Course Title: The Beatles: Four Extraordinary Albums That Transformed Pop Music

Course Code: WSP-144, now a virtual online course via Zoom videoconference. Details and technical instructions will be forthcoming from Continuing Studies.

Instructor: Dr. Joel Phillip Friedman

Course Summary:

Nearly sixty years after they exploded onto the music scene, The Beatles still capture our imagination as few groups have. In this two-day intensive course, we will delve into the Beatles’ career, development, and songwriting process through a deep dive into four extraordinary albums.

After their first single, “Love Me Do,” reached the UK Top 20, the Beatles recorded most of the album *Please Please Me* (1963) in one grueling twelve-plus-hour day at EMI Recording Studios. *A Hard Day’s Night* (1964), the group’s first album of all original songs, captured the height of Beatlemania as the band members’ interests began to diverge from performance to songwriting. *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967) is often considered to be the first “concept album.” *Pepper* is a brilliant recording never meant to be performed live, and its release put to rest fevered rumors of the post-touring Beatles breakup. *The Beatles* (1968) was a bold, unprecedented, messy double album nicknamed “The White Album.” Their first album on the new Apple label marked the end of their psychedelic period and the introduction of Yoko Ono. New scholarship has highlighted this album’s artistic brilliance and previously unknown warm, collaborative process.

The course will include lectures, discussions, and the opportunity to listen closely to individual tracks, as we examine the studio process, equipment, techniques, and songwriting craft that brought these albums to life.

Grade Options and Requirements:

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - Students must attend all Zoom class meetings to receive credit

*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.*

Course Outline:

Saturday, April 25, 2020

10-12:30

*Please Please Me* (1963): After their first single, “Love Me Do,” reached the UK Top 20, the Beatles were tasked with recording most of the album *Please Please Me* in one grueling, infamous twelve-plus-hour day at EMI (now Abbey Road) Studios. We will reconstruct one of the most famous days in all Beatles’ history: track-by-track, hour-by-hour! **Listening:** *Please Please Me* (2009 Remaster) complete LP.

Sunday, April 26, 2020

10-12:30

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365 Lasuen St., Stanford, CA 94305
continuingstudies@stanford.edu
650-725-2650
A Hard Day’s Night (1964), was the group’s first album of all original songs and captured the height of Beatlemania as the band members’ interests began to diverge from performance to songwriting. Even the two sides of the LP diverge in tone, purpose, and complexity. We will dig into recording session outtakes squeezed in-between touring and filming and explore how the still-young band grew at a phenomenal rate as songwriters and recording artists. Listening: A Hard Day’s Night (2009 Remaster) complete LP (Optional Criterion Collection movie).

Saturday, May 2, 2020
10-12:30

Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band (1967) is often considered to be the first “concept album.” We will investigate whether that is true. Regardless, Pepper is a brilliant recording never meant to be performed live, it is a studio creation, painstakingly pieced together over many months, straining the technological limits of Abbey Road, their producer, George Martin, and his team. The album’s release put to rest fevered rumors of the post-touring Beatles breakup. We will explore their recording process through outtakes made available - in pristine condition - on the 2017 box set. Listening: Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band (2009 Remaster or, optionally, the 2017 Remix) complete LP, plus single Penny Lane/Strawberry Fields Forever (found on Magical Mystery Tour 2009 Remaster and the 2017 Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band Remix).

Saturday, May 2, 2020
10-12:30

The Beatles (1968) was a bold, unprecedented, and messy double album nicknamed “The White Album” (TWA). It is a veritable encyclopedia of songwriting style and structure. The first album on their new Apple label, it marked the end of their psychedelic period, the introduction of Yoko Ono, and demonstrated the growing adverse effects their business endeavors had on the band’s relationships and their creative collaborative process. The well-known stories of strife and unhappiness during the long recording sessions have impacted the album’s reputation and overshadowed its excellence. Recent scholarship, and the 2018 box set, have highlighted both the album’s artistic brilliance, and the many previously unknown moments of warmth and collaboration during in its creation. Listening: The Beatles (2009 Remaster or optional 2018 Remix) complete LP, plus single Hey Jude/Revolution (found on Past Masters 2009 Remaster).

LEGAL

It is mandatory that you access all required listening materials legally and properly – whether via physical media (CD vinyl, etc.), download, or streaming. I own all my materials. Recordings will not be shared under any circumstances.

We are able to offer this course under the umbrella of the TEACH Act, which “extends the Face-to-Face Teaching exemption to distance learning courses in a limited way. The exemption applies only to online courses restricted to registered students, and so may be applicable for Stanford courses that incorporate an online component.”

1. The content must be accessible only to those students who are enrolled in the course;
2. The content must be accessible only for the duration of a class session;
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