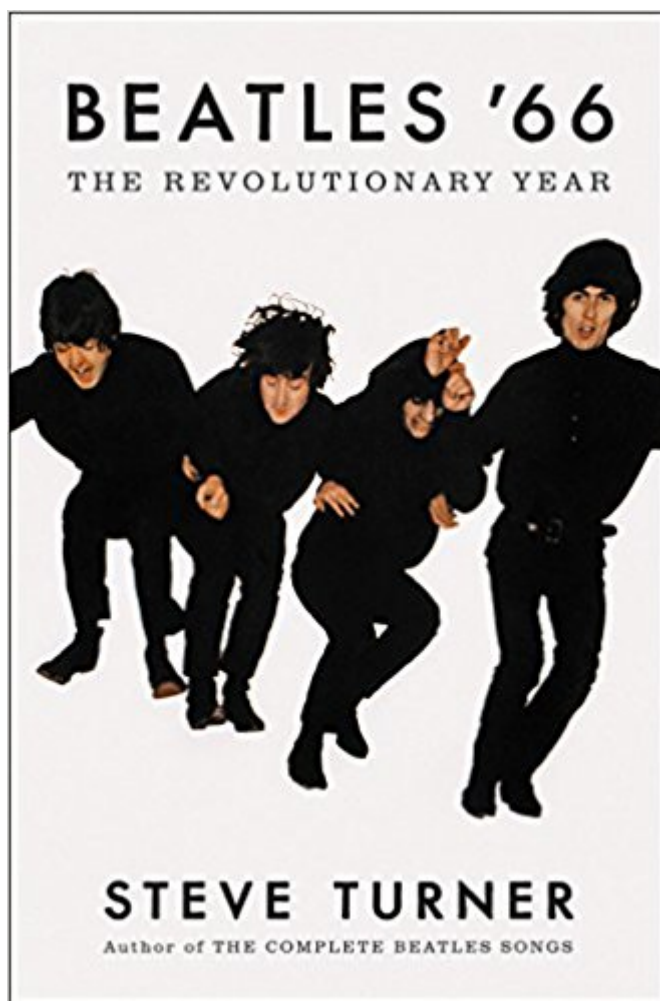


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# Beatles '66: The Revolutionary Year



## Synopsis

A riveting look at the transformative year in the lives and careers of the legendary group whose groundbreaking legacy would forever change music and popular culture. They started off as hysteria-inducing pop stars playing to audiences of screaming teenage fans and ended up as musical sages considered responsible for ushering in a new era. The year that changed everything for the Beatles was 1966—the year of their last concert and their first album, *Revolver*, that was created to be listened to rather than performed. This was the year the Beatles risked their popularity by retiring from live performances, recording songs that explored alternative states of consciousness, experimenting with avant-garde ideas, and speaking their minds on issues of politics, war, and religion. It was the year their records were burned in America after John's explosive claim that the group was "more popular than Jesus," the year they were hounded out of the Philippines for "snubbing" its First Lady, the year John met Yoko Ono, and the year Paul conceived the idea for Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. On the fiftieth anniversary of this seminal year, music journalist and Beatles expert Steve Turner slows down the action to investigate in detail the enormous changes that took place in the Beatles' lives and work during 1966. He looks at the historical events that had an impact on the group, the music they made that in turn profoundly affected the culture around them, and the vision that allowed four young men from Liverpool to transform popular music and serve as pioneers for artists from Coldplay to David Bowie, Jay-Z to U2. By talking to those close to the group and by drawing on his past interviews with key figures such as George Martin, Timothy Leary, and Ravi Shankar—and the Beatles themselves—Turner gives us the compelling, definitive account of the twelve months that contained everything the Beatles had been and anticipated everything they would still become.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

â œA pleasing romp through the Beatlesâ™ annus mirabilis...Turner does a nice job of capturing them at their best.â • (Kirkus Reviews)â œReading Beatles â^66, lâ™m right there-and where else would you want to be if you love music?â • (Bono)â œ1966 was a crucial year in the Beatlesâ™ amazing journey from being the Fab Four to becoming the princes of psychedelia...By concentrating on just this one year, Steve Turner has been able to examine every influence, document every detail, and fit the jigsaw together. An extraordinary achievement.â • (Barry Miles, author of Paul McCartney: Many Years from Now and In the Sixties)â œ1966 was the year of my marriage to George, our first visit to India, and the Beatlesâ™ last concert. It was a really exciting time of innovation and exploration- the world, our oyster. Everything is captured most vividly and in such detail in this book. â • (Pattie Boyd)â œA fascinating dissection of these best and worst of times for the Beatles. Steve Turnerâ™s research is impressive.â • (Philip Norman, author of Shout! The True Story of the Beatles, John Lennon: The Life, and Paul McCartney: The Biography)â œThe most comprehensive coverage of Revolver and the events in the Beatlesâ™ lives and times in 1966. Splendid!â • (Tony Bramwell, author of Magical Mystery Tours: My Life with the Beatles)â œTurner succeeds in creating an illuminating portrait of the Beatles, both as a band and as individual artists.â • (Publishers Weekly)â œThis book guides Beatles fans through that year in an engaging, interesting and compelling way. Beatles â^66 is a major achievement-for Beatles fans, yes of course, but also for anyone interested in how creativity works and is affected by its surroundings.â • (New York Journal of Books)â œTurnerâ™s well-researched, in-depth, quote- and photo-filled prÃ©cis will thrill all Beatles fans.â • (Booklist)â œWhat music journalist Turner brings...is fantastic access (the book draws upon his interviews with The Beatles, as well as producer George Martin and George Harrisonâ™s mentor Ravi Shankar) and an extraordinary, Peter Guralnick-like (Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley) attention to detail.â • (USA Today)â œTurner tackles the year from all angles, incorporating a wealth of source material and new quotes from people involved to shed some fresh light on these incidents . . . This book is the work of an expert, and expertly written at that.â • (Paste Magazine)â œA wonderfully compelling look into the year that changed everything for the band.â • (BookPage)â œThis is a Beatles book to read many times. An extraordinary book.â • (Beatles Magazine)

The year that changed everything for the Beatles was 1966—the year of their last concert and *Revolver*, their first album of songs not intended for live performance. This was the year the Beatles risked their popularity by retiring from the tour circuit, recording songs that explored alternative states of consciousness, experimenting with avant-garde ideas, and speaking their minds on issues of politics, war, and religion. It was the year Americans burned their records after John's explosive claim that the group was "more popular than Jesus," the year they were hounded out of the Philippines for "snubbing" the country's first lady, the year John met Yoko Ono, and the year Paul conceived the idea for Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band. On the fiftieth anniversary of this seminal year, music journalist and Beatles expert Steve Turner slows down the action to investigate in detail the enormous changes that took place in the Beatles' lives and work during 1966. He looks at the historical events that had an impact on the group, the music they made that in turn profoundly affected the culture around them, and the vision that allowed four young men from Liverpool to transform popular music and serve as pioneers for artists from Coldplay to David Bowie, Jay-Z to U2. By talking to those closest to the group and by drawing on his past interviews with the Beatles themselves and key figures such as George Martin, Timothy Leary, and Ravi Shankar, Turner gives us the definitive account of the twelve months that encompassed everything the Beatles had been and would yet become.

With all of the newer Beatles books being released, what does Beatles '66 have to offer? For this Beatles fan this book like no other puts it all together to convincingly show to what extent the Fabs were hot and heavy into expansive, creative and innovative thought and ideas—a continual Renaissance throughout 1966. Just reading many passages buoys the spirit and inspires the reader. What an Awakening!! Upon review of published sources Turner utilized as background—my personal library includes about 3 dozen he's listed—it's the many interviews he's conducted that makes the difference, including that of Pattie Boyd, who has written a blurb on the back dust jacket (as has Bono, Barry Miles—think Mac's "Many Years from Now" and Beatles confidant & go to source Tony Bramwell). You probably already have a couple of Turner's Beatles related books in YOUR Beatles library such as 'A Hard Day's Write: The Stories Behind Every Beatles Song' and his, "Gospel According to the Beatles" so you are likely familiar with his work. 454 pages with an excellent index you'll probably consult a lot to check specific things out at a reasonable price on . It makes for inspirational reading and documents the extent the Beatles were actively pushing through boundaries and why *Revolver* was so revolutionary and visionary—better appreciated today with the test of time. I'll close with a tasty and revealing quote on page 168 from George Harrison: "In the

past, we've thought that the recording people knew what they were talking about. We believed them when they said we couldn't do this, or we couldn't do that. Now we know we can, and it's opening up a wide field for us."

"Our whole outlook on life is changing because our circumstances have changed our surroundings." Paul McCartney, 1966. "I'd rather have a couple of hundred people who really dug the music than two million who didn't know what was going on." John Lennon, 1966. This book takes the year 1966 and deconstructs it in some detail as far as what the Beatles experienced both musically and personally. Depending on how deep a Beatles fan you are will largely determine how much you enjoy this book. Four "stars" for including so many details that help put that year into better perspective for me. 1966 was the year the Beatles stopped touring, the year year people in the U.S. burned anything Beatles after Lennon's remark about Beatles vs. Jesus popularity, the year their music morphed from "she loves you"/"I want to hold your hand" to lyrics dealing with altered states of consciousness, the groundbreaking "Revolver" album. It's also the year when Lennon met Yoko Ono (the death of the Beatles to a number of fans), the germ of an idea from McCartney for a kind of alter ego band--Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, the year Harrison met sitar master Ravi Shankar, and other topics covered in this book. As the author points out, in '66 all of this was new and had never been done before. So the band was taking a chance by stopping touring and expanding their sound. It may sound quaint in 2016, but back then this was really something no one had done before. "There are so many new sounds to take in now, and I'm listening all the time and wondering how I can adapt them into our work." George Harrison, 1966. "When something came out like 'Revolver' there was still an element of surprise. We didn't know where it came from, and how it arrived." John Lennon, 1969. The book is laid out chronologically by month, beginning with Dec. '65 and progressing through Dec. '66. There's b&w photos and other ephemera throughout the book (printed on the same paper stock used for the body of the book). There's also a chronology of pertinent events affecting the group during that year, plus an Index. Of some interest is an appendix titled "The Beatles Jukeboxes", which lists records Lennon and Harrison listened to, and in both McCartney's and Ringo's case an educated guess as to their likes in music. Basically what this book by Steve Turner does is slow down and expand the overview of this pivotal year. Doing so enables him, through relatively recent and (especially) older interviews with the group and other people on the scene at the time, to fill in, in depth, many of the details of the changes and experiences the band was having. Occasionally the book wanders a bit and some may feel the book bogs down at times, and some fans may feel that there's too much information. But fans who want to go deeper

into this period will like the ride overall. While there's nothing truly astounding as far as any revelations, the details make for an interesting, sometimes informative and (yes), a fun read about the Beatles at this particular time. "We just happened to become leaders of whatever cosmic thing was going on. We came to symbolize the start of a whole new way of thinking." Paul McCartney, 2004. And it's those details that (for me) bring this story to life. Nothing really heavy here, just a deeper look at how the group was changing from pop stars to something more personal and musically challenging. I was all set to come away thinking this is just another Beatles book, but after I began to get into it I found myself enjoying the book. By focusing on one pivotal year the author largely fills in what being a Beatle was like in 1966.

Author Steve Turner said that in 2009, Paul McCartney told him about a then-recent report that claimed that two of the most significant factors in the fall of Soviet communism were the spread of contraband Levi jeans and the illicit underground distribution of Beatles records. The strength and truth of this statement rings with authenticity when backed up by the facts in this book. The author targets 1966 as the year of revolutionary change, not only for the Beatles, but for the entire genre of pop music. His extensive bibliography and list of sources helped to recreate 1966 and makes you feel as if you were there. Some of the stories in the book I had heard before, such as recording multiple tracks to create a desired sound and cutting and running tapes backwards through the machines to achieve a different sound. Mr. Turner details everything about the Beatles and how they consciously decided to change how a group was supposed to behave (record and tour). The Fab Four felt trapped by their own success, and desperately wanted to grow as musicians. As they worked to put together the next album, they weren't sure how their fans would feel about the new music being created, music that would be able to be recreated at a concert venue today but was impossible to achieve in 1966. This is not a simple praise book that talks about how good the Beatles were, this book goes deep into the thought processes of each Beatle and how they worked together to create something new. The development of songs for the *Revolver* LP is fascinating, along with the inclusion of information about other groups who provided their own contributions to the music scene. What musicians created back then would dictate the direction of music for decades. The Beatles were very good at combining new developments into a song and coming up with something that had never been heard. Their fame helped to spread it around the world. This book provides an excellent view of how the initial seeds were germinated, teased into growth, and eventually evolving into something wonderful. Excellent book for music history lovers, or for anyone who has a desire to know about the revolutionary

changes in music that happened in the 1960s. Five stars.

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