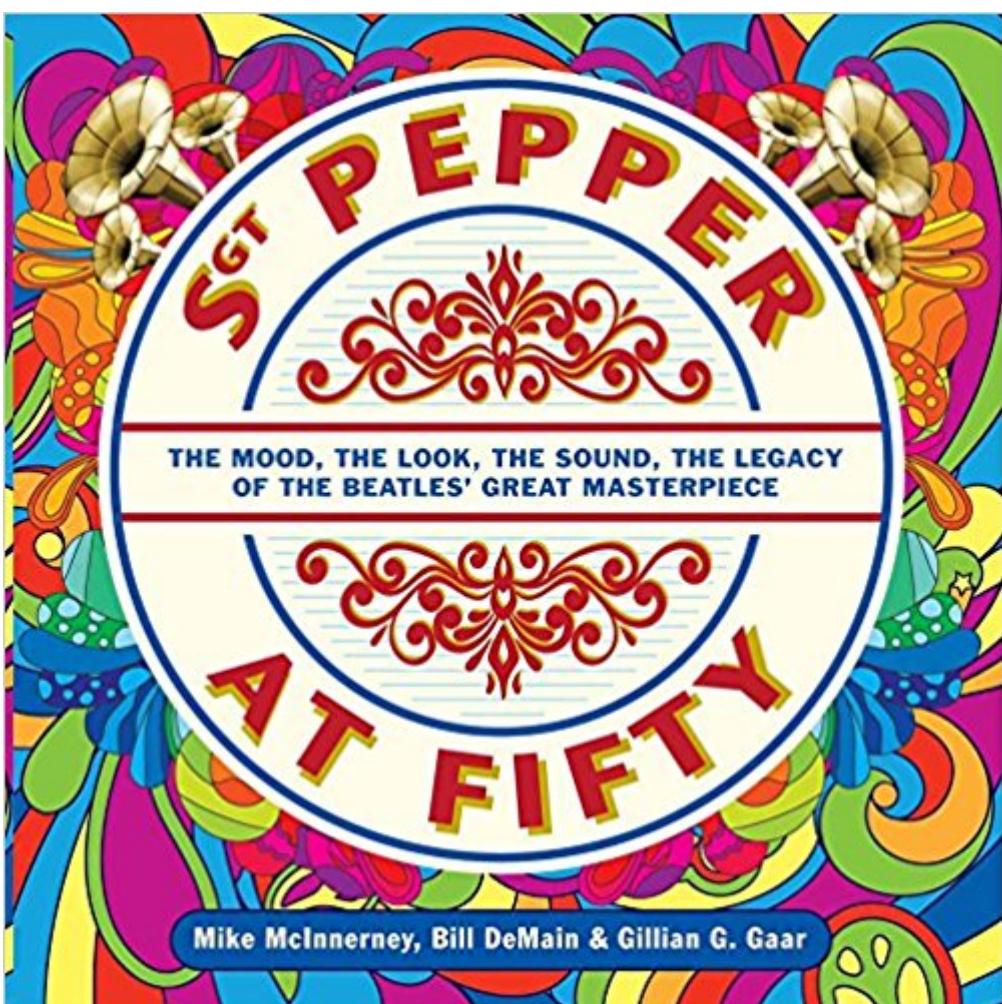


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# Sgt. Pepper At Fifty: The Mood, The Look, The Sound, The Legacy Of The Beatles' Great Masterpiece



## Synopsis

A celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Beatles' mind-blowing landmark album: *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. Widely regarded as one of the greatest albums of all time, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* celebrates its 50th anniversary in June 2017. Even after half a century, the Beatles' groundbreaking work thrillingly evokes the sights, sounds, and mood of the sixties at their most joyously psychedelic and creative. Featuring contributions from leading authorities on the Beatles' music, *Sgt. Pepper at Fifty* provides an in-depth critique of the album, by looking at the unique cultural circumstances that led to its creation; examining the rich assemblage of influences that informed its sound; exploring the landmark cover art, which continues to inspire debate and intrigue; and assessing the record's enduring legacy as the pinnacle of British pop. In addition to 225 photos and other images, the book includes memorabilia.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bill DeMain has written for publications including MOJO, Classic Rock, Musician, Entertainment Weekly, Mental Floss, and Performing Songwriter. He's also contributed essays to several books, including *The Beatles: Ten Years That Shook The World* (DK), *The History of Rock* (Parragon), *The MOJO Collection* (Canongate), and more. Mike McInerney was among the leading British designers and counterculture activists of the sixties. He was art editor of leading British counterculture newspaper the International Times, and designed posters and album covers for many of the biggest names of the time, including The Who. Gillian G. Gaar has written for

numerous publications, including *Mojo*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Goldmine*. Her previous books include *100 Things Beatles Fans Should Know and Do Before They Die* (Triumph Books), *Boss: Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band* (Voyageur), and *Elvis the King: The Authorized Book from the Graceland Archives* (Carlton). The first Beatle she saw in concert was Paul McCartney, June 10, 1976, at the Kingdome. She lives in Seattle.

While there'll be several books about this classic album to mark its 50th anniversary, to my mind, Derek Taylor's "It Was Twenty Years Ago Today" from 1987 remains the benchmark -- far enough away from 1967 to gain some perspective, but not so far away that remembered experience wasn't still fresh. So, how does this book fare, according to that standard? Actually, it fares quite well! First of all, by dividing itself into 4 specific sections, with each one devoted to one specific aspect. These sections are:

- 1 - The Mood. In many ways, this is the most crucial part, because *Sgt. Pepper* is best understood & appreciated in the context of its time, as the full expression & embodiment of that time's most glowing hopes & dreams. Yet even then it wasn't mere escapism, as young people grappled with questions of meaning, identity, peace, love & hate to an fervent degree. Mike McInerney, who was a young man & participating artist at the time, gives us a good overview of the cultural zeitgeist, beginning with 1966, not only in music but in underground poetry, art movements, fashion, and new modes of psychology, sociology, and politics. And drugs. Of course, and drugs -- but as they were seen then, as cleansing the doors of perception a la Blake & Huxley, opening the mind & soul to a greater reality of unrealized possibilities & potential. Which was certainly naïve, but in a mostly positive way, as I recall from my own youth then. (But then I was lucky enough to get mostly the good aspects of the 1960s, and very few of the bad.)
- 2 - The Look. Here we get a thorough overview of the album art & the artistic currents that fed into its creation. While fans will know most of this, it's well-told & offers some facts that were new to me, as they may be for others. The quotes from Jann Haworth especially stand out for me.
- 3 - The Sound. Again, this is material that fans will know down to the minutest detail, I'm sure. But it's still an excellent primer about the evolution of each song, and the then-startlingly new techniques that were used to shape them. And it certainly makes me want to go back & listen to the album all the way through with fresh ears.
- 4 - The Legacy. This part does seem a little short to me, although it does a good basic job of covering the ups & downs of critical opinion about the album over the following decades, as well as its ongoing influence. One of the negative descriptions that occurs many times is that *Sgt. Pepper* is too much of its brief moment & thus dated. Well, yes, it is ... but to me, given the bleaker state of the world these days, it's an important reminder that people have aspired to far more than we seem

capable of imagining now. Its "dated" aspect is in fact part of its lasting charm. I'd have liked to have seen this idea developed a bit more thoroughly ... but maybe that's an entire other book in itself? In addition, there are small 2- or 3-page sidebars on red backgrounds, each one focusing on a single specific event or individual ... the man who painted Paul's piano, for instance, with his recollections of that time; or recounting of fabled events (poetry readings, happenings). All of these add dimension to the day-glo tapestry, as do the vivid photographs & reproduced posters. So, is this merely glorified nostalgia for members of my now-greying generation? I'll happily admit to it being partly that ... but that's not necessarily a bad thing. As far as Formative Moments Of Your Youth go, one could do much worse! For me, at least, this opens up the windows of memory & lets the golden past come flooding in for awhile. Time does teach us that life is more complex & compromised as we get older; but as David Lindsay once wrote, "It makes all the difference whether one sees darkness through the light, or brightness through the shadows." No, life can't be Sgt. Pepper every day ... but I'm glad Sgt. Pepper was there when I was young. And for younger listeners, not even born until 2 or 3 decades afterward? I think this is a good, solid introduction to that particular cultural touchstone, one that perhaps didn't have a lot of answers, but offered a great deal of hope ... and imagination ... and fun! From my admittedly biased perspective, most highly (ahem) recommended!

Really sets the mood that was in place when Sgt Pepper was released!

Well written and enjoyable history of this great album.

This is a beautiful book. Great pictures, and very informative. What a gift it is for anyone who loves the Beatles.

Purchased along with the 50th Anniversary re-release of the album as a birthday present to myself. I must say, I have great taste!! Great book for any Beatles Fan!

My sisters and I each bough my dad an item celebrating the 50th of the Sgt Pepper album, and he literally could not stop smiling.

great product. fast shipping would buy from them again. THANKS!!!

Nice read for any Beatles fan !

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