

Beatles Song Analysis

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“Eleanor Rigby”

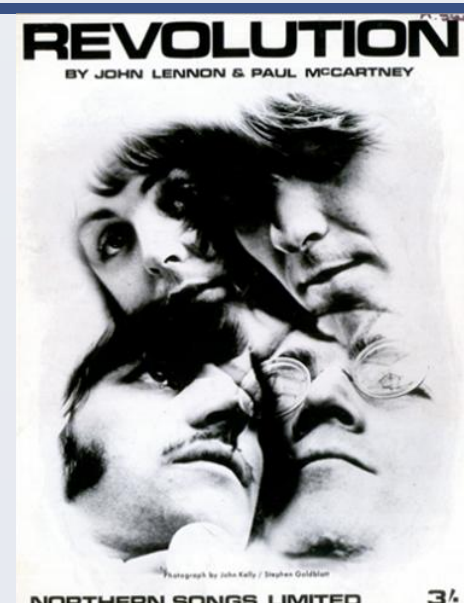


Year
1966
Album
Revolver

Story Behind the song

- Written by Paul McCartney
- About a lonely old woman
- Rigby is the name of a store
- ‘Father McKenzie’ was going to be ‘Father McCartney’
- Matching gravestone at the band’s meeting place
- Song arrangement possibly inspired by Vivaldi
- Musical Elements
- Song arrangement possibly inspired by Vivaldi
- No drums or guitars
- Contains four violins, two violas and two Chellos
- Was never played live by the band

“Revolution”



Year
1968
Album

“Revolution” was a single paired with “Hey Jude”. “Revolution 1” and “Revolution 9” are on the White album.

Story Behind the Song

- The Band’s most well-known political song.
- John Lennon’s response to the Vietnam war
- Original version says both “Count me in “ and “Count me out”.
- Final version says “Count me out”.
- Musical Elements:
- Recorded lying down for a different sound
- Scream at beginning recorded separately.
- Includes an organ, electric piano, and handclaps.
- “Revolution 1” has a slower tempo recorded in A major, more brass and backup vocals.

“I’m Down”

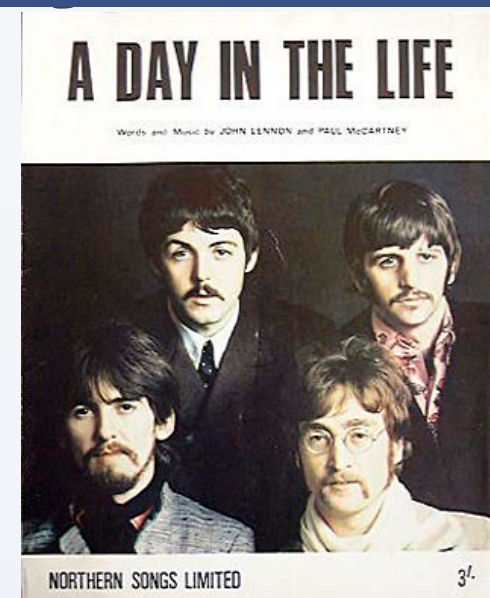


Year
1965
Album

Released as a single, paired with “Help”
Story Behind the Song

- Written at his girlfriend’s house.
- A joking way of presenting their relationship problems.
- Musical Elements
- Inspired by Little Richard
- Includes bongos and an organ.

“A Day in the Life”



Year
1967
Album

Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band
Story Behind the Song

- Beginning about two local newspaper stories with John Lennon’s own spin
- The middle part written by Paul McCartney, about his daily routine, was meant for another song.
- Some lines were banned due to drug references.
- ‘I saw a film today, oh boy. The English army had just won the war’ from Lennon’s film *How I Won the War*.
- Title never mentioned in Lyrics.

Musical Elements

- Two musical styles integrated
- Combined guitars and pianos with a forty-one piece orchestra
- Recorded in three sessions: basic track, the orchestra, and the last note
- The last chord was hit by all four Beatles, producer George Martin, and lasted over forty seconds.

“Hey Jude”



Year
1968
Album

Does not appear on a studio album, later appears on a mix album of the same name
Story behind the song

- Written by Paul McCartney, for John Lennon’s son Jillion after his parents divorced
- Jillion learned the song was about him shortly before John’s murder.

Musical Elements

- Basic musicality
- Consists of guitars and pianos
- Becomes more rock n’ roll toward the end
- Vocals and instrumentation end in F natural.

“I’ll Follow the Sun”



Year
1964
Album

Beatles for Sale
Story Behind the Song

- Written before Beatles, similar sounding version part of the Quarrymen
- Written by Paul McCartney at age sixteen.
- Inspired by looking outside, imagining traveling with the sun.
- Followed by “Mr. Moonlight” on the album.

Musical Elements

- Folk-like sound
- Straightforward form, low pitch range
- C major key, very few chords present
- Chromatic lines present in bridge vocals

“Blackbird”



Year
1968
Album

The White Album
Story Behind the Song

- Written and recorded by Paul McCartney, shortly after the band’s return from India.
- Another political song from the White Album, like “Revolution”.
- About racism as well as the hope for freedom and equality.

Musical Elements

- Composed in E minor, a key McCartney and George Harrison learned at a young age.
- Time signature changes several times throughout the song, from 3/4, to 4/4 and 2/4.
- Instrumentation consists of only guitars and vocals.

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“Don’t Let Me Down”

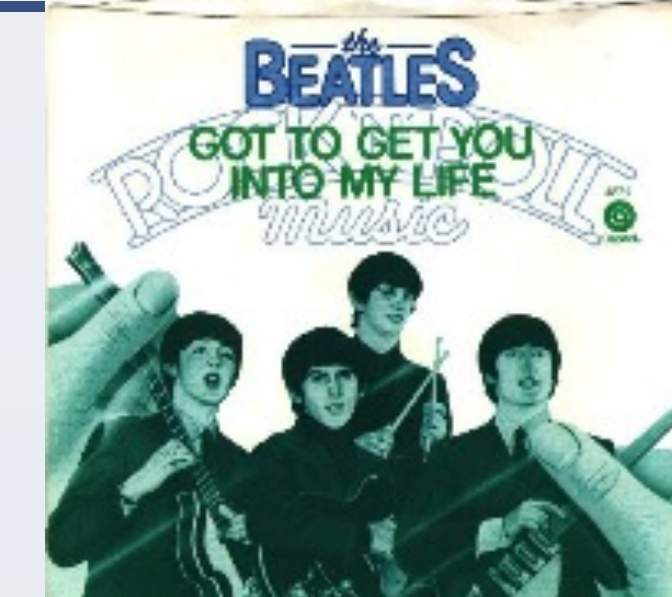


Year
1969
Album

Released as a single, along with “Get Back”.
Story Behind the Song

- Written by John Lennon, for his wife, Yoko Ono.
- Played at their last concert, featured in the film *Let it Be*.
- Covered by Jillian Lennon, Taylor Hicks, Maroon 5, and Matchbox Twenty.
- Musical Elements
- Keyboards played by Billy Preston, whom George Harrison brought in to smooth tensions within the band.
- Symbols played by Ringo Starr.
- Alternate take on the 2003 album *Let it Be...Naked*.

“Got to Get You Into My Life”



Year
1966
Album
Revolver

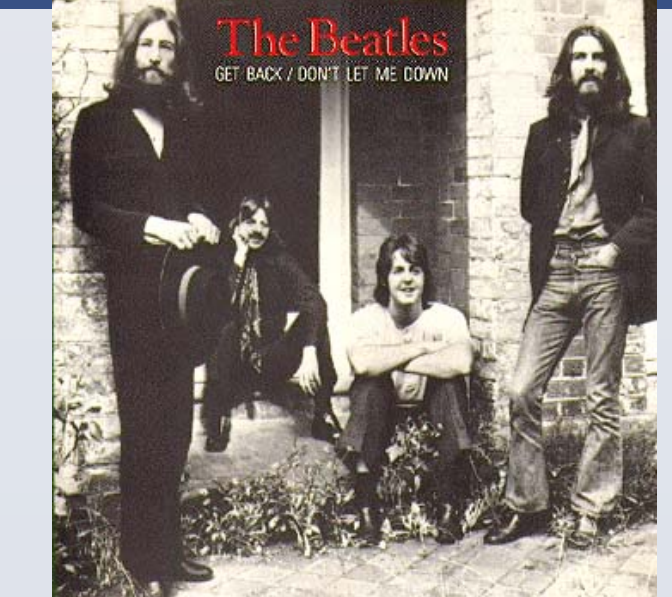
Story Behind the Song

- Written by Paul McCartney, about his desire for marijuana
- Covered by Earth, Wind, & Fire
- Used in the television show Golden Threat.

Musical Elements

- First time trumpets and saxophones were included in a Beatles song.
- One of John Lennon’s favorite McCartney songs.
- Did not chart until 1976.

“Get Back”



Year
1970
Album
Let it Be

Story Behind the Song

- Originally about illegal immigration
- Represents the band getting back to their old roots
- Rumored to be about Yoko Ono, because he looked at her when performing the song

Musical Elements

- John Lennon claimed it to be a rewrite of “Lady Madonna”
- Piano played by Billy Preston
- Covered by Rod Stewart, Elton John, and the Bee Gees