

MUSIC

HELP! ANOTHER STAB AT THE FAB FOUR

Miley Cyrus's take on the Beatles is a curious addition to the list of Fabs covers, both brilliant and truly awful

By SIMON HARDEMAN

 **DOWNLOAD OUR FREE APP**



The FREE Independent digital app provides you with constantly updating news coverage; plus a 30 day free trial to download the PDF version of the printed newspaper daily and access to all of the weekend supplements such as The New Review, Radar, Traveller and The Independent Magazine.

The INDEPENDENT
Download it now at: independent.co.uk/apps

Print subscriptions also available. See independent.co.uk/subscriptions for more information.

IT MAY NOT AUGUR WELL that we have Miley Cyrus's dead dog to thank for the latest Beatles cover-version extravaganza. When Floyd, her favourite pet, was mangled by coyotes last year, the twerker turned to the band she says they had both listened to together – the Flaming Lips. And next month, Cyrus's collaboration with them on "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" is part of a track-by-track remake of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, by the Lips and collaborators including Moby and My Morning Jacket.

The Cyrus-fronted everything-but-the-kitchen-sink version and full-frontal-nudity video, wherein the song is made over with psychedelic lippy, does not promise a classic, though the album is curiously enjoyable. Meanwhile, an all-star 42-song package of covers of Paul McCartney, *The Art of McCartney*, finally sees the light of day in November. Excitingly, it features Bob Dylan, Brian Wilson and Smokey Robinson – though it also has, more worryingly, Alice Cooper covering "Eleanor Rigby".

So what's the point? "People are like, 'Why do you do Beatles songs?'" the Lips' leader Wayne Coyne has told us, "and I'm like, 'because people love them.'" Yes we do, which is why it's so wonderful when the covers go well, and so excruciating when they don't.

So here are five of the worst and weirdest, then five of the most wonderful. Fab fingers crossed that Floyd's demise inspires more of the latter.

I Should Have Known Better

BONO
I AM THE WALRUS (2007)
The man whose band has at last found its true calling as spam in your iTunes inbox puts his voice up against John Lennon's and takes one hell of a beating. This was recorded for the film *Across the Universe*, which bolts Beatles songs onto a story about... well, who cares? It's an excuse for the songs. And this one exposes Bono's misplaced super-confidence in his vocal ability as nakedly as an Irish guitarist's head with no beanie hat.

BJÖRK
ÁLFUR ÚT ÚR HÓL (1977)
On which the 11-year-old future cultural icon sings "Fool on the Hill" in Icelandic, bringing to it all the charm of a teething baby in the seat behind you on a nine-hour flight with no earplugs. It comes from her debut album, which followed a performance on Icelandic radio during which listeners mistakenly believed the volcano Eyjafjallajökull was erupting. Having established that planes weren't being grounded, the Icelandic public demanded more. And this, in which micro-Björk stamps her foot and bellows for attention over the fade-out, is what they got.

BING CROSBY
HEY JUDE (1969)
Crosby's bloke-next-door-singing-in-the-bath vocal style doesn't suit all songs. Frankly, it doesn't suit all bathrooms, and this is one take that would have been best left behind the smallest room's door with a note on it saying "I wouldn't go in there yet". At the end of the Second World War, US soldiers voted Crosby the man who had done the most for their morale. Luckily the war ended 24 years before he could inflict this on them. The way he replaces the "Na-na-na..." ending with "Pom-pom-pom..." would have called for immediate surrender.

WILLIAM SHATNER
LUCY IN THE SKY WITH DIAMONDS (1968)
It's Lennon, Jim, but not as we know it. Imagine *Star Trek*'s James T Kirk on an alien planet, having eaten a strange plant that makes him dance through a purple forest declaiming song lyrics to the sky, and you'll get an idea of how this boldly goes where no vocalist has gone before. It seems like a joke, but almost certainly wasn't. One reviewer complained: "Ah cannae take any more, Cap'n!"



Just let it be: Bono (top) and Bing Crosby (above) are both guilty of criminal versions of Beatles songs
REUTERS/CORBIS; CINEMAPHOTO

SEAN CONNERY IN MY LIFE (2009)
"There are playshesh I'll remember all my life, though shome have changed..." Sir Sean of Devolution speaksh his way over a chamber rendering of the shong (OK, I'll stop now). The idea is obviously to achieve the kind of impact Johnny Cash had with his emotionally bare last recordings, but is closer to that achieved by Peter Sellers's hammed-up "A Hard Day's Night". Extraordinarily, it was produced by Beatles mentor George Martin – who also produced Sellers!

MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR
BUGS BUNNY AND DAFFY DUCK
HELLO GOODBYE (1995)
From the album *Bugs & Friends Sing the Beatles*. Bugs and Daffy argue as to who says what, when, with Bugs getting ever more irritated at Daffy singing the wrong thing: McCartney must kick himself for never having written the lyric "Thometimeth I think he doeth it jutht the thpite me!" So what's up Doc? Well, it's great fun, but the characterisations aren't a patch on Mel Blanc, who died six years earlier.

WILSON PICKETT WITH DUANE ALLMAN
HEY JUDE (1968)
This contains reputedly Eric Clapton's favourite guitar solo, from Allman, the man who later contributed *that* riff to "Layla". But it is more than matched by Pickett's throat-shredding performance, which makes McCartney's screams on the original sound like the early morning yawn of a dyspeptic corgi. And it was never planned: Pickett happened to drop by the legendary Fame Studios in Muscle Shoals while Allman was hanging around looking for gigs, and on a whim the guitarist persuaded him to do it.

FLORENCE AND THE MACHINE
OH! DARLING (2009)
John Lennon always thought he could have sung McCartney's *Abbey Road* track better than its

Two of us: (clockwise from above) Flaming Lips front man Wayne Coyne and Miley Cyrus on stage in Las Vegas; Florence Welch; Joe Cocker
IMAGES: VALERY HACHE/AFP





writer, who struggled through take after take, day after day, to get the rough sound he wanted for the vocal. Florence recorded it live at the same studios in 2009, and gave a virtuoso performance that wrings bucketloads of emotion out of it.

LESLIE WEST
DEAR PRUDENCE (1976)
Siouxsie fans will choke on their black liquorice allsorts as they read this, but the Banshee's 1984 sing-along-a-goth pop version of one of Lennon's favourite own compositions isn't a patch on this swampy reimagining, from the former Mountain guitarist's debut solo album. It goes from haunting to searing, courtesy of what were once dubbed "the fattest fingers in rock'n'roll".

JOE COCKER
WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS (1968)
A contender for best cover version of anything ever. Sheffield's gravel throat (and master of air guitar) took a song that Lennon and McCartney designed for a limited range – aka "Ringo's track" on *Sgt. Pepper* – and turned it into one of pop's greatest vocal performances. Cocker even changed the time signature from 4/4 to 6/8. While he played air guitar, Led Zep's Jimmy Page contributed the actual axe-manship. Twenty years later at a Prince's Trust concert, Cocker sang it with Wet Wet Wet's blue-eyed soulster Marti Pellow, who must still have nightmares.

'With a Little Help from My Fwends' is out on 28 October



Country to Country

SATURDAY 07 MARCH 2015

LUKE BRYAN

FLORIDA GEORGIA LINE

Brandy Clark

SUNDAY 08 MARCH 2015


LADY ANTEBELLUM

JASON ALDEAN

BRANTLEY GILBERT

KIP MOORE

ADDITIONAL ARTISTES TO BE ANNOUNCED



at The **O2**

AXS.COM/C2C 08448 24 48 24

GIGSANDTOURS.COM 0844 811 0051

PRESENTED BY THE O2 & SIM CONCERTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE CMA

axs

GIGSANDTOURS

CMA

02

! COUNTRY2COUNTRY

C2C-COUNTRYTOCOUNTRY.COM

COUNTRY2COUNTRY