

Voyager

The MagellanMusic Newsletter

Summer 2016

The Summer of 1966. Here we are, 50 years later, still diggin' tunes from that magnificent summer, still turned on, tuned in and dropping out from an Establishment that won't let go. We cherish more than ever how good those times were. Hindsight gives us such a clear view of what the hippie generation accomplished that it's almost hard to believe it really did happen. The summer of 1966 was like the dawn of new era. LSD had taken hold, 'anti-Establishment' was a common term, as were the words 'groovy' and 'freak-out', anti-war protests became a regular news story, the mini-skirt and Women's Lib were forces to reckon with, men were wearing much brighter colors, the phrase 'flower power' was catching on, and most notable of all was something brand new - psychedelic music. Nobody knew what that phrase meant because it didn't exist yet. The Spring and Summer of '66 was sprouting so many new and unusual sounds that many didn't know what to make of it. But 'psychedelic' would soon become not just a description, but an entire musical genre. It would sprout like Magic Mushrooms and spread faster than listeners could keep up with. It spread so wide that it would become a means of identifying what albums and artists were all about. Psychedelic music was such a driving force of the youth revolution that 1966 would become an historical landmark, an era, a way to chronicle the change of social consciousness happening all around us. Changes were so adventurous that music had gone from 'safe' Pop like "Love Me Do" in 1962 to the mind boggling "Tomorrow Never Knows" in only 5 years. The 'Summer of Love' in 1967 would take credit for the astounding cultural renaissance, but 1966 was the year of metamorphosis.

Here are a few surprises from 1966 that some may not know:

The Fugs – Second Album (release date, March): The Fugs were the first and most revolutionary, bizarre, outrageous band of them all. They were a distinct taste of underground/anti-establishment/psychedelic music to happen, influential to so many artists – music and comedy alike – that there's no way to list them all. It was almost like their albums were secondary to the wacko experience of their stage shows. The Fugs were so startling even to authorities that they came under investigation by the FBI, and were also banned from their regular venue in New York City, the Astor Place Playhouse, because fire/building inspectors considered them possibly hazardous. Their first album actually came out in 1965, but their "Second Album" was the best at focusing on music and exemplifying what they did so well. Not just a touch of psychedelia, but an allegorical scream of rejection to the Establishment.

Mothers of Invention – Freak Out! (release date, June 27): It was a nice touch to borrow Ken Kesey's famed term for an album title. "Freak Out!" was their first

album, it was considered (by Zappa) to be the first psychedelic album, it was the first rock double-album, and it was the first neo-concept album. The only downside is much of the eclectic attitude was borrowed from the Fugs. Still, as wonderfully odd and weird as it is, the public didn't like it. It was panned by critics, it sold badly, and was deleted from Verve's catalog in 1971. But as history always does, a look back revealed that it was indeed a milestone. MoI and Frank Zappa would go on to careers of Satire Rock, but "Freak Out!" had no reputation to bank on. It was a freaky new experience for listeners and the very reason why Zappa went on to create such a hard core following.

The Yardbirds – Roger the Engineer (release date, July 15): This band suffered the ravages of record companies much like the Beatles did. What came out in Britain was not what came out in America, and this album didn't appear in America at all. It was a neo-compilation called "Over Under Upside Down" (actually the follow up album) by mixing and matching various tracks from both. But finally, all these years later, this original version is available. While they were better known as blues style thanks to Eric Clapton, this album was the first to feature new guitarist Jeff Beck, their first to feature all songs written by them, and their first step into a very different direction. Psychedelia was growing and this album was part of it. It would set the tone for many follow-up releases, and why some call it their best album ever. A hearty compliment for a band mis-handled by their own record company.

The Byrds – Fifth Dimension (release date, July 18): This was their third album, but a clear taste of psychedelia. The album cover featured a 'flowery' design (the phrase 'flower power' was already in use in California), a photo of the band on a colorful carpet (as in magic carpet), and besides the terrific "Eight Miles High" there were other songs like "What's Happening" and "2-4-2 Foxtrot" that were indeed ventures into new musical territory. Some critics say the album didn't sport the best songwriting because Gene Clark (main songwriter) had split, but that's irrelevant. This album, in a big way, helped bring the new musical attitude to life.

The Beatles – Revolver (release date, August 5): This album was the pantheon of change in 1966. Many consider it the best album in rock history. It has been chronicled so much that it's pointless to repeat it here, but so astonishing at the time that even Beatle fans were stunned. Except for the easily recognizable voices, it sounded nothing like the band from just a year previously. Many were still enthralled by "Rubber Soul" and "Help" (and all the others), but "Revolver" was so different and diverse that it could safely be called the first 'progressive' rock album. There was everything from blazing rock 'n' roll with distorted guitars to eastern mysticism to a children's song. The song "Rain", from the May 30th single release of "Paperback Writer" (b/w "Rain"), was the first outright psychedelic song. The bizarre, altered sound puzzled everyone, especially toward the end when it sounded as if they were singing backward. It was just a teaser of things to come on "Revolver", especially the final song, "Tomorrow Never Knows". It was 3 minutes of the most intense psychedelia ever done, before or since. Listeners were so astounded that many had to flip to side 1 and hear it all again to make absolutely sure it really was the Beatles.

Jefferson Airplane – Takes Off (release date, August 15): Only Jefferson Airplane fanatics would know they released their first album only 2 weeks after “Revolver”. They had been together a year already playing regularly at a club owned by band leader Marty Balin, nestled in the burgeoning hippie bowels of San Francisco, so they were very experienced with the growing psychedelic movement. The downside is it didn't have the luxury of a hit song. That meant radio play and distribution was limited, which meant they had to work the region as much as they could, but it was a surprisingly solid album in a genre not even defined yet. “Takes Off” would remain in the dark until Grace Slick joined and their breakthrough album came in 1967.

Donovan – Sunshine Superman (release date, August 26): This album could technically be called the first psychedelic album because the recording had actually begun in December of 1965. Then thanks to contract hassles and additional recording needed, it wasn't on shelves until August. Still, it was the first album to have a strong lysergic vibe from start to finish. Donovan knew the Beatles personally, recorded most of this album at Abbey Road, and used their example of sitar, flute, harpsichord and many other instruments to go far beyond his original image of Scottish folkster. Psychedelia was on the move and no wonder this was one of Donovan's best albums.

The Deep – Psychedelic Moods-A Mind Expanding Phenomena (release date, October): This was the first album to use the word 'psychedelic'. The Deep were a patchwork studio band from New York City encouraged by the producer, but weren't really professionals or fully prepared for such a project. Plus they didn't have much time for development of the songs, and why they sounded more like an adventurous garage band. “Psychedelic Moods” was their only album, but at least they tried their best.

Love – De Capo (release date, November): In the new century we learned how many good artists had fared well in the 1960's, but also learned how many had been forgotten. Love was one of them. They were a foremost band in Southern California at the time, well before names like the Doors and Big Brother, and “De Capo” (their second LP) was indeed a foray into the psychedelic movement. This album flurried with different genres like rock, hints of jazz, and classic baroque pop, but included the first known side-long track, “Revelation”, at 19 minutes. It was stretched thin from jamming, but so surprising that in a few years side-long tracks would be centerpieces for bands like Yes, Pink Floyd, and Genesis.

Cream – Fresh Cream (release date, December 9): Cream was a hit before they played their first note. Clapton was the top axe-man in Britain, and any new band with him was instantly compelling. Their first shows in the Summer featured a bluesy style, which was Clapton's musical roots, but by Fall and the surge of psychedelia this debut album in December was very different than how they started. Nobody expected it to be so good. It was filled with Psychedelia, Pop, Hard Rock, Jam Rock, and filled out with good production, good voices and timeless melodies. Just as interesting, their 'power trio' image was accidental, a format that

spawned a plethora of bands, including Jimi Hendrix. That aside, this album was just the start for a band that would become a music cornerstone.

Honorable mentions:

The Kinks – Face To Face: Psychedelic or not, some call this one of the best albums of 1966. The surprise for fans was the distinct change in attitude. It was a turn away from the usual British Invasion pastiche, more like the groovy atmosphere of the Beatles "Rubber Soul". Unmistakably a sign of the times.

The Blues Project – Projections: The band name might put one off the growing changes in 1966, but not in this case. It was very much like blues oriented bands that would become frequent in the coming years. Maybe blues was their base, but it didn't stop them from delving into lots of groovy sounds.

West Coast Pop Art Experimental Band – Part One: Their band name says exactly what it is. Except it was distributed by a tiny label, and so rare that it's only available through collectors. Plus they were young and inexperienced, "Part One" was mostly a hint of the much more developed "Volume One" (from 1967) that would become a classic 'lost gem'.

The Blues Magoo's – Psychedelic Lollipop: This was one of the first albums to use the word 'psychedelic', which featured a minor hit for them "(We Ain't Got) Nothing Yet", but they too were more like an above average garage band. Not all-out psychedelic but pointed in the right direction.

The 13th Floor Elevators – Psychedelic Sounds of the 13th Floor Elevators: was yet another of the first albums using 'psychedelic' in its title. They were also considered something of a garage band but better. And the album cover was a great example of the psych art to follow. The music was earthier than one might expect, but when they cut loose on real psychedelic songs they really cut loose.

Count Five – Psychotic Reaction: Some may think of them as just another garage band, but this was one of the most memorable. They had no less than two minor hits from this album, the title track and "Peace Of Mind", which is notable for such a little known group, but great sounds for any psychedelia fan.

The Seeds – A Web of Sound: Music enthusiasts know the Seeds were an unabashed garage band, but this album (of two from 1966) was as venturesome as any such band could produce. Some fans joke that they might have been doing LSD when it was recorded, so for garage freaks this one is a classic.

Today is a good day to start re-exploring 1966!

Music as medicine is no longer the imagination

As far back as I can remember my Dad was always playing records. Songs like "Moon River", "The Elephant Walk", and "Ramblin' Rose" were big favorites. I even danced to Maxwell House coffee commercials when I saw it on TV. But when I was 6 everything changed. "I Want to Hold Your Hand" tumbled out of the car speakers one day and suddenly I couldn't think of anything else. The driving beat, the hand claps, and that stratospheric note on "...hand!" gave me chills even at that young age. It was exhilarating, like a roller coaster in an amusement park. No music had ever affected me that way, and without knowing it, music soon became the center of life. An AM radio and a record player became my best friends. Even TV shows were liked or disliked because of their theme songs. And as time went on the songs seemed to capture the moment. We learned later that good songs are almost like time machines, conjuring the people, places and things happening at those moments. Many of us today can almost track our lives by looking at the old Billboard record charts. And somehow they sound better than ever considering how flat the music world has become. So does that mean we're living in the past or do we really know if Then is better than Now?

Amazingly, it turns out that there are clinical reasons for favorite songs. Recent research in neuroscience clearly points out that music and our brains are inexorably linked. There's a scientific field dedicated to studying the effect of music on the nervous system, and it's called the Cognitive Neuroscience of Music. Whether you play an instrument, are a composer, an avid music fan or just a casual, tone-deaf listener, there's enough neurological research available to make your head spin. Researchers, for example, have discovered that when it comes to emotions, the right side of the brain is stimulated by happy music, while the left side is stimulated when a song makes us sad. Research has also indicated that musical training at an early age can improve a child's speech and sounds. A study published by Northwestern University in 2012 claims that people who play music not only have a keener sense of sound, but also are better at detecting emotions in speech. Don't play an instrument? Well, if you've ever been in love, chances are there are songs that melt your heart. Writing for Slate.com in 2014, columnist Mark Stern observed, "Brain imaging studies show that our favorite songs stimulate the brain's pleasure circuit, which releases an influx of dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin and other neurochemicals that make us feel good. The more we like a song, the more we get treated to neurochemical bliss, flooding our brains with some of the same neurotransmitters that cocaine chases after."

Literally, even in clinical terms now, music has a tremendous impact on how we feel, both mentally and physically. It is a medicine. Some may say that music memories from the impressionable years are nothing more than nostalgia, a way to find that something we lost long ago, but that's flummery. Then and now is the same. They were times when everything sounded new and bright and clear. It gave an electricity, a brightness to life, a sense of hope despite the bad news we were fed constantly on radio and TV. Just for a moment we could escape the doldrums and indulge in a medicine we didn't even know we were taking. We could put on "I Want To Hold Your Hand" once more and for two and a half minutes be bathed in splendor. Maybe best of all, there's no overdosing on happiness. Everything is beautiful when we have another dose of that beautiful medicine called Music.

Old titles are now outselling the new

It has recently been revealed that in 2015, for the first time in music history, older 'catalog' titles have outsold 'new'. This is so stunning that it's little different than the revelation of used cars selling more than new ones. It certainly tells the tale of how low the contemporary music scene has fallen. However, there's always more to the story. These sales stats are based on CD sales and we know that's been falling off since the MP3/downloading revolution came along in the late 1990's. In the downloading category new titles are still ahead of catalog, but even there the gap has closed sharply. New download titles are only 10% ahead of catalog and it's still closing. As for music streaming, which is the fastest growing trend of all, there are no current studies as to whether new titles stream more than the old. However, considering the recent controversy of streaming-without-royalties for all music before 1972, the suggestion is strong that old titles are big everywhere. It doesn't necessarily mean the grand old legends of the 60's and 70's are at the heart of it though. New titles become stock titles in roughly 2 years, which creates a glut of such titles, but we still see greats like the Beatles, Pink Floyd, Led Zeppelin and others still on the shelves and selling steady as always. The fact is, dependence on new sales is getting thin. So all you music execs out there you'd better listen to your customers because the times they are a-changin'.

Speaking of sales...

Ever wondered who the top ten best selling artists are? Most guess the Beatles and Elvis are tops, numerous others claim to be close, but the results are a surprise. And these aren't total sales, just sales of albums. Here is the RIAA certified list of best selling artists in America:

1. The Beatles - 178 million
2. Elvis Presley - 136
2. Garth Brooks - 136
3. Led Zeppelin - 111.5
4. Eagles - 101
5. Billy Joel - 82.5
6. Michael Jackson - 79
7. Elton John - 77
8. Pink Floyd - 75

9. AC/DC - 72

10. George Strait - 69

Imagine that, Garth Brooks tied with Elvis. Or Michael Jackson further down the list than Jackson-ites would like to think. Or Pink Floyd, a progressive rock band. Or George Strait, still another Country singer. Not at all what most would expect, but good to know American listeners have a wide variety of tastes.

Warner Brothers achieves a first

Warner Brothers recently announced that online streaming is now their #1 money maker, the first in music history, one that artists hoped wouldn't happen. The numbers are astonishing. According to their financial report, overall growth in just one quarter alone was 10% (13% including currency exchange), a total of \$745 million. Growth in music streaming alone was a jaw-dropping 59%. Steve Cooper, Warner Brothers CEO, commented, "This new milestone comes only four quarters after our streaming revenue first topped our download revenue." If that isn't bad enough, last month the RIAA announced that for the first time ever, streaming made up the largest component of the total U.S music industry revenue in 2015, marking a major milestone for the format. Streaming now accounts for 34.3% of the pie. Dan Ek, CEO of Spotify said, "Finally, after years and years of decline, music is growing again.... Streaming is behind the growth in music."

Streaming – the music Establishment keeps growing

A story emerged not long ago that Apple (iTunes) was likely to discontinue music downloading within a few years. This announcement was rather stunning, and unexpected, but two different sources quickly called this claim 'over-exaggerated'. As we know, it was downloading that became the rage of music buying that eclipsed CD's as the premier source, and it was iTunes that lead that surge. But now that music streaming is the hottest access on the market the music scene is again in a state of flux. It raises the classic question, "Where do we go from here?" As in all new marketing efforts nobody really knows. Each format, or any product for that matter, seems to drench that market then settles into a steady niche until something else comes along. So far CD's haven't left the marketplace, as had been predicted with downloading, so it's likely to be the same with streaming over downloading. And apparently streaming still has a long way to go. We've seen a number of companies fade away already, the typical business format of the stronger beating the weaker, no possible way to know how it will eventually define itself, far too many variables that will shape it as it happens. The Voyager staff predicts that streaming will be much like broadcast radio. It's new and fun right now, but once it wears off listeners will find there are certain places and times it's most appropriate. It's always easiest to flip on the radio, or Sirius XM, or pop in a CD (which is the finest fidelity) and there's just no way to better it. Despite the music Establishment pushing music streaming as hard as it can and paying as little royalty money as possible, it can't win the battle in the long run.

Why was the hippie generation so good?

No one will truly understand it. So many different influences came together so quickly and with such effect that it could almost be interpreted as a social vortex. It was an unprecedented time unmatched in history. It was like a renaissance. For almost 3 decades, from the Beat generation to the Hippie generation to the 1980's, the counter-culture became a way of life. Not just in America where it was most renowned, but around the world from as far north as Sweden to as far south as New Zealand on the other side of the planet. The hippie generation seemed to touch every part of life, whether the Establishment wanted to admit it or not. All the way down to adolescents getting psychedelic clothes, toys and school supplies at chain stores like Sears. And today the legacy is still with us. Equal rights are as big an issue as ever, we see the words 'Establishment' or 'drag' used commonly, or tie dyed T-shirts seen frequently on children and adults alike. Most notably is the legalization of marijuana, which is in 25 States now, and the well-documented discoveries that hallucinogens like LSD are very effective anti-depressant medicines.

But there are plenty of myths. One is that the hippie generation died at the end of the 1960's, and the youth movement failed. It was blamed on things like the Beatles breaking up, foremost names like Hendrix, Joplin, and Morrison dying from drug overdoses, the Manson murders, or the Rolling Stones Altamont concert disaster. Unfortunately, this fallacy was created by contemporary history revisionists. They conveniently forgot that every era experiences good and bad. They shape it to view from their perspective, not the counter-culture perspective. The real story is it was the 1980's when the hippie movement began to fade. That generation was more interested in being delusional Young Urban Professionals – Yuppies - who caved into the superficial 'plastic pop' motif of the times. They seemed to care little about the horrendous Recession, or the monumental government over-spending, or the reality that the new Vietnam was the Middle East. Little did they know that it would become the longest conflict in American history. Worst of all, it was the assassination of John Lennon in 1980 that was a devastating but allegorical portent of things to come.

It's the 1960's that capture the imagination like no other. During those times, thanks to the Beatles, it was like the dam had broken loose. The anti-Establishment movement seemingly caught fire. Vietnam War protests became a central factor, the music scene grew into a veritable phenomenon of its own, the arts took on the new perspective of 'pop art' (Max Factor, Andy Warhol), movies became much more explorative (2001, Rosemary's Baby), books and literature seemed to undergo a revival (Herman Hesse, Carlos Castaneda), spiritualism dominated instead of religion (Buddhism, Hinduism), even house designs changed radically, such as geodesic domes (Buckminster Fuller).

Recent research reveals that more musical artists were signed to contracts between 1965 and 1970 than at any other time in history. So many that there is no accurate count. Every label from majors down to locals were signing artists on the slightest chance they might somehow break through. Money was being spent on music at

such levels that it could've been included in a household budget. The same was true for live music events. Music festivals had actually started in the 1950's, but in America the first real Rock event wasn't Monterey in 1967, it was the Trips Festival in San Francisco in 1966. And today rock fests are yearly traditions in various places all across America.

Naturally there was no way to maintain a cultural phenomenon of this magnitude forever. While many still believe the hippie generation 'died' after the 1960's, it had actually only faded from public light. The press didn't give it headlines any more. It had become a way of life. Long hair on guys and bra-less women were the norm. But what the Establishment didn't understand was instead of lessening the counter-culture impact, it was increased. Radically so. Since hippies were just a part of the social background, anti-war protests carried on. Marijuana and mind chemicals flourished. Social activism was stepped up. Daniel Ellsberg uncovered the stunning "Pentagon Papers". The Watergate scandal went on to force the unprecedented resignation of a president. Investigation of the Kennedy and King assassinations were re-opened. New laws inhibiting domestic spying were enacted. The EPA, Environmental Protection Agency, was created. NORML, the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws, became an open and active group. Microsoft and Apple computers emerged. The home video recorder emerged. 'Art Rock', such as Yes and Genesis, took the music scene to entirely new levels. Films such as "Network" and "Soylent Green" dealt with real issues. And the biggest victory of all, which even a few hippies had a hard time believing, was in 1975 the Vietnam War came to an end.

The hippie generation was indeed far more than good. Almost like a wistful, surreal dream. Far more profound than it was ever given credit for, and an era that will never be equaled.

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“People come, people go, things happen, things change, but music remains the voice of Life.”

- unknown