed by cultural commentators of the time as nothing more than a fad that would vanish within months as the novelty wore off. The group ensured this wouldn't happen by making *A Hard Day's Night* in early 1964, a cinéma vérité-style motion picture comedy/musical that cemented their image as "the Fab Four": happy-go-lucky, individualistic, cheeky, funny lads with nonstop energy. The soundtrack was also a triumph, consisting entirely of Lennon-McCartney tunes, including such standards as the title tune, "And I Love Her," "If I Fell," "Can't Buy Me Love," and "Things We Said Today." George Harrison's resonant 12-string electric guitar leads were hugely influential; the movie helped persuade the Byrds, then folk singers, to plunge all-out into rock & roll, and the Beatles (along with Bob Dylan) would be hugely influential on the folk-rock explosion of 1965. The Beatles' success, too, had begun to open the U.S. market for fellow Brits like the Rolling Stones, the Animals, and the Kinks, and inspired young American groups like the Beau Brummels, Lovin' Spoonful, and others to mount a challenge of their own with self-penned material that owed a great debt to Lennon-McCartney.

Between riotous international tours in 1964 and 1965, the Beatles continued to squeeze out more chart-topping albums and singles. (Until 1967, the group's British albums were

often truncated for release in the States; when their catalog was transferred to CD, the albums were released worldwide in their British configurations.) In retrospect, critics have judged *Beatles for Sale* (late 1964) and *Help!* (mid-1965) as the band's least impressive efforts. To some degree, that's true. Touring and an insatiable market placed heavy demands upon their songwriting, and some of the originals and covers on these records, while brilliant by many group's standards, were filler in the context of the Beatles' best work.

But when at the top of their game, the group was continuing to push forward. "I Feel Fine" had feedback and brilliant guitar leads; "Ticket to Ride" showed the band beginning to incorporate the ringing, metallic, circular guitar lines that would be appropriated by bands like the Byrds; "Help!" was their first burst of confessional lyricism; "Yesterday" employed a string quartet. John Lennon in particular was beginning to exhibit a Dylanesque influence in his songwriting on such folky, downbeat numbers as "I'm a Loser" and "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away." And tracks like "I Don't Want to Spoil the Party" and "I've Just Seen a Face" had a strong country flavor.

Although the Beatles' second film, *Help!*, was a much sillier and less sophisticated affair than their first feature, it too was a huge commercial success. By this time, though, the Beatles had nothing to prove in commercial terms; the remaining frontiers were artistic challenges that could only be met in the studio. They rose to the occasion at the end of 1965 with *Rubber Soul*, one of the classic folk-rock records. Lyrically, Lennon, McCartney, and even Harrison (who was now writing some tunes on his own) were evolving beyond boy-girl scenarios into complex, personal feelings. They were also pushing the limits of studio rock by devising new guitar and bass textures, experimenting with distortion and multi-tracking, and using unconventional (for rock) instruments like the sitar.

As much of a progression as *Rubber Soul* was relative to their previous records, it was but a taster for the boundary-shattering outings of the next few years. The "Paperback Writer"/"Rain" single found the group abandoning romantic themes entirely, boosting the bass to previously unknown levels, and fooling around with psychedelic imagery and backwards tapes on the B-side. Drugs (psychedelic and

otherwise) were fueling their already fertile imaginations, but they felt creatively hindered by their touring obligations. Revolver, released in the summer of 1966, proved what the group could be capable of when allotted months of time in the studio. Hazy hard guitars and thicker vocal arrangements formed the bed of these increasingly imagistic, ambitious lyrics; the group's eclecticism now encompassed everything from singalong novelties ("Yellow Submarine") and string quartet-backed character sketches ("Eleanor Rigby") to Indian-influenced swirls of echo and backwards tapes ("Tomorrow Never Knows"). Some would complain that the Beatles had abandoned the earthy rock of their roots for clever mannerism. But Revolver, like virtually all of the group's singles and albums from "She Loves You" on, would be a worldwide chart-topper.

For the past couple of years, live performance had become a rote exercise for the group, tired of competing with thousands of screaming fans that drowned out most of their voices and instruments. A 1966 summer worldwide tour was particularly grueling: the group's entourage was physically attacked in the Philippines after a perceived snub of the country's queen, and a casual remark by John Lennon about the Beatles being bigger than Jesus Christ was picked up in the States, resulting in the burning of Beatle records in the Bible belt and demands for a repentant apology. Their final concert of that American tour (in San Francisco on August 29, 1966) would be their last in front of a paying audience, as the group decided to stop playing live in order to concentrate on their studio recordings.

This was a radical (indeed, unprecedented) step in 1966, and the media was rife with speculation that the act was breaking up, especially after all four spent late 1966 engaged in separate personal and artistic pursuits. The appearance of the "Penny Lane"/"Strawberry Fields Forever" single in February 1967 squelched these concerns. Frequently cited as the strongest double A-side ever, the Beatles were now pushing forward into unabashedly psychedelic territory in their use of orchestral arrangements and Mellotron, without abandoning their grasp of memorable melody and immediately accessible lyrical messages.

Sgt. Pepper, released in June 1967 as the Summer of Love dawned, was the definitive psychedelic soundtrack. Or, at least, so it was perceived at the time: subsequent critics

have painted the album as an uneven affair, given a conceptual unity via its brilliant multi-tracked overdubs, singalong melodies, and fairy tale-ish lyrics. Others remain convinced, as millions did at the time, that it represented pop's greatest triumph, or indeed an evolution of pop into art with a capital A. In addition to mining all manner of roots influences, the musicians were also picking up vibes from Indian music, avant-garde electronics, classical, music hall, and more. When the Beatles premiered their hippie anthem "All You Need Is Love" as part of a worldwide TV broadcast, they had been truly anointed as spokespersons for their generation (a role they had not actively sought), and it seemed they could do no wrong.

Musically, that would usually continue to be the case, but the group's strength began to unravel at a surprisingly quick pace. In August 1967, Brian Epstein -- prone to suicidal depression over the past year -- died of a drug overdose, leaving them without a manager. The group pressed on with their next film project, *Magical Mystery Tour*, directed by themselves; lacking focus or even basic professionalism, the picture bombed when it was premiered on BBC television in December 1967, giving the media the first real chance they'd ever had to roast the Beatles over a flame. (Another film, the animated feature *Yellow Submarine*, would appear in 1968, although the Beatles had little involvement with the project, either in terms of the movie or the soundtrack.) In early 1968, the Beatles decamped to India for a course in transcendental meditation with the Maharishi; this too became something of a media embarrassment, as each of the four would eventually depart the course before its completion.

The Beatles did use their unaccustomed peace in India to compose a wealth of new material. Judged solely on musical merit, *The White Album*, a double LP released in late 1968, was a triumph. While largely abandoning their psychedelic instruments to return to guitar-based rock, they maintained their whimsical eclecticism, proving themselves masters of everything from blues-rock to vaudeville. As individual songwriters, too, it contains some of their finest work (as does the brilliant non-LP single from this era, "Hey Jude"/"Revolution").

The problem, at least in terms of the group's long-term health, was that these were very much individual songs, as opposed to collective ones. Lennon and McCartney had long

composed most of their tunes separately (you can almost always tell the composer by the lead vocalist). But they had always fed off of each other not only to supply missing bits and pieces that would bring a song to completion, but to provide a competitive edge that would bring out the best in the other. McCartney's romantic melodicism and Lennon's more acidic, gritty wit were perfect complements for one another. By the White Album, it was clear (if only in retrospect) that each member was more concerned with his own expression than that of the collective group: a natural impulse, but one that was bound to lead to difficulties.

In addition, George Harrison was becoming a more prolific and skilled composer as well, imbuing his own melodies (which were nearly the equal of those of his more celebrated colleagues) with a cosmic lightness. Harrison was beginning to resent his junior status, and the group began to bicker more openly in the studio. Ringo Starr, whose solid drumming and good nature could usually be counted upon (as was evident in his infrequent lead vocals), actually quit for a couple of weeks in the midst of the White Album sessions (though the media was unaware of this at the time). Personal interests were coming into play as well: Lennon's devotion to romantic and artistic pursuits with his new girlfriend (and soon-to-be-wife) Yoko Ono was diverting his attentions from the Beatles. Apple Records, started by the group earlier in 1968 as a sort of utopian commercial enterprise, was becoming a financial and organizational nightmare.

These weren't the ideal conditions under which to record a new album in January 1969, especially when McCartney was pushing the group to return to live performing, although none of the others seemed especially keen on the idea. They did agree to try and record a "back-to-basics," live-in-the-studio-type LP, the sessions being filmed for a television special. That plan almost blew up when Harrison, in the midst of tense arguments, left the group for a few days. Although he returned, the idea of playing live concerts was put on the back burner; Harrison enlisted American soul keyboardist Billy Preston as kind of a fifth member on the sessions, both to beef up the arrangements and to alleviate the uncomfortable atmosphere. Exacerbating the problem was that the Beatles didn't have a great deal of first-class new songs to work with, although some were excellent. In order to provide a suitable concert-like experience for the film, the group did climb the roof of

their Apple headquarters in London to deliver an impromptu performance on January 30, 1969, before the police stopped it; this was their last live concert of any sort.

Generally dissatisfied with these early-1969 sessions, the album and film -- at first titled *Get Back*, and later to emerge as *Let It Be* -- remained in the can as the group tried to figure out how the projects should be mixed, packaged, and distributed. A couple of the best tracks, "Get Back"/"Don't Let Me Down," were issued as a single in the spring of 1969. By this time, the Beatles' quarrels were intensifying in a dispute over management: McCartney wanted their affairs to be handled by his new father-in-law, Lee Eastman, while the other members of the group favored a tough American businessman, Allen Klein.

It was something of a miracle, then, that the final album recorded by the group, *Abbey Road*, was one of their most unified efforts (even if, by this time, the musicians were recording many of their parts separately). It certainly boasted some of their most intricate melodies, harmonies, and instrumental arrangements; it also heralded the arrival of Harrison as a composer of equal talent to Lennon and McCartney, as George wrote the album's two most popular tunes, "Something" and "Here Comes the Sun." The Beatles were still progressing, but it turned out to be the end of the road, as their business disputes continued to magnify. Lennon, who had begun releasing solo singles and performing with friends as the Plastic Ono Band, threatened to resign in late 1969, although he was dissuaded from making a public announcement.

Most of the early-1969 tapes remained unreleased, partially because the footage for the planned television broadcast of these sessions was now going to be produced as a documentary movie. The accompanying soundtrack album, *Let It Be*, was delayed so that its release could coincide with that of the film. Lennon, Harrison, and Allen Klein decided to have celebrated American producer Phil Spector record some additional instrumentation and do some mixing. Thus the confusion that persists among most rock listeners to this day: *Let It Be*, although the last Beatles album to be released, was not the last one to be recorded. *Abbey Road* should actually be considered as the Beatles' last album; most of the material on *Let It Be*, including the title track (which would be the last single released while the group was still together), was recorded several months

before the Abbey Road sessions began in earnest, and a good 15 months or so before its May 1970 release.

By that time, the Beatles were no more. In fact, there had been no recording done by the group as a unit since August 1969, and each member of the band had begun to pursue serious outside professional interests independently via the Plastic Ono Band, Harrison's tour with Delaney & Bonnie, Starr's starring role in the Magic Christian film, or McCartney's first solo album. The outside world for the most part remained almost wholly unaware of the seriousness of the group's friction, making it a devastating shock for much of the world's youth when McCartney announced that he was leaving the Beatles on April 10, 1970. (The "announcement" was actually contained in a press release for his new album, in which his declaration of his intention to work on his own effectively served as a notice of his departure.)

The final blow, apparently, was the conflict between the release dates of Let It Be and McCartney's debut solo album. The rest of the group asked McCartney to delay his release until after Let It Be; McCartney refused, and for good measure, was distressed by Spector's post-production work on Let It Be, particularly the string overdubs on "The Long and Winding Road," which became a posthumous Beatles single that spring. Although McCartney received much of the blame for the split, it should be remembered that he had done more than any other member to keep the group going since Epstein's death, and that each of the other Beatles had threatened to leave well before McCartney's departure. With hindsight, the breakup seemed inevitable in view of their serious business disagreements and the growth of their individual interests.

As bitter as the initial headlines were to swallow, the feuding would grow much worse over the next few years. At the end of 1970, McCartney sued the rest of the Beatles in order to dissolve their partnership; the battle dragged through the courts for years, scotching any prospects of a group reunion. In any case, each member of the band quickly established viable solo careers. In fact, at the outset it could have been argued that the artistic effects of the split were in some ways beneficial, freeing Lennon and Harrison to make their most uncompromising artistic statements (Plastic Ono Band and All Things Must Pass). George's individual talents in particular received acclaim

that had always eluded him when he was overshadowed by Lennon-McCartney. Paul had a much rougher time with the critics, but continued to issue a stream of hit singles, hitting a commercial and critical jackpot at the end of 1973 with the massively successful *Band on the Run*. Ringo did not have the songwriting acumen to compete on the same level as the others, yet he too had quite a few big hit singles in the early '70s, often benefiting from the assistance of his former bandmates.

Yet within a short time, it became apparent both that the Beatles were not going to settle their differences and reunite, and that their solo work could not compare with what they were capable of creating together. The stereotype has it that the split allowed each of them to indulge in their worst tendencies to their extremes: Lennon in agit-prop, Harrison in holier-than-thou-mysticism, McCartney in cutesy pop, Starr in easy listening rock. There's a good deal of truth in this, but it's also important to bear in mind that what was most missing was a sense of group interaction. The critical party line often champions Lennon as the angry, realist rocker, and McCartney as the melodic balladeer, but this is a fallacy: each of them were capable, in roughly equal measures, of ballsy all-out rock and sweet romanticism. What is not in dispute is that they sparked each other to reach heights that they could not attain on their own.

Despite periodic rumors of reunions throughout the 1970s, no group projects came close to materializing. It should be added that the Beatles themselves continued to feud to some degree, and from all evidence weren't seriously interested in working together as a unit. Any hopes of a reunion vanished when Lennon was assassinated in New York City in December 1980. The Beatles continued their solo careers throughout the 1980s, but their releases became less frequent, and their commercial success gradually diminished, as listeners without first-hand memories of the combo created their own idols.

The popularity of the Beatles-as-unit, however, proved eternal. In part, this is because the group's 1970 split effectively short-circuited the prospects of artistic decline; the body of work that was preserved was uniformly strong. However, it's also because, like any great works of art, the Beatles' records carried an ageless magnificence that continues to captivate new generations of listeners.

So it is that Beatles records continue to be heard on radio in heavy rotation, continue to sell in massive quantities, and continue to be covered and quoted by rock and pop artists through the present day.

Legal wrangles at Apple prevented the official issue of previously unreleased Beatle material for over two decades (although much of it was frequently bootlegged). The situation finally changed in the 1990s, after McCartney, Harrison, Starr, and Lennon's widow Yoko Ono settled their principal business disagreements. In 1994, this resulted in a double CD of BBC sessions from the early and mid-'60s. The following year, a much more ambitious project was undertaken: a multi-part film documentary, broadcast on network television in 1995, and then released (with double the length) for the home video market in 1996, with the active participation of the surviving Beatles.

To coincide with the Anthology documentary, three double CDs of previously unreleased/rare material were issued in 1995 and 1996. Additionally, McCartney, Harrison, and Starr (with some assistance from Jeff Lynne) embellished a couple of John Lennon demos from the 1970s with overdubs to create two new tracks ("Free as a Bird" and "Real Love") that were billed as actual Beatles recordings. Whether this constitutes the actual long-awaited "reunion" is the subject of much debate. Certainly these cuts were hardly classics on par with the music the group made in the 1960s. Some fans, even diehards, were inclined to view the whole Anthology project as a distinctly 1990s marketing exercise that maximized the mileage of whatever could be squeezed from the Beatles' vaults. If nothing else, though, the massive commercial success of outtakes that had, after all, been recorded 25 to 30 years ago, spoke volumes about the unabated appeal and fascination the Beatles continue to exert worldwide. -- Richie Unterberger

B. The Smiths

The Smiths were the definitive British indie rock band of the '80s, marking the end of synth-driven new wave and the beginning of the guitar rock that dominated English rock into the '90s. Sonically, the group was indebted to the British Invasion, crafting ringing, melodic three-minute pop singles, even for their album tracks. But their scope was far broader than that of a revivalist band. The group's core members, vocalist Morrissey and guitarist Johnny Marr, were obsessive rock fans inspired by the D.I.Y. ethics of punk, but they also had a fondness for girl groups, pop, and rockabilly. Morrissey and Marr also represented one of the strangest teams of collaborators in rock history. Marr was the rock traditionalist, looking like an elegant version of Keith Richards during the Smiths' heyday, and meticulously layering his guitar tracks in the studio. Morrissey, on the other hand, broke from rock tradition by singing in a keening, self-absorbed croon, embracing the forlorn, romantic poetry of Oscar Wilde, publicly declaring his celibacy, performing with a pocketful of gladiolas and a hearing aid, and making no secret of his disgust for most of his peers. While it eventually led to the Smiths' early demise, the friction between Morrissey and Marr resulted in a flurry of singles and albums over the course of three years that provided the blueprint for British guitar rock in the following decade.

Before forming the Smiths in 1982, Johnny Marr (b. John Maher, October 31, 1963; guitar) had played in a variety of Manchester-based rock & roll bands, including Sister Ray, Freaky Part, White Dice, and Paris Valentinos. On occasion, Marr had come close to a record contract -- one of his bands won a competition Stiff Records held to have Nick Lowe produce your band -- but he never quite made the leap. Though Morrissey (b. Steven Patrick Morrissey, May 22, 1959; vocals) had sung for a few weeks with the Nosebleeds and auditioned for Slaughter & the Dogs, he had primarily contented himself to being a passionate, vocal fan of both music and film. During his teens, he wrote the Melody Maker frequently, often getting his letters published. He had written the biography/tribute James Dean Isn't Dead, which was published by the local Manchester publishing house Babylon Books in the late '70s, as well as another book on the New York Dolls; he was also the president of the English New York Dolls fanclub. Morrissey met Marr, who was then looking for a lyricist, through mutual friends in the

spring of 1982. The pair began writing songs, eventually recording some demos with the Fall's drummer Simon Wolstencroft. By the fall, the duo had settled on the name the Smiths and recruited Marr's schoolmate Andy Rourke as their bassist and Mike Joyce as their drummer.

The Smiths made their live debut late in 1982 and by the spring of 1983, the group had earned a small, but loyal, following in their hometown of Manchester and had begun to make inroads in London. Rejecting a record deal with the Mancunian Factory Records, the band signed with Rough Trade for a one-off single, "Hand In Glove." With its veiled references to homosexuality and its ringing riffs, "Hand in Glove" became an underground sensation in the UK, topping the independent charts and earning the praise of the UK music weeklies. Soon, Morrissey's performances became notorious, as he appeared on stage wearing a hearing aid and with gladiolas stuffed in his back pockets. His interviews were becoming famous for his forthright, often contrary opinions, which helped the band become media sensations. By the time of the group's second single, "This Charming Man," in late 1983, the Smiths had already been the subject of controversy over their songs "Reel Around the Fountain," a song that had been aired on a BBC radio session and was alleged to condone child abuse. It was the first time that Morrissey's detached, literary and ironic lyrics were misinterpreted and it wouldn't be the last.

"This Charming Man" reached number 25 on the British charts in December of 1983, setting the stage for "What Difference Does It Make"'s peak of number 12 in February. The Smiths' rise to the upper reaches of the British charts was swift, and the passion of their fans, as well as the UK music press, indicated that the group had put an end to the synth-powered New Wave that dominated Britain in the early '80s. After rejecting their initial stab at a first album, the Smiths released their eponymous debut in the spring of 1984, to strong reviews and sales -- it peaked at number two. A few months later, the group backed '60s pop vocalist Sandie Shaw, who Morrissey had publicly praised in an article, on a version of "Hand In Glove" which released and reached the Top 40. "Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now" reached number 10, becoming their highest-charting single, amidst a storm of controversy about its B-side "Suffer Little Children," which was about the notorious Moors Murders. More controversy appeared when Morrissey denounced the hunger relief efforts of Band Aid, but the group's

popularity was not effected. Though the Smiths had become the most popular new rock & roll group in Britain, the group failed to make it outside of underground and college radio in the US, partially because they never launched a full-scale tour. At the end of the year, "William It Was Really Nothing" became a Top 20 hit and Hatful of Hollow, a collection of B-sides, BBC sessions and non-LP singles, went to the Top 10, followed shortly by "How Soon Is Now" peaking at number 24.

Meat is Murder, the band's second proper studio album, entered the British charts at number one in February of 1985, despite some criticism that it was weaker than The Smiths. Around the time of the release of Meat is Murder, Morrissey's interviews were becoming increasingly political, as he trashed the Thatcher administration and campaigned for vegetarianism; he even claimed that the Smiths were all vegetarians, and he forbid the remaining members to be photographed eating meat, even though they were still carnivores. Marr, for his part, was delving deeply into the rock & roll lifestyle, and looked increasingly like a cross between Keith Richards and Brian Jones. By the time the non-LP "Shakespeare's Sister" reached number 26 in the spring of 1985, the Smiths had spawned a rash of soundalike bands, including James, who opened for the group on their spring 1985 tour, most of which Morrissey supported. However, all of the media attention on the Smiths launched a mild backlash later in 1985, when "That Joke Isn't Funny Anymore" was pulled from Meat Is Murder and failed to reach the Top 40.

"The Boy With the Thorn In His Side" revived the band's fortunes in the fall of 1985, and their third album, The Queen Is Dead confirmed their popularity upon its release in the spring of 1986. Greeted with enthusiastic reviews and peaking at number two on the UK charts, The Queen Is Dead also expanded their cult in the US, cracking the Top 100. Shortly before the album was completed, former Aztec Camera guitarist Craig Gannon became the band's rhythm guitarist, and he played with the band throughout their 1986 international tour, including a botched American tour. The non-LP "Panic," which was criticized as racist by some observers for its repeated refrain of "Burn down the disco ... Hang the DJ," reached number 11 late in the summer. A few months after its release, Marr was seriously injured in a car crash. During his recuperation, Gannon was fired from the band, as was Rourke, who was suffering from heroin

addiction. Though Rourke was later reinstated, Gannon was never replaced.

The Smiths may have been at the height of their popularity in early 1987, with the non-LP singles "Shoplifters of the World" and "Sheila Take A Bow" reaching number 11 and 10 respectively and the singles and B-sides compilation *The World Won't Listen* (revamped for US release as *Louder Than Bombs* later in 1987) debuting at number two, but Marr was growing increasingly disenchanted with the band and the music industry. Over the course of the year, Morrissey and Marr became increasingly irritated with each other. The singer wished that Marr would stop playing with other artists like Bryan Ferry and Billy Bragg, while the guitarist was frustrated with Morrissey's devotion to '60s pop and hesitancy to explore new musical directions. A few weeks before the fall release of *Strangeways, Here We Come*, Marr announced that he was leaving the Smiths. Morrissey disbanded the group shortly afterward and began a solo career, signing with Parlophone in the UK and staying with the Smiths' US label, Reprise. Marr played as a sideman with a variety of artists, eventually forming *Electronic* with New Order frontman Bernard Sumner. Rourke retired from recording and Joyce became a member of the reunited *Buzzcocks* in 1991.

Rank, a live album recorded on the *Queen is Dead* tour, was released in the fall of 1988. It debuted at number two in the UK. A widely-criticized, two-part *Best of* compilation was released in 1992; the praised *Singles* compilation was released in 1995. Joyce and Rourke sued Morrissey and Marr in 1991, claiming they received only 10 percent of the group's earnings while the songwriters received 40 percent. Rourke eventually settled out of court, but Joyce won his case in late 1996. An appeal was scheduled. -- Stephen Thomas Erlewine

C. Morrissey

One of the most influential figures in alternative rock, Morrissey's legendarily sensitive, melancholy persona made him a highly polarizing icon, reviled in some quarters with nearly the same intensity he inspired in his passionately devoted fans. As the lead singer of the Smiths, arguably the most important indie band in Britain during the '80s, Morrissey's theatrical crooning and literate, poetic lyrics -- filled with romantic angst, social alienation, and cutting wit -- connected powerfully with a legion of similarly sensitive, disaffected youth. Yet as much as his fan base revered him, Morrissey was also criticized -- sometimes fairly, sometimes not -- for his self-absorption and determinedly miserable outlook (others simply couldn't stand his effeminacy). The Smiths were stars in Britain, exerting tremendous pull over much of the country's guitar-based music for many years after their breakup, but remained underground cult artists in the States. By the time Morrissey firmly established himself as a solo artist, that cult had grown to the point where he became more popular in the U.S. than in his homeland, where he was frequently dogged by controversy. Prevailing critical opinion on his solo albums holds that they don't measure up to his best work with the Smiths, yet the Mozzer (as he's affectionately nicknamed) has produced enough terrific music to keep his sizable fan base enthralled.

Stephen Patrick Morrissey was born May 22, 1959, in Manchester, England; not surprisingly a shy, awkward youth, he became obsessed with music and film as a teenager and devoted his writing talents to penning a New York Dolls fanzine (he was the president of their U.K. fan club), as well as a tribute to James Dean and numerous opinionated letters to the weekly music paper Melody Maker. During the explosion of punk in the late '70s, Morrissey unsuccessfully auditioned for Slaughter & the Dogs and sang for a brief period with a band called the Nosebleeds. He met guitarist Johnny Marr in 1982 and the two began writing songs together, forging one of the most productive partnerships British pop had seen in quite some time. The Smiths' 1983 debut single, "Hand in Glove," a love song filled with oblique references to homosexuality, made them an underground sensation in the U.K. and as Morrissey attracted more attention, he demonstrated a flair for manipulating the media. His interviews were filled with blunt, unpredictable opinions and intentionally outrageous

statements and his notoriety wasn't hurt by his stage presence (he performed wearing a hearing aid with flowers sticking out of his back pockets) or his self-proclaimed celibacy in the wake of much speculation about his sexuality. Possessed of a darkly cynical bent as a lyricist, he was often misinterpreted as advocating some of the more disturbing things he sang about, which only added to the furor surrounding the band. The Smiths' eponymous 1984 debut was a smash in the U.K. and in its wake, Morrissey began promoting his political views, heavily criticizing Margaret Thatcher, and advocating vegetarianism (hence the title of the follow-up LP, *Meat Is Murder*). The *Queen Is Dead* (1986) was acclaimed as a masterpiece, but friction between Morrissey and Marr was growing. Marr departed after 1987's *Strangeways, Here We Come* and Morrissey broke up the rest of the band to begin a solo career.

Feeling betrayed by Marr's defection, Morrissey channeled his frustration into creating new material with producer Stephen Street. His first two solo singles, "Suedehead" and the gorgeous "Everyday Is Like Sunday," were significant British hits in 1988 and his first album, *Viva Hate* (its title a reference to the Smiths' breakup), was commercially and critically well-received. He released several more high-quality singles, including "The Last of the International Playboys" and "Interesting Drug," but spent an inordinate amount of time laboring on the follow-up album, issuing the stopgap compilation *Bona Drag* in 1990. In the meantime, the Madchester fad was sweeping British indie music and when the lackluster *Kill Uncle* was finally released in 1991, it only magnified the disappointment. U.K. reviewers took Morrissey to task, suggesting that the record marked the end of his glory days and that he would never be able to match the songs he'd written in tandem with Marr. A misperceived flirtation with British nationalism (not helped by a couple of seemingly racial caricatures in recent songs) tarnished his image even more in the U.K. press during 1992, this coming amid even more frequent reports of feuds with his managers, business associates, and ex-bandmates. All the controversy overshadowed the fact that 1992's Mick Ronson-produced *Your Arsenal* was a smashing return to form; Morrissey used his new guitar tandem of Alain Whyte (who co-wrote much of the material) and Boz Boorer (formerly of rockabilly revivalists the Polecats) to full advantage in crafting a crunchy, glammed-up record. It easily ranked as the

hardest-rocking of his career, or at least, that was overshadowed in England; over in the U.S., tickets for his upcoming tour were selling like hotcakes and he managed to sell out L.A.'s Hollywood Bowl even faster than the Beatles had.

His confidence renewed by his American success (to the point where he permanently moved to Los Angeles), Morrissey delivered an equally strong follow-up in 1994's calmer Vauxhall and I, which even got him his first Top 50 singles-chart entry in the U.S. with the MTV-supported "The More You Ignore Me, the Closer I Get." A hit-and-miss compilation, The World of Morrissey, followed in 1995, after which he switched labels (from Sire to RCA) for the first time since the Smiths' debut album. Also issued in 1995 was the prog rock-informed Southpaw Grammar which confounded many and perhaps prevented him from expanding his American audience past a now-sizable group of longtime listeners. In 1996, he moved to another new label, this time Island, and released Maladjusted the following year. It failed to sell well outside of his most fanatical followers and his relationship with Island ended in 1998. In the years that followed, Morrissey remained a massively popular touring attraction on the strength of his singular identity, despite the fact that he had yet to land another record deal. -- Steve Huey