

# The original music artists and their music I love - The Beatles

Yiren Qin<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Affiliation not available

September 16, 2022



Figure 1: The original music artists and their music I love - The Beatles

## The original music artists and their music I love - The Beatles

Yiren Qin<sup>1,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Black Family Stem Cell Institute, Department of Cell, Developmental and Regenerative Biology, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, New York, NY 10029, USA.

\*Correspondence address: [yiren.qin@mssm.edu](mailto:yiren.qin@mssm.edu)

If one day YouTube can't be used, the most painful thing may be that I can no longer enjoy my favorite original music and its videos I love. When my work is not going well, it makes me irritable, dull and even pessimistic and disappointed from time to time. However, it is the original music that allows me quickly alleviate from this unhappiness and gives me the motivation and courage to continue working hard. It is the original music that makes me feel the charm of the art more deeply and lets me get more inspiration and enlightenment to do scientific research. Here, I'd like to write down the original music artists and their music I love and share them with my readers.

First, let me introduce my favorite rock band - The Beatles.

Speaking of the Beatles, we will think of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr (Richard Starkey) from Liverpool, England. From their 20-year-old debut to conquest of the world, to the disbandment of the band that had been working for less than ten years, to the early death of Lennon at 40 and Harrison at 58, as a complete fan of the Beatles, my heart is filled with sadness. Only when I see them still singing in the video, do I feel that the Beatles are always there and live young forever in my heart.

As a band in the 1960s, most Chinese people probably only heard about it literally, and seldom listened, felt and understood the Beatles' songs. There are 188 original songs created by the Beatles [1], most of which were created by the core of the band Lennon and McCartney individually or together (The creation here means writing lyrics and composing music), and the public contributions are marked with Lennon-McCartney. In addition, lead guitarist Harrison created 25 songs and drummer Starr created 2 songs. There are 78 my favorite songs of the Beatles. Whenever I walk to the supermarket and wait in a long line, whenever I am thinking quietly in the middle of the night, whenever I feel down, I play these 78 songs in a continuous loop on YouTube and listen to them ecstatically. Here, I introduce representative songs of the Beatles, the achievements and honors of the Beatles and its members, and the development of each member after the disbandment of the band.

## 1. Representative songs of the Beatles

### 1.1. Love songs in the early stage of the band

Just as Jeannette Catsoulis, a reporter from The New York Times, described her personal experience when she participated in the Beatles concert in 1964 in an article published in this newspaper in 2015: "I think I had my first orgasm at a Beatles concert - then again, how would I have known? When you're preteen, prepubescent and pretty much pre-everything, 'I want to hold your hand' seems the height of erotic ambition. And that was especially true in 1964, before the sexual revolution and the Internet made that kind of ignorance unimaginable" [2].

#### 1.1.1 "I want to hold your hand"

This is a love song created and sung by Lennon and McCartney together in 1963 that can ignite youth hormones. It sounds tight-paced and canty, cheerful and euphonic, amazing and passionate. It is also a perfect tune played in harmony with Harrison and Lennon's guitar, McCartney's bass and Starr's drumming, and has become the best-selling single of the Beatles in the world [3]. This song is ranked 16th on the Rolling Stone's 500 greatest songs of all time [4].

#### 1.1.2 "She loves you"

This is an unusual love song created and vocalized by Lennon and McCartney in 1963, and harmonically vocalized by Harrison. As a lovesickness song, the melody sounds musical and euphonic, but with a little miss and concern. In addition, what is unusual about this song is that the lyrics are not about the writer's love for the person he likes, but as an intermediary to describe a love that is impossible to be together, as described in the lyrics:

"You think you lost your love,  
Well, I saw her yesterday.  
It's you she's thinking of  
And she told me what to say.  
She says she loves you . . .  
You hurt her  
She didn't know why  
It wasn't your fault

And didn't turn around

Oh yes she loves you

Because with you alone she can only be happy. . .”

This song was the highest-selling single of the Beatles in the UK. It also was the highest-selling single among all artists in the 1960s [5]. Rolling Stones ranked it 64th on the 500 greatest songs of all time [4].

### 1.1.3 “I should have known better”

This love song was created by Lennon alone in 1964 and sung by Lennon and McCartney together. It sounds very dulcet, euphonic, joyful and pleasant. Harrison's superb guitar chords make the tune of this song even more sublime. In a live video of the Beatles that I like most to watch, all four of them perform extremely cheerfully. In addition to playing the guitar, Lennon also plays the harmonica interspersed. McCartney squints Lennon from time to time to keep up with his rhythm. Harrison dances happily while playing his guitar. Starr can't close his mouth gladly. What's interesting is that at the end of this video, a fan admires the performance of the Beatles with ecstasy. When he finally raises his hand to cheer, he finds himself in handcuffs with another cheering person. This is the state of the Beatles fanaticism.

### 1.1.4 “And I love her”

This is a very sweet love song created and sung by McCartney alone in 1964. McCartney's beautiful singing voice combined with slow guitar and soft drum accompaniment sounds very pleasant and melodious. McCartney called it the first lyrical song to impress him [6]

### 1.1.5 “When I am sixty-four”

This is a song created by McCartney at the age of about 16 and released in 1967 [7]. It describes the young guy hoping to be with the person he loves and grow old. The song is sung by McCartney alone, and the melody sounds soothing, euphonic and musical. Incorporating Starr's harmonious and powerful drumming, it also sounds a touch of sadness and concern. I like listening to this song very much, but I also think that the two members of the Beatles did not live to 64 years old, so I feel a trifle sad.

### 1.1.6 “Yesterday”

This is a slightly sentimental love song created by McCartney in 1965. It's sung by McCartney alone by playing the guitar. It's also the first solo song performed by the Beatles. The melody sounds simple, dulcet and melodious. It is still popular today. There are more than 2,200 cover versions of this song and it is considered to be the most covered song in the recorded music history [8]. This song was voted as the best song of the 20th century in the BBC radio poll in 1999 [8]. It was ranked 13th in the Rolling Stone's 500 greatest songs of all time [4]. According to the biographers of McCartney and the Beatles, this song was conceived by McCartney when he was dreaming of the entire melody. He played it in front of the piano immediately after he woke up so as not to forget [8]. The same is true when I write articles. I often dream of new ideas when I sleep. I take notes immediately after I wake up.

## 1.2 Representative songs created and sung by Harrison during the band

Harrison was the youngest in the band (3 years younger than Lennon and Starr, and 1 year younger than McCartney). His music creation and singing talents during the Beatles were mostly overshadowed by the geniuses of Lennon and McCartney, so he said he was an “invisible” singer in the band. Here, I introduce the two most famous songs he created when he was in the band, “While my guitar gently weeps” and “Something”. Both of them entered the Rolling Stone's 500 greatest songs of all time, ranking 136th and 278th respectively [4], and both of them entered Rolling Stone's top 10 songs of the Beatles of all time [9].

### 1.2.1 “While my guitar gently weeps”

This song was inspired by the Chinese *I Ching*. When Harrison went to his parents' home, saw the book for the first time and he finished reading it, he found that the Eastern culture he had felt was the opposite of what was introduced in the West [10], as described in the lyrics:

“...I look at the floor and I see it needs sweeping  
Still my guitar gently weeps.  
I don't know why nobody told you  
How to unfold your love  
I don't know how someone controlled you  
They bought and sold you...  
With every mistake we must surely be learning  
Still my guitar gently weeps  
I don't know how you were diverted  
You were perverted too  
I don't know how you were inverted.”

This song conveys Harrison's disappointment that there is unrealized potential for universal love in this world, just as he said “The love there that's sleeping”. The melody of the song sounds incredibly euphonic, beckoning and melodious at the same time with a hint of disappointment and sentimentality. It is one of my favorite songs of the Beatles. In addition, this song was ranked 7th among the Rolling stone's 100 greatest guitar songs of all times [11].

### 1.2.2 “Something”

Some music historians believed that this song reflected that Harrison's music creation level could catch up with Lennon and McCartney [12]. When this song was composed, Harrison and Pattie, Lennon and Yoko, McCartney and Linda, Starr and Maureen were all in the love of the duo. The melody of the song sounds sweet, dulcet, euphonic and comfortable, which is very suitable for men and women in love. This song has been covered by more than 150 artists and is the second most covered song of the Beatles after “Yesterday”. It is ranked 17th among the most covered songs of the 20th century listed by Broadcast Music Incorporated. In addition, the song was named the best songwriting and composition song of 1969 by the Ivor Novello Award [12].

### 1.3 The song created and vocalized by Starr during the band - “Octopus's Garden”

This song sounds very peaceful and easy, also musical and joyful. Harrison, who helped Starr complete the song, commented on the song: “This cosmic song is lovely and so peaceful” [13], as the lyrics mention:

“I'd like to be  
Under the sea  
In an octopus' garden  
In the shade...  
Oh what joy  
For every girl and boy  
Knowing they're happy  
And they're safe...”

Besides, due to the peaceful and cheerful rhyming of lyrics and music, it is sometimes regarded as a children's song [13].

#### 1.4 Sad songs in the band's later stage

In the later stage of the Beatles, McCartney became the actual leader of the band, and he created and sang most of the songs. Because the band was facing disbandment, some songs created in this period sounded sad. Here I list the 3 most representative songs:

##### 1.4.1 "Hey Jude"

This is an almost household song of the Beatles, created and sung by McCartney alone in 1968. The creative inspiration came from the radical changes caused by the band's later disbandment. It was also at this time that Lennon left his wife Cynthia and his 5-year-old son Julian for Yoko. During this period, McCartney drove to visit Cynthia and Julian, and wrote this song on the way back. It was originally called "Hey Jules" and later changed to "Hey Jude". This song was to comfort Julian from the pressure of separation from his parents [14]. As the lyrics describe:

"Hey Jude, don't make it bad.  
Take a sad song and make it better.  
Remember to let her into your heart,  
Then you can start to make it better.  
Hey Jude, don't be afraid.  
You were made to go out and get her.  
The minute you let her under your skin,  
Then you begin to make it better.  
And anytime you feel the pain, hey Jude, refrain,  
Don't carry the world upon your shoulders.  
For well you know that it's a fool who plays it cool  
By making his world a little colder..."

This song sounds sort of sad, yet soothing and euphonic. The simple and beautiful melody fully embodies McCartney's genius for music creation. This song is the highest-ranked single of the Beatles, ranking 8th among the Rolling Stone's 500 greatest songs of all time [4]. At the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics, 70-year-old McCartney was still passionate about playing and performing this song in front of the piano. Singing with everyone present, he walked to the big stage to wave his hands and interact with the audience, which brought the atmosphere on the scene to a climax.

##### 1.4.2 "The long and winding road"

This song was created and sung solely by McCartney in 1968 and released publicly in 1970. The creative intention came from the growing tension between the band members. The melody of the song sounds very sad and moving, making people cry. In a live video in the studio of the Beatles, McCartney sat in front of the piano practicing the song. He looked a bit decadent with a long beard while Lennon and Yoko sat on the carpet together smoking cigarettes and flirting. This was the scene in the late stage of the Beatles.

##### 1.4.3 Let it be

The creative inspiration of this song was the same as the above "The long and winding road". Faced with the possible disbandment of the band in the future, McCartney was very sad and disappointed. At this time, he often thought of his mother who left him when he was 14 years old. Once in a dream, his mother

Mary told him: “It will be all right, just let it be”, so he named this song “Let it be” [15], as the lyrics describe:

“When I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary comes to me  
Speaking words of wisdom, let it be  
And in my hour of darkness she is standing right in front of me  
Speaking words of wisdom, let it be  
Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be  
Whisper words of wisdom, let it be  
And when the broken hearted people living in the world agree  
There will be an answer, let it be  
For though they may be parted, there is still a chance that they will see  
There will be an answer, let it be...”

In this song, McCartney’s excellent singing voice and his beautiful piano performance, Harrison and Lennon’s melodious and harmonious guitar ensemble, and Starr’s sonorous and powerful drum accompaniment, make the whole melody perfect. This song was the last single of the Beatles before McCartney announced his departure from the band. It is also one of the most well-known songs of the Beatles. Rolling Stones ranked it 20th in the 500 greatest songs of all time [4].

### 1.5 Some other songs

In addition to the above songs, I’d like to recommend some little-known and wonderful songs from the Beatles:

Fast-paced and cheerful songs: “Thank you girl” (Created by Lennon and Paul McCartney and dedicated to female fans as a gift. Drumming-based accompaniment brings Starr’s percussion wisdom to the extreme.), “Hold me tight”, “Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da”, “Drive my car”, “Birthday”;

Soothing and melodious songs: “Free as birds” (Created by Lennon in 1977 after the disbanding of the band, and recorded by the Beatles members together again), “Golden slumber”, “Carry that weigh”, “We can work out”, “Black bird”, “Two of us”, “Do you want a secret”, “Wait”, “Here, there and everywhere”, “Yes it is”;

Harmonious and moving songs: “This boy” (A perfect and harmonious tune vocalized by Lennon, McCartney, and Harrison at the same time);

Kind of sad, yet affecting songs: “Girl”, “Don’t let me down” (A anguished love song created by Lennon for Yoko);

Touching and beautiful songs: “Things we said today”, “Ask my why”;

The first non-love song of the Beatles: “Nowhere man”.

### 1.6 The Beatles vs Mozart

Some people might laugh at me: “In the new era, you actually even introduce us to the old-fashioned songs that grandpas listened to”. The following is my defense:

First of all, in the 1960s in China, our grandpa’s generation had never heard of rock music in their youth, nor had they had the opportunity to listen to and understand the Beatles’ songs.

Secondly, according to data from Spotify, the world’s largest music media streaming provider, the Beatles’ songs were played 1.7 billion times in 2019, and 30% of the listeners were 18 to 24 years old [16]. It suggested that “the Beatles remain a popular culture phenomenon even among Gen Z fans” [16].

Thirdly, Mozart’s music is more than two hundred years old. Why not only does no one say that it is old-fashioned, but it is hailed as a classic and elegant art and played in the extravagant music hall for non-ordinary people to appreciate? In comparison, is the popular music of the Beatles vulgar than the classical music of Mozart? As far as art itself is concerned, as sad music, Mozart’s “Symphony No.40” is more objectively superior to the Beatles’ “Let it be”? **NO!** In an article entitled “Mozart vs the Beatles” published by American philosopher Gary Gutting in The New York Time in 2013, he commented: “... the alleged superiority of high culture has often supported the pretensions of an aristocratic class claiming to have privileged access to it ... The Beatles, attracted people for their catchy melodies, teasing lyrics, cool attitudes, sense of musical adventure, political views, and by now even the memories they evoke ... **The same can be true of works of high art**” [17]. Interestingly, Gutting’s article is also accompanied by a satirical cartoon. It describes a pianist stepping onto the stage, picking up Mozart’s sheet music, and playing intoxicatingly. But the close-up of a male and female listeners scratch their heads and can’t understand the music. After the pianist finish playing, he goes back to his car with flowers, and then play Britney Spears’ CD and drive away with headphones. I think that in a society where the hereditary aristocracy has been eliminated, even billionaire entrepreneurs would not listen to dull and tedious classical music every day, but would enjoy free and individual popular music at every moment of their leisure.

Last, among the Rolling Stone’s 500 greatest songs of all time in 2010, 39.2% were from the 1960s, 26.2% from the 1970s, 11% from the 1980s, 4.4% from the 1990s, 5.4% from the 2000s [4]. These data fully suggest that the appreciation value and artistic level of modern popular music are demonstrating a clear downward trend. I personally think that in the era of artificial intelligence, the artistic wisdom and creativity of human beings may have also declined.

## 2. The achievements and honors of the Beatles and its members

**2.1** The rise of the Beatles ended the era of American non-original singer Elvis Presley, and achieved the Beatles era that conquered the world, and made the British music invade the United States, the birthplace of rock music.

**2.2** The Beatles are by far the highest-selling music artists [18]. In addition, in the 1960s, the British economy was in a crisis of depletion of the U.S. dollar and could not maintain its commitment to fix the exchange rate at 2.8 U.S. dollars per pound. The savior of this crisis was the Beatles, and it was the money the Beatles made from touring the United States and other countries that turned the tide [19]. According to media statistics, the Beatles made \$650 per second from 1964 to 1966 [19]. Nearly half a century after the disbandment of the Beatles, the four members earned 71 million U.S. dollars in 2013 [20], earning \$2.25 per second.

**2.3** Among the 500 greatest songs listed by Rolling Stones in 2004/2010, the artist with the most selected songs were the Beatles, contributing 23 songs, of which 10 are in the top 100 [4].

**2.4** The famous media’s evaluation of the Beatles

**2.4.1** Among the 100 greatest artists of all time from Rolling Stone, the Beatle ranked first [21].

**2.4.2** Among the 100 most successful artists listed by Billboard in 2008, the Beatles ranked first [22];

**2.4.3** Among the 100 most influential people of the 20th century collected by Times, the Beatles was listed [23].

**2.5** Famous media’s evaluation of the members of the Beatles:

**2.5.1** Among the 100 greatest British people named by the BBC in 2002, Lennon and McCartney ranked 8th and 19th respectively. Only two scientists ranked above them, Charles Darwin and Isaac Newton.

Harrison ranked 62nd, surpassing steam engine inventor James Watt and comedian Charlie Chaplin [24].

**2.5.2** Among the 100 greatest songwriters of all time from Rolling Stones, McCartney ranked second, Lennon ranked third, and Harrison ranked 65th [25].

**2.5.3** Among the 100 greatest singer of all time from Rolling Stones, Lennon ranked 5th and McCartney ranked 19th [26].

**2.5.4** Among the 100 greatest guitarists of all time from Rolling Stones, Harrison ranked 11th and Lennon ranked 55th [27]. Lennon was not only a genius of music creation and singing, but he was also an outstanding guitarist, which is less known, so Lennon said that he was the “invisible” guitarist in the band.

**2.5.5** Among the 100 greatest drummers of all time from Rolling Stones, Starr ranked 14th [28]. Although Starr is not the drummer with the best percussion skills among the rock bands, he can play the most perfect rock music with other members of the Beatles. Some people call him the godfather of rock percussion, because his art of playing percussion with his own sense and wisdom has taught other drummers with better skills a vivid lesson: Drumming is not only a violent beating with your hands, but more importantly, using your brain.

### **3. The development of each member after the disbandment of the band**

After the Beatles was disbanded, the four members independently developed their own music careers.

As a peace activist and philosophical artist, Lennon created the astounding masterpiece - “Imaging”. Rolling Stones described this song as Lennon’s greatest musical work dedicated to the world [29]. The song’s calm and clear melody, and soft chord progress make it perfect. It is ranked No. 3 on the Rolling Stone’s the 500 greatest songs [4]. At the closing ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics, a video of Lennon playing and singing the song in front of the piano was shown on the giant screen.

“Imagine there’s no heaven

It’s easy if you try

No hell below us

Above us, only sky

Imagine all the people

Livin’ for today

Ah...”

It seems that Lennon “Get back” (a famous song created by McCartney at the late stage of the Beatles).

McCartney has been very depressed and sad for a while after the band just disbanded, so he composed the famous song “Maybe I’m Amazed” to express his mood at that time, as the lyrics describe:

“Maybe I’m amazed at what’s going on . . .

Maybe I’m a man and maybe you’re the only woman who could ever help me;

Baby won’t you help me understand . . .

Maybe I’m amazed at the way you pulled me out of time, hung me on the line,

Maybe I’m amazed at the way I really need you.”

Later, McCartney and his wife Linda and other members formed the Wings, which became one of the most successful bands in the 1970s [30]. In addition, McCartney is also one of the richest musicians in the world, with an estimated wealth of 800 million pounds as of 2020 [31]. During the COVID-19 outbreak in

2020, famous singers from all over the world participated in a live online global concert with the theme “One World: Together At Home” to thank and encourage the medical staff who are fighting on the front lines. 78-year-old McCartney was invited to participate in the performance. He looked still vigorous and sang the famous song “Lady Madonna” that he created during the Beatles period while playing the piano.

Harrison independently developed his own music career after the band was disbanded, and has also made brilliant achievements. He created many very beautiful and high-selling songs, the most famous such as “My sweet lord”, which became the No.1 single in the international rankings at the end of 1970 and early 1971 [32]. Harrison was also a very wealthy musician, with a fortune of 100 million pounds during his lifetime [33].

After the band was disbanded, Starr’s music career also flourishes. He becomes the richest drummer in the world, with an estimated wealth of 350 million pounds as of 2020 [34].

The brief introduction of the Beatles is over, but listening to the Beatles’ music is endless.

**This article is dedicated to my beloved the Beatles!**

Yiren Qin

Nov. 2021, Manhattan, New York

## References

- [1] List of songs recorded by the Beatles, Wikipedia
- [2] Jeannette Catsouli, The Beatles Awaken a New Sensation. The New York Times, 2015.
- [3] I Want to Hold Your Hand, Wikipedia
- [4] 500 Greatest Songs of All Time, Rolling Stone
- [5] She Loves You, Wikipedia
- [6] And I Love Her, Wikipedia
- [7] Paul McCartney: The Lyrics: 1956 to the Present, Publisher: Liveright (November 2, 2021), ISBN-10: 163149256X, p791.
- [8] Yesterday (Beatles song), Wikipedia
- [9] The Top Ten Beatles Songs of All Time, Rolling Stone
- [10] While My Guitar Gently Weeps, Wikipedia
- [11] Rolling Stone’s 100 Greatest Guitar Songs Of All Time
- [12] Something (Beatles song), Wikipedia
- [13] Octopus’s Garden, Wikipedia
- [14] Hey Jude, Wikipedia
- [15] Let It Be (Beatles song), Wikipedia
- [16] UCR CLASSIC ROCK & CULTURE: Thirty Percent of Spotify Beatles Streams Are by 18-24-Year-Olds
- [17] Gary Gutting, Mozart vs. the Beatles, The New York Times, 2013
- [18] List of best-selling music artists, Wikipedia
- [19] Kristin Forbes, Financial “deglobalization”?: capital flows, banks, and the Beatles
- [20] How The Beatles Earned \$71 Million This Year, Sort Of, Forbes

- [21] 100 Greatest Artists, Rolling Stone
- [22] Hot 100 All-Time Top Artists, The Billboard
- [23] The Beatles- Irrepressible and irresistible, they were — and remain — the world’s most astonishing rock-‘n’-roll band, Times
- [24] 100 Greatest Britons, Wikipedia
- [25] 100 Greatest Songwriters of All Time, Rolling Stone
- [26] 100 Greatest Singers of All Time, Rolling Stone
- [27] 100 Greatest Guitarists, Rolling Stone
- [28] 100 Greatest Drummers of All Time, Rolling Stone
- [29] Imagine (John Lennon song), Wikipedia
- [30] Paul McCartney and Wings, Wikipedia
- [31] Paul McCartney, Wikipedia
- [32] My Sweet Lord, Wikipedia
- [33] George Harrison, Wikipedia
- [34] Ringo Starr, Wikipedia