

Who influenced the Beatles in their era?

The Beatles earliest influences can be seen in the form of the likes of Cliff Richard and the Shadows, where Richard's stage presence and female following went hand in hand with his rock 'n' roll attitude which is what captivated The Beatles to performing on stage publically. It was the performing onstage that the Beatles adopted their signature looks and the mop-top haircut that is imitated and still popular today to accompany the collarless grey and black suits the Beatles wore in their early years of forming. Another influence the Beatles drew from, was blues performer Chuck Berry covering several of Berry's songs in their early years and then Lennon to include "here comes old flattop" in the song, 'Come Together', from the Abbey Road album. Buddy Holly was another influence on the sound of the Beatles naming their band initially as the 'Beatals' as a tribute to 'Buddy Holly and the Crickets' before settling on The Beatles in August 1960.

Holly's voice was one of the most imitated sounds of the 1960's with his vocally smooth rock 'n' roll vibe to his works that can be felt in many of the Beatles early tracks, and was the first covered artist by the Quarrymen of 'That'll be the Day'. Paul McCartney describes the sound of hearing Buddy Holly for the first time as this "electric sound on the radio" and "this strange new music". McCartney and Lennon first began writing together attempting to replicate the song writing of Holly himself using the same chords which eventually after "trying that for hours" would end up with a few original songs. Buddy Holly's influence on the Beatles music can be seen in the first few chords used in 'Love Me Do', following the same rhythm as 'Peggy Sue' showing how much of an influence Buddy Holly really had on the early beginnings of the Beatles and the song-writing partnership of Lennon/McCartney.

nRock 'n' Roll King, Elvis Presley also had a significant impact on the group with John Lennon quoted as saying, "if there hadn't been an Elvis, there wouldn't have been the Beatles". At the tender age of 15, Lennon was heavily influenced by Elvis' sound and looks adapting his lifestyle to that of Presley having the ability to fuse blues, rock 'n' roll and skiffle into one sound that had not been heard before across the Atlantic.

It was also the fusion of fire gospel with New Orleans RnB that Little Richard, a pioneer of rock 'n' roll no doubt also influenced the music the Beatles would produce. It was particularly Paul McCartney that was influenced by Little Richard the most at the time imitating his voice on several of the Beatles recordings which can be seen in "She Loves You" imitating Little Richard's "Wooo!"

The album, 'Freewheelin' released by Bob Dylan in 1963 was played by the Beatles countless numbers of times in their hotel room in Paris and left the four astounded over the sound that was Bob Dylan.

It was the tour of America in August of 1965 where the Beatles were introduced to Indian culture and classical Indian music by mutual friend, David Crosby. Harrison soon became fascinated with Indian culture and in particular the sitar. This influence Harrison musically where on the 'Rubber Soul' track 'Norwegian Wood' Harrison plays his sitar. It wasn't until

the following year that Harrison met sitar legend, Ravi Shankar, who gave a private concert at the home of Harrison where Ringo Starr and John Lennon were in attendance. This had a major impact on the music of the Beatles, not only musically influencing 'Rubber Soul', 'Revolver' and 'Sgt Peppers' but also spiritually, culminating in visiting India in 1968 to attend a Transcendental Meditation Session. The Beatles believed that this would help them to find inner peace and happiness which would result in a more creative attitude influencing the lyrics created between the band members. Indian culture and religion had the biggest effect on George Harrison who completely immersed himself in the culture and all its aspects becoming a student of Ravi Shankar and purchasing a house boat to further his learning.

Harrison found peace and comfort in the Indian way of life where materialistic values of Western society were frowned upon with spiritual values regarded as the most important aspect, something Harrison followed right up until his death in 2001. Even after the Beatles broke up, Indian culture and religion never completely left George Harrison and he continued playing the sitar and remained in contact with his mentor Ravi Shankar for many years; he also remained a vegetarian from 1968 until his death.

Conclusion

I began my research on 'The Beatles' earlier this term not knowing what to expect as I had previously known very little about the fab four. I can safely say now that has now changed, from the stacks of information I came across and watched, listened and read through I slowly began to expand my knowledge of the four lads from Liverpool. Some people say the Beatles are just an 'overrated' rock 'n' roll band which would not stand up against the bands of today, but here's the thing, they never intended on being compared to the bands of today (although in my opinion their music outstrips many artists of today).

The Beatles were ground-breaking and their music summed up the swinging 60's from which they emerged, taking all their influences and creating their own sound which was a breath of much needed fresh air. John Lennon once said the Beatles were "more popular than Jesus" which caused uproar in the United States, no doubt because it was true.

From 1960 – 1970, there was rarely a place you could not visit without hearing the Beatles being played over the radio or hysterical girls wanting for the love of John, Paul, George and Ringo. I've come to appreciate the Beatles completely and utterly and believe they deserve all the credit they have been given. They revolutionised the use of albums into a primary way of dispersing singles as opposed to albums being considered as only 'filler material', the unexceptional songs with only a few hits.

Although the Beatles disbanded more than 40 years ago their impact has remained just as prevalent amongst society as in my opinion they are the most famous and recognised band that has ever been. I don't think even those four lads from Liverpool could have dreamt of the amount of success or hysteria they would cause, The Beatles will safely remain in the CD's and vinyl released and the iPods they inhabit for many years to come.