

In the Beginning

First appearance in trade magazines: April 25, 1970.

Introduction:

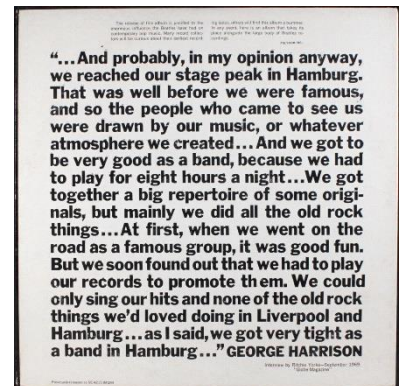
Over a period of two days, June 22 and 23, 1961, the Beatles recorded a set of songs together in Hamburg, Germany, with fellow British musician, Tony Sheridan. At that time, German Polydor considered four of the songs to be suitable for release. These were, "My Bonnie," "The Saints," "Why," and "Cry for a Shadow." Three other selections, "Ain't She Sweet," "Nobody's Child," and "Take Out Some Insurance on Me, Baby," were considered for a potential future release. A supplementary session on May 24, 1962, provided one additional song: "Sweet Georgia Brown."

These sessions in Hamburg gave rise to the first Beatles releases anywhere in the world, as their first single (Polydor NH 24-673) came out in Germany in October 1961. On that single, the group was shown as Tony Sheridan and the Beat Brothers. Tony signed with Polydor, making quite a few records with them, and on his early records his backing group was usually shown as the Beat Brothers. Sheridan re-recorded the slow introduction to the A-side, "My Bonnie," for inclusion on what would be their first single in Great Britain. Thanks to the involvement of the group's new manager, Brian Epstein, the British release showed the group's proper name – coming out in January 1962 (Polydor NH 66-833). That single fared well enough in England that Polydor contracted for it to be released in several other countries, including the United States.

By the end of 1963, Beatlemania was erupting in the UK and Canada, and the band was on the verge of making it big in the United States. Tony Sheridan re-recorded the vocal to "Sweet Georgia Brown," having rewritten the lyrics to refer to a hip woman who was so hot that "she even dared to criticize the Beatles' hair." In early 1964, Polydor had no presence in the United States, so they licensed the "first four" songs to MGM records – which normally took imports from the German label, Deutsche Grammophon. These were the four songs that had been released as an EP in Germany and England in the middle of 1963.

By May, Atlantic/Atco had an arrangement with Deutsche Grammophon, so they got the "other four" Beatles/Sheridan songs for release on their Atco label. Famously, Atlantic considered them to be unsuitable in their original form and chose several Atlantic musicians (including drummer Bernard Purdie) to add new guitar and drum parts to the songs.

In early-to-mid June 1964, Polydor released in Germany what would become this album. They called the album, *The Beatles' First* – a name that made perfect sense in the throes of Beatlemania.



Apparently, MGM and Atco each had the rights to release four songs apiece in the United States and Canada – and those rights extended for a period of five years. Therefore, the full album containing eight Beatles-backed songs and four songs backed by the Beat Brothers did not come out in North America in 1964. British Polydor had not released it in England, either. Instead, for three years they had preferred to import German copies of the album. When the album did come out in Great Britain, in August 1967, it appeared there in stereo only.

Finally, on April 1, 1969, Deutsche Grammophon's arrangements with other companies in Canada and the United States (in particular MGM) expired. At that time, Polydor opened offices in the United States. Canadian Polydor had started releasing records in that country in 1966, but US Polydor did not exist until later in the year.

September 1969 saw Polydor preparing to release the *Beatles First* album in Canada for the first time. With the music on it being seven-to-eight years old, and with Beatlemania long having subsided, they were in no rush. They designed a cover based on the Paul-is-dead rumor that was popular, and they put the album out on November 12th. An article in *Billboard* flatly stated that there were no plans to release such an album in the United States.

American Polydor was just getting rolling in October, and with so many interesting albums on their roster, there was no reason for them to release any out-of-date Beatles music. In early 1970, however, they reconsidered that decision. All of the songs are in true stereo on the Canadian and US LPs.

Now, let's get on to the album's release history.



DGG Handling MGM in Europe

NEW YORK — Deutsche Grammophon's European affiliate will continue to handle MGM pop product on the European continent under negotiations recently concluded between the two companies, although DGG, Archive and Heliodor material will no longer be distributed by MGM in the U. S. effective Tuesday (1).

These classical lines will be distributed by the new American offices of Polydor, Inc. Special Polydor items may be licensed to MGM for the U. S. in the future.



with music that's ahead of its time.

With Cat Mother. With Tony Williams Lifetime. With Ten Wheel Drive. With Area Code 615. With Corbitt. With Savage Rose. We're growing so fast, we didn't even have time to announce ourselves. Charts were the first to announce us. Now we're announcing ourselves.

CAT MOTHER 24-4001 * AREA CODE 615 24-4002 * CORBITT—JERRY CORBITT 24-4003 *

Early Beatles On Polydor LP

MONTREAL — Early disks cut by the Beatles in Hamburg, Germany, were released in a new Polydor LP, Nov. 12. The album, "Very Together," contains songs recorded for the company in 1961. It will not be released in the U.S.

The LP has a suggested list price of \$2.98. Liner notes were written by columnist Ritchie Yorke from a recent interview with George Harrison.

Label 69

Polydor

24-4504

Red label with Polydor rim print and no address
STEREO at the top of the label, as part of the backdrop

Label 69P

Factories: Columbia-Pitman



Label 69M

Factories: Monarch



The Monarch job number of Δ 14559 is consistent with an intended release in March/April.



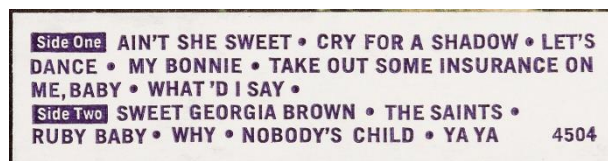
Possible covers:

Gatefold commercial cover

Gatefold commercial cover with a small white/blue sticker reading, "promotional copy not for sale."

Sticker:

A few copies of the LP came out with a blue/violet rectangular sticker indicating the song titles.



Label 69PRC
Factories: PRC



The label now shows a short version of the title, and the printer added a PD- prefix to the catalog number.

Label 69-RC1

Polydor

24-4504 (SKAO-93199)

Red label with no rim print

STEREO at the top of the label and "Mfd. by Capitol Records, Inc" at the bottom

These copies were pressed for distribution by the Capitol Record Club.

Available 1970-71.

Factory: Capitol Jacksonville



24-4504

THE BEATLES featuring TONY SHERIDAN
In the Beginning (circa 1960)
Many of your customers will be curious about this early Beatles recording. Others will find this album a bummer. In any event, its release is justified by the enormous influence the Beatles have had on contemporary pop music.



POP
BEATLES—In the Beginning (Circa 1960). Polydor 24-4504 (S)
Lennon, Harrison and McCartney plus Pete Best, and Stuart Sutcliffe and Tony Sheridan are featured on this pre-Beatlemania album. There is the newness and awareness here that the Beatles became associated with. Here is another chapter in the history of the rock movement which the Beatles helped to form in 1964. All of the cuts on this album date from around 1960.

Label 69-RC1a

Polydor

24-4504 (SKAO-93199)

Red label with no rim print

STEREO at the top of the label and "Mfd. by Capitol Records, Inc" at the bottom

An additional Polydor copyright with a year of 1972 appears at the bottom.

These copies were pressed for distribution by the Capitol Record Club.

Available 1972.

Factory: Capitol Jacksonville



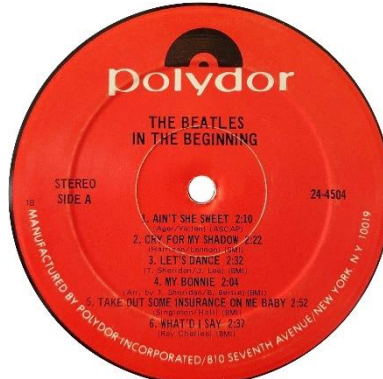
Label 76

Polydor

24-4504

Red label with Polydor rim print and complete address.

Factory: Presswell

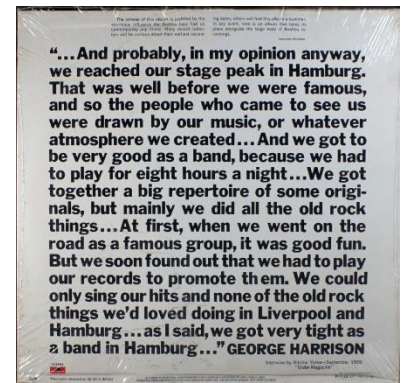


Possible Covers:

Original gatefold cover (SC1);

Single-pocket cover (SC2) with Polygram logo on the back, and NO bar code.

These new covers seem to have come out in around 1981.



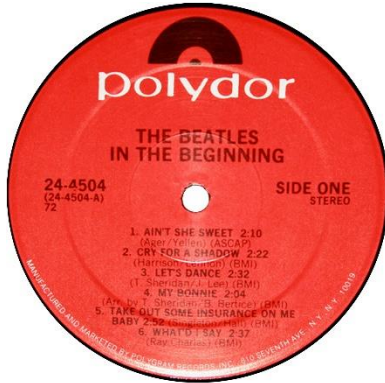
Label 83

Polydor

24-4504

Red label with Polygram rim print and complete address.
Available from 1983 to 1988.

Factory: Presswell (#72)



Label 83

Polydor

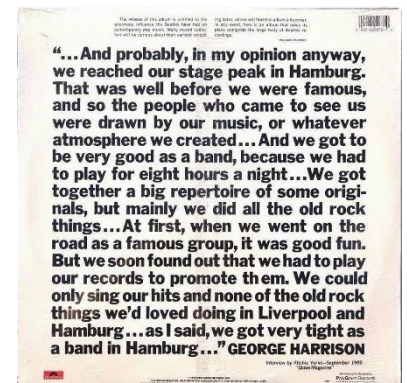
825-073-1

Red label with Polygram rim print and complete address. New catalog number.
These copies came out in 1988.



Possible covers:

Single-pocket cover (SC3) with bar code (UPC) on the back.



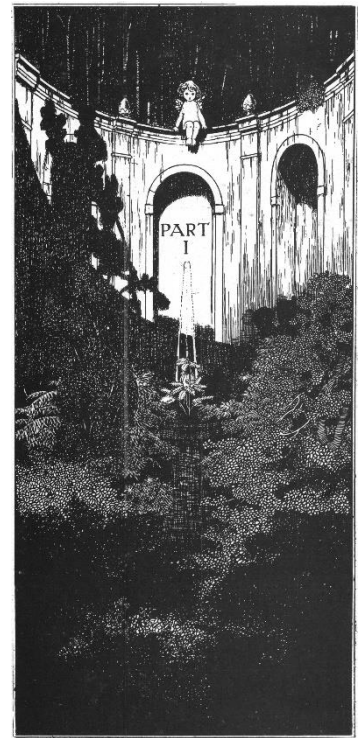
Cover Design:

David Krieger's attractive cover design is one of the things about this album that stands out. The front cover photo is made to look like a stack of the new issue of *Mersey Beat* magazine has just come out, capturing a moment in history. The front cover does depict Vol. 1, No. 13 of *Mersey Beat* (from the weeks of January 4-18, 1962), but close scrutiny reveals how it has been altered. First, an examination of the genuine magazine reveals that the center fold would have passed through John's guitar, cutting out George's entirely and removing most of Pete Best. Mr. Krieger adjusted the image to contain most of the photograph. However, instead of including the bandmembers' names at the bottom – as in the original magazine, he shifted the word "Beatles" up slightly and placed their names under the group's name. Left intact were the photo credit to Albert Marrion, the Liverpool photographer whom Brian Epstein had commissioned to photograph the band in December 1961. The original picture shows more of the band, including Pete's drum kit.



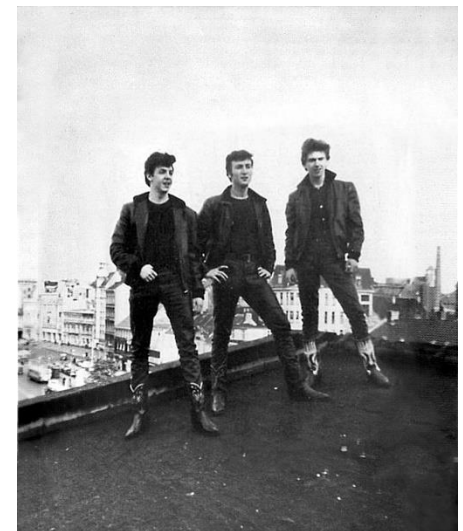
Krieger's choice of this particular image was an excellent one. Compared to the Beatles of 1969-1970, the band here was clearly younger...different...raw.

The inside front cover features newly-written liner notes from the memory of Tony Sheridan. Next to these notes is an engraving marking Part One of an old book. I do not know the source of the engraving, but “Part I” is certainly an appropriate image for an album entitled *In the Beginning*.

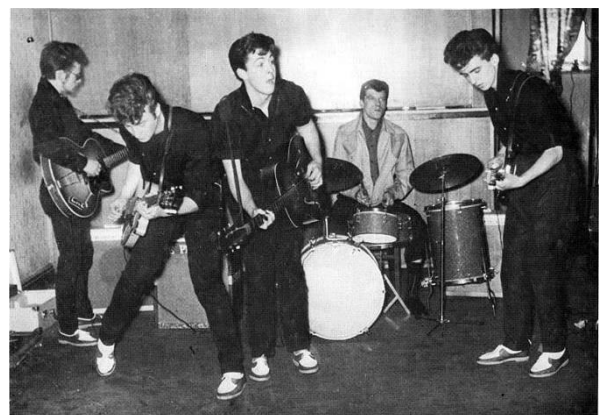


The inside back cover shows three images of the Beatles. The first, taken c. April 1961 on the Top Ten Club in Hamburg, features Paul, John, and George. This was one of several pictures taken at the same time, whose purpose may have been to promote the fact that the band would be appearing at the club.

The second photo in the group shows the famous image that Astrid Kirchherr shot of the five-member band in 1960. She took several shots at the fairgrounds in Hamburg that day, but this picture of the whole band stands out. For this album, David Krieger has cropped out Stu Sutcliffe entirely – Stu doesn’t appear on the album; however, Stu does appear in the third photograph in the set.



That photograph was taken on May 10, 1960, as the Beatles were auditioning for a spot backing Johnny Gentle on what would be the band’s first tour. Drummerless at the time, they appear here with Johnny (“Hutch”) Hutchinson. Hutch also performed with the Beatles temporarily in 1962 while they were between drummers.

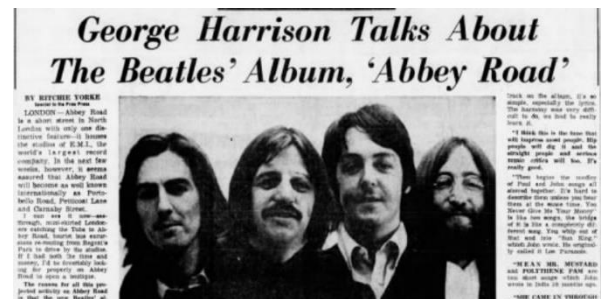


The back cover begins with a disclaimer from Polydor about the album's historical value. People who were used to *Revolver*, *Sgt. Pepper*, and *Abbey Road* might be extremely disappointed with *In the Beginning*, but Polydor warned potential buyers that this was an historical artifact and not a "new" Beatles album.

In the lower left corner is a reference to the album's previous release on the MGM label. That wasn't correct, of course. Since MGM and Atco had split the eight Beatles songs from the Hamburg sessions, they had not appeared together in the USA – legally – until this album.

The designer gave the majority of space on the back cover to a quote from George Harrison, a quote that Polydor-USA had taken from the back cover of the Canadian LP, where it appears in much smaller print. The source of that quote is somewhat interesting.

In mid-September 1969, Ritchie Yorke – who wrote for the *Toronto Globe and Mail* and for the *Detroit Free Press* – sat down at the Apple Records office in London with George and Ringo. Yorke had helped John to promote his peace tour in May and wound up providing John with the opinion that he ought to perform at the Toronto Rock and Roll Revival. As Ringo went through a set of photographs, Yorke interviewed George right after the Toronto festival and just before *Abbey Road* came out. This was around the same time that John Lennon left the Beatles.



George's analysis of the new Beatles LP was the subject of Yorke's article for the (September 26, 1969) *Detroit Free Press*, but to read the rest of the interview, people had to get the *Globe and Mail* from October 25th. In that interview, we see that they addressed a wide range of topics, and Derek Taylor jumped in to describe Apple as "an organization which has developed, without anyone really planning it this way, as a service which exists to implement the whims of The Beatles...which (comma), fortunately (comma), do normally turn out to be commercial."

At one point in the interview, Ritchie Yorke mentioned a recent conversation with The Rolling Stones' Keith Richards, in which Keith described the Stones as "more of a performing group than the Beatles," who were "a recording group." George objected, looking back at how the Beatles used to perform all the time prior to the decision that they made collectively at the end of the 1966 tour.

"We performed from before we were famous, right from when we were at school, we just performed all the time. And, uh... probably in - well, in my opinion, our peak for being – for playing – live was in Hamburg. 'Cause at that time we weren't famous, and so the people who came to see us were drawn in by the music or by whatever atmosphere we created. And also that time, with us being from Liverpool, it was a big scene, because they'd always say you've got to be from London to – you know, and they always thought we were hick[s] or something. But when we played in Hamburg, they kept wanting us back there because we were pulling lots of people and we got very good as a band there, because we had to play eight hours a night."

George reminisced a bit about Hamburg, listing the Indra, the Kaiserkeller, and the Top Ten as clubs where they had played. George said that their repertoire really grew because they were on stage for so long, playing some of their own material, lots of rock songs, and music that wasn't rock and roll at all. He added,

“But we got very tight as a band, and because it was the period in England when it was all matching ties and handkerchiefs, and doing routines, like the Shadows. And we were out of it for that, so we just kept playing the rock 'n' roll things. And the stuff from records we used to get from Brian Epstein's shop before we met him. But they used to stock up with every record that was ever issued. So, we'd go in there and spend afternoons rooting through. We used to do all those Barrett Strong, you know, "Money" and all the sort of tunes that weren't popular particularly, but were quite heavy. And all the Chuck Berry, Little Richard, all the rock 'n' roll things.” (based on a transcription by John C. Winn)

Harrison spoke about the changes in their concerts after they became popular, and he went on to other things. What we read on the back covers of the Polydor albums is Ritchie Yorke's summary of what George Harrison was talking about.