
Sgt Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band

The Beatles-1966

Album Cover



‘With a Little Help From My Friends’

Tonality:E Major

Texture: Homophonic and Antiphonal phrasing

Rhythm: Swung-tied quavers

Tempo: 112 BPM

Time signature: 4/4

Other Features: Melodic movement in bass line

‘With a Little Help From My Friends’ (Track 2)

The song moves from track 1-2 without a break introducing the character of Billy Shears (the singer of the melody-Ringo Starr). Ringo was the drummer in the Beatles.

Structure

The overall structure is not untypical of a Beatles song or indeed any pop song of the period:

Intro: chorus (rising major chords, C – D – E)

Verse 1: solo – Ringo

Chorus: solo n- Ringo – chorus joining on the third repeat

Verse 2: solo – Ringo alternating questions with chorus

Chorus 2: in vocal harmony throughout, six bars instead of 8

Bridge: chorus asking questions with solo (Ringo) answering

Verse 3: chorus-asking question with solo (Ringo) answering

Chorus 3: in vocal harmony throughout, six bars instead of 8

Bridge: chorus asking questions with solo (Ringo) answering

Chorus: in vocal harmony throughout, this time 8 bars leading to:

Outro: harmonically a repeat of the intro.

The accompanying chords ‘plod’ along in a crotchet rhythm (1 beat per chord), you can hear this particularly on the piano. The overall rhythm of the backing and vocal melody is of a steady **shuffle** which is found in rock and roll. A shuffle beat essentially breaks up each crotchet (1 beat note) into a triplet, the first two being tied to each other. The vocal melody is swung rather than played straight quavers.

What is interesting about the melody is that after the first note, the shuffle beat places each of the important words in the text, do, sang, tune, stand, walk and me just slightly before the beat making them prominent and having greater emphasis. The tied quavers on each of these notes create a sense of syncopation in the rhythm of the melody. The sequential movement between the first four notes of bar 1, and the first four notes of bar 2, help to give it a sense of shape and balance, and all of this within the narrow range of a perfect fifth, E to B, simple, but extremely effective.

Antiphonal phrasing is present between Ringo's vocal melody and the backing singers. This happens starting in **verse 2**

'What do I do when my love is away?' -Ringo solo
'Does it worry you be to alone' -Backing singers

This is then switched when the backing singers ask him...

'Do you need anybody?' -Backing singers
'I just need somebody to love' -Ringo solo

Chord structure verse

The chord structure is fairly simple using chords E, F#m and B.

Bass guitar melody

Paul McCartney's bass guitar playing features heavily on this track. There are many passing notes in the simple chords which gives the piece the uplifting feel.

'Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds' (Track 3)

Tonality:A Major

Genre: psychedelic rock

Features: time signature changes in each section

Use of different recording and music technology

The overall structure of the song looks like this:

Intro and verse 1: $\frac{3}{4}$ metre

Bridge 1: $\frac{3}{4}$ metre

Chorus 1: 4/4 metre – bass line in running quavers

Verse 2: back to $\frac{3}{4}$ metre

Bridge 2: $\frac{3}{4}$ metre, bass line very arpeggio driven

Chorus 2: 4/4 metre – bass line in running quavers again

Verse 3: slightly modified bass line

Chorus: repeated three times with modified bass and fading out

The opening $\frac{3}{4}$ metre keyboard introduction is remarkable in its simplicity but immediately evokes the dreamy atmosphere:

Music technology effects: **Automatic Double Tracking (ADT)**

A way of performing an instrumental or vocal track only once but achieving a double tracked (chorus) slight delay effect using a tape machine.

The first 3 lines of the song are song without this...

Picture yourself in a boat on a river
With tangerine trees and marmalade skies
Somebody calls you, you answer quite slowly
A girl with kaleidoscope eyes **(automatic Double Tracking added from here)**



Webb's exam tip...This particular effect changes the timbre of John Lennon's voice because it sounds like Delay and Echo

Music technology effects: **Direct Input Transfer (DIT)**

The producers and engineers invented a device (transformer) that enabled the Beatles to plug instruments straight into the equipment rather than use a microphone which is what happened before. This enabled the instruments to produce a crisper and clearer tone. This can be heard particularly in the bass parts

Music technology effects: **Close Micing**

Exactly as it sounds...the microphone is placed very close the sound source. This gives the recording a very 'dry' sound with no natural reverberation.

Music technology effects: **Reduction Mixing**

This was a way of 'bouncing' many recordings onto 1 track (similar to what you can do on GarageBand). This then allowed more track room so the Beatles could put other instruments on the recordings and layer them up to achieve a different sound overall.

Music technology effects: **Varispeeding**

Where music is recording at different speeds, either slowed or sped up. This effects the timbre of the instrument. This is used in 'Lucy in the sky with Diamonds' and makes it sound 'lightheaded' and 'dreamy'

Music technology effects: **Flange**

Used on the guitar recordings to achieve a 'sweeping' sound'

Music technology effects: **Distortion**

The guitar amp tube was turned up so much that the guitar sounds distorted and fuzzy.

Music technology effects: **Hammond organ Lesley Speaker**

The Beatles played George Harrison's guitar through a Lesley speaker. This gives a 'whirring' effect. This can be heard on the longer guitar notes within the chorus on 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds'



Webb's exam tip...Be prepared to use the terms above in your answers!

Tonality of sections

Verse=A Major-Some chromatic movement in bass guitar part dotted minims (3 beat note)

Bridge 1 ('cellophane flowers')Bb-crotchet movement in bass

Chorus=G major-quaver moment in bass

Verse 2=return to A major

Bridge 2 ('cellophane flowers')Bb

Second chorus=G major

Verse 3 =A major

Straight to Chorus=A major



Webb's exam tip...the change of key in the bridge and chorus add to the psychedelic feel as it moves and develops the piece. This is also helped with the change of rhythm of the bass part.

Melodic movement within vocal melody

In the verse the vocal melody is based around the first 5 notes of the A major scale.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The first staff contains the first four measures of the melody. Above the staff are four guitar chord diagrams: A, A/G, F#m7, and F+. The lyrics under the first staff are: Pic - ture your - self in a boat on a riv - er, with. The second staff contains the next four measures of the melody. Above the staff are four guitar chord diagrams: A/E, A/G, F#m7, and F. The lyrics under the second staff are: tan - ger - ine trees and mar - ma - lade skies.

The melody above mostly uses the first 3 notes of the A major scale. This is until the word 'mar-ma-lade' is sung on E and D.



Webb's exam tip...This adds to the dreamy/psychedelic sound of the piece

‘Within You, Without You’

George Harrison said:

“Within You, Without You came about after I had spent a bit of time in India and fallen under the spell of the country and its music. I had brought back a lot of instruments. It was written at Klaus Voorman's house in Hampstead after dinner one night. The song came to me when I was playing a pedal harmonium.

I'd also spent a lot of time with Ravi Shankar, trying to figure out how to sit and hold the sitar, and how to play it. Within You, Without You was a song that I wrote based upon a piece of music of Ravi's that he'd recorded for All-India Radio. It was a very long piece - maybe 30 or 40 minutes - and was written in different parts, with a progression in each. I wrote a mini version of it, using sounds similar to those I'd discovered in his piece. I recorded in three segments and spliced them together later.”

Harrison was the only Beatle to perform on the song, the instruments were: Harrison:

vocals, sitar, acoustic guitar, tambura

Unknown musicians: **dilruba, swardmandal, tabla, tambura**

Strings: session musicians

The structure of the piece is ABA.

The instrument that starts the piece off is a **Tambura**, an Indian type violin. This is the instrument you can hear playing some **glissando (slides)**. To start with there is a **lack of pulse** in this introduction. The **tambura** provides a **Drone** whilst also playing a melody over the top. The melody is **Modal** and is in the **Mixolydian Mode** in Indian music different scales are called **Raga**. Before the vocals enter you can hear a harp type instrument called a swardmandal playing a glissando with **Echo** on it. After this the **Tablas** enter and play a constant cyclic rhythm called a **Tala**. The drone of the **Tambura** continues through this section. This introduction sounds almost improvised until the vocals enter.

Vocal section

Important points to note about the vocal melody...

1. The dilruba doubles the vocal line with a few subtle changes

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2. The phrasing is somewhat irregular for a pop song (2 six bar phrases followed by a nine bar phrase)
 3. The vocal melody was introduced in the introductory dilruba melody which sounded improvised and free but sounds more 'fixed' when sung
 4. Western Strings enter in the second verse of the song to combine with the typically Indian strings used so far for the accompaniment
 5. In the first chorus there is a change of time signature to **5/8**

Antiphonal Phrasing

There is antiphonal phrasing between the Western string section and the Indian string section in the instrumental parts

Possible Exam Questions

Identify the musical genres featured in each of these two songs from *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. **2**

(i) *With a Little Help from my Friends*
rock/pop

(ii) *Within You Without You*
Indian classical

The dilruba and the sitar can be heard during *Within You Without You*.

Identify two musical features present in this song because these instruments have been used.

Any two from:

- **sitar: adds drone; distinctive tone quality/timbre; use of pitch bend**
- **dilruba: sustained notes/chords: adds a "wind"/softer timbre**

State two reasons why the Beatles stopped touring and performing live by the time the **S^{gt.} Pepper** album had been recorded.

Any two from:

- **amplification not powerful enough so audience louder than band**
- **song arrangements becoming too complex for live performance**
- **song instrumentation too diverse eg strings, brass, Indian instruments**
- **multiple harmony vocals which could not be performed live by four musicians**
- **exhausting schedule from constant touring**
- **safety issues eg physical threats in America, Japan and the Philippines**
- **technological recording techniques used in original versions too complex to be replicated in a live performance situation.**

^ Explain how The Beatles were able to achieve a 'new sound' through their use of technology in *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*.

Automatic Double Tracking (ADT): Using analogue tape delay to copy another voice to avoid live double tracking.

Direct Input Transformer: (DIT) – The Abbey Road sound engineers invented a 'transformer' so that electric instruments could be recorded directly into the equipment rather than through a microphone. Later became known as DI. **This greatly improves the sound quality captured/avoids the chances of feedback**

Used to record most of Paul McCartney's bass lines on S^{gt.} Pepper.

Close-micing: a microphone is placed close to an instrument or sound source, within three to twelve inches, producing a dry sound often with more bass. Also separates the individual sounds **producing a 'cleaner' recording/making it easier to separate/pan tracks.**

Reduction Mixing (Ping-Ponging/Bouncing): dubbing multiple parts to just one or two tracks, allowing more room for additional overdubbing. Nearly always used with older 4 track machines due to limited recording space. Allowed George Martin (producer) to add additional layers and vary the texture.

Echo/Delay; Used on John Lennon's vocal in order to 'paint' a psychedelic sound.

Hammond Lesley Speaker units used add further echo to the vocal parts and to George Harrison's guitar.

Lowry Heritage electric organ played by McCartney with added organ stops to create a 'celeste' like ethereal sound

Distortion and Flange used on guitar in the chorus.

Extreme panning, particularly at the start of the song where the bass is extreme right, keyboard extreme left.

More Possible Exam questions

1:

Identify two musical features in *Within You, Without You* typical of the Indian Classical tradition.

Any **two** of:

- use of sitar
- use of drone
- use of tabla
- use of dilruba
- sustained notes
- lack of pulse
- use of raga
- improvisation

Webb's exam tip.....This question is asking you to identify 2 different features of the song *Within You, Without You* that you could also hear in Indian Classical music. All the possible answers are on the left.make sure you make 2 separate points to get full marks

2:

Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds is often referred to as psychedelic pop/rock. Identify **two** musical features in the song that help to create an 'hypnotic' effect.

Any **two** of:

- use of heavy delay and/or echo on vocal
- heavily sustained keyboard
- repeated chromatic phrase in the verse
- repeated notes in the vocal melody

Webb's exam tip.....This question is asking you to identify 2 musical features that make 'Lucy in the sky with Diamonds' sound 'hypnotic'. All the possible answers are above. Again make sure you make 2 separate points

3:

Identify **two** ways in which technology is used to enhance the recording of the guitars in the songs on Sgt. Pepper.

Any two of:

- **Direct Input Transformer (DIT)**
- **Close micing**
- **Reduction Mixing**
- **Hammond Lesley Speaker**
- **Distortion**
- **Flange**

4:

Explain how Lennon and McCartney use musical elements to create an uplifting, joyous mood in *With a Little Help from my Friends*.

- 1)Major key
- 2)Antiphonal phrasing
- 3)Crotchet accompaniment ('plods' along)
- 4)Off beat or Syncopated melody vocal
- 5)Simple chord sequence
- 6'Bouncy' guitar passing notes
- 7)Staccato chords in accompaniment
- 8)Rising chord introduction

Glossary of terms

Antiphonal

Refers to a musical texture where the musical material is sung or played by alternate groups.

Automatic Double Tracking (ADT)

Creating a double tracking effect through the use of tape delay. Can also now be done digitally.

BPM

The number of beats in a minute in a musical pulse.

Bridge

In song-writing, a bridge is usually a contrasting section performed before returning to a verse or chorus. Can also be called a 'Middle 8'

Celeste

A keyboard instrument where hammers strike metal plates of different pitch.

Concept album

A studio recording with a thematic unity, purpose or artistic cohesiveness.

Contrapuntal

Two or more independent melodic lines performed at the same time.

Call and response

Refers to a musical texture whereby one musician or group of musicians makes a musical statement and this is immediately answered by another musician or group of musicians.

Dilruba

A bowed string instrument found throughout the Indian sub-continent.

Double tracking

Recording the same instrumental or vocal part twice to achieve a chorus type effect.

Drone

A harmonic effect where a single note or chord is sustained throughout a musical phrase. Often appears as a perfect 4th or 5th interval.

Harpsichord

A keyboard instrument where the strings are plucked rather than struck.

Imperfect cadence

In an imperfect cadence the last chord is chord V (the dominant) creating an unfinished effect.

Inversions

An inverted chord is one where any note from the chord appears as the lowest in pitch other than the root.

Lesley speaker

A loudspeaker and amplifier with a rotating drum producing a fluttering effect.

Mixolydian

Can refer to the Greek, medieval or modern mode.

Modulation

Process of changing from one key to another.

Ostinato

A constantly repeated musical phrase.

Overture

Opening section to a piece of music, usually an instrumental introduction.

Passing notes

Melodic notes that do not form part of the essential harmonic structure but 'pass' between one chord and another.

Perfect cadence

A perfect cadence is a progression from V to I in both major and minor keys. It gives the musical phrase a sense of finish.

Pizzicato

Plucking rather than bowing a stringed instrument such as the Violin or 'Cello.

Root

The note from which the chord grows, ie the 1st note.

Segue

A smooth, uninterrupted transition from the end of one piece of music to the beginning of another.

Sequence

Repetition of a music motif or melodic phrase at a higher or lower pitch.

Shuffle beat

Commonly found in rock, jazz and blues with an 8 beat rhythm sub-divided into triplets.

Sitar

A plucked string instrument found mainly in Indian music.

Stepwise

Refers to melody in cases where the movement is largely by step, ie from one note to the next adjacent note.

Swardmandal

An Indian Harp or Zither.

Syncopation

Refers to stresses in the rhythmic flow that appear to be off the main beats in the pulse.

Tabla

An Indian drum where the pitch can be altered by pressing on the skin.

Tala

A repeated rhythmic pattern found in Indian music.

Tambura

A lute-like stringed instrument producing a drone.

Tie

Two or more notes tied together.

Transition

A transition is a section of music that links one main idea to another, for example, between a verse and a chorus.

Word painting

A compositional technique whereby the sound of the music reflects the lyrical content thereby literally 'painting' the words.