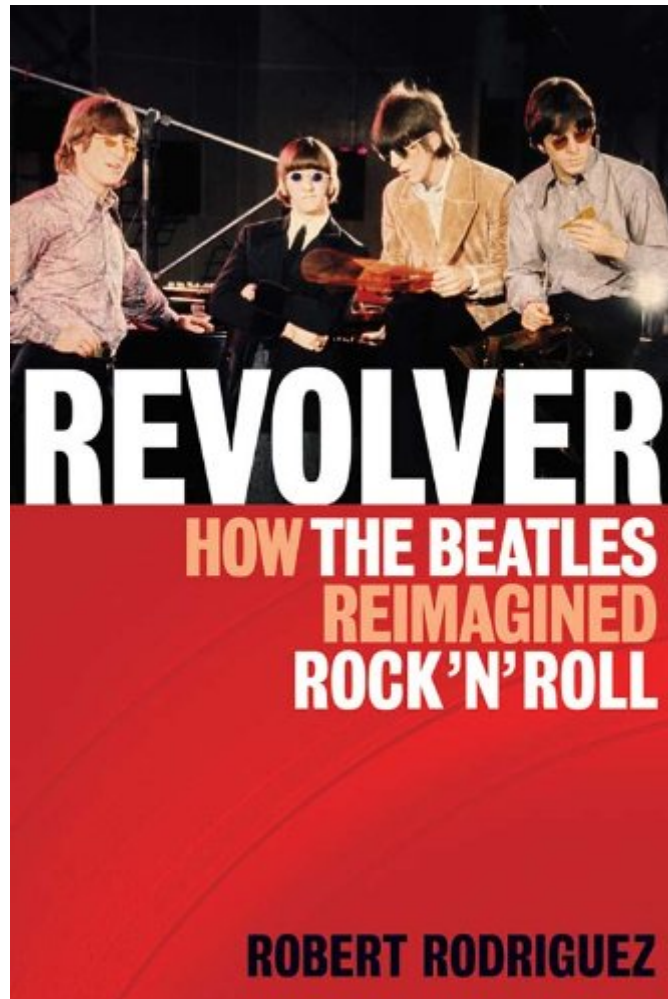


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Revolver: How The Beatles Re-Imagined Rock 'n' Roll



Synopsis

(Book). Acquired wisdom has always put Sgt. Pepper at the head of the class, but it was Revolver that truly signaled The Beatles' sea change from a functional band to a studio-based ensemble. These changes began before Rubber Soul but came to fruition on Revolver, which took an astonishing 300 hours to produce, far more than any rock record before it. The making of Revolver hunkered down in Abbey Road with George Martin is in itself a great Beatles story, but would be nothing if the results weren't so impactful. More than even Sgt. Pepper and Pet Sounds, Revolver fed directly into the rock 'n' roll zeitgeist, and its influence could be heard everywhere: from the psychedelic San Francisco sound (Jefferson Airplane, Grateful Dead); to the first wave of post-blues hard rock (Sabbath, Zeppelin); through movie soundtracks and pretty much everything that followed it including every generation of guitar-based pop music and even heavy metal. More than any record before or after, Revolver was the game-changer, and this is, finally, the detailed telling of its storied recording and enormous impact.

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Customer Reviews

The Beatles' "Revolver" album was an overlooked masterpiece in its time, argues Robert

Rodriguez, but it is now getting its proper due. That's fine with me... "Revolver" is doubtless one of the greatest albums ever recorded. My problem with this book stems from its attempts to gently rubbish "Sgt. Pepper" in order to build up "Revolver." More about that shortly. First, the good: This is a clearly written and well organized book about "Revolver," dwelling first on the album's 1966 context (both in the career of the Beatles and in the pop world at the time), then on the songwriting, then the recording, and finally the reception of the album upon its release. Rodriguez knows his stuff - this is not one of those books by relatively clueless journalists who are coming to the Beatles in depth for the first time. A brief section on the question of whether and why Paul McCartney did not play on the track "She Said She Said" is the best and clearest summation of the issue I have ever read. There are many other carefully researched details, include the exact timing of Paul's motorbike accident which left him with a chipped tooth. The book is similarly good on the egregious machinations of record companies at the time, leading to different versions of the album appearing in Britain and America. And, to his credit, whenever Rodriguez ventures into the realm of criticism and opinion, he is careful to mention that what he is saying is subjective. (There are one or two minor self-contradictions, as when he holds up "Doctor Robert" as a song advocating drugs, then later recognizes it as a tongue-in-cheek song making fun of a drug pusher instead.) As I say, my main problem comes near the end of the book where he compares the laudatory reception of "Sgt.

Without doubt "Revolver" is my favourite Beatles album, so I was intrigued to read this book looking at the making of an album the author puts above "Sgt Pepper" - usually cited as the bands high point. Rodriguez asserts that although Pepper is usually considered the apex of the Beatles creativity, it is actually "Revolver" that is the artistic high water mark - a true group collaboration which pushed the studio's technological limits as far as they could go. 1966 saw the band coming to the end of their touring life (it would later end with the "bigger than Jesus" comment and the chaos that was the Phillipines). However, what allowed the band to actually settle into the studio and create music without pressing time commitments was the lack of agreement of a third feature film, for which Brian Epstein had blocked out three whole months for shooting. Finding themselves without a script, they were left with the space they needed to create a masterpiece. John and Paul were at the exact mid-point states the author, before dominance in the group shifted from John to Paul. Also, this was a time when the members of the band happily experimented (Paul playing lead guitar on "Taxman" for example) without treading on each others toes. This excellent book begins with what the Beatles were up to in early 1966 and what music their peers were creating, before looking at how the songs were written and then recorded. There is lots of the detail Beatle fans

thrive on and examination of the revolutionary innovations used, such as Automatic Double Tracking and use of reversed tape.

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