Observations & questions

- Song analysis models
- Is this album a unified work of art similar to a symphony, suite or song cycle in classical music?
  - The invention of the “concept album”
  - McCartney “… like writing your novel”
  - Lennon disagreed
  - The first album to print the lyrics on the sleeve

Producer George Martin

“The 5th Beatle”

contexts & consequences

- Pop music gets its own Art Tradition
- Queen – “We don’t compose songs, we compose albums”
- Punk reacts against this (Metallica struggles on)
- The Recording is the Work
  - Before, recordings were supplements to the ‘real thing,’ live performance
  - Now, the live concert is the supplement to the recording
  - Financially, this may be reverting back, but the recording still seems to be the site of music

‘The Frame’

- Opening (title) song (SPLHCB)
- Alter ego/distancing (dissimulation) tactic
- Polystylistic now, polystylistic then, but in the future?
- 12 + 5 bar phrase lengths – gives it a chopped up feel?
With a Little Help . . .

- A “character song” (as in an opera or musical)
- Musical traits? (Simplicity of harmony seems to set up the next song)
- Drug reference? Surrealistic verse?
- Rating on your personal normalcy/weirdness chart?
- Appeal to fantasies/Beatlemania?

Chorus:
I get by with a little help from my friends,
I get high with a little help from my friends. Etc.

The enigmatic lines:
What do you see when you turn out the light,
I can't tell you, but I know it's mine.

Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds

- Nothing to do with LSD? It’s dream imagery, not drug imagery . . .
- Contrast in meter
- cleverly ambiguous harmony
- Instruments: electric organ “bell” stop, bass, tambura, two types of guitars
- fx (compression, phasing) & tape speed trick on the vocals

Getting Better

- Optimism with one or two negative, even shocking, twists in the lyrics
- “the album’s first track with no harmonic innovations” — Walter Everett
  – (but I think that guitar spiking away on a note that may or may not fit into the chords is really cool)
- Falsetto “foolish rules”

It’s getting better all the time
I used to get mad at my school
the teachers who taught me weren’t cool
You're holding me down, turning me round,
filling me up with your rules.
I've got to admit it's getting better
a little better all the time
I have to admit it's getting better
it's getting better since you've been mine.
Me used to be angry young man
Me hiding me head in the sand
You gave me the word
I finally heard
I'm doing the best that I can.
I've got to admit it's getting better

Can't get no worse

Fixing a Hole

- Instruments: harpsichord (and the usual guitar, bass and drums)
- Lovely mix of major and minor (the drifting dreamy state of mind?)
- Intro is short a couple of beats – throws everything else off? (otherwise straight 8-bar phrases)
- Artist & society?
Fixing a Hole

I'm fixing a hole where the rain gets in
and stops my mind from wandering
where it will go
I'm filling the cracks that ran through the door
and kept my mind from wandering
where it will go
and it really doesn't matter if I'm wrong
I'm right
Where I belong I'm right
See the people standing there who disagree and never win
and wonder why they don't get in my door.
I'm painting my room in a colorful way
and when my mind is wandering
there I will go.

Fixing a Hole

And it really doesn't matter if
I'm wrong I'm right
where I belong I'm right
where I belong.

Silly people run around they worry me
and never ask me why they don't get past my door.
I'm taking the time for a number of things
that weren't important yesterday
and I still go.
I'm fixing a hole where the rain gets in
and stops my mind from wandering
where it will go.

She's Leaving Home

• The view from the other side of the “Generation Gap”
• Very straightforward narrative
• Instruments: harp & strings; as in “Eleanor Rigby,” ‘old-fashioned’ arrangement
• Triple meter
• Nice details in the lyrics: “kitchen . . . clutching . . . handkerchief”
• Relationship to the SPLHCB album concept?

Being For the Benefit of Mr. Kite

• FX (reverb, tape, waltz recorded at half-speed, etc.)
• Swirl of harmony
• Text from an antique poster
• Lennon wanted to “smell the sawdust”
• Contrasting use of triple meter

Within You Without You

• George Harrison’s song for the album
• Harrison is the “spiritual Beatle” – seriously engaged with mediation & Indian music
• Instruments: drone (tambura) tabla, bowed sarangi-like dilbura, Indian zither, sitar, chamber ensemble strings played in an Indian style
• No chords or harmony; like Indian music, focus is on melody & scale
• Contrasting section in quintuple meter

We were talking about the love we all could share when we find it
to try our best to hold it there with our love,
with our love, we could save the world if they only knew.
**Within You Without You**

Try to realize it's all within yourself, no one else can make you change.
And to see you're really only very small, and life flows on within you and without you.

We were talking about the love that’s gone so cold and the people, who gain the world and lose their soul, they don’t know, they can’t see. Are you one of them?
When you’ve seen beyond yourself then you may find peace of mind is waiting there
And the time will come when you see we’re all one, and life flows on within you and without you.

**Good Morning, Good Morning**

- Most irritating song on the album
- Aggressive, distorted timbre of brass (!) instruments
- Meter is quite “natural” in following the text’s rhythm, but that makes it quite complicated!
- Lyrics a social critique again?
- Animal sounds at end in order of animals that would frighten or eat the proceeding one

**When I’m Sixty-Four**

- Tune sketched by McCartney in the late 1950s
- Quite a contrast!
- Does the style/generational theme connect to album concept?
- Instruments: clarinet, bass clarinet, tuba-like bass, bells, piano, brushes in drum kit
- Square, functional (bass movement by fifths) harmony (but a nice minor section contrast)
- Very chromatic melody but within that square harmony

**Lovely Rita**

- Least interesting song on the album?
- Square harmony
- I like the sound and rhythmic play of the lyrics
- Connect to album concept? “milit’ry man”?
- FX include speed recording/playback trick on piano to modify its sound
- Simulated sex in the coda? The ‘virtual reality’ of the album?

**Good Morning, Good Morning**

- Good morning, good morning, good morning ah
- Nothing to do to save his life call his wife in
- Nothing to say but what a day how’s your boy been
- Nothing to do it’s up to you
- I’ve got nothing to say but it’s OK
- Good morning, good morning etc.
- Going to work don’t want to go feeling low down
- Heading for home you start to roam then you’re in town
- Everybody knows there’s nothing doing
- Everything is closed it’s like a ruin
- Everyone you see is half asleep
- And you’re on your own you’re in the street
SPLCHB Reprise

• Sealing off the album? A bookend to the concept but wait! There's more . . .

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN

A Day in the Life

• a product of Lennon & McCartney
• References to the news transformed
• Orchestral sweep tied to “avant garde” “classical” composers

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN

b. 1928
given an electronic music studio in 1953
Gesang der Junglinge clip on YouTube or Gruppen Part 1 Part 3

KARLHEINZ STOCKHAUSEN

A Day in the Life

I read the news today, oh, boy
About a lucky man who made the grade
And though the news was rather sad
Well, I just had to laugh
I saw the photograph
He blew his mind out in a car
He didn't notice that the lights had changed
A crowd of people stood and stared
They'd seen his face before
Nobody was really sure if he was from the House of Lords

I saw a film today, oh, boy
The English army had just won the war
A crowd of people turned away
But I just had to look
Having read the book
I'd love to turn you on.
**A Day in the Life**

Woke up, fell out of bed,  
Dragged a comb across my head  
Found my way downstairs and drank a cup  
And looking up, I noticed I was late  
Found my coat and grabbed my hat  
Made the bus in seconds flat  
Found my way upstairs and had a smoke  
Somebody spoke and I went into a dream, Ah  
I read the news today oh, boy  
Four thousand holes in Blackburn, Lancashire  
And though the holes were rather small  
They had to count them all  
Now they know how many holes it takes to fill the Albert Hall  
I'd love to turn you on

**The Locked Groove**

- an infinitely repeating loop of sounds at the end of the album  
- That Paul!  
- Message(?): “Wake up”!

**A unified work of art?**

- Large scale harmonic plan? (maybe; Everett opinion)  
- Motif connections? (doubt it)  
- A balancing of contrasts and a variety of techniques to achieve and intensify those contrasts (Meckler opinion)  
- A theme of generational conflict & social critique (drugs not the only consistent theme in the lyrics!)

**Key reference work**