



HIFI/STEREO REVIEW'S CHOICE OF THE LATEST RECORDINGS

ENTERTAINMENT

POPS • JAZZ • FILMS • THEATER • FOLK • SPOKEN WORD

Reviewed by CLIVE BARNES • NAT HENTOFF • PAUL KRESH • REX REED • PETER REILLY

THE BEATLES: *Magical Mystery Tour*. The Beatles (vocals, instrumentals). *Magical Mystery Tour*; *The Fool on the Hill*; *Flying*; *Blue Jay Way*; *Your Mother Should Know*; *I Am the Walrus* ("No You're Not!" said Little Nicola); and five others. CAPITOL (S) SMAL 2835, (M) MAL 2835* \$5.79.

Performance: **Repulsive**
Recording: **Fair**
Stereo Quality: **Good**

Although I never imagined the Beatles were completely sane, I began to be seriously concerned for their mental health when they announced they were God. Oh, sure, they later tried to smooth things over by explaining they really meant that *everyone* is God. It didn't help. Now they have a new album out which convinces me that someone should do society a favor by locking them up. I say "new" only because side one is devoted to their score for a television film special previously unexposed in this country (we didn't know how lucky we were, folks); side two is a compilation of 45-rpm singles most Beatles fans already own, such as *Penny Lane*, *Strawberry Fields Forever*, *Baby You're a Rich Man*, and the delightfully ingenious *All You Need Is Love*. For the rest of the salacious drivel on side one, Capitol is asking six bucks a throw. Baby, you gotta be a rich man to shell out that much bread for something as revolting as this.

Up to now my main criticism of the Beatles has been their inability to perform their own songs well. They write intelligently, but they are lousy entertainers and downright untalented, tone-deaf musicians. (I make exceptions of their superb vocal treatment of *All You Need Is Love* and their lovely instrumental intonation on *Penny Lane*, although I'd still like to hear what the Weavers would have done with that first tune.) Their farcical, stagnant, helpless bellowing on the *Mystery Tour* songs proves my point; worse, this disc provides the first group of Beatles compositions I never *ever* want to hear again performed by anybody!

Now let's examine this creepy phenomenon. Ever since the fellows gave up singing about narcotics in favor of meditation with the great Indian guru Maharishi, their music has become so totally divorced from real-

ity as the rest of the world knows it that I, for one, can no longer identify with it on any level. I appreciate their bizarre incorporation of honky-tonk piano, sitars, bagpipes, etc., as much as the next man, but gimmicks don't compensate for confused musical ideas. First in this mystery tour there is the title tune itself, no more than a Radio City Music Hall parody. Nothing different or clever there. Then there is a song called *The Fool on the Hill*, which I rather liked because it features some lovely flute work and because it is the only item on the disc that is not distorted so much that you

nique, but it is utterly silly and pointless. It begins with an intro sounding suspiciously like one of John Barry's James Bond film scores, then lapses into twenty-five lines of stuff like: "I am he as you are he as you are me and we are all together . . . sitting on a cornflake waiting for the van to come . . . I am the eggman, they are the eggmen—I am the walrus GOO GOO GOO JOOB . . . yellow matter custard dripping from a dead dog's eye . . . crabalocker fishwife pornographic priestess boy you been a naughty girl, you let your knickers down . . . elementary penguin singing Hare Krishna man you should have seen them kicking Edgar Allan Poe . . . I am the eggman, they are the eggmen, I am the walrus GOO GOO GOO JOOB GOO GOO JOOBGOO GOOGOO-OOOOOOO JOOOOOB. . ." The whole thing fades out to what sounds like people being fried on electric fences and pigs rooting in a bucket of swill. There are also a few sounds out of wind tunnels, and unless my ears deceived me (it's perfectly possible, I admit), I think I heard one of the Beatles in the background mocking a priest in the confessional.

I don't care what kind of ideological sense all this guff is supposed to make. I feel perfectly safe not knowing, like a man in the Middle Ages who has been inoculated against bubonic plague. But if you care, and if you buy this platter of phony, pretentious, overcooked tripe, then you and the Beatles deserve each other. R. R.



GLEN CAMPBELL
Country-and-western, contemporary-style

can't understand the lyrics. It will probably be picked up by people who can sing, and then maybe I will like it even more. Next, something called *Flying*, a two-minute and sixteen-second instrumental interlude which sounds like the soundtrack of an old Maria Montez jungle movie at just about the point where she feeds the chanting populace to the cobras. Fourth, *Blue Jay Way* (go figure that one out) which consists of three minutes and fifty seconds of the Beatles sounding as if they are singing under water or gargling with Listerine. Boring as hell.

There's more. There's *Your Mother Should Know*, which is nothing more than a Gaslight Era cabaret tune full of da-das and yeah-yeahs. Finally—and this I've got to quote or you'll never believe it—comes the cherry on the banana split. *I Am the Walrus* ("No You're Not!" said Little Nicola) defies any kind of description known to civilized man. Not only is it ugly to hear, lacking any cohesion of style or tech-

RECORDING OF SPECIAL MERIT

GLEN CAMPBELL: *By the Time I Get to Phoenix*. Glen Campbell (vocals and guitar); orchestra. *By the Time I Get to Phoenix*; *Hey Little One*; *My Baby's Gone*; *Back in the Race*; *Love Is a Lonesome River*; and six others. CAPITOL (S) ST 2851, (M) T 2851* \$4.79.

Performance: **Excellent**
Recording: **Very good**
Stereo Quality: **Excellent**

Glen Campbell seems to me to be one of the better country-and-western singers. I was particularly taken by the performance he gives here of the title song, which he is able to make both touching and unsentimentally convincing. Campbell's avoidance of the easily jerked tear sets him rather apart from the older generation of country singers and gives his performances a marked degree of believable reality. There is also a healthy touch of sardonic humor in his voice in such songs as *You're Young and You'll Forget*. This album and Campbell's performances would seem to me to be an almost ideal blend of traditional country-and-west-

Explanation of symbols:

- (S) = stereophonic recording
- (M) = monophonic recording
- * = mono or stereo version not received for review