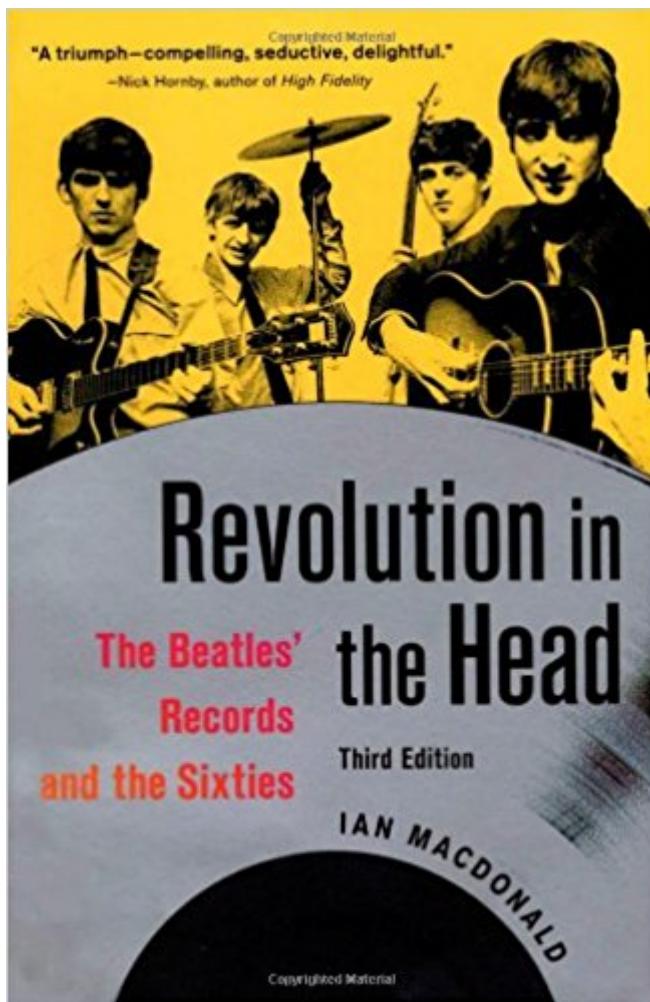


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# Revolution In The Head: The Beatles' Records And The Sixties



## Synopsis

This *Bible of the Beatles* captures the iconic band's magical and mysterious journey from adorable teenagers to revered cultural emissaries. In this fully updated version, each of their 241 tracks is assessed chronologically from their first amateur recordings in 1957 to their final *reunion* recording in 1995. It also incorporates new information from the Anthology series and recent interviews with Paul McCartney. This comprehensive guide offers fascinating details about the Beatles' lives, music, and era, never losing sight of what made the band so important, unique, and enjoyable.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A triumph; compelling, seductive, delightful." - Nick Hornby, author, *High Fidelity*  
"A brilliant electrical storm of a book." - Newsweek  
"The most astute piece of Fab's exegesis ever published; brilliant on the group's triumphs, refreshingly scathing about its shortcomings . . . One of the twenty greatest rock & roll books." - Blender  
"The finest piece of Fab's scholarship ever published." - Mojo  
"Among the few essential commentaries on their music and its meaning." - Shepherd Express  
"Dipping into [this] book will make you want to rush to put on a set of good headphones and really listen to what MacDonald points out. . . . This is a great read both for old fans and younger generations seeking to see what the fuss was all about." - Law Practice Magazine  
"A valuable resource." - newsblaze.com  
"I have worn out three; yes"

three&#151;copies."Â  &#151;newscritics.com"Every little thing is a gem in Ian MacDonald's mini-essay collection about the songs of the Fab Four." â "The Guardian

Ian MacDonald was a songwriter, a record producer, and the author of *The Beatles at No. 1*, *The New Shostakovich*, and *The Peopleâ™s Music*. He died in 2003.

Deserving of its reputation as one of the best Beatle books of all time. The late Ian MacDonald writes with opinionated erudition about a band he knows and loves. Which is not to say that he does not bring a very critical ear to their songs. You may not always agree, but MacDonald sets up a real conversation with his readers and fellow fans. This is as good a companion to listening to the Beatles as you could wish for. It has certainly renewed my pleasure and understanding of a body of work that remains unequaled in pop music.

The Beatles are their own cottage industry. In fact, they're more than a cottage industry. They are the most popular and influential band of all time, bar none 'whether you agree or not' and countless books have been written about them. *Revolution in the Head* is one of the few Beatles books that is considered essential by all. You will learn something new everytime you read it. I have read it a dozen times, and it never fails. I own over 100 Beatles books and biographies and I learned more from this book than any other. In fact, this is without question my favorite music book ever. And for me, that is saying something. *RITH* examamines the career of The Beatles through the individual songs, and therefore devotes space to every single song written or performed by The Beatles. Some songs get multiple pages, some songs hardly get a paragraph. MacDonald's assessments are sometimes harsh in the eyes of some, but he stands by his opinions, and even if you don't agree with all of them, you will want to revisit the catalogue and you will learn something. Even the introduction is stellar and should be required reading. This book has garnered some controversy in The Beatles community for some of its opinions and its highbrow style. Do not let these factors deter you. This book is controversial, but brilliant. Read it! If you are interested in The Beatles, music in general or even culture in general, this book is a masterpiece.

I've read all things Beatles and yet Ian MacDonald offers information and perspectives that are new. He characterizes various tracks as responding to other musicians that I found believable: John listens to Dylan and responds, Paul listens to the Beach Boys and responds, John listens to Paul or Paul to John and responds, George is on his own planet and responds, and so on. The social and

cultural context also plays a role in his telling of the story behind the tracks; flower power, fashions, the changing nature of relationships, Indian philosophies, Vietnam war, and more. I especially liked how sharply critical the author is of efforts he finds less than the Beatles best. He is explicit about tracks he thinks the Beatles mostly mailed in. Is there any other explanation for 'Don't Pass Me By' or 'Piggies?'? What's also interesting are tracks he said really engaged the Beatles, when they dug in hard and did incredible amounts of work to get it right. It's well known that they invested hugely in 'A Day in the Life,' but I did not know "Happiness is a Warm Gun" was one of their favorites they doted on. 'Tomorrow Never Knows' and 'Because' also really engaged them. Go figure. Mostly, the Beatles emerge as craftsmen who for their early albums would do 25 takes to get a song right, or spend months and months in the studio (Sgt. Pepper). Hard work. That their songs were less and less likely to have 'pop' structures and more 'rock' structures (think 'Hard Days Night' versus 'She's So Heavy') because of drugs (pop songs requiring more attention to melody, harmony, and lyrics) is an arguable point, but it's a fair one to make.

A fairly insightful look at Beatle music, who played what, how the music was written and an occasional revelation from a fan and musicologist. MacDonald can be dismissive and caustic but also unabashed in his admiration. Some of his targets (While My Guitar Gently Weeps, for instance) are inexplicably hypercritical and he quotes extensively from Albert Goldmans hack job disguised as a biography of John Lennon. Nevertheless the book is considered the bible of Beatle discographies and in spite of the editorialization contains a wealth of information and arcanus. Worth the money especially for us Beatle "scholars."

I disagree with maybe 75 percent of the late Ian MacDonald's judgments. Songs he finds trite I think are masterpieces. Songs that for him form a critical part of the Beatles' work -- I'm looking at you, Ticket to Ride -- leave me saying "Huh?" And yet every single analysis has something that will make you think and, unless your last name is Martin, will tell you something you didn't know. Isn't that a fair price to pay even if your favorite song or favorite Beatle doesn't come off the way you think it or he should? This book will bear multiple readings. Now that I've finished it as a stand-alone product, I want to go back and read it again while listening to the songs (you'll need the Anthology set to do it full justice). It's that good. MacDonald's examination of the first 12 bars of I Want To Hold Your Hand will thrill you, I guarantee it. And I am sure that, even though I was a part of Beatlemania and have been listening to these songs for, gulp, 50 years, I will hear even more new stuff thanks to this superb book. RIP Mr. MacDonald. Your work is greatly appreciated and I hope this review will draw

more readers to possibly the best book on popular music I've ever read.

This unusual, encyclopedic book takes Beatle fandom to a deep level. There is more personal information here about how the Beatles recorded their magic than I would have thought could be known. Ever wonder what it was about their vocal and musical harmonies that makes a particular song so compelling? Look the song up here. If you're a fan you'll find out what was going on with the guys when they were writing and recording it. If you're a musician you'll find out about instruments, chord changes, recording strategies etc.

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