

How accurate is this statement in relation to the development

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



The Beatles were a phenomenal success throughout the 1960s as they began a new era of music that changed the state of play in the music industry. Their simple chord structures, epitomised on 'Love Me Do', and intricate vocal harmonies led them to being a huge success in Britain, as well as the rest of the world. There was a "charge emitted by their music" (p1, MacDonald, 1998) and the new genre of music undeniably inspired other bands to write and perform in a similar style.

However not all credit can be given to The Beatles for the development of popular music in Britain. Popular music from America was the initial influence as it "found its way into the UK via the ports" (BBC - h2g2) and as Liverpool was the main port into the UK from America, inevitably the music initially had an effect on musicians in the Merseyside area. This particularly had an effect on a four-piece skiffle group formed in 1956 by John Lennon, The Quarry Men, who over time developed and formed The Beatles in 1960 (MacDonald, 2002).

They were young and brought a new image that was idolised by teenagers. The "four young men behind the music" amazed people and their image resonated "with a youthful and halcyon ideal of those times" (p17, Frontani, 2007). They were later described as "the four most famous and musical men on earth, the best dressed and on a good day the most captivating people anyone can remember" (Taylor, n. d.) and "witty, irreverent, young and lovable mop-tops" (p86, Frontani, 2007).

This look attracted thousands of young men and women, many of whom would copy them in an attempt to idolise this new band. It is therefore

possible that the visual change in the sixties was indeed down to The Beatles and they were " a catalyst for much of the change that occurred during the 1960s" (p231, Frontani, 2007). The Beatles began performing in Germany at The Indra Club, Hamburg, on 17th August 1960 (Cross, 2005). It was described as " the worst of Koschmeider's clubs, surrounded by narrow streets of pubs, clubs and brothels" (p32, Cross, 2005).

They would often have to play for up to eight hours per day but this enabled them to create a very large song library, as Paul recites " but playing like that, you get to have a lot of tunes, if nothing else" (p33, Cross, 2005). They played for forty-eight nights until 3rd October when they were banned for " being too loud" (p348, MacDonald, 1998). Their initial repertoire began with covers of songs by artists such as Bobby Comstock and The Rooftop Singers and this continued on for a further two years before EMI would consider offering a record contract.

Despite an unsuccessful audition with Decca Records at the beginning of the year, their first single was recorded at EMI Studios on Abbey Road in September 1962, and the singles 'Love Me Do' and 'P. S. I Love You' were released a month later (p81, Everett, 2001). It was not until February 1963, however, that the release of 'Please Please Me' was The Beatles' first number one single, and the LP remained at number one for thirty weeks (p83, Everett, 2001).

Despite this initial success, Gerry and the Pacemakers dislodged them two months later with their number one single 'How Do You Do It' (Clayson,

2007). Regardless of the fact that they managed to dominate the UK charts, they were not initially successful in the USA. At first EMI declined to release their singles and passed them onto smaller record companies as " Vee Jay Records release 'Please Please Me' in February 1963" (p32 Shuker, 2005), however it is important to note that the single was released in the United Kingdom through Parlophone Records though.

It was not until later on for The Beatles as " this all changed with the band's first US tour in 1964, and the accompanying Beatlemania and chart domination" (p32, Shuker, 2005). The Beatles first appeared on The Ed Sullivan Show on 4th February 1964 and were " greeted by 3, 000 screaming teenage fans when they arrived at Kennedy International Airport" (p36, Frontani, 2007). This was a breakthrough for The Beatles, as well as future British artists, as they had previously accomplished little or no success in the USA until now.

This achievement would go on to be a key factor in encouraging other British bands such as The Kinks, The Rolling Stones and The Who to develop their success in other countries. Another aspect that was important to the success of The Beatles was the role of Abbey Road studios. Despite having an album titled after the renowned studios in London in 1969, studio number 2 was " used almost exclusively for Beatle business" which left them " free to create as it suited them" (p131 Frontani, 2007).

This freedom gave them the flexibility to write and record whenever they wished as well as being creative with new ideas and creating fusions by

mixing other genres into their already successful style. For example, " In 'Rubber Soul', the Beatles blend gospel, country music, baroque counterpoint and even French popular ballads into a style that is wholly their own" (p131, Frontani, 2007). Experimenting with new styles meant that they would be one step ahead of their competition.

In 1965 new bands such as The Yardbirds, The Kinks, The Rolling Stones and The Who were emerging and stealing publicity from The Beatles. As well as these new bands, solo artists such as Cliff Richard had already been successful prior to the 1960s and there was a huge audience who were captivated by his music (The OFFICIAL Cliff Richard website: Biography). The Beatles were continuing to develop their music as they progressed throughout their career and one catalyst that undoubtedly helped with this was the role of drugs, such as LSD, magic mushrooms and in particular marijuana (MacDonald, 1998).

They met Bob Dylan in " New York on August 28, 1964, at which time he introduced them to marijuana" (p276, Everett, 2001). The effect that Bob Dylan had on The Beatles was incredible as they began to reference him in their songs, such as 'Yer Blues' and 'The Luck of the Irish' as well as the " use of his photograph on the cover of 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band'" (p276, Everett, 2001), which is also regarded as the " Beatles' LSD album" (p137, Frontani, 2007). The use of marijuana continued and in the spring of 1965 The Beatles were " smoking marijuana for breakfast" (p317, Everett, 2001).

Their use of the drug had almost spiralled out of control and inspired them to write the song 'Help!' featured on the self-titled album released in 1965 (Help! - The Beatles - Discover music at Last. fm). The lyrics 'I need somebody', 'Help me if you can, I'm feeling down. Help me get my feet back on the ground' are evident as Lennon recalls, " I was fat and depressed and I was crying out for help" (p317, Everett, 2001). The use of marijuana was only just emerging in the sixties as more people were " trying to find new ways to explore pleasure" (Bacig, 2002).

It can therefore be deduced that The Beatles would have been one of the first bands to use it and other bands would no doubt experiment with it in the future. Smoking marijuana definitely would have had an effect on the music that The Beatles were producing, hence the change in instrumentation, texture and structure in the mid-sixties. The songs had also dramatically increased in length and with the release of 'Magical Mystery Tour' in 1967 (Magical Mystery Tour - The Beatles - Last. fm), songs like 'Strawberry Fields Forever' and 'I'm the Walrus' were now over four minutes in length.

At the beginning of their career, songs would only have lasted for a maximum of three minutes and mainly featured electric guitar, bass guitar, drums and perhaps a keyboard/piano. Instruments used previously in classical music were now evident in their music and in many cases dominated the music. The use of strings and brass are particularly evident in the accompaniment in 'Strawberry Fields Forever', before the music takes a

very unexpected turn in the last thirty seconds of the song, which features a modal flute passage.

As well as the introduction of instruments featured in classical music, The Beatles continued to experiment with new ideas which are evident on the singles 'I Feel Fine' which "opened with guitar feedback" and 'Norwegian Wood' which featured "George Harrison on sitar, an instrument that quickly became commonplace" (p132, Frontani, 2007). The sitar was also featured on the song 'Within You, Without You', from the album 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band', and is heard throughout the majority of the song.

Other British bands had not previously used these performance techniques and instruments, so it is important to consider these elements when examining the development of popular music in Britain throughout the 1960s. A technique that was used in many songs by The Beatles was the use of vocal harmonies. Obvious examples of this technique can be found in their performances of 'I Saw Her Standing There' and 'Yes It Is', which was described by Lennon as "a showcase for the group's close harmonies" (p130, Frontani, 2007).

Initially the vocal harmonies were mainly used in the chorus section for songs, for example 'I Saw Her Standing There' used simple backing vocals. This song was featured on the album 'Please Please Me' which was released quite early on their career in 1963 (Berman, 2007). However, with the release of 'Yes It Is' as a B-side to 'Ticket To Ride' two years later in 1965, their vocal harmonies were a key element to the music and began to feature

throughout their song. In contrast to the statement by Aaron Copland, not all credit alone can be given to The Beatles for the development of popular music in the 1960s.

It is indeed true that they were a key aspect in the development from 'pop' music to 'rock' music and The Beatles were "amazingly adept not only at pacing the competition, but also at surpassing it" (p132, Frontani, 2007). However other bands were now taking this approach and were beginning to attract large audiences, three influential bands at the time undoubtedly being The Kinks, The Rolling Stones and The Who. The Kinks came onto the scene very shortly after The Beatles and topped the UK charts in 1964 with 'You Really Got Me', a single that is still very popular today (p75, Harry, 2004).

They were seen as "the most consistently inventive 1960s band after the Beatles, due to Ray Davies's leadership and songwriting" (Moore, Kinks in Oxford Music Online). Whilst they were a huge success and continued to produce music until the 1980s (Harry, 2004), it is clear that The Beatles were still dominating the market and were continuing to attract the majority of the British audience. The Rolling Stones "came to the attention of an appalled nation as anti-Beatles" (p16, Clayson, 2007) and were initially disliked by many.

People would avoid listening to them and people would go as far as switching off their televisions or radios if they came on. "Fathers would switch off Top Of The Pops automatically if the Stones or anyone like them were on" (p17,

Clayson, 2007) and this was likely to further spark teenage rebellion..

Despite this objection to The Rolling Stones, many people quickly became avid fans of this new up and coming, raw band. Like The Beatles, fans would copy their fashion ideas, as " eleven boys were suspended from a Coventry secondary school for having 'Mick Jagger' haircuts" (p16, Clayson, 2007).

The rhythm and blues band certainly had a big impact on Britain and ironically signed a music deal with Decca, who had previously rejected a contract with The Beatles (Moore, Oxford Music Online). The Rolling Stones were not the only British band to rise to fame in the sixties though, as The Who released their first single in January 1965, which went straight into the UK Top 10 (Anon, Who in Oxford Music Online). Unlike The Rolling Stones, The Who had a controversial approach to their performances, which featured " in-person violence" which " matched an anti-social attitude" (Anon, Who in Oxford Music Online).

Nevertheless, The Who were still a massively lucrative band in Britain and went on to expand their success into America in 1969 with their release of the album 'Tommy' and their appearance at Woodstock (p94, Harry, 2004). As well as British bands, solo artists such as Cliff Richard and Cilla Black were continuing to attract wide audiences, primarily of the older generation. Cliff Richard was such a success that he is the " only artist to have achieved No. 1 hits in all the decades that followed his first chart-topper and can boast more than one hundred chart entries" (p83, Harry, 2004).

Cilla Black rose to fame interestingly via John Lennon and went on to have the same manager as The Beatles, Brian Epstein. He later went on to state that she would become "one of the biggest stars in this country for thirty or forty years" (Anon, Cilla Black Official Website | Biography). She would later go on to have two successful number one singles "just days before my 21st birthday", she write on her website (Anon, Cilla Black Official Website | Biography).

Unfortunately Cilla Black was not quite as successful in America where she "simply became another one-hit wonder over there with 'You're My World' reaching No. 26 on Billboard chart on July 25 1964" (p49, Harry, 2004). It is clear from the evidence pulled together that The Beatles were undeniably a huge influence on the music of the sixties, as Aaron Copland states. They are certainly an iconic feature of the sixties and the majority of us would agree that they are "probably the best example of the development of British popular music in the 1960s" (p20, Reeve-Baker, 2010).

However, Harry, 2004 also writes "there is no denying that the impact of the Beatles and the other British bands and artists did have a profound effect on the American music scene" (p57) so we can only agree with Aaron Copland to a certain extent and not give all credit to The Beatles when thinking about the music of the sixties. It is therefore fair to conclude with Shuker's statement in *Popular Music : The Key Concepts* as he writes "The Beatles were the crucial performers and their success opened the way for the Dave Clark Five, Gerry and the Pacemakers, the Rolling Stones, etc. (p32) as they

changed the way in which music was composed and performed to the British public and indeed the rest of the world.

We can also go as far to say that they could have opened the way for other emerging bands in the sixties such as Deep Purple, Pink Floyd and even Led Zeppelin, who would go on to develop further experimental techniques, both in terms of harmony and technology. In the words of Ian MacDonald: "Though ultimately the product of influences deeper than pop, the Sixties' soaring optimism was ideally expressed by it, and nowhere more perfectly than in the music of The Beatles" (p1, MacDonald, 1998).