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PLEASE PLEASE ME • THE BEATLES

stereo

THE BEATLES



**PLEASE
PLEASE ME**

with Love Me Do
and 12 other songs

Photo: Angus McBean



Pier Head, Liverpool,
19 Sept 62

Please Please Me **THE BEATLES**

■ **GEORGE HARRISON** (lead guitar) ■ **JOHN LENNON** (rhythm guitar)
■ **PAUL McCARTNEY** (bass guitar) ■ **RINGO STARR** (drums)

Pop picking is a fast 'n' furious business these days whether you are on the recording studio side listening out, or on the disc-counter side listening in. As a record reviewer I find myself installed halfway in-between with an ear cocked in either direction. So far as Britain's record collecting public is concerned, The Beatles broke into earshot in October, 1962. My natural hometown interest in the group prevented me taking a totally unbiased view of their early success. Eighteen months before their first visit to the EMI studios in London, The Beatles had been voted Merseyside's favourite outfit and it was inevitable that their first Parlophone record, LOVE ME DO, would go straight into the top of Liverpool's local hit parade. The group's chances of national chart entry seemed much more remote. No other team had joined the best-sellers via a début disc. But The Beatles were history-makers from the start and LOVE ME DO sold enough copies during its first 48 hours in the shops to send it soaring into the national charts. In all the busy years since pop singles first shrank from ten to seven



inches I have never seen a British group leap to the forefront of the scene with such speed and energy. Within the six months which followed the Top Twenty appearance of LOVE ME DO, almost every leading deejay and musical journalist in the country began to shout the praises of The Beatles. Readers of the *New Musical Express* voted the boys into a surprisingly high place via the 1962/63 popularity poll... on the strength of just one record release. Pictures of the group spread themselves across the front pages of three national music papers. People inside and outside the record industry expressed tremendous interest in the new vocal and instrumental sounds which The Beatles had introduced. Brian Matthew (who has since brought The Beatles to many millions of viewers and listeners in his "Thank Your Lucky Stars", "Saturday Club" and "Easy Beat" programmes) describes the quartet as *visually and musically the most exciting and accomplished group to emerge since The Shadows.*



The Cavern Club, Liverpool, 22 Aug 62

Disc reviewing, like disc producing, teaches one to be wary about making long-term predictions. The hit parade isn't always dominated by the most worthy performances of the day so it is no good assuming that versatility counts for everything. It was during the recording of a Radio Luxembourg programme in the *EMI Friday Spectacular* series that I was finally convinced that The Beatles were about to enjoy the type of top-flight national fame which I had always believed that they deserved. The teen-audience didn't know the evening's line-up of artists and groups in advance, and before Muriel Young brought on The Beatles she began to read out their Christian names. She got as far as John ... Paul ... and the rest of her introduction was buried in a mighty barrage of very genuine applause. I cannot think of more than one other group — British or American — which would be so readily identified and welcomed by the announcement of two Christian names. To me, this was the ultimate proof that The Beatles (and not just one or two of their hit



The Bally, Liverpool, 19 Sept 62

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Abbey Road Studios, 4 Sept 62

records) had arrived at the uncommon peak-popularity point reserved for disc-dom's privileged few. Shortly afterwards The Beatles proved their pop power when they by-passed the lower segments of the hit parade to scuttle straight into the nation's Top Ten with their second single, PLEASE PLEASE ME.

This brisk-selling disc went on to overtake all rivals when it bounced into the coveted Number One slot towards the end of February. Just over four months after the release of their very first record The Beatles had become triumphant chart-toppers!

Producer George Martin has never had any headaches over choice of songs for The Beatles. Their own built-in tune-smith team of John Lennon and Paul McCartney has already tucked away enough self-penned numbers to maintain a steady output of all-original singles from now until 1975! Between them



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Photographic Studio, London, Jan 63
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The Beatles adopt a do-it-yourself approach from the very beginning. They write their own lyrics, design and eventually build their own instrumental backdrops and work out their own vocal arrangements. Their music is wild, pungent, hard-hitting, uninhibited . . . and personal. The do-it-yourself angle ensures complete originality at all stages of the process. Although so many people suggest (without closer definition) that The Beatles have a trans-Atlantic style, their only real influence has been from the unique brand of Rhythm and Blues folk music which abounds on Merseyside and which The Beatles themselves have helped to pioneer since their formation in 1960.

This record comprises eight Lennon-McCartney compositions in addition to six other numbers which have become firm live-performance favourites in The Beatles' varied repertoire.

The group's admiration for the work of The Shirelles is demonstrated by the

inclusion of **BABY IT'S YOU** (John taking the lead vocal with George and Paul supplying the harmony), and **BOYS** (a fast rocker which allows drummer Ringo to make his first recorded appearance as a vocalist). **ANNA, ASK ME WHY**, and **TWIST AND SHOUT** also feature stand-out solo performances from John, whilst **DO YOU WANT TO KNOW A SECRET** hands the audio spotlight to George. **MISERY** may sound as though it is a self-duet created by the multi-recording of a single voice . . . but the effect is produced by the fine matching of two voices belonging to John and Paul. There is only one 'trick duet' and that is on **A TASTE OF HONEY** featuring a dual-voiced Paul. John and Paul get together on **THERE'S A PLACE** and **I SAW HER STANDING THERE**; George joins them for **CHAINS**, **LOVE ME DO** and **PLEASE PLEASE ME**.

Original 1963 cover notes
TONY BARROW

Please Please Me **THE BEATLES**

Historical Notes

Please Please Me was released into a pop music market that was still in its infancy. In March, 1963, 'music for teenagers' revolved around the single and many of the American rock 'n' roll artists loved by The Beatles found little success in an LP chart dominated by sophisticated singers, easy listening instrumentals and musicals of stage and screen. The achievements of The Beatles would soon reverse that trend by vividly demonstrating the artistic and commercial potential of a pop album aimed at young record buyers.

In 1963, however, the first Beatles album on EMI's Parlophone label was intended as no more than a quickly-produced audio snapshot of a group enjoying its first taste of chart success. It featured the four songs from their two hit singles (although 'Love Me Do' was a different version) plus another ten tracks recorded in just one day. Many of these were covers of rock 'n' roll and rhythm &

blues favourites from the group's stage repertoire.

The gathering momentum of The Beatles during 1963 proved unstoppable. George Martin's decision to sign the group to Parlophone in 1962 and EMI's small gamble to fund an album had both paid off handsomely. *Please Please Me* topped the UK album chart at the same time that their third single 'From Me To You' was at number one and only surrendered that position thirty weeks later to the second LP *With The Beatles*. It continued its run in the Top Twenty for a further nine months.

In this era, local hits for British artists rarely translated to American chart success and, not unusually, EMI's company in the States - Capitol Records - did not release either the album or 'From Me To You'. Instead, the material was licensed to the independent R&B label Vee-Jay, who issued 'Please Please Me' and 'From Me To You' in 1963. Although both singles failed to make any impact, an album was planned for the summer to include twelve of the *Please Please Me* songs. Called *Introducing The Beatles*, the Vee-Jay LP eventually surfaced when





EMI House, Manchester Square, London, Feb 63

the States fell under the Beatles' spell in January, 1964. It reached number two - held off the top by the group's first Capitol album *Meet The Beatles!*. The tracks licensed by Vee-Jay returned to their rightful home at Capitol in October, 1964 and eleven of them were shuffled into a different order for the album *The Early Beatles* released in March, 1965.

Simply through its initial British chart success, *Please Please Me* had given EMI an unparalleled return on their investment in studio time. It was The Beatles' fifth single 'I Want To Hold Your Hand' and their second album *With The Beatles* which sparked the explosive international success that changed everything...

Recording Notes

Produced by George Martin
Principal Engineer: Norman Smith

Having recorded two singles in 1962, The Beatles made their fifth visit to EMI's studios in Abbey Road, North London on 11th February, 1963 to record the songs needed to make their debut album. In just nine and three quarter

hours and using seven half-hour reels of tape, they completed eleven titles. The only song not used from that day was 'Hold Me Tight'. It was re-recorded seven months later for the next LP. Recording on a twin-track tape machine with the instruments sent to track one and the vocals to track two meant that the mono and stereo mixes could be made on another day. This ensured producer George Martin could devote all the valuable studio time to the intense recording schedule.

The first session of this productive day began at 10.00am and after three hours they had two songs ready for overdubbing in the afternoon. Three more songs were recorded between 2.30 and 6.00pm and two of them were also given overdubs. The second to be worked on was 'A Taste Of Honey', which features the 'trick duet' mentioned in the album's original cover notes. On that song, the recording made earlier was played back to Paul in the studio and simultaneously copied to another twin-track machine while he sang along with his original lead vocal. Double-tracking, as this was known, became a frequently used

technique but for this album it was limited to this song. The afternoon's other overdubs included harmony vocals, harmonica, percussion and handclaps.

When the evening session began at 7.30, they had five songs finished. Three and a quarter hours later they had completed a further six. After working on 'Hold Me Tight', The Beatles stormed through five cover versions - ending the day with two performances of 'Twist And Shout'. It was their first take that was chosen to close the album. Two weeks later, the ten selected songs were mixed into mono and stereo during a three hour session and, when added to the four from 1962, the album was now complete. *Please Please Me* had taken a little over 25 hours to record, edit and mix - a few albums later, as Beatles recordings became more adventurous, that would be hardly enough time to complete one song.

Please Please Me was released at a time when mono was the preferred format and stereo records sold to a small number of hi-fi enthusiasts. The twin-track recordings formed the basis of this stereo album but their original

purpose was to achieve a good balance between the instruments and the vocals when creating the masters. Inevitably, the stereo mix provides an unusual experience of hearing all the voices on the right side with all the instruments coming from the left.

However, because the 1962 twin-track tapes of 'Love Me Do' and 'P.S. I Love You' had been discarded, the original stereo vinyl LP presented them in fake stereo. Although this was common practice at the time, it subsequently fell out of favour and so these songs are presented on this CD in mono.

This remastered album has been created from the original stereo analogue master tapes except for tracks 8 and 9, which are from the original mono analogue master tapes.

Remastered by Paul Hicks, Steve Rooke and Guy Massey.

Project Co-ordinator: Allan Rouse

Thanks to Simon Gibson

Historical Notes: Kevin Howlett and Mike Heatley

Recording Notes: Allan Rouse and Kevin Howlett

Project management for EMI Records Ltd: Wendy Day and Guy Hayden

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