

Christian Cappelluti

The music of the Beatles

I was driving my car down Peters Creek the other night, and I had the radio on. All of a sudden, they played a very beautiful song; a song with a sweet, mellow, memorable melody, and a mesmerizing and intriguing harmony.

This song had something very peculiar about it, something which made it sound simple, sincere, and spontaneous, but also refined and classy, at the same time.

It was one of those songs that make me wish there were more like them, even if it was not the first time that I had listened to it. Actually, I had probably listened to that song for the first time when I was a child, and since then I must have listened to it many other times.

While I turned the radio a little bit louder, I started thinking about the band who wrote and sang that song, and how great it was at composing music that we all still love, thirty years later.

The name of the song was "Michelle" and the band who wrote it, as we all know, is "The Beatles".

The Beatles was a band that really brought something new and valuable to the world of modern music, something for which all pop and rock musicians who came after them should be very thankful.

The Beatles was the first world famous self-contained band that wrote its own songs, and turned the last name of the authors (Lennon/McCartney) into a guarantee of quality.

The Beatles was the first band that experimented with different production and sound engineering techniques, using a variety of instruments on its records, ranging from the string quartet in "Yesterday", to the full orchestra in "All you need is love", from the alarm clock in "A day in the life" to the backwards-rolling tapes in "Strawberry Fields Forever".

The Beatles was also the first band to achieve fame worldwide, and to establish not only a standard and a term of comparison for all competing bands, like The Rolling Stones or The Beach Boys, in the U.S., but The Beatles also established a new fashion, a new look (ask your parents about the Beatles' haircut), and, most of all, it provided the young generation of the 60s with an almost revolutionary attitude towards freedom, love, and fun in their lives.

For the first time, boys and girls from all over the world had a common musical background, something that they could really share and enjoy together. Germans, french, Spanish, Swedish, Japanese, Italians, you name it... they were all practicing their English singing the songs of The Beatles. Guys and girls from all over the world wanted to learn how to play the guitar to get together and sing "Help", "Let it be" or "Yesterday". Actually, a lot of careers in rock music started with a guitar and a Beatles song. Everybody loved their music, and the new generations also love their music.

Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, at last, can sit side by side and enjoy these songs. If I asked my grandmother, for instance: "Hey Granny, how about listening to some techno music?", she would probably say "Well, Christian, how about some Caruso, or Mantovani?", but if I went for the Beatles, I am sure we would reach a perfect agreement.

Personally, I really don't know what my life will look like "when I'm 64", but I think it is very probable that I will still be listening to that song.

It is hard not to like the Beatles, because they were so original and inventive, that practically everybody can find the seeds of their own favorite kind of music in the Beatles' repertoire. You like Rock & Roll? Listen to "I saw her standing there". You like romantic ballads? "Girl" will do. You like honky tonk? Listen to "Rocky Raccoon". Progressive is your world? Have you tried "Happiness is a warm gun?" And even if all you listen to is hard rock and heavy metal, you should still be able to appreciate "Helter Skelter". If it wasn't for that song, recorded in 1969, maybe your favorite Led Zeppelin or Ac/Dc album would now sound different.

I am not the only one who praises the Beatles this way. If you go to any record store and look under Beatles, you will find a number of collections recorded by various artists who pay their tribute to some of the greatest songwriters ever. Billy Joel recorded "Back in the U.S.S.R.", Elton John "Lucy in the sky with diamonds", Stevie Wonder "We can work it out", and all of you who have seen "Woodstock", the movie, will remember Joe Cocker's terrific version of "With a little help from my friends" as the highlight of the whole concert. And yesterday I even heard a country version of "If I fell".

The Beatles are not the Eagles and hell won't freeze over for them! They broke up at the top of their relatively short but intensive career, in 1970, and now, especially after John Lennon's death in 1981, we will never see them together again, in a live show.

Nevertheless, the magic of their songs continues to fill our hearts and to bring joy to our lives. Thank you, Beatles, for such beautiful songs as "Hey Jude", "Across the Universe", "Something", or "And I love her", they are really evergreens, and whenever I hear somebody referring to The Beatles as the most popular band of all times, I really can't help thinking they sure deserve it.