

ENTERTAINMENT

ANTHOLOGY 2 - EVEN MORE OF THE SAME?

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They're back (again), and they have another new song (sort of). Or in other words, it's just like November all over again (except without the television show). But enough of these parentheses - as if you haven't guessed, *Anthology 2* has just hit the stores, and that could mean that Beatlemania has returned again (at least for the first time since *Anthology 1* came out back in November). *Anthology 1* more or less laid down the groundwork for the series, featuring alternative versions of well-known songs, the occasional unreleased song, and inevitably, the token completely new song. And in the case of *Anthology 2*, the new song is 'Real Love', the second of the songs that the remaining Beatles recorded using tapes of unfinished John Lennon songs. 'Real Love' will probably be familiar to some Lennon fans as one version of the song has already turned up on the soundtrack to the movie *Imagine* - a pleasant enough song. The end product may be sold as a Beatles song, but it sounds more like a song from late in John Lennon's solo career where he is backed by an all-star band. Yoko might like it better than 'Free As A Bird', but it still feels more like a gimmick to ensure publicity.

But the first question that has to be asked is just who is the *Anthology* series supposed to appeal to? I'm sure that in theory, EMI would love to think that everyone should own one. And why not? After all, a cursory listen to any oldies radio station will tell you that the legend of The Beatles lives on. Yet there are only a couple of dozen staples that get played again and again, something which implies that the public might have a limited

attention span, even when it comes to The Fab Four. History might be interesting to historians, but to the general public? Do people really want to hear an old, crackly tape of John Lennon and Paul McCartney's first band performing a not-very-memorable song? Probably not, and that could be why *Anthology 1* didn't perform quite as well as some people expected - it was kept from the much-coveted number one spot in the UK album charts by Michael Jackson. Sad, but true.

Fortunately, *Anthology 2* shouldn't suffer from that same problem - it covers the years between 1965 and 1968, and that means that the majority of the songs will be very familiar to just about everyone. Those years also represent the time when The Beatles moved away from their simpler pop roots to more experimental days; from the sitar on 'Norwegian Wood' to the grandiose orchestration on 'A Day In The Life', these are the songs of the most creative band in the history of pop music. The track listing for *Anthology 2* almost reads like a greatest hits album. Or at least it would for any other band, but for the likes of The Beatles, it only represents a fraction of their total work - that is something that bodes well for the *Anthology 3* which will complete the trilogy.

Though the song titles might be familiar, the versions that appear on *Anthology 2* are quite different from what you might expect. There are live versions from the last real concerts that the band performed. When you hear the tapes from Tokyo in 1966, you might understand why - it is hard to hear the band above the screaming crowd. How rewarding can it be to play when you can't even hear yourself sing? With the end of live



The suits might be the same, but something's changed...

performances, the band had a chance to devote the extra time to something that they really did have a chance to do up to now - develop. They might still have been a pop band, but now their songs had a little bit more to say than "she loves you" (yeah yeah yeah...). And that is what makes *Anthology 2* a more fascinating listen than the first volume - it contains the actual growth process. It even shows the songs where the changes began to take place; 'Norwegian Wood' and 'Tomorrow Never Knows' are both songs that couldn't have been predicted four years previously.

Another way to witness the creative process at work is to listen to the

alternative versions of familiar songs. Usually, they are earlier takes which have been sitting on a shelf for years, but there are also some demos that show an even more embryonic version of a song. And this provides the high spot of the *Anthology* series so far - three versions of 'Strawberry Fields Forever', starting with John Lennon's strummings of his guitar at his home, followed by the considerably different first studio take, and then finally, the seventh take which almost captures the spirit of the final version that everybody knows. These three tracks alone give an insight into The Beatles creative process that

has rarely been seen before now, and I can almost recommend *Anthology 2* simply on the strength of that.

But I can recommend *Anthology 2* for quite a few more reasons than just that. To start with, there is the historical argument I used back in November - it reminds you just how important The Beatles were in the big picture. And there is all that behind the scenes stuff that people go on and on about. But if you still aren't convinced, just listen - *Anthology 2* has The Beatles when they started getting creative, but before they got too weird, so pick it up for that reason. After all, I hear that *Anthology 3* is going to have eight different versions of 'Revolution 9' - I can't wait.



On the set of the 'video' for Strawberry Fields Forever.

THE OBLIGATORY BEATLES COMPETITION...

We have THREE copies of *Anthology 2* to give away, and hopefully some other bits and pieces too (much thanks to Barry Kent at EMI).

And all you have to do is answer the following questions:

1. Who was the oldest Beatle?
2. What was the first Beatles' single released by their own Apple label?
3. Name all of The Beatles feature films.
4. Which George Harrison album has given its title to a current hit song?
5. In which feature film did John Lennon make his solo acting debut?
6. From which original Beatles albums do these songs come?
 - a) Helter Skelter
 - b) Only A Northern Song
 - c) Tomorrow Never Knows
 - d) One After 909
 - e) Can't Buy Me Love

Get your answers into The Bruns office by 9pm on Tuesday (NO late entries will be accepted), and the first three correct entries pulled from the 'hat' will win.

You can even use e-mail if you want - bruns@unb.ca.

The Entertainment Editor's decision is final