So we talked about The Beatles early period where they were more or less a bar band that does a lot of covers, up-tempo dance pop songs. They really create The Beatles sound during this time and become a sensation in the United States. Now the second period is called the middle period. It’s kind of a short period in their development. There are only two albums that they make during this time and that’s Help! and Rubber Soul both in 1965. With these two albums we see a market change in The Beatles output in their music. One thing that we notice is there are more acoustic elements coming into The Beatles music along with some folk elements. Also there’s a real Dylan influence. Bob Dylan really influenced John Lennon. Before John Lennon was a songwriter he would write songs. He would crank them out more or less as a craftsman. Just writing a song for the purpose of making a song. He was influenced by Bob Dylan though. He started to really realize that songwriting was more a personal thing. He started putting his own personal thoughts and feelings into his songs and that was definitely a Bob Dylan influence on John Lennon.

So we have this introspective style emerging during this middle period. There’s also more individuality evident in The Beatles output. Meaning you hear more John Lennon. You hear more individual stylings from Paul McCartney and also the two other Beatles George and Ringo as well. They’re also starting to include social statements in their songs. Songs about peace and love and harmony are starting to come out and become a real theme in The Beatles music. That was to remain throughout the rest of their recording career.

Then we move quickly into the late period. The late period is where The Beatles really start to use the studio as an instrument. What they do is they use a lot of different effects. They start to experiment and they use tape loops. They use distortion in the bass. The songs start to become longer. The Beatles individuality starts to become more and more apparent among the members of the band. Around this time they stopped touring due to safety issues. They would then sit in their own homes during their off periods and compose music and write. Then when they would get together to make a record they would bring all their ideas together. It became more of a hodgepodge and a mishmash of musical ideas rather than a real cohesive band like they were in their early period. From this we get more artistic composition, start to add more instrumentation. George Martin especially, the producer of The Beatles, he was classically trained. He was a classical record producer as well. He would add orchestrations with strings, French horns, trumpets, and the like. Even more exotic instruments like the sitar. Instruments from around the world (tablas) would be added to their music.

They also started experimenting with drugs during this time, particularly LSD. That influenced their music as well. There was a real psychedelic bent to their output. Probably one of the most famous records from this period is Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band. It’s a very famous
record that The Beatles made. Very influential on the bands that came after it. They were heavily influenced by The Beach Boys’ Pet Sounds. Ironically, The White Album is the one that’s really their self-titled album. It was the most individualized record of them all. It even goes so far as the last track on that record is the track written and sung entirely by Ringo Starr. None of the other Beatles were involved in that track.

The last seven releases from The Beatles were from this late period. That’s the end of The Beatles output when The Beatles broke up in the early 70s.