

**PICTURE CREDITS**

The Abergaeenny Chronicle: 113 bottom  
 Apple/Hulton-Deutsch Collection: 193 left, 199 right, 200 bottom, 204 right, 206 right, 207, 210, 211 top, 221, 222, 223, 225 bottom, 226, 239 bottom, 243, 262 bottom, 264 left, 264 bottom right, 265 top right, 267 top, 267 bottom, 271  
 Apple/Walter Shenson Films: 138, 149, 150 top left, 185 right, 186, 192  
 Aquarius Picture Library: 9 bottom right, 11 bottom and bottom centre  
 Art Barry: 50 right  
 Laurie Asprey: 336  
 BBC Photo Library: 107, 119, 120, 133, 134, 177  
 Beatle City: (letter) 13 top  
 Ken Beaton/John Askew collection: 19 bottom  
*Bedford* Record: 86  
 Albert Bonici: 95  
 Bootle Times: 26  
 Tony Bramwell: 284  
 Johnny Byrne: 58 bottom right  
 Camera Press: 7 top right, 106, 211 centre, 227 bottom, 236, 246 bottom, 312, 346  
 Camera Press/Apple: 331  
 Cheniston Roland/Mark Lewisohn collection: 19 top  
 Christie's: 9 bottom left, 32 top, 35 top left, 45 bottom, 62 top, 63 left, 90 top, 97, 151, 155 left, 201 centre, 213 right, 245, 265 left, 291 left, 319 bottom  
 The Cincinnati Enquirer: 140 top, right of centre  
 The Cleveland Press: 140 top, left of centre  
 Colorific!: 194  
 Commonwealth United Films: 134 bottom, 319 right  
 Coventry Evening Telegraph: 82  
 The Daily Cinema: 165 top, 198  
 Daily *Herald*: 92 bottom, 94 top  
 Daily Mail: 241 right  
 Darwin Advertiser: 98 top  
 Hunter Davies: 70 top  
 Robert Ellis: 308 right  
 EMI: 7 top left, bottom left and right, 54, 55 (all except centre picture), 61 bottom left, 70 bottom, 77 left, 79, 80 left, 90 bottom, 91, 92 top, 94 bottom, 99 bottom, 102, 103, 104 bottom, 115 (all pictures), 117, 129, 146, 147, 148 top, 148 centre, 168 left, 168 right, 170, 172, 174, 175 right, 180, 183 bottom, 184, 195 left, 204 left, 209, 216 bottom, 217, 218, 219, 224, 233, 234, 235, 238 top, 242 bottom, 244, 246 top, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252 top, 253 left, 256, 257, 259, 260, 262 top, 288, 289, 191 right, 292, 293, 294 right, 299, 300, 303, 308 left, 313, 315 left, 319 left, 321, 322, 325, 327, 330 top, 330 right, 332 bottom, 334, 339 bottom, 342, 343, 344, 345, 349 left  
 Paul Fender: 36  
 Dave Forshaw: 67 right  
 Granada Television: 59, 130  
 Nigel Greenberg: 76 right  
 Maurice Haigh: 96  
 Richard Hale: 294 left, 295  
 Heswall and Neston *News* and Advertiser: 19 right, 27 top right  
 Hong Kong Tiger Standard: 162  
 Home Counties Newspapers: 140 bottom  
 David Hughes/Mark Lewisohn collection: 13 bottom  
 Hulton-Deutsch Collection: 9 top right, 22 right, 22 left, 89 bottom, 100, 131 left, 132 top left, 135 right, 136 right, 137 top, 142 bottom, 143, 159, 161 left, 167 left, 169, 188, 232, 237 bottom, 252 bottom, 261, 263, 266 bottom, 277 top, 279, 298, 305 bottom, 317, 318  
*Inverness Courier*: 27  
 The Japan Times: 211 right  
 Peter Kaye: 62 bottom  
 Leslie Kearney/Mark Lewisohn collection: 15 left, 58 top right

Jon Keeble: 131 right  
 Allan Kozinn: 145 top right, 216 top left  
 Richard Langham: 12 3  
 Richard Lester: 137 bottom, 190 top  
*Liverpool Echo*: 15 right, 16 top, 41, 42, 43, 49, 63 right, 64 right, 75 bottom, 81 right, 163 bottom right, 197, 213 left, 230 left  
*Liverpool Weekly News*: 52 right, 58 left  
 London Features International: 9 top left, centre and centre right, 11 top, 110 bottom, 145 top, 145 bottom right, 156 bottom, 178, 179 top right, 183 top  
 Linda McCartney: 314 top, 324, 329 bottom, 330 bottom, The Maidenhead Advertiser: 193 right  
*Manchester Evening News*: 17 top  
 The Manila Chronicle: 212  
 Albert Marrion/Mark Lewisohn collection: 37 bottom, 52 left  
 Dick Matthew: 34, 44, 45 top, 50 top, 50 bottom left  
 The Melbourne Age: 163 left  
 Mersey Beat: 55 centre  
 Graham Moyle: 163 top right  
 New Musical Express: 225 top, 238 bottom, 275 right  
 Staffan Olander: 126 top  
*Peterborough Standard*: 85  
 Phillips: 39, 51, 80 right, 88  
 Radio Times: 239 top, 268 top  
 Record Retailer/Spotlight Publications: 60, 61 bottom right  
 Relay Photos: 264 right, 276 right, 339 top  
 The Reporter Group (South Lancashire Newspapers): 101  
 Rex Features: 2, 3 all pictures, 11 top centre, 124 bottom, 181, 214 right  
 Geoff Rhine: 14 right  
 Rhyl Journal and Advertiser: 73  
 Richmond, Twickenham and Barnes Herald: 189  
 Charles Roberts: 14 right  
 The San Francisco Chronicle: 201 right  
 The San Francisco Examiner: 140 top left  
 Scope Features: 114 top, 165 bottom, 166, 187, Keith Sluchansky at Revolver: 48 left, 145 centre left, 167 right, 182 left, 182 centre, 201 top left, 227 top, 229  
 David J Smith: 24 left, 32 bottom  
 Somerset County Gazette: 265 bottom right  
 Sotheby's: 18, 23, 24 right, 25, 28 bottom, 29, 31 top, 31 bottom right, 35 bottom right, 37 top, 48 right, 56, 57, 65, 69 left, 69 right, 71 right, 88, 89 top, 116, 132 top right, 136 left, 154 right, 220, 237 right, 286 left, 332 top  
 Southport Visiter: 64 left  
 Stroud News and Journal: 68  
 Times Newspapers: 122, 127 bottom  
 TV Times: 127 top  
 Don Valentine: 82  
 Victoria and Albert Theatre Museum: 108 bottom  
 Wallasey News: 20, 27 bottom right, 28 top  
*West Derby Reporter*: 16 top  
 The West London Observer: 155 right  
 Yorkshire Evening Post: 114 bottom

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**CONTENTS**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....4  
 FOREWORD .....6  
 INTRODUCTION .....8  
 GUIDANCE NOTES ..... 10  
 1957—1959 ..... 12  
 1960..... 18  
 1961 ..... 30  
 1962 ..... 52  
 1963 ..... 88  
 1964 ..... 136  
 1965 ..... 180  
 1966 ..... 210  
 1967 ..... 236  
 1968 ..... 276  
 1969 ..... 306  
 1970 ..... 340  
 APPENDICES  
 A Discography, 1962—1970 .....350  
 Peak Chart Positions, 1962—1970 .....351  
 Date/Composer Index Of  
     EMI © Recordings ..... 352  
 Chronology Of UK Radio Appearances.....354  
 Chronology Of UK TV Appearances.....355  
 Session/Live Performance Recordings  
     Broadcast By BBC Radio ..... 356  
 Other Engagements Played..... 357  
 Engagements Not Played .....358  
 Where They Played ..... 359  
 What They Played ..... 361  
 Name Index ..... 366

## F O R E W O R D

Normally I do not wallow in nostalgia; life is too short to keep looking back. But a recent reappraisal of old Beatles masters at Abbey Road has enabled me to delve into the past without too much of a guilt complex. I have listened again to the original tapes that we made all those years ago. Can it really be 30 years since I introduced the Fab Four to the strange and wonderful world of recording at EMI Studios in London? Even in 1962 they were experienced performers, although their genius for creating brilliant music and songs had yet to emerge. Certainly they were no strangers to hard work, and the years that followed saw them plunge into a whirlwind of concerts, broadcasts, feature-films, TV appearances, press conferences and photo calls that would have broken lesser men. Make no mistake about their lives then; there was little glamour in their goldfish bowl, and far too many demands were made on them.

As one of those behind the scenes urging them on, I had to stake my claim on their time for recording, which they fortunately enjoyed. In the studio their inventiveness and quest for new sounds is well known. They were quick learners, and in no time the master found himself becoming the student. Once the studio became their priority – from 1966 on – their horizons were limitless. Always curious, they insisted on finding new sounds and newer ways of achieving them.

Of course, there were moments when I could cheerfully have strangled one or other of them, and no doubt the feeling sometimes was reciprocated, but my enduring memory of those times is the enormous fun it all was. We really did not think about material success and the fortunes that they were earning. Our only consideration was to achieve the very best that we could, and we were completely united in that aim. If I inwardly believed we were developing an art form that would last for decades I kept it to myself. The value of what we were doing was never discussed. But we all knew that something really worthwhile was emerging.

Of all the chroniclers who have studied the lives of John, Paul, George and Ringo, Mark Lewisohn stands supreme. His dedication in getting all the true facts and cataloguing them, coupled with a style of writing that is most readable, leaves him with no rival. Time and again he has proven that he knows far more about what we did and when we did it than any of us. His book on the Beatles' recording sessions is an authoritative journal that I find invaluable. So many other books have been written about the lives of the Beatles that are less than truthful and a great deal of misinformed rubbish has been avidly devoured. We are fortunate to have Mark's scholarship. We need have no fears about his latest work, *The Complete Beatles Chronicle*; it will be as accurate as it is detailed.

G E O R G E M A R T I N

