

Album of the Month March 2007

Love by The Beatles GRB8

Rather like a pot of Marmite, you either like The Beatles or you don't. I was born after The Beatles split up, so I've missed the original euphoria of being able to buy the new Beatles album from the record shop, remove the record from the protective sleeve, place the disc on the turntable and drop the stylus, and sit back and listen. But I still love their music – helped by an almost endless supply of radio airplay, and albums in the shops. I also studied the 'Magical Mystery Tour' album as part of my GCSE music course in 1995, and when I was at university, bought their *Free As a Bird* single from Woolworth's in Aberystwyth (on cassette - how time flies!).

I actually wasn't going to buy The Beatles' 'Love'. We've already got '1' at home, and rarely a week goes by at Radio Warneford without a Beatles track being played from the 'Red' or 'Blue' albums (that might be something to do with having a fan, Geoff, on the Tuesday team of course!). But imagine by surprise when the CD arrived in my on Christmas Day last year – a present from my girlfriend's mother's partner. We put it in the CD player almost immediately – and what a refreshing album it is. But why have it in the record library when we already have a fair amount of The Beatles' tracks? Well, 'Love' might have some well-known tracks listed, but the arrangements are somewhat different – new mixes, new backing arrangements, and of course digitally re-mastered to remove the hiss and crackle. Purists will argue of course that this is all 'cut and pasted' nonsense – and why alter what is already perfect?

The background to the 'Love' project actually goes back to when the surviving Beatles met up in Las Vegas during the 1990s to work on the 'Anthology' project. George, Ringo and Paul would often visit the 'Cirque du Soleil' show when it was in town. George in particular was a great fan of the movement and spectacle performances, and became close friends with one of Cirque du Soleil's founders, Guy Laliberté. Out of this friendship was born the idea of a Beatles-inspired Cirque production.

The album has been put together by veteran Beatles producer, George Martin, and his son Giles, also in the music business. The concept is to provide a soundtrack to the Cirque du Soleil show using well-loved Beatles songs, but presented in a fresh way. George and Giles painstakingly went through every studio session The Beatles ever recorded, and built layers and layers of elements from different takes of different tracks into the fabric of some of the best-loved songs. For example, *Strawberry Field Forever* yields a composite of various takes of the song, augmented with vocals and/or instrumentation from *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, *Piggies*, *In My Life*, *Hello*, *Goodbye* and *Penny Lane*. In *Octopus's Garden* you can hear a little snippet from *Yellow Submarine*. Others are more true to the original – *Eleanor Rigby* and *All You Need Is Love* are two good examples – but of course, there's no hiss or crackle.

Whilst it would be impossible to play the whole album during the course of a normal evening at Radio Warneford (or have I just set a challenge?), I would wholeheartedly suggest having a play of it. Why not use one of these versions for a request, rather than the original?

Mike Hoptroff, February 2007