

This Day in History... March 22, 1963

The Beatles Release First Album

On March 22, 1963, the Beatles released their first full-length album, *Please Please Me*.

The Beatles first formed in 1957 as the Quarrymen and established themselves as a popular live act in Liverpool and Hamburg, Germany. In 1962, the band signed with Parlophone and recorded their first two singles, "Love Me Do" and "Please Please Me." By early 1963, "Love Me Do" reached number 17 on the UK charts. Then on January 19, they appeared on the popular television show *Thank Your Lucky Stars*, and performed "Please Please Me."



The Beatles came to America in February 1964, launching the British Invasion.

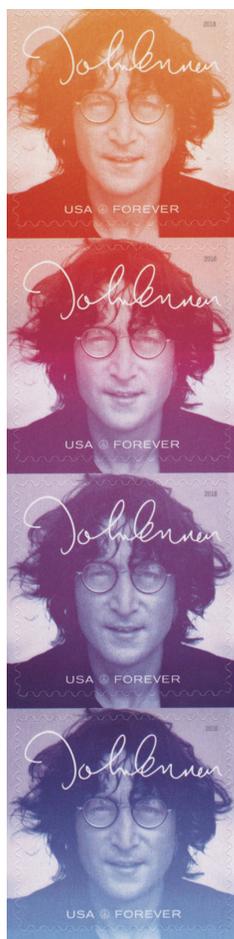
Over night, the Beatles became one of the hottest acts in Britain, and their record label requested a full album. So at 10 a.m. on February 11, the Beatles made their way to the legendary Abbey Road studios, previously known for its recordings of the London Symphony Orchestra. Their producer, George Martin, wanted the album to capture the intense energy of their live performances. Contrary to standard practice, they recorded almost every song live, rather than editing all the pieces together. The session was a testament to the Beatles' work ethic – grinding out take after take and song after song. And when the rest of the crew left for a lunch break, the band stayed behind to rehearse.

By 10 p.m., the Beatles had completed nine songs. Front man John Lennon had been working though a cold the entire day, but they needed to record one more song – "Twist and Shout." Though his voice was nearly gone, Lennon took a few throat lozenges and poured all his energy into two takes of the song. He later said that that song "nearly killed me... Every time I swallowed it was like sandpaper. I was always bitterly ashamed of it, because I could sing it better than that; but now it doesn't bother me. You can hear that I'm just a frantic guy doing his best."

Within 13 hours, the Beatles recorded their first album. Eight of the 14 songs that would appear on the final album (four had been previously recorded) were written by Lennon and Paul McCartney. They originally planned to title the album *Off the Beatle Track*, but due to the popularity of the recent single, they decided to name it *Please Please Me*.

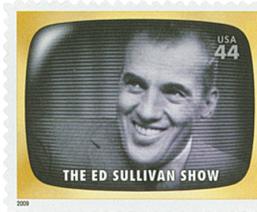
The album was released over a month later, on March 22. It entered the UK charts on April 6 and spent 30 weeks at number one. It was knocked out of first place by the Beatles next album, *With the Beatles*. In all, *Please Please Me* spent 70 weeks on the charts. The album wasn't released in America until 1987, though many of the songs were included on the 1964 album *Introducing... The Beatles*, which was sold in the US.

Please Please Me marked the start of "Beatlemania" and led to an invitation to appear on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, which launched The Beatles into stardom in the



John Lennon Music Icons stamps

US. What followed was a magical ride, as The Beatles – with Lennon and McCartney writing almost all of the songs – recorded 22 No. 1 hits from 1963-69. In an 8-year run, the band released 13 albums. They affected the music and culture of the generation.



The Beatles would appear on The Ed Sullivan Show four times.

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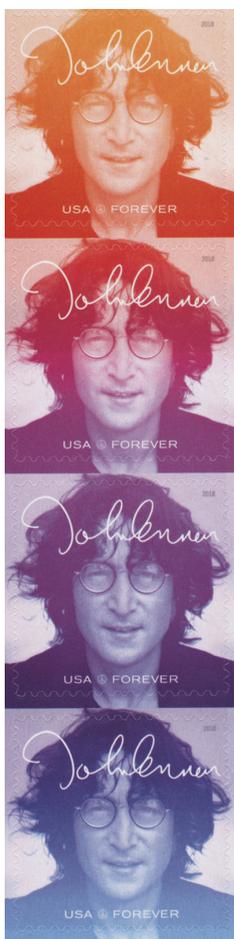
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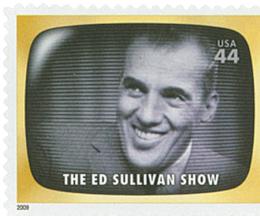
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