



TRANSCRIPTION OF SOUNDTRACK

LEGO® Art – 31198
The Beatles

 **SOUNDTRACK**
Only in English

0001 00:00:01:12 00:00:04:04

[Nish] It's definitely the Beatles album I listen to the most frequently.

0002 00:00:04:06 00:00:11:14

[Jeff] Whatever the Beatles did, they ripped up the thing that preceded it. Incredible to think about the way they approach creativity.

0003 00:00:11:16 00:00:22:06

[Samara] The thing about this album is it combines a sense of the times it's made in in this incredible format. And yet it's an album that's full of these memories from childhood that they turn into music.

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[Nish] Of all the diverse influences that can be rooted back to the Beatles, is not often that they come up in a conversation about rap music.

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[Jeff] I defy any Beatle fan to throw half of that album on the bonfire. Can't be done.

0006 00:00:36:11 00:00:51:00

[Female Host] Imagine crafting your own wall art. Maybe it's a pattern that fascinates you. Or maybe it's the promise of an immersive, creative. experience, like no other. A piece of iconic art that you can build yourself.

0007 00:00:51:02 00:01:12:03

Female host] Relax and reconnect with your creative side. We've created unique soundtracks curated around the world of art, music and movies And in this soundtrack, we're stepping into the world of Beatlemania, and how the Beatles created the timeless White Album.

0008 00:01:12:05 00:01:34:12

[Female Host] We'll hear from the passionate Beatles aficionados with a deep knowledge of the band's music and history. Uncovering the sounds and stories behind some of the White Album's most iconic moments. Plus, the LEGO® designers who created the LEGO® art pictures of John, Paul, George and Ringo, offer a peek behind the curtain of what it's like working at the LEGO® Group.

0009 00:01:34:14 00:01:48:12

[Kitt] John's and Paul McCartney's face are half-inch shadow. We kind of had to find the other side of the face by mirroring it. What I find most amazing is, like he was saying, the deliberate extreme contrast from Sgt. Pepper.

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[Jeff] Yet, they still think, yeah, if we wanna put up a long sound collage and somebody saying, "Number nine, number nine..." on our new album, we'll do it. And they didn't care, they did it anyway.

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[Female Host] You can listen as you build at your own pace and get inside the story. Ready to dive in? Welcome to LEGO® Art. And here's your host, Jeff Lloyd.

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[Jeff] Hello and welcome to this celebration of the Beatles' White Album. With a little help from our friend at LEGO®, I'm Jeff Lloyd. And I'm here to talk about the Beatles, their expansive and epic. ninth album, which is also called "The Beatles", but we know it as the White Album. And, of course, and I'll be talking about LEGO®'s new set which recreates the iconic images of John, Paul, George and Ringo from the inside album cover of the White Album in brick form. And I'll be joined by some brilliant guests, LEGO® and Beatle fans, all of them. First up, we have a journalist who's at the intersection of pop culture, politics and social change, she's also here, I think, to provide some much needed. intellect Samara Ahmed, hello.

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[Samara] Hopefully not too much, lot of fun, too. Hello.

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[Jeff] Hello, and also with us is Nish Kumar, a comedian, writer, presenter, Beatle nerd, LEGO® enthusiast.

If Samara's providing the intellect, Nish, I think you are providing a certain amount of sartorial pizzazz. Because you're know for Beatles accessorizing.

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[Nish] Well, first of all, let me just say how offended I am that I'm not the source of gravitas on this podcast. I'm absolutely livid about that type of affairs. But, yes, what you're referring to, Jeffrey, is the fact that I... when we were sixth form in school, that story I told you in confidence and now regret doing so, when I was 17 years old, our school made this sort of radical step of allowing sixth formers wear their own ties. And I wore the same Beatles tie every day for two years.

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[Jeff] And could you describe that tie? Because it's pertinent to what we're talking about today.

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[Nish] Yes, so it's the four- there were few Beatles tie options back in the day and one was a sort of squashed version of the Sgt. Pepper's cover. And I thought, "Well that's very uncool." So I just go with the four black images from the White Album. Because that's the cool Beatles tie.

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[Jeff] Samara, if you had seen somebody wearing a tie like this every day for two years, would it cement their position as cool in your mind do you think?

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[Samara] Do you know, it's funny, cause I was just thinking back because I wore a Beatles badge on my school jumper when I went in to senior school, because that's the moment I fell in love with them. And I remember being asked to remove it because it was unsuitable. It was 1979, exactly ten years after they'd split up. And I just thought why do they hold such power? So I guess, yes, I really would've been impressed. I would've been worried it'd be a bit grimy after two years around that neck.

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[Nish] Oh, listen, there was a suspect-looking stain on Ringo Starr's face from about six months in that did not get removed.

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[Jeff] Who would've thought that after all these years later, those very same portraits are now gonna be rendered as a LEGO® set. It's quite something, isn't it?

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[Nish] It's not entirely unexpected. They're pretty iconic images of them

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[Jeff] Well, later, I will talk to LEGO® designers Chris Stamp and Kit Kossman live from LEGO® HQ in Billund in Denmark, which in itself is terribly exciting about how they and their team of master builders designed and created the new set, which is number 31198, if you are a LEGO® number fan. And I know there are plenty out there. Samara, admit it, if you weren't a journalist of the type of gravitas we've already discussed, don't you think a LEGO® designer is perhaps the coolest job you could have?

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[Samara] It is, it is especially– I was looking at the artwork for this set. It's a grown, gray-haired man sitting, listening to an album making LEGO®. I think there's something about that. ability to embrace childishness because that's one of the things the Beatles gave us, actually., as adults.

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[Jeff] Yes. Yeah, definitely. And also especially with the White Album and getting into transcendental meditation. There's a real through line with the mindfulness. I think you could lose yourself rendering portraits in LEGO®.

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[Samara] And also, John, in particular, was very into board games. I think I read that he had some arrangement with a toy company they used to send him the newest one.

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[Nish] Is that right?

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[Jeff] Nish, have you ever held any LEGO® designer fantasies?

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[Nish] My brain does not work in that way. I had loads of LEGO® when I was a kid. It was just always terrible. at assembling it. I would always get very frustrated. So I imagine if I was a LEGO® designer, it'd be two LEGO® block that I stuck together and then just written "Paul McCartney" on them. I think that would probably be the extent of my Beatles LEGO®. It's a good thing for the world that I stuck to comedian and not– I mean, if you think my comedy is bad, my LEGO® would be exponentially, considerably worse.

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[Jeff] Well, that is the brilliance of these sets. If you're like me or you and basically you can build some form of a tower that goes straight up, these sets, it's almost like I'm in a knitting pattern.

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[Nish] Totally, yeah, totally. I think that's one of the reasons why people like LEGO®. Because there's a pretty clear guide of what you're supposed to be doing.

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[Jeff] As well as finding out all about LEGO®'s Beatles inspired set, I'm going to be playing clips from the White Album and delving into its conception, recording and legacy, and unearthing some stories that you might not have heard before. That's later. But for now, listen, build, relax and let me briefly tell you about the LEGO® set that features those iconic images of the Beatles in brick form. And it's actually four LEGO® sets in one because you can choose which Beatle you want to build, depending on your mood. So what mood do you think would suit LEGO® John, Samara?

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[Samara] I don't know about LEGO®. I was very distracted by the lovely, ruffly neck that Ringo has in the original photograph and his fabulous mustache. So I like this idea that John looks quite austere and a bit somber. And I'd like to do that maybe that it would all make each other's face and he would pick Ringo. Cause Ringo, he's already braced the sort of full-on '60s standish, just as John completely walked away from it. So, yeah, I think you'd have them making their opposites.

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[Jeff] Yes, I think you're right. I think that there's something about that portrait of John from the White Album as well. That if you were set to say to somebody, "Okay, close your eyes and think. of John Lennon." That's quite close to how a lot of people would

think of him with the long hair and little roundy glasses. I mean, the beards would come and go post-Beatlemania, and he'd get very thin up. until his death in 1980. I think if you were to come up with a cartoon image of John Lennon and what he looked like for the last 15 years of his life almost, I think that's pretty close to how we would see him.

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[Samara] And his look's lost in thought as well. Like he's somewhere else.

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[Jeff] Yeah, so should we go for that stare into middle distance? That could be a dream. If you're in a dreamy mood, you'd... John could be the one. Paul... what mood do you think you'd be in to build a LEGO® Paul, Nish?

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[Nish] Focused. Professional. Diligent.
Just trying to keep the band together.

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[Jeff] Yeah. Is this a mood that regularly descends on you?

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[Nish] Oh, god, no. But I can imagine. That's just one of the many differences between me and Paul McCartney..

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[Jeff] Of course, he'd famously written "Yesterday" by the age of 22. Were you still wearing that tie at the age of 22?

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[Nish] I don't know what I was doing at the age of 22. I think it's dangerous, you know, when you're a fan of rock musicians. I remember once I was in a record shop. And I found a copy of Bob Dylan's 1967 greatest hits anthology, which still covers his first album to Blonde on Blonde, the sort of end of his going electric period. And he was about, I think, 25. by the time all of that music had come through. And the Beatles were were sort of. like 27, 28, I think, or maybe George was 27, 28?

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[Jeff] The Beatles were over, you know, it wasn't public, but the Beatles were over by George's 27th birthday.

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[Nish] Yeah, so I mean, I think. it's probably not a great idea to get into a direct comparison.

I'm pretty sure I hadn't yet broken up with my overdraft limit by the time the Beatles had dissolved as a band.

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[Jeff] I think for a George mood, we'd have to go spiritual. Because so much of this album was written written with the Maharishi in Rishikesh. Although, George did get a bit, quite often, get a bit shirty, but he got a bit shirty with Paul for being too focused. on composing tracks for the new album while they're in Rishikesh. Of course, they came back with this wealth of songs which became the White Album. But I think George's feeling was. really, you should just be here to take your meditation seriously.

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[Samara] George suddenly looks so grown up having always been the baby of the band in those four images.

You know, he really radiates maturity. I think it's definitely the grown up. If you've come of age, you would do the George.

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[Jeff] I think George sports the best facial hair. He certainly wears a mustache, I feel, better than any other Beatle.

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[Nish] I don't know about that. Ringo's got a pretty juicy number going. I'm thinking more of the Billy Shears era and go, that– the Sgt. Pepper's 'tache is a pretty juicy 'tache.

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[Jeff] I mean, this could be another whole podcast in itself. Which Beatle wears a mustache the best. But let's not get in the weeds here.

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[Jeff] So, when you're satisfied with your particular LEGO® Beatle of choice, you can pop it inside a buildable LEGO® brick frame and display it on a wall or stand it up amongst your other Beatle memorabilia. And this is LEGO® art. Even the box is really cool. And it comes with a booklet which is full of Beatle facts and photos. So, Nish, Samara, you've seen the LEGO® set, we've talked through various moods that you would have to be in to build the respective Beatles. But I'm gonna ask you just before we get into the album itself, like, do you have a favorite Beatle, Nish?

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[Nish] I think I... I think when I was a teenager, certainly around the time I was listening to a lot of Beatles, when I was first really exposed to a lot of Beatles stuff, I think I would probably have said Paul. 'Cause I grew up with the image of the Beatles as being... Ringo heavily associating him with "Yellow Submarine." George was the favorite of a lot of our family, because he was the one that was cool with Indians. So my family was like, "George really took an interest in India." So we're very biased, but we think he's the best.

And... John was– he was the sort of iconoclast and Paul was the sort of fun dad who wrote "Mull of Kintire". My mum would always say, "Oh he seems like he really is close with his kids."

And that, again, was like the weird metrics. by which the Kumar family measured the Beatles.

But I think, certainly as a teenager, the sort of discovery of Paul's relationship with the avant garde scene in London and him doing the sort of rewound guitars and the tape loops on "Tomorrow Never Knows".

I think there was exciting discovery of this other side of Paul McCartney that I really found interesting when I was a kid.

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[Jeff] And have you stuck with Paul? I mean, i almost feel like the correct answer is it changes from year to year, week to week, whatever. it is, but has Paul remained the favorite now?

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[Nish] Well, again, it does fluctuate. I'm in a real George phase. And so I've been listening to a lot of old things from his past. So I would say I'm currently in a bit of a George phase.

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[Samara] There's a theory that, um, that the Beatles are like kind of zodiacs. All men can define themselves as George with Paul rising. Different stages in their lives.

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[Jeff] I love that.

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[Samara] My favorite is George. And for some of the reasons you said, Nish.

I mean it made a huge difference to knowing how much he was into Indian culture.

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[Nish] Yeah!

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[Samara] He also had this weird thing where– we used to have music parties at my house. My mother in particular knew a lot of artists. And Ravi Shankar played at our house once.

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[Jeff] What? [Nish] What?

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[Samara] Yes, and, um, and it was weird because I think, sadly, it was before I discovered the Beatles. But certainly, it was a knowledge of his connection to the Beatles and to George Harrison. That made it, "Wow! Ravi Shankar played at our house!" In a way that as a child of immigrants, you sort of define yourself by the values of the culture. you're growing up in. And always fully appreciate your parents' culture.

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[Jeff] Which room of the house was it in, Samara?

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[Samara] In our living room.

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[Nish] What?

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[Jeff] And it was just people sitting cross-legged on the floor?

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[Samara] Yes. I saw Ravi at about 10:30 at night. We had a big tea, massive amount of tea lot of morsels in. And they would play for a couple of hours, break around half-midnight for tea and some morsels. And they'd play again, probably wrap up about 4:35. And all the kids would be upstairs watching, you know. Falling asleep. And eventually our parents would take us home.

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[Jeff] So Ravi Shankar was downstairs but you weren't too interested in what was on the TV upstairs.

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[Samara] It was really sad, wasn't it? I did not sit and listen to Ravi Shankar performing. But yeah, you'd take all the furniture out and spread sheets. And people would pay to contribute towards the fee for the musician. And certainly in the, this was in the '70s. But i think in the '60s and the '70s, before you kind of had to big established thing about concert halls and things. A lot of these concerts took place in people's homes. Ravi Shankar was a huge name and he could've filled a concert hall. But there was some special circumstance which meant that he'd performed in our house. Should get my mom on to explain why.

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[Jeff] All right, we're gonna learn about the LEGO® set later. when we talk to designers Chris and Kit. Two people who get paid to play with LEGO® all day. Presumably. But for now, let's concentrate on the White Album. And where better to start than at the beginning.

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[Beatles] Flew in from Miami Beach BOAC
Didn't get to bed last night
On the way the paper bag was on my knee
Man, I had a dreadful flight
I'm back in the USSR
You don't know how lucky you are, boy
Back in the USSR

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[Jeff] So what are your associations with this album, Nish? Did you own the tie before you ever heard the album? Or did it come the other way around? Is it a chicken/egg situation?

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[Nish] The tie was bought in full knowledge of the White Album. I was very into "Revolver" and then very into the White Album. It was so I had a cassette copy. So I mean, I was experiencing the album in fragments. And it's only the last couple of years that I've been able to kind of sit down and listen to the whole thing.

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[Samara] You know I would say the one thing about streaming is that you do have the sense of the flow of it, 'cause I had a much similar with my final copy, which I actually bought about, I think about 20 years ago. And I was really stuck by what a— an artwork it is. So when you listen to it on stream, you get all the beautiful segues between the tracks. And I remember when I bought the final album, put it on my record player. It doesn't take that long until you have to flip the side. Partly because the flow just really absorbs you. So, it's one of those weird things where it feels like an album that was waiting for streaming to be invented.

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[Jeff] Well, as you mentioned, it's the Beatles' ninth album as recorded throughout 1968. released on the 22nd of November that year. It came in a colossal 93 minutes and 33. seconds. Now interestingly, that same year on the 7th of June, the first Legoland, Billund, opened. so when John Lennon said— when he later sang "imagine there's no countries", I think he might've revised that if you'd thought about Legoland and what's that's brought to the world. The Beatles recorded "Revolution No. 1" "Don't Pass Me By", "Revolution No. 9", and "Blackbird", "Everybody's Got Something to Hide Except for Me and my Monkey" and "Good Night" in the same month that Legoland opened. Now we've played a bit of "Back in the USSR" there. Samara, what are your thought on that as an opening song. for the album?

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[Samara] It's incredible And I think it's, for me, part of it, you know, with the sound of the plane at the beginning, for me it makes me think of Vietnam and all that stuff that's going on. The scale of the war and how public opinion turned against it. But also that it's just a complete— the song is just an almost like an easy parody. Like, Oh, yeah. We can do Beach Boys. Here you go. I'll throw that back at you. As if it were a kind of a satirical skit on the Beach Boys. And yet it's as good as— You know, it's done with authenticity. And it's that ability to be playful and be partly knocking off a copy of something, and yet do it for real. That makes it such a powerful opening. And also, there's all these tracks like it. Which are songs that kids could sing without necessarily understanding the story, 'cause they had a kind of— a quality of lists. 'Back in the USSR' has all those lists of different provinces, of different Soviet states, so they can name Ukraine girls and all the rest of it. And "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da" was also a song that I remember those songs I heard as a kid without necessarily associating them with the Beatles. They were just songs that you heard that had a kind of folk song existence in children's playgrounds, I think.

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{Jeff] That is an interesting thing about some of the Beatles' music. Very quickly. Sometimes it takes hundreds of years for songs like "Ringer Roses" or whatever to turn into playground songs. But with the Beatles, it happened really quickly. My first memory of first hearing Beatles music was the old man who used to come into our primary school and play the piano, playing "When I'm Sixty-Four". And I didn't know

that was– belonged to a band. It just felt like all those other songs that we'd sing and there's definitely, that happens a few time, I think, on the White Album.

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[Samara] Well, there's something about Ringo's voice, which was meant for engaging the children, thinking ahead to Thomas Mullet. The thing about this album is it combines a sense of the times it's made in. And this incredible format. And yet it's an album that's full of– that could be being childlike. And childish. And it's full of these memories from childhood that they turn into music.

That's why– the more and more listening to it, it's really stuck me. It's remarkable combination to Pilaf.

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[Jeff] Nish, "Back In the USSR", I think it's properly funny.

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[Nish] Yes, yeah, it does. They have a real fondness for carry-on style smart.

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[Jeff] Oh, yeah, yeah.

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[Nish] "Let me hear your balalaika's ringing out" is something that could, it's a line that could be said in sort of, you know, carry-on out the Kremlin. It's got that sort of– It sort of has that kind of goofy sense of humor behind it

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{Samara] And my go, I just noticed on that line, "Show me round your snow peaked mountain way down south", Nish...

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[Nish] Yeah.

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[Jeff] I think the rule of thumb with the Beatles is if there is a double entendre. you think, is this profound or is it a double entendre? It's a double entendre every time.

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[Samara] Well, that's the musical aspect that Paul brings to this. Like he did to Sgt. Pepper, you know. It's song that you can imagine someone singing on a stage. And working out what would be the next joke about the Soviet Union that you could make up and all the innuendo potential.

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[Jeff] We're not gonna be able to hear every track on the White Album, certainly. Even though we gladly could. But we're conscious of your time here. There's too many for us to go into detail about. we'd be here all week. But let's talk about the Beatles dreamed a large part of the album up. And it's well known that the White Album was mainly written during the band's stay in Rishikesh in India. So you've both seen through family, very aware of that period of the Beatles story.

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[Samara] Yeah, well, although it was the same paguan, part of my family's from Poona, where there was a different cultish leader who has detracted a lot of western-followers. We used to go and sit outside and watch the westerners turn up to go into the Shino Genish enclosure. And I guess when I first became aware of the Rishikesh period, instantly I just associated with, oh, he was probably another one of those charlatans that westerners fell for. So I'm glad that they got into Indian culture, but I felt a bit sorry for them.

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[Jeff] Yeah, so what do you think of the Maharishi? The great thing about the Beatles' story is that the cast of supporting characters, Maharishi goody, baddy, Nish?

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[Nish] We— you know, the world is not sure of dubious, bearded Indian men who are deliberately trying to trick white people. I mean, my first exposure to that side of the Maharishi probably came via oh goodness gracious me sketch where Sanji played a fairly obvious Maharishi type, who was essentially selling nonsense, masquerading as Hindu philosophy to gullible westerners. And I remember my parents were having to explain that. It's a funny sketch that works in and of itself. I remember my parents having to explain the wider context. There was a sort of vogue in the late '60s and early '70s for these confidence tricksters.

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[Samara] And yet, there was obviously a different time which was very sincere. When I was a reporter on News Night, there was a big planning rally over ... Manor, which was the manor house that George Harrison had given the Hare Krishna movement. And there was the issue about how the locals didn't like it, all these pilgrims turning up at festivals. And a lot of south Asian heritage would go to the temple. Because they did all the rituals so well. And I went and I spent the day with them and made a film with them. And I was just really struck by how much support he'd given to Hinduism in the UK. What was really important was that in the way it worked in the end. It affected a lot of south Asian Hindus. It wasn't just about white people having their own version of Hinduism that was something separate. And I think that's been the really positive, long-term legacy of that. I was also interested to see who left first from Rishikesh. [indistinct] Although it was partly, probably didn't like foreign food. Ringo seemed to be— he was always the one who saw through charlatans. And was out of there very fast.

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[Jeff] And of course, Ringo's got his suitcase of baked beans with him. To keep him connected.

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[Nish] Oh, and I definitely think that George Harrison's interest in Indian culture and Hinduism is a religion that's definitely deeply felt. But what I always think is really interesting about this album is considering how much of it was composed in Rishikesh, it's the one that doesn't have any sort of— especially if you consider the three previous albums all have some— even if it's just the sitar on "Norwegian Wood". They all have some kind of direct Indian musical influence. And what I think is so interesting is that Rishikesh sort of marks musically them turning away from a lot of the— not just the sort of the Indian music, but a lot of the hallmarks of their dissent into psychedelia. One of the reasons I think "Back in the USSR" is such an interesting album opener, it's quite sprawling and diffuse— musically diverse album. The one thing that kind of holds it all together, it was them trying to return to the roots of why they started being a band in the first place.

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[Samara] You know, that's so well observed, particularly because—you have to go a long way from home to see home clearly. And I think what really comes to it, it's always like spending all that time on the other side of the world. All these memories of childhood influences, of parents, of musical instrumentation on it, which is very, very English in many ways. It all comes out. Sometimes you feel more connected to home when you're a long way from it.

0092 00:25:42:07 00:25:51:20

[Jeff] Let's talk about— what are the other— the most famous songs on the album. "While My Guitar Gently Weeps". Is it a favorite of yours, Nish?

0093 00:25:51:22 00:26:51:00

[Nish] Yeah, 100 percent. Also, I mean, I love the transition from "Bungalow Bill" into this. I love the sort of slow fade-out, and then John shouting, "Ay-uh!". And then just

cutting straight into the piano intro. It's, yeah. It's an iconic song. What I found a really interesting experiment was the thing that Charles Martin did a couple of years ago. They did for Cirque de Soleil. I think it's called– It's just called "Love". It's really, really interesting where they sort of mix songs up and, you know, it's a really interesting album in and of itself. But the jewel in its crown was the acoustic demo of George playing "While My Guitar Gently Weeps". Because I associate that song so much with the Clapton lead guitar line. And the piano intro. But just hearing him play it on an acoustic guitar. And then they did a really nice thing where they– Charles Martin did a sort of orchestration. And so, there's like a string quartet.

0094 00:26:51:02 00:26:53:14

[Jeff] With George Martin, it was one of the last things he ever did professionally.

0095 00:26:53:16 00:27:05:06

[Nish] Right. I didn't realize. Well, that's wonderful. And it's really lovely. But hearing the song straight back to its bare bones makes you realize what an incredible feat of songwriting it is.

0096 00:27:05:08 00:27:26:24

[Jeff] There's something interesting in that in the Beatles– if you ever listen to the work in progress that they did. The early takes of songs and the different versions. They're pretty much without exception. The one they alighted on for the album was always the right thing. Although I'm not sure with "While My Guitar Gently Weeps". I think I prefer it without Eric Clapton. Noodling all over it.

0097 00:27:27:01 00:27:50:24

[Samara] There's been a claim that it doesn't quite hit a peak. But the sort of spiral of it is something which is very familiar in Indian music. Kind of spiraling around a theme and just going with it. And it's one of those songs I'd rather put it on a mix tape in the '80s alongside all kinds of whatever contemporary things that I loved. But it just seems to be something that stands out of time. As just a beautiful construction in its own right.

0098 00:27:51:01 00:28:11:08

[Jeff] And this was still a point, really, where even though George does, you know, gets a few songs on the White Album. There's "Piggies", there's "Long, Long, Log", the "Savoy Truffle". But this is a point where really, Lennon/McCartney aren't– still aren't taking him seriously as a songwriter. And yet, he turns out something as good as this.

0099 00:28:11:10 00:28:48:18

[Samara] And also, to think of "Savoy Truffle", which is actually a bit like "Back in the USSR", it's an incredibly filthy song, I think. And again, it's full of, you know, it's riffing on a box of chocolates. I remember Good News chocolates quite well. And I'm just astounded, 'cause. it seems to me it's completely comparable with all the stuff on this album. I also think "Long, Long, Long" is a really lovely song that's kind of there right near the end. And not skills he turned up on the eponymous 1978 album. And I think more interest in the songs that they'd be carrying around for years. For some reason, just kept being turned down. 'Cause there's a Ringo song on this that is from 1962, isn't it?

0100 00:28:48:20 00:28:49:18

[Jeff] "Don't Pass Me By".

0101 00:28:49:20 00:28:55:06

[Samara] Yeah. And I'm just fascinated that what would it have sounded like if they'd recorded it at the time?

0102 00:28:55:08 00:29:20:17

[Jeff] That is a great question. I wonder if the lyrics were finished. I can't imagine the Beatles in 1962 having the lyrics "You were in a car crash and then you lost your head". But maybe, but yeah. It's an interesting– like George would really have to fight to get songs on albums. So I think these were all pretty. contemporary to the White Album. "Savoy Truffle" is groovy in a way that the Beatles often aren't, do you know what I mean?

0103 00:29:20:19 00:29:23:23

[Samara] Yes. That's a good choice of words. Yes, it's definitely groovy.

0104 00:29:24:00 00:29:28:09

[Jeff] And "Long, Long, Long" sounds like it could be a low-fi band from the early noughties.

0105 00:29:28:11 00:29:59:19

[Nish] Yeah, there's just a chunk of it that sounds very, very contemporary. You can hear echoes of it in– I think in sort of mid-nineties American singer/songwriters like Elliot Smith and Amy Mann. And lots of like John Bryant's production that he did on the early Fiona Apple albums. And even on Kanye's second album. Feels very much like the White Album.

And lots of the like low-fi acoustic bands from the early noughties, it really feels like have a real connection with the White Album.

0106 00:29:59:21 00:30:10:03

[Jeff] It is the album that if you think of indie and all types of music more generally, it's the one from which you can draw the straightest through line I think.

0107 00:30:10:05 00:30:17:12

[Nish] Yeah, I mean a song like "I'm So Tired" almost sounds like a sort of prototype bits of grunge.

0108 00:30:17:14 00:30:37:12

[Beatles] I'm so tired, I'm feeling so upset
Although I'm so tired, I'll have another cigarette
And curse Sir Walter Raleigh
He was such a stupid get

0109 00:30:37:14 00:30:48:11

[Jeff] But let's talk about "I'm So Tired". In a way it is the descendant of "I'm Only Sleeping". Is that a favorite of yours, Samara?

0110 00:30:48:13 00:31:07:07

[Samara] I would say it's a favorite, but heard in the whole round and the flow of this album. I think it's powerful. I mean, it's... feels like a song that's very much about now, isn't it? What enduring somebody does to you. I'm guessing that's at heart what it's about. And there's a very John-like vote thrown in about Walter Raleigh at the end.

0111 00:31:07:09 00:31:08:16

[Jeff] "He's such a stupid get".

0112 00:31:08:18 00:31:09:14

[Samara] Yeah. {Jeff} "Get".

0113 00:31:10:24 00:31:19:23

[Samara] Yeah, I have quite a lot of feelings about John. I think he's cheeky talented. But I feel even from the distance from all these years, I find him slightly scary.

0114 00:31:20:00 00:31:31:11

[Jeff] I think he could be incredibly nice and charismatic, but I think on the receiving end of one of his moods or if he took against you or whatever. Yeah, I would've been easily reduced to tears by John Lennon.

0115 00:31:31:13 00:32:12:05

[Nish] There's a kind of nihilist, fuzzy guitar chunk of the White Album that I have to say really appeals to me. And I definitely think that this, even Samara and I are talking about this, it's exactly the reason why– There was always this kind of grand theory that

somewhere within the White Album is the best individual, single-disc Beatles album of all time.

But I've always thought the problem with that is no two people— no two Beatles fans could agree on what the beset single-disc of the White Album. should be. Because for me, it would have to include "Happiness Is a Warm Gun", "I'm So Tired", the kind of Lennon nihilism. But I know for other people that is not their favorite bit of the album.

0116 00:32:12:07 00:32:46:07

[Samara] Well, you couldn't have put two more different points of view together. Because the songs that I would pick. I love are things like, "Julia", "Mother Nature's Son", i mean the much more McCartney melodic stuff. All the duly risen McCartney songs. But it's definitely the melodious stuff I go for. I mean, look at "I'm So Tired", it makes you think about the bedding that was to come, wasn't it? I have this memory of John Lennon, seeing him in images a lot in history books when he was a kid. Always being in bed.

0117 00:32:46:09 00:33:02:01

[Jeff] He was. There was more in cleave in the article where he said the bigger than Jesus comments. The whole front half of that article is about. John Lennon being the laziest man in Britain. Lying in bed until the afternoon. He loved bed. He was a bed enthusiast.

0118 00:33:02:03 00:33:44:08

[Samara] And at the same time, talking about his nihilism and how he could be quite scary. Gail Renard, who went on to become, I mean she is a great cut of a script writer. Wrote things like "Pipkins" right? I met her, um, last year and she of course got her big career break doing PR for the bedding in Montreal, where she was a schoolgirl. And he gave her the lyrics to "Give Peace a Chance". She just talks about how incredibly lovely he was to her. She's a 16-year-old girl, and she was on the phone to her mum, and the mother's saying, "You have to make sure there's no drugs. being taken or drinking or anything going on with my daughter. while my daughter's around. And made sure she got off home okay every day." So there was a side that him that could be incredibly lovely to young women. Not negative at all.

0119 00:33:44:10 00:33:51:01

[Jeff] But just on what we were talking about, I defy any Beatle fan to throw half of that album on the bonfire. It can't be done.

0120 00:33:51:03 00:34:33:06

[Nish] I think it's very difficult. I mean, I would say I see, 'cause I— "Mother Nature's Son" and "Julia" are two of my favorites from the album. But I see the album dividing along the lines of the sort of alternative/indie-rock Beatles band, which I. think encompasses "Mother Nature's Son" and "I'm so tired" and then the— what I think of as being the excesses of things like "Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da" and "Piggies" and "Savoy Truffle". That's the distinction I draw in my mind. But that's all the eye of the beholder. You can't even— it's not even just making a qualitative judgment, you can't even decide how you should divide the album along genre lines. It entirely seems to depend on your own perspective.

0121 00:34:35:17 00:34:55:11

[Beatles] Sexy Sadie, what have you done
You made a fool of everyone
You made a fool of everyone
Sexy Sadie, ooh...

0122 00:34:55:13 00:35:03:16

[Samara] I just think the power of the album is in the flow of it. There's stuff on there like "Sexy Sadie", which I just don't like at all.

0123 00:35:03:18 00:35:05:00

[Jeff] What is it you don't like about it?

0124 00:35:05:02 00:36:30:17

[Samara] It just doesn't feel like it's doing anything interesting. Whereas– what's that other song? "Honey Pie". Even though it's– what I love is. I know what it is, it's playing with all these ideas, the '20s. And for people it's in 1968, you know, Laurel and Hardy, and the kind of golden-screen age of Jean Harlow and everything. It wasn't that long ago. It was as long ago from then as this album is from us today. And yet we know that– I just think time is the biggest thing about this album that you have to understand. What they've achieved in four years was like a lifetime for other people. And so, everything on this album is casting backwards, it's casting forwards, it's thrown in all kinds of different directions, it's all being cultural influences, like the violets they're seeing on the news. And it's just distilling it all down into these records. I think the biggest thing about listening to it now is because we're so used to be able to look up every reference, you can listen to it multiple times. There's pop music everywhere we want it. In '68, it had only been even a year, just about a year that you had widely available pop music. So taken from an album like this and putting it on, and listening to it again and again and again, it's a completely analog listen. And all these references are quite cryptic. You couldn't just go and look them up on Wikipedia. And think that's just the power of the album is you don't quite understand it. It just takes you into these four different minds that are kind of shooting off in different directions that happen to be playing on the same record.

0125 00:36:30:19 00:37:04:06

[Nish] Yeah, and I totally agree. That's so much– that's such a part of the pleasure of going back and repeatedly listening to it. I definitely know that this is the album that I listen to the most. Even if it's in fragments, and with all the other albums, I have a sense of why I like the albums and which bits are like what I like. And where as the White Album, I feel like, it's still a mystery to be solved. In its appeal and in its kind of– Yeah, it is just a really– it's a sort of constantly shifting record.

0126 00:37:04:08 00:37:39:02

[Samara] I find it a bit too cynical for my liking. I have said this before, but I have a big theory that I think a lot of women prefer the early albums. And I do. I mean, "Please Please Me" is the album I listen to more than any other. Even though I wouldn't claim it's their greatest. Just because of the perfection of the harmonies, that fact that it's an incredibly feminine album where they cover a lot of African-American girl groups. But

I think some of these songs, you know, partly because of what they've been through, they feel quite brutal, feel quite mean, it feels like they're lashing out a bit. And yet there are songs like "Julia" on it, which is just so heartbreaking and honest. Even that lullaby, "Good Night", that's stuck on you at the end.

0127 00:37:39:04 00:37:40:07

[Jeff] "Good Night", yeah.

0128 00:37:40:09 00:38:03:05

[Samara] I like that, although there's a sort of sketch of awareness of what it is. I still think those moments of sincerity shine through. But they're older. And I think maybe that's the hardest for me listening to this. It feels like they're getting older. More cynical. And you were saying earlier, Nish, the sort of magic of the summer of '67 feels like a long time ago and they sing through it. Something dark it's come.

0129 00:38:03:07 00:38:09:12

[Nish] And they're also deliberately, I mean, a song like "Glass Onion", they're sort of deliberately pulling apart the myth of the Beatles.

0130 00:38:09:14 00:38:10:07

[Samara]. Yes.

0131 00:38:10:09 00:38:20:21

[Nish] You know, I always think about the "here's another clue for you al, the Walrus was Paul". It's just John Lennon deliberately trying to irritate Beatles fans.

0132 00:38:22:07 00:38:46:15

[Samara] And there's the sentence from "Revolution 1". When you think this is 1968 when the big revolution in the streets, Paris, Prague Spring, all the violence that was taking place at the democratic convention. I mean, only some of it would've happened during

the democratic convention. I think it was after this album was recorded. But that sense of revolution, people feeling something was changing. Then the song "Revolution 1" which is incredibly cynical.

0133 00:38:46:17 00:39:02:12

[Beatles] But when you talk about destruction
Don't you know that you can count me out
Don't you know it's gonna be
All right...

0134 00:39:02:14 00:39:07:13

[Jeff] And he can't make his mind up, whether you can count him in or out when it comes to destruction.

0135 00:39:07:15 00:39:37:16

[Nish] Yeah, this is often grouped with Beggar's Banquet, the Stones album that came out in the same year. But that album is very much a sort of connected to those protest movements. Particularly in something like "Street Fighting Man", which is on that record. But this feels much more like the Stones record this feels closer to is "Exile on Main Street". It's the sort of sprawling double album. and it doesn't have a single coherent political philosophy. And I think, for me there's something really interesting about that.

0136 00:39:37:18 00:39:52:23

[Jeff] But you can hear Lennon trying to figure it out on the record when he says "when you talk about destruction, don't you know that you can count me out" is the one we all know from the single that came out of the other side of "Hey, Jude". But on the album, he's twitching between the in and out. They're figuring it out in real time.

0137 00:39:53:00 00:40:08:15

[Samara] It's funny, that "Blackbird", the Paul McCartney song is the one that's become assumed to be about civil rights and black power. Even though as far as I can tell, that's entirely put on to the song. I have no sense that it's there from inception.

0138 00:40:08:17 00:40:35:10

[Jeff] Well, Paul has said that it is, but there's nothing from that time, I don't think, where Paul talked about it being part of it being about the civil rights movement. Now, I think, he will always introduce it in concerts saying that's what was in his mind, that's what he was thinking, but I'm not sure that if you go back to the interviews from around the time of the White Album, that's what he said at all. Not to say that it wasn't in his mind, it was just maybe, you know, it wasn't something he talked about at the time.

0139 00:40:35:12 00:40:40:07

[Nish] I've definitely heard him in retrospect describe it as a sort of a protest anthem.

0140 00:40:40:09 00:40:56:24

[Beatles] Blackbird fly, blackbird fly
Into the light of a dark black night

0141 00:40:57:01 00:41:08:03

[Nish] It's a sort of perfect song. Although it is responsible and I count myself very much amongst this, for a series of what can be described as amateur acoustic guitar hate crimes.

0142 00:41:10:00 00:41:11:24

[Jeff] So, have you had a crack at it then, Nish?

0143 00:41:12:01 00:41:22:12

[Nish] Oh, yeah. There's a certain type of gentleman who was taken of the guitar at some point in their life that has a terrible "Blackbird" cover in them. And I am definitely one of those people.

0144 00:41:22:14 00:41:39:23

[Samara] Well I have a different story which is "Mother Nature's Son" is a song that I first encountered by learning to play in from the piano and had never heard it played as such by the Beatles. I had that Alan Aldridge Beatle's Lyrics, illustrated Beatles lyrics books. My mother had got me for Christmas, when I'd actually asked for a "Sound of Music" songbook.

0145 00:41:40:00 00:41:55:20

And I don't think she'd opened it, 'cause there are some very, very disturbing photographs for a child to be looking at. But I just worked through it playing these songs that I've never heard of. And "Mother Nature's Son" was one that captivated me. Because it had a really interesting sonnet construction.

0146 00:41:55:22 00:42:13:07

[Beatles] Born a poor young country boy
Mother Nature's son
All day long I'm sitting singing songs for everyone.

0147 00:42:13:09 00:42:48:23

[Samara] And so for me this album is a real- synthesis is the wrong word- but it's this real collage of melodic, exquisiteness. And hard rock violence and drama and sex some of it, as you say, quite nihilistic. Some of it is full of jokes. And so I could listen to it and admire it as a work. But I have to confess, it's not my favorite. But having said that, having listened to it on repeat a lot over the last few weeks, it grows on you. But the joy is in hearing it all, I think, all the way through.

0148 00:42:49:00 00:43:58:12

[Nish] It's one that, I mean, it's definitely the Beatles album I listen to the most frequently. One of the things that really made my love of the album having listened to it a lot when I was a teenager, and then sort of got away from it a bit was actually of all things, all the diverse influences that can be rooted back to the Beatles. It's not often that they come up in a conversation about rap music. But the gray album is one of my favorite albums of all time. Which is where Danger Mouse took Jay-Z's black album, which Jay-Z then released an a Capella version of it with the explicit intent of having various DJs remix versions of it. And Danger Mouse sort of set himself this intellectual challenge of using the Black Album with the White Album. And definitely hearing what he had heard in those songs, it definitely, completely reignited my interest in the White Album when I first heard the Gray Album. I sort of keep coming back to this idea, no two people see the White Album in the same way. And hearing what Danger mouse heard in the White Album completely flipped my perspective on a lot of the music.

0149 00:43:58:14 00:45:44:01

[Jeff] There's something you touched on there and I think Samara touched on it before is the way the album is constructed sonically. And yet, it's an album where the hand of George Martin is perhaps more invisible than on Sgt Pepper, Magical Mystery Tour, Revolver. Even Rubber Soul. I mean, to the extent that George Martin went on holiday during the recording of it and left the work experience to Chris Thomas. He went on to become an incredibly successful British producer in his own right. He produced all kinds of stuff. But what about this sense from the album, and the Beatles talk about it. If you watch the anthology, you'll read interviews. They talk about it being a time where they were starting to come apart. And instead of making an album. as the Beatles, it was more akin to four solo albums. Paul McCartney described the sessions as a turning point for the group, because there was a lot of friction during that album. "We were just about to break up. And that was tense in itself." Or as Lennon said, "The breakup of the Beatles can be heard on that album. Jeff Emrick, who was a recording engineer, he announced that he was no longer willing to work with the group. And immediately left the studio because of tensions. It was the first album where wives and girlfriends came to the sessions. Ringo quit, Ringo came back. George Garrison covered his drums in "Flowers". And yet, when you listen to- I don't know if you've listened to the box set they did a couple of years ago for 50th anniversary. They sound like a band far more than you expect them to be. It doesn't sound that much like they're working in silos.

0150 00:45:44:03 00:46:14:00

[Samara] I totally agree. I think the collage effect is clear who's the originator of a particular song. But to me it still sounds like the Beatles. It's being experimental. And I was particularly shocked that the sound engineer quit. 'Cause you'd have kind of thought he would be the one who's just used to sitting and listening to them have their rows and doesn't take it personally. And I'm still fascinated. to know what made the specific turning point where he just thought they've crossed the line and are getting out of here.

0151 00:46:14:02 00:47:13:08

[Nish] I mean, i think that as much as it is three plus one Ringo song solo album sort of stitched together, but they are still each other's backing group on the solo albums. And the chemistry that was sort of hard won through Hamburg and all the way through kind of the mid-sixties, Beatlemania hysteria. It's still absolutely there. So even if they are making their own music, they're still calling on- I mean, the definitive anecdote I can think of for that is the inception of the arrangement that ends up being on the record, "While My Guitar Gently Weeps" where George Harrison tensions were so high that George Harrison brought Eric Clapton to the sessions, not necessarily. to play guitar, more to act as an impartial observer who might get him to behave better. And it did work. And then immediately Paul came up with the kind of opening piano riff that kicks the song off. And as much as they are solo artists, when it comes down to it, they're still each other's backing group and they still have the chemistry.

0152 00:47:13:10 00:48:01:05

[Samara] And I think George Martin taught them well because their use of sounds in sort of funny bits and pieces, even though I think "Revolution No, 9"- I can see what people don't like about it- Actually, it's a fascinating listen. And all the little sound effects are things they play with on the other tracks, they're all really cleverly put together and eclectic. And I just think what they were doing on Sgt. Pepper, enabled them to do this, even if they didn't have. You know they were quite outgrown their master, because I don't think it's that simple. But I just think they were talented enough that even when they're rowing with each other, all the additional tensions of wives and girlfriends

there, actually can still produce incredibly original and sort of assured musical experimentation. It definitely is a Beatles record.

0153 00:48:01:07 00:48:34:09

[Jeff] And bear in mind that the previous Christmas, they'd have their first widespread critical kicking for "Magical Mystery Tour" for being too out there. And they are still the biggest band on the planet. And yet they still think, yeah, if we want to put up a long sound collage and somebody saying, "Number nine, number nine" on our new album, we'll do it. And that- a lot of bands having gone through what they've gone through with "Magical Mystery Tour" would've thought, oh, god. We can't do anything like that again. And they didn't care, they did it anyway.

0154 00:48:34:11 00:49:01:01

[Samara] Yeah, just the bravery of it. And I still see it as it four years from the kinds of Beatley mop-top era to this. And you just think, four years now for a band. I mean, how much major progression. do you expect to see. And that's why for me the biggest theme in this album is time. That they seem to live accelerated lives. What they achieve in one year is what people now do in five or six.

0155 00:49:01:03 00:49:08:13

[Jeff] It wasn't me that said- I can't remember who said it, but it was like One Direction turning into Radiohead in the space of three or four years.

0156 00:49:08:15 00:49:36:01

[Nish] Yeah. It definitely is hard to contextualize. The closest thing I can match to it is maybe something like "Lemonade", the Beyoncé album, where you have the biggest pop star in the world consciously drawing from the avant-garde. And a sort of quite deliberately bringing in this sort of influence of high art or that sort of sonic experimentation. Otherwise it's hard to sort of think of a precedent.

0157 00:49:36:03 00:50:25:23

[Samara] And also, very much the imagery thinking about the LEGO® set. I'm looking right now as we speak at the folded out inserts with this collage of photographs that was done by Richard Hamilton. And I don't know if you see here if he was famous for that collage, that percent could've kicked off pop art, which was the collage with the bodybuilder in the kitchen.

And they got him to do the collage. And it's so self-aware about them as pop stars who don't- who look back on it as who were those guys. I can't imagine any contemporary pop star like Cliff Richard or even The Rolling Stones being able to put, to get a collage like this, which is so distance and self-aware about who they were and who they are now. With these contact-sheet images of them has kind of mock-tops and on holiday and then images of their manager. I mean it's an incredible work of art. Just that layout itself.

0158 00:50:26:00 00:52:01:14

[Jeff] Let's talk a bit before we bring in LEGO® art designers Chris and Kit tell us about the LEGO® set. Let's just talk about how the album looks. I mean, obviously a plain white cover. And this is their last proper album. They did the "Magical Mystery Tour" EP, but their album prior to that had been "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band". It couldn't be further from that. Which is one of the amazing things about the Beatles is that a lot of bands, they will hit on something and think, okay, we've found our formula. Whatever the Beatles did, they ripped up the thing that preceded it and went somewhere else. Which is just incredible to think about the way they approached creativity. So you got the band's name in Helvetica, crookedly bind and bossed slightly below the middle of the album's right side. And then later vinyl record releases in the US showed a title in gray printed rather than embossed letters. Each copy of the record featured a unique stamped serial number to create in Hamilton's words, this is Richard Hamilton we just mentioned, "The ironic situation of a numbered edition of something that has like five million copies. In 2008, an original pressing of the album with the serial number with four zeroes and a five sold for 19,201 pounds on eBay, but in 2015, Ringo Starr's copy which was 0000001, it sold for a world record 790.000 dollars at auction. Interesting that Ringo got number one, I think.

0159 00:52:01:16 00:52:37:22

[Samara] Sweet. Do you know what I find most amazing? Is, thank you for saying, the deliberate extreme contrast from Sgt. Pepper and I was listening... that Paul McCartney had the design of Sgt. Pepper, and one of the things they deliberately wanted the album to be was as rich as possible. Because you remembered that sense of buying a record in Lewis's, the department in Liverpool. And sitting on the bus going home. And even while you're on the bus, then you're not home yet, to play the record, you can be gleaning all this stuff from looking at the cover. And so, to deliberately do the opposite and give you something that is nothing, it seems at first glance. But then everything is buried inside. It's quite interesting.

0160 00:52:43:07 00:52:57:24

[Jeff] Well, the album itself isn't just a part of music history. But it is also now part of our history they cover.

So stark, yet so iconic and this is the perfect moment to bring in LEGO® art designers, Chris Stamp and Kit Kossman. Hello!

0161 00:52:58:01 00:52:59:07

[Kit] Hello! [Chris] Hi, Jeff.

0162 00:52:59:09 00:53:23:01

[Jeff] So, we've already touched on it here, every time they had a new album or a new project, they had a different look that went along with it. You close your eyes and think of Beatles, sometimes you'll get a mop-top, sometimes you'll get a Sgt. Pepper, Sometimes you'll get the long beard and "Abbey Road". How did you decide it was the White Album era photos that should be converted into LEGO® art?

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[Chris] That's a great question. We spent a lot of time just going through books and archives of imagery. Just trying to find- not just some iconic images, but clear images so that when you transferred it into LEGO®, it was quite clear who you were looking at.

Because the images themselves are quite abstract in the medium of LEGO®. One of the biggest things that we've discussed was what do you see in your mind's eye when you think of the Beatles?

What appears in your mind when you think of Paul and John and George and Ringo and then come each of that?

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[Kat] Yeah, well you have to remember that this is the first time we actually tried to do mostly portraits, so it was really important to get some images that was good enough to translate into mosaics.

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[Jeff] And how easy was that translation?

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[Kat] It turned out to be, like, the images were very nice, but it was quite a challenge because when you are looking at the actual pictures, like John's and Paul McCartney's face are half in shadow. We kind of had to find the other side of the face by mirroring it, the face, from the middle and also taking them through PhotoShop and realigning the pictures up. But especially with John Lennon, half of his face is, like, it's almost gone in a shadow. So it was harder than we assumed.

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[Jeff] So, was John the hardest, then?

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[Kat] No, I don't think so. <laughs>

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[Chris] Oh, I think John was the hardest.

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[Kit] You think so? I actually think Paul was the hardest, but that was because we started out with Paul. So, and at that time we had to kind of find out the style of the picture. And if you look at them, you can see that we made, like, half the face in yellow-orange-brownish colors. Then on the other side, they are, like, more cold and blue-ish. So with Paul, we kind of had to establish the style and his pictures, also. If you look at the other pictures, they're actually– his pictures is very close to his face, but the other ones is a bit further away. So, there was a time where actually the whole cropping of the pictures had to come up with a bit of his hair to one side, because it wasn't in the picture.

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[Jeff] I'm guessing that much of this happens on a computer screen. At what point do you try it out with bricks?

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[Kat] Uh, that takes a lot of tries on the computer. Before you get it to work, but you can pretty much see in the different programs that we're using for it. Like, when it's good enough to make for real. And that's when we are making them.

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[Jeff] And is that a good day at your job when you get to get the bricks out?

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[Chris] Well, it's very different, because we were trying to capture adults as a target audience with any other normal LEGO® product that we do. The first thing you do is dive in the bricks. You go, you get an idea in your head, you go and you start building, physically, day one. And you keep doing that, and getting into the computers is very late in the process.

With this project, like Kit said, it was the complete role reversal. From a time standpoint, it takes you a few hours to build one of these. So you might tweak Paul's eyes. And then you might spend hours building that one copy. Just to find out all of

a sudden, he has sad eyes, or one of his eyes looks sad. But the other one looks a bit happy. It's just not realistic or feasible, to do that and go through those loops. So like you mentioned, we could do that much faster, digitally. And then look at six, seven, eight different versions at the same time before we move onto the next stage.

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[Samara] Can I ask a question? Just- I'm looking at the images while you were both speaking. And I just wonder, is there, other than bricks, that you could, like, say, start making John's face. But then give him Paul McCartney's eyes?

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[Kat] Samara, you are welcome to do that, but I think that you might find it's ending up looking a bit Picasso-like in the end. Because the thing is with the images. When you look at them, the facial size is different from each other. So the chin-line of George doesn't match the neckline of Ringo and stuff like that. So I don't think it's going to be as pretty as you imagine in your head.

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[Samara] I'm fascinated by what you both say. About how you deliberately went for images that- They're not like the cartoon Beatles. You know, that we can imagine doing a version of them as mop-tops. Which would be relatively easy. You could see the little LEGO® figures as well. But these support traits that are very, very intense, they're quite revealing of their soul. And to turn that into LEGO®, I think it's an incredible thing to have done. And really ambitious. I'm really struck by how you managed to pull it off.

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[Chris] Well, that was one of the big talking pints when we first started. These are very iconic imagery. We really to not just create another updated version of what you've seen before. So we were really trying to create the LEGO® version. Something that, okay, it might be familiar imagery, but then they've done it in a very different and unique way that you might not normally have seen.

So that's why, for example, we ran with the yellow to blue color palette that we added on top.

And just to see, so you've got a creative richness, both of you, I'm just looking at the album cover, was there not a party that was tempted to say, "This is for adults. Let's give a puzzle, which is construct the cover of the White Album. And all you'd have to go on would be the little embossed bit that says, "THE BEATLES".

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[Nish] Oh, yeah, that's definitely how I would've approached it from a let's-try-and-cut-my-work-day down.

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[Kit] Yeah, but also, it would be very avant-garde LEGO® thing to do in the spirit of the Beatles, according to... which is, you know, let's get them playing LEGO®. It's all white. Um, but every piece has to be in the right place.

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[Jeff] See, Kit, you could've saved yourself a lot of work if you...

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[Kit] Yeah, I could. I could. But I can also tell you why we didn't do that. Because doing this, we also wanted to create a good experience for the consumers. So it was also doing the whole process. It was very important to us, to entertain people while they were building so it wasn't getting boring. And you could imagine if everything was just white, would the Beatles... that might not have been, like, optimal? That might not have been a good way of recruiting? New recruit people.

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[Samara] Can I put in a request, actually? Because one of the things you haven't talked about is you know that the mad day out, when they were in the middle of recording

the album and they went all around London without the.. And photographed all these amazing scenes all over the place. And they're in their ruffled shirts and their pink suit. And there's a particular image outside of the fake pancreas hospital in North London. Standing, in what looks like a field of seven-foot-high hollyhocks. And all kinds of bright colors. And I just think that would be an amazing piece of...

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[Kit] I could imagine so, but it would also be very, very big to get all the details. And it's gonna be huge.

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[Samara] No, I really appreciate from what you were saying about the details and the thing about those faces that you've chosen is, is a huge amount of toning and shading that goes into the details. But it's actually because you've got a close-up image. I can imagine being quite emotional actually putting in the last pieces of their soulful eyes and thinking what I achieved by the age of 27...

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[Jeff] Well, you've got that to look forward to with your LEGO® bricks, Samara.

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[Samara] Yes.
Existential crises, thank you.

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[Jeff] Well, the sets are beautiful. Thank you so much for talking to us. And congratulations on the LEGO® set.

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[Chris] Thank you. [Kit] Thank you.

0190 01:00:50:05 01:01:01:03

[Beatles] Helter Skelter. Helter Skelter. Helter Skelter.

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[Jeff] All right, Samara, let's just take a little time here to talk about the legacy of the album.

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[Samara] If you're talking about legacy, I suppose this is one of the first albums to really hit that horrible modern thing, which is albums and works of art being cited as influences for dreadful crimes. And of course, the Charles Manson amongst the Hollywood murders, kind of claimed to be influenced by secret messages in this record. Which is just utter nonsense. But I just think more broadly, it's the idea of- There is a sense of breaking of things on this album. And the fact that you could listen to "Revolution 9" and be genuinely scared about what you were hearing. Especially if you were quite young, a child or teenager listening to it. I think that's part of its power. That it wasn't afraid to make music that was scary, really, genuinely taking you sort of dark areas of the mind that you didn't really understand. And then to do all that. That mixing up. And particularly for me, the unashamed harking back to old traditions. 'Cause if you rock and roll, that's all about rebelling against all the boring old stuff your parents listen to. But the Beatles kind of made their peace with it and created new art out of it. It's really important.

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[Jeff] Nish, you got anything on the album's legacy?

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[Nish] I would say it's influenced possibly- it's the most interesting element of the Beatles influence, I think. The DNA of the White Album has spread itself further, I think, than almost any other element of the Beatles. I think it's such an interesting section

of their history. Even up to Outkast making a double album that's essentially two solo albums that sort of grated together.

I think that the ghosts of the White Album spread themselves in a really fascinating way across popular music. And so for that reason, spread themselves in a really fascinating way across popular music.

And, so for that reason, I think it's possibly the most interesting Beatles album. And it's certainly the one that I find myself returning to most often.

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[Samara] You know if I were to use one color key phrase, I'd say it's an album from dreams. It's got this dreamlike quality, And perhaps the most influential aspect of it is the idea that your dreams are worth listening to, And that the serendipity of them can have a value. And can have a beauty. I mean, the self basically turns Britishness into some kind of— particularly some kind of filter. Some kind of kaleidoscopic filter. So there's references to musical, there's references to childhood, there's nursery rhymes in there. There's contemporary issues with revolution, and there's very personal songs. There's a box of chocolates in there turned into something slightly more sinister. And that's the world of dreams, isn't it?

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[Nish] Now it's time to say goodnight.

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[Jeff] Yeah, now it's time to say goodnight. Um, thank you both for your insights and thoughts on the White Album. It's all we have time for on this look at the Beatles White Album. Thanks to my guests, Samara Ahmed, Nish, Kumar, and LEGO® designers Chris Stamp and Kit Kossman. And of course, thanks to Apple Corps and LEGO® for inviting us to make this program. Good luck to you, building the Beatles LEGO® set above all. I hope you found this listen enjoyable and relaxing. I mean, this is a big thing with these LEGO® sets. It's the relaxation. That's what it's all about. As Nish pre-empted, I will leave you with the words Ringo says at the end of the album, "Good night, everybody. Everybody, everywhere. Goodnight."

0198 01:04:21:05 01:04:26:14

[Jeff whispers] Goodnight, everybody. Everybody, everybody.

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[Female host] Thank you for listening to the story behind Beatles' White Album. How's your piece of art coming along? Are you getting ready to hang it on the wall? Maybe you're ready to break it apart and build one of the other versions. Or create your own. This has been an original soundtrack from LEGO® art.