

OCTOPUS'S GARDEN

THE BEATLES

APPEARS IN
ROCK & POP
2018

⚡ Released: 1969 ⚡ Album: Abbey Road ⚡ Label: Inertia, Monkey Puzzle, RCA Records

ABOUT THE SONG

'Octopus's Garden' is one of two Beatles songs written by drummer Ringo Starr, and featured on The Beatles' 11th album, *Abbey Road*. Starr had the idea for the song while on holiday with his family in Sardinia in 1968. After lunch on a boat, the captain told him a story about how octopuses pick up stones and objects from the sea bed to build gardens with. He wrote the song in Sardinia, and George Harrison later helped with developing the chord changes.

Starr said it was also inspired by his desire to hide from growing tension in the band: 'at the time I just wanted to be under the sea, too.'

RECORDING AND PRODUCTION

Recorded at EMI Studios (now known as Abbey Road Studios) in April 1969, the backing track of 'Octopus's Garden' took 32 takes before The Beatles were happy with it and Starr was able to record his final vocals. Produced by the band in the absence of *Abbey Road* producer George Martin, the backing vocals of band members Paul McCartney and George Harrison were put through compressors and limiters to create a gurgling sound, and the sound of bubbles being blown with a straw in a closely-miked glass was added.



Watch The Beatles working on 'Octopus's Garden' in the studio

“ I'D ASK MY FRIENDS TO COME AND SEE AN OCTOPUS'S GARDEN WITH ME I'D LIKE TO BE UNDER THE SEA IN AN OCTOPUS'S GARDEN IN THE SHADE ”

'OCTOPUS'S GARDEN' IS RINGO'S SONG. IT'S ONLY THE SECOND SONG RINGO HAS EVER WRITTEN MIND YOU, AND IT'S LOVELY...'
GEORGE HARRISON

BEATLES SONGS WRITTEN BY RINGO STARR

Ringo wrote and sang two Beatles songs, below, however he sang or co-wrote others including 'With a Little Help From My Friends', 'Yellow Submarine', 'Good Night' and 'What Goes On'.

- ⚡ 'Don't Pass Me By', *The Beatles (White Album)*, 1968
- ⚡ 'Octopus's Garden', *Abbey Road* 1969

THE ALBUM

Abbey Road was released in September 1969 by Apple Records. The 11th album by The Beatles, the recording sessions for *Abbey Road* were the last in which all four Beatles participated. *Let It Be*, released in 1970, had mostly been recorded before the *Abbey Road* sessions began. While the recording sessions for *Abbey Road* were more amicable than the sessions for the previous album (*The Beatles/The White Album*) and the *Let It Be* sessions earlier in 1969, there were still many arguments between the band members. By the time *Abbey Road* was released, John Lennon had privately left the band. Paul McCartney publicly announced his departure in 1970.

Although it wasn't directly promoted by The Beatles, *Abbey Road* was an immediate commercial success, reaching No. 1 in the UK and US. Initially it received mixed reviews from the critics, however it is now viewed by many as The Beatles' best album, and one of the greatest albums of all time. The songs 'Something' and 'Here Comes the Sun' are regarded by many as the best Beatles songs George Harrison wrote.

The infamous album cover shows the band walking across a zebra-crossing outside Abbey Road Studios - the site was given grade II listed status in 2010 and tourists still flock there to try take photos of themselves on the crossing. The cover does not include the name of the album or even the band's name at the decision of Apple Records' creative director, who insisted it wasn't needed as they were the most famous band in the world.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

The Beatles formed in Liverpool, UK in 1960, with the initial line-up consisting of John Lennon, Paul McCartney and George Harrison on guitars, Lennon's friend Stuart Sutcliffe on bass and Pete Best on drums. They took a residency that year in Hamburg, Germany, where they would perform on and off over the next two years.

Sutcliffe left the band in 1961 and McCartney took on the role of bass player. Now a four piece, they signed to Polydor Records in 1961, releasing the single 'My Bonnie'. The Beatles also often played at The Cavern Club in Liverpool, where they met Brian Epstein, who was appointed manager in early 1962. Later that year they signed to Parlophone and began recording. Drummer Best was replaced by Ringo Starr.

The Beatles released *Please Please Me* in the UK in 1963. With the success of the album came increased media attention and the band's tours began to be met with 'Beatlemania' - masses of screaming fans appearing at concerts around the UK. This phenomenon grew as The Beatles began releasing music in the USA and had a No. 1 hit with 'I Want to Hold Your Hand' in 1964.

The best-selling band in history, The Beatles continue to inspire and be admired today, almost 50 years after their split in 1970.

MORE TO EXPLORE

Songs: 'Here Comes The Sun' and 'Something' by The Beatles (1969). See also songs written by Ringo Starr box, overleaf.

Albums: See albums by The Beatles box, right. **Collaborators:** Brian Epstein, George Martin, Pete Best, Stuart Sutcliffe. **Trinity Rock & Pop 2018 syllabus:** Vocals, Grade 1.

'*ABBEY ROAD* SHOWS A BAND STILL CLEARLY IN ITS PRIME, CAPABLE OF SONGWRITING AND RECORDING FEATS OTHER GROUPS COULD ONLY ENVY.'
PITCHFORK

ALBUMS BY THE BEATLES

The Beatles released 12 studio albums between 1963-1970:

- ⚡ *Please Please Me*, 1963
- ⚡ *With the Beatles*, 1963
- ⚡ *A Hard Day's Night*, 1964
- ⚡ *Beatles for Sale*, 1964
- ⚡ *Help!*, 1965
- ⚡ *Rubber Soul*, 1965
- ⚡ *Revolver*, 1966
- ⚡ *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, 1967
- ⚡ *The Beatles (The White Album)*, 1968
- ⚡ *Yellow Submarine*, 1969
- ⚡ *Abbey Road*, 1969
- ⚡ *Let It Be*, 1970

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