

LISTENING TO CLASSIC ROCK MUSIC

ACHIEVEMENTS IN ALBUM CONTINUITY, PART 2

THE BEATLES' ABBEY ROAD

Through the concept album, many groups found ways to link some or all of the songs put onto a single album, achieving a unifying effect from song to song, or from beginning to end.

Side two of The Beatles' *Abbey Road* album achieves this effect to a very high degree through musical and lyrical effects (different from *Sgt. Pepper*, which relied on packaging and title-track/reprise title-track connections).

Here are some of the connections made between the tracks of *Abbey Road*, side two. The songs joined by brackets are linked by segues and come across as continuous, without any intervening gap:

Here Comes The Sun: The song's form is very clear, with strong verses and a memorable chorus. Its medium-high energy serves as a good opener for the album side. The auspicious lyrics provide a positive mood for what might come next. Obviously the song operates fine without the other album tracks. The bridge ("sun, sun, sun, here it comes") used a guitar arpeggio that is echoed towards the end of *You Never Give Me Your Money* (in the "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7" theme).

Because: Rather unconnected to the rest of the tracks. Its vague mood and gentleness serve as a moment of rest before the next song and to propel the transition to the next song; the ending seems cut short and unfinished, causing a strong anticipatory effect...

You Never Give Me Your Money: a very catchy verse, but the lack of a chorus makes the song more open-ended. Then it transitions to the other unstructured vignettes that don't have any obvious connection to the initial material: "*Out of college...*"; "*Oh that magic feeling...*"; "*One sweet dream*". The outgoing theme ("1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, all the children up in heaven") uses a similar arpeggio to that heard in *Here Comes The Sun* (but slower), which dissolves into the next song. Also, the fact that it's John Lennon's voice on the line helps prepare *Sun King*, on which he also sings.

Sun King: like *Because* (also a John Lennon song), this one is more gentle, mellow and looser in form. It provides a calming sensation (an interlude) after all the previous vignettes. And the lyrics "Here comes the sun king" have an obvious connection.

Mean Mr. Mustard: In the same key as *Sun King*. Short, more upbeat, structured and catchy. The lyrics mention "his sister, Pam", a likely reference to the next song.

Polythene Pam: also short, upbeat and structured, with a more typical rock and roll beat and chords.

She Came In Through The Bathroom Window: also short, structured and high energy. The "she" could be Polythene Pam...The mysterious lyrics at one point refer to days of the week similar to some of the lyrics in Lady Madonna. The end is crisp, but on a chord that ultimately feels unresolved, which makes the transition to the next song smoother.

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Golden Slumbers: the ballade quality and dramatic buildup with strings and brass helps indicate that the end of the album must be near. Plus, the going to sleep lyrics seem to be saying "good night" to the listener.

Carry That Weight: this feels so much like the "real" chorus of *Golden Slumbers* that the connection is seamless. The short reprise of *You never Give Me Your Money* before the "carry that weight" chorus makes a clear connection to the initial version a few tracks earlier. And the same transitional arpeggio first heard at the end of "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, all the children up in heaven" (reminiscent of the previously-mentioned *Here Comes The Sun* Arpeggio) further cements the intended connection and unification with earlier material.

The End: more like a coda to the previous grouping of songs. Notable are the words "oh, you're gonna be in my dreams tonight" (which continue the sleep theme in *Golden Slumbers*). This is also the most high energy track (it even features a drum solo!, as well as guitar solos by the three other Beatles), providing the biggest build-up and climax to the then-relaxing codetta: the final statement of the album and effectively by the Beatles, and also probably the most recognized lyrics in rock history: "And, in the end, the love you take/ Is equal to the love you make." (if you don't believe that, go to Google and type in "and in the" and the rest of the line will appear.

Her Majesty: an unconnected coda (and afterthought) to the whole album and seemingly a joke. Many people didn't even know it was on the album because of the amount of silence that precedes it. Initially it was meant to go after *Mean Mr. Mustard*, but it was removed and almost not revived.

Book End Effect: while it's hard to say if this was planned, or merely interpretive, it's worth noting that the first track of this album side is (perhaps) about the sun coming up (i.e. the beginning of the day) and the last compilation of songs (beginning with *Golden Slumbers*) refers to going to sleep (i.e. the end of the day).