THE ROLLING STONES

Week Three

Essential Listening:

1. *Between the Buttons* (ABKCO, 1967). The best of their pre-1968 albums is highly underrated, finding the Stones at a point where they'd branched out from their blues/R&B/soul-oriented beginnings into quirkier and poppier, but still tough, compositions by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards. It’s stuffed with fine songs rarely played on the radio except during Rolling Stones A-Z weekends like: “Complicated,” “My Obsession,” “Who’s Been Sleeping Here,” “All Sold Out,” “Connection,” “Yesterday’s Papers,” “Back Street Girl,” and “Please Go Home.” Confusingly, this is available on CD in two different versions: the one issued in 1967 the UK, and the one issued in 1967 in the US (which is missing some good songs from 1967 UK version, but adds the hit single "Ruby Tuesday"/"Let's Spend the Night Together").

2. *Flowers* (ABKCO, 1967). A real hodgepodge even by the standards of how US labels sometimes manufactured LPs with no real UK counterparts, this combined some then-recent hits with odds and ends that hadn’t found a place on American LPs before 1967. Nonetheless, it has lots of good music, including the hits "Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby, Standing in the Shadow," "Ruby Tuesday," "Let's Spend the Night Together," "Lady Jane," and "Mother's Little Helper," as well as some outtakes and songs left off the US versions of *Between the Buttons* and *Aftermath*. Some of those are really good, like “Sittin’ on a Fence,” “Out of Time,” “Ride on Baby,” “Back Street Girl,” “Please Go Home,” and “Take It or Leave It.”

3. *Their Satanic Majesties Request* (ABKCO, 1967). Often derided as a blatant attempt by the Rolling Stones to mimic *Sgt. Pepper*, down to its gaudy 3-D cover. But though the Stones' only psychedelic album is uneven, it has some great songs, especially "She's a Rainbow," "2000 Light Years from Home," and "In Another Land." It also has some mediocre ones, and a sloppy jam in “Sing This All Together (And See What Happens).”
4. **Beggars Banquet** (ABKCO, 1968). The Rolling Stones' return to their blues roots, though with mostly original songs and their own idiosyncratic lyrics and attitudes, including two of their most adventurous recordings in "Street Fighting Man" and "Sympathy for the Devil." There is also more of a Mississippi Delta/early rural blues influence here than there was on their early records. Brian Jones reportedly did not contribute much to the sessions, but did make his presence felt with the exquisite slide guitar on "No Expectations," as well as sitar and tamboura on "Street Fighting Man."

5. **Let It Bleed** (ABKCO, 1969). With Brian Jones on the way out and his replacement Mick Taylor on the way in as this album was finished, the band’s lineup was a little unsettled during the recording of their final LP of the 1960s. Like *Beggars Banquet*, it was more blues-oriented than their 1965-67 recordings, though it was a little less country-blues-tilted than *Beggars Banquet*, and a little more geared toward hard blues-rock. The standout tracks were “You Can’t Always Get What You Want,” which with its quasi-classical-choral feel demonstrated the group had a greater range than they’re usually given credit for, “Let It Bleed,” “Midnight Rambler,” and “Gimme Shelter.” Keith Richards take his first lead vocal on “You Got the Silver.” Note that the hit single from this period, “Honky Tonk Women,” is not here; instead there’s an inferior country version of the same song, retitled “Country Honk.”

**Recommended additional recordings by the Rolling Stones, 1967-mid-1969:**


2. From *More Hot Rocks*: The mid-1967 single “We Love You,” their sullen take on flower power, backed by the quite good flower-pop song “Dandelion” (which was the hit in the US, not “We Love You”). *More Hot Rocks* also has the less memorable B-side of
“Jumping Jack Flash,” “Child of the Moon.” All three of these tracks are on numerous other wallet-draining compilations too.


4. From *The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus* (ABKCO, 1995): The soundtrack to the TV special of the same name, filmed in December 1968 but not officially released until the mid-1990s, has five live Stones tracks, including four songs from *Beggars Banquet* and one (“You Can’t Always Get What You Want”) that they wouldn’t issue until 1969. There’s also a song apiece by guests the Who, John Lennon (playing in a one-time band with Keith Richards, Eric Clapton, and Jimi Hendrix Experience drummer Mitch Mitchell), Marianne Faithfull, Jethro Tull, Taj Mahal, and Yoko Ono. The music is good, but it’s better experienced on *The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus* DVD (see below).

**Recommended additional reading (in addition to sections on the 1967-mid-1969 Rolling Stones on general suggested reading list):**

1. *Butterfly on a Wheel: The Great Rolling Stones Bust*, by Simon Wells (Omnibus Press, 2012). A little dry, especially if you’re more into the Stones’ music than their lives. But this goes over the bust of Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, and others at Keith’s Redlands home in early 1967 in exhaustive detail, as well as the subsequent trial, and drug-related offenses for which Brian Jones was harassed shortly afterward. Like numerous others, the author feels, backed by much evidence, that the Stones were set up, and that the punishment that was sought far outweighed the seriousness of the infractions.

2. *Marianne Faithfull*, by Mark Hodkinson (Omnibus, 1991). Decent no-nonsense bio of a fascinating singer whose career extended way beyond the British Invasion, and who owes part of her notoriety to her lengthy late-’60s romantic relationship with Mick Jagger. Faithfull tells a more subjective account in her memoir *Faithfull*, co-written with David Dalton.
3. *Days in the Life: Voices from the English Underground 1961-1971*, by Jonathon Green (Pimlico, 1998). Extensive oral history of the emergence of the British psychedelic counterculture, drawn from dozens of interviews with figures in the movement. Relevant to the Rolling Stones story in its depiction of how the counterculture was harassed in the UK in the late 1960s from many directions, the Stones not being the only targets.

4. *Allen Klein: The Man Who Bailed Out the Beatles, Made the Stones, and Transformed Rock & Roll*, by Fred Goodman (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2015). As business manager of both the Rolling Stones and the Beatles in the late 1960s and early 1970s (as well as numerous other British rock acts), Allen Klein played a controversial role in their careers. Although he gained unprecedented concessions from record companies for his artists, he also sowed some discord within the Beatles and Rolling Stones through both his personal style and his financial practices. The legalities of his contractual relationships with his clients aren’t all that easy to wade through if you don’t have a head for that sort of thing. But this book lays them out for the layperson with about as much accessibility as can be attained, combining the business analysis with plenty of stories about the colorful manager’s abrasive style and relationships with the celebrated rockers he represented.

5. *Brian Jones: Who Killed Christopher Robin? The Murder of a Rolling Stone*, by Terry Rawlings (Helter Skelter, 2005). Although the death of Jones is highlighted in the title, more than half of this is actually a biography of Brian, with a few sections about his controversial death at the end. This does an adequate if unspectacular job of covering the essentials of his life, and received some attention for its assertions that Jones was killed by Frank Thorogood, based on a deathbed confession to one witness. A better, and likely the best, biography of Jones is due soon from experienced rock writer Paul Trynka, though as of this writing it doesn’t have a publication date.

6. *Rolling Stones and the Making of Let It Bleed*, by Sean Egan (Unanimous, 2005). In-depth account of the making of one of the Stones’ most celebrated albums, drawing on interviews with some of the participants.
Recommended DVDs/videos:

1. 6 Ed Sullivan Shows Starring The Rolling Stones (Sofa Entertainment, 2011). This two-DVD set of all six episodes of The Ed Sullivan Show includes the January 15, 1967 program on which they played “Ruby Tuesday” and “Let’s Spend the Night Together.” It’s especially notorious as Mick Jagger was instructed to change the title of the latter song to “Let’s Spend Some Time Together,” and did so about half the time.

2. The Rolling Stones Under Review 1967-1969 (Sexy Intellectual, 2007). Like many Under Review documentaries in the Sexy Intellectual series, this combines snippets of vintage Stones footage with analysis by musical critics and interviews with peripheral associates of the band, like publicist Keith Altham, backup singer Merry Clayton, and Byron Berline (who played fiddle on “Country Honk”). It’s not as satisfying as a more inside look, but covers some of the essentials, particularly for those without a deep familiarity with the group’s history. This has been combined with its prequel (The Rolling Stones Under Review 1962-1966) onto one volume, The Rolling Stones in the 1960s: The Complete Review.

3. Sympathy for the Devil (ABKCO, 1968). Originally titled One Plus One, this film by top French New Wave director Jean-Luc Godard mixed footage of the Rolling Stones rehearsing and recording “Sympathy for the Devil” in the studio with incomprehensible fictional scenes of students and black power activists discussing or enacting radical politics (sometimes with voiceover narration seemingly taken from a porn novel!). The sections with the Stones are fascinating, as we follow the song’s genesis from an entirely different folky arrangement to the final recorded version (and, in the process, sadly view a barely functional Brian Jones). In contrast, the non-Stones scenes are stultifyingly boring and pointless. The 2018 DVD adds a new documentary on the making of the movie, including recent interviews with co-producer Mim Scala and cinematographer Tony Richmond. Other extras include Voices, a 1968 Godard documentary made during the filming of Sympathy for the Devil, and a commentary track by film critic David Sterritt.
4. *The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus* (ABKCO, 1995). Though filmed in December 1968, this concert movie, hosted by and featuring the Rolling Stones as well as other artists (including the Who, Jethro Tull, and Marianne Faithfull), wasn't released until 1995. The Rolling Stones reportedly shelved this because they weren’t happy with their performance, though it’s okay, and also the final time they were filmed with Brian Jones (who seems to be fading badly). Notable in Beatles history as the first instance in which John Lennon performed outside of the group, singing "Yer Blues" with a band including Eric Clapton, Keith Richards (on bass), and drummer Mitch Mitchell from the Jimi Hendrix Experience.

**Not on DVD or VHS, but of note:**

*A Degree of Murder* (1967). Rather awful German thriller, but of note for featuring Anita Pallenberg in the lead role while she was Brian Jones’s girlfriend. Of more note is the soundtrack, written by Brian Jones, though it's not that distinctive or remarkable.

**Notable People:**

Marianne Faithfull: Mid-‘60s British pop star singer met Mick Jagger in 1964, but became his girlfriend in late 1966, remaining so for the next three or four years. Was involved in several Rolling Stones incidents/projects during that time, including being present with Jagger, Keith Richards, and others when Mick and Keith were busted at Richards’s country home Redlands in February 1967; getting referred to anonymously as the naked girl in the subsequent trial, though everyone knew who it was; appearing in the “We Love You” promo video satirizing the trial; appearing in the December 1968 concert film *The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus*; and flying to Australia to star with Jagger in the 1969 movie *Ned Kelly* (though she was removed from that role after overdosing on drugs shortly after arriving). She also co-wrote “Sister Morphine,” which first appeared on her version on a flop 1969 single, and later on the Stones’ 1971 album *Sticky Fingers*. Has maintained a musical and sometimes acting career, if sometimes sporadically, to the present day.
**Anita Pallenberg:** German/Italian actress/model had been Brian Jones’s girlfriend since late 1965 before leaving him for Keith Richards in early 1967. Remained with Richards for about the next dozen years, bearing him three children (one of whom died as an infant). Starred in the 1967 German movie *A Degree of Murder*, whose soundtrack was written by Brian Jones. Also starred with Mick Jagger in the controversial movie *Performance*, filmed in 1968, but not released until 1970.

**Jimmy Miller:** Producer for the Rolling Stones from 1968 through 1974. From the United States, his previous credentials included production for the Spencer Davis Group and Traffic.

**Nicky Hopkins:** Top British session musician who played keyboards on records by numerous UK groups, including the Beatles and the Who. He played on many Rolling Stones sessions for about 15 years starting in late 1966, and sometimes played with them live in the early 1970s.

**John Paul Jones:** Then a session musician, the future Led Zeppelin bassist did the string arrangement for “She’s a Rainbow.”

**John Lennon & Paul McCartney:** Sang uncredited backup harmony vocals on “We Love You.”

**The Small Faces:** When some of the Rolling Stones failed to show up for a session, Steve Marriott and Ronnie Lane of the Small Faces sang backup vocals on “In Another Land,” the sole Bill Wyman song featured on a Rolling Stones album (*Their Satanic Majesties Request*).

**David Sniderman:** Mysterious Canadian who was present at the Redlands bust, disappearing shortly afterward. Some believe, including some Rolling Stones biographers, that he was the insider most responsible for setting up the bust, cooperating with the police and government. Also sometimes referred to as David Schneidermann and, as a video producer in Los Angeles in the 1980s, David Jove.
**Michael Cooper:** Photographer who took the three-dimensional cover picture featured on *Their Satanic Majesties Request*. Most known for doing cover photography for the Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper*, which naturally flamed speculation that the Stones were trying to imitate *Sgt. Pepper*. Was present at the Redlands bust, though not prosecuted.

**Robert Fraser:** London art dealer, and friend of numerous top rock musicians, including the Beatles and Rolling Stones. He was also at the Redlands bust. While Mick Jagger and Keith Richards served barely any time on bust-related offenses before being freed, Fraser served six months in prison. Also gave suggestions used for production of the cover art for the Beatles’ *Sgt. Pepper* and *White Album*.

**William Rees-Mogg:** Editor of *The Times*, perhaps London’s most prestigious newspaper. His editorial criticizing the sentencing of Mick Jagger and Keith Richards to jail terms was crucial in turning public opinion in the Rolling Stones’ favor, and leading to the sentences getting overturned.

**Judge Leslie Block:** Judge at the trial of Mick Jagger and Keith Richards in mid-1967. Was criticized for, months later, making derogatory remarks about the case in a dinner held by the Horsham Ploughing and Agricultural Society, where he stated, “we did our best, your fellow countrymen, I, and my fellow magistrates, to cut those Stones down to size, but alas, it was not to be, because the Court of Criminal Appeal let them roll free.”

**News of the World:** London paper Ran article in February 1967 falsely stating Mick Jagger had talked to him freely about his drug use (it was actually Brian Jones). After Jagger inferred he would sue for libel, many believe *News of the World* helped set up the Redlands bust. This is the same newspaper that was shut down in 2011 amid allegations of phone hacking.

**Suki Poitier:** British model who was Brian Jones’s girlfriend from about mid-1967 to early 1969. Had previously been girlfriend of Tara Browne, an heir to the Guinness fortune, and was in the car when he died in a crash in December 1966 – the crash that, after
John Lennon read a newspaper article about it, gave Lennon the idea for “A Day in the Life.” Died in a car accident in Portugal in 1981.

**Jean-Luc Godard:** Legendary French New Wave director filmed the Rolling Stones rehearsing and recording “Sympathy for the Devil” in the studio in 1968. Footage from those scenes was used in his movie *One Plus One*, retitled *Sympathy for the Devil* in some markets/editions to capitalize on the Stones’ appearance.

**Detective Sergeant Norman Pilcher:** Infamous for busting British rock stars on drug charges, and according to some, framing them by planting drugs on their premises. One of his targets was Brian Jones; he was also involved in drug arrests of Donovan, John Lennon, and George Harrison.

**Jimi Hendrix:** Andrew Oldham, Bill Wyman, and Keith Richards, as well as possibly other Rolling Stones, all saw Jimi Hendrix play in New York in 1966, when he was just making the shift from sideman to bandleader and hungry for a break. None of them seemed especially impressed or inclined to give him one. They might have forgotten him after that, except Richards’s girlfriend Linda Keith took up with Hendrix. And in September 1966, Hendrix moved to London and began a rise to international superstardom, unsuccessfullly attempting to pick up (with Mick Jagger present) Marianne Faithfull at a club a few months later. The one Rolling Stone to become close to Hendrix was Brian Jones, who introduced him at Hendrix’s first major US concert at the Monterey Pop Festival in June 1967.

**The Maharishi Mahesh Yogi:** Indian guru of the Transcendental Meditation movement, in which the Beatles became interested via George Harrison and his wife in the summer of 1967. Mick Jagger and Marianne Faithfull accompanied the Beatles to study with him at a weekend retreat in Wales in late August 1967, but that was cut short by news of Brian Epstein’s death. The Beatles went to Rishikesh, India to study transcendental meditation with him and other students in early 1968, but none of the Beatles finished the course, leaving at different times for different reasons. A disillusioned John Lennon wrote "Sexy Sadie" about him. Jagger and
Faithfull’s involvement with the Maharishi, however, apparently didn’t continue after that weekend retreat.

**Astrid Lundstrom:** Long-term Swedish girlfriend of Bill Wyman from 1967 to 1983.

**Dave Mason:** Multi-instrumentalist from Traffic who plays on some of *Beggars Banquet*, in part to make up for Brian Jones’s diminishing contributions.

**Al Kooper:** Plays keyboards and French horn on “You Can’t Always Get What You Want.” Also a noted session musician for Bob Dylan and many others, as well as being a key member of New York ‘60s rock groups the Blues Project and (for their first album) Blood, Sweat & Tears.

**Rocky Dijon:** Plays conga on “Sympathy for the Devil” and, on *Sticky Fingers*, “Can’t You Hear Me Knocking.”

**Doris Troy:** One of the backup singers on “You Can’t Always Get What You Want.”

**Madeline Bell:** One of the backup singers on “You Can’t Always Get What You Want.”

**London Bach Choir:** Featured on “You Can’t Always Get What You Want,” particularly in the extended vocals-only opening section and the long fadeout.

**Watts Gospel Choir:** Featured on “Salt of the Earth” from *Beggars Banquet*.

**Ric Grech:** Multi-instrumentalist in Family and Blind Faith. Plays fiddle on “Factory Girl” from *Beggars Banquet*.

**Byron Berline:** Plays fiddle on “Country Honk” on *Let It Bleed*.

**Nanette Workman:** Backing singer on “Country Honk” and “You Can’t Always Get What You Want.”
Leon Russell: Plays piano and did the horn arrangement for “Live with Me” on *Let It Bleed*.

John Mayall: Leader of John Mayall’s Bluesbreakers, one of the top British blues bands, noted for generating guitarists who went on to fame with subsequent groups – Eric Clapton, Peter Green (leader of the original Fleetwood Mac), and Mick Taylor. Recommended Taylor to the Stones when they were looking for a guitarist to replace Brian Jones.

The Dirty Mac: Joking name given a temporary, one-performance supergroup consisting of John Lennon on guitar and lead vocals, Eric Clapton lead guitar, Keith Richards on bass, and Mitch Mitchell on drums. They performed the Beatles’ “Yer Blues” on *The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus* in December 1968.

Michael Lindsay-Hogg: American-born, UK-based director of *The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus*. Had previously directed segments of the mid-1960s UK TV show *Ready Steady Go* featuring the Stones, as well as some of their promo clips. Also directed some promo clips for the Beatles and, more famously, their *Let It Be* movie.

The Velvet Underground: Mick Jagger has said that this great New York group’s song “Heroin,” written by Lou Reed and from the first Velvet Underground album, inspired a similar use of droning textures in *Beggars Banquet*’s “Stray Cat Blues.”

Anna Wohlin: Swedish girlfriend of Brian Jones who was living with him at the time he drowned on July 3, 1969. Gave her account of her brief time with Jones in the slim memoir *The Murder of Brian Jones: The Secret Story of My Love Affair with the Murdered Rolling Stone*.

Frank Thorogood: Builder living on site of Brian Jones’s home who has sometimes been suspected of being involved in Jones’s drowning.

Notable Places:
Olympic Sound Studios: London studios in which the Rolling Stones did most of their recording between late 1966 and mid-1969.

Redlands: The country home of Keith Richards in Sussex, where he and Mick Jagger were busted on drug-related charges in February 1967. Richards still owns and occasionally resides in the house.

London Palladium: Major London venue where the Rolling Stones appeared on the television show *Sunday Night at the London Palladium* in January 1967. Their refusal to wave goodbye with the rest of the cast from a revolving stage at the end, as tradition dictated, caused enormous controversy in the press and among the public.

Abbey Road Studios: Known as EMI Studios at the time, the location of many of the Beatles' recording sessions, including one on June 25, 1967 in which the group performed “All You Need Is Love” to about half a billion people for the first satellite broadcast. Shown clapping along in the audience was Mick Jagger, who went to jail a few days later.

Chichester Court: Court in which Mick Jagger and Keith Richards were tried for offenses relating to the Redlands bust.

Brixton Jail: Mick Jagger spent one night here after his drug conviction before being freed on bail.

Wormwood Scrubs: Keith Richards likewise spent one night in prison here before being freed on bail.

Palace of Culture and Science, Warsaw: The Rolling Stones made their only appearance behind the Iron Curtain in the 1960s here on April 13, 1967.

Empire Pool, Wembley, London: The Rolling Stones’ appearance at the New Musical Express Pollwinners Concert here on May 12, 1968 marked their only public concert between April 17, 1967 (in Athens, Greece) and November 7, 1969 (in Fort Collins, Colorado).
**Grosvenor Square:** Site of the American Embassy in London, and thus a major demonstration against the Vietnam War on March 17, 1968 that included some violence between police and demonstrators. Mick Jagger was at the demonstration, which partially inspired the song “Street Fighting Man.”

**48 Cheyne Walk:** Where Mick Jagger and Marianne Faithfull lived, in the Chelsea district of London near the Thames River, in the late 1960s.

**Cotchford Farm:** East Sussex home, once the property of *Winnie the Pooh* author A.A. Milne, where Brian Jones drowned in his swimming pool on July 3, 1969. Mick Jagger, Keith Richards, and Charlie Watts drove here to meet with Jones and fire him from the band on June 8, 1969.

**Sunset Sound Studios:** Hollywood studio where the Rolling Stones did some recording and overdubbing for *Let It Bleed* in 1969, though the bulk of the recording was done in Olympic Studios in London.

**Elektra Studios:** Another Hollywood studio where the Rolling Stones did some recording and overdubbing for *Let It Bleed* in 1969.

**Intertel Studios:** Studios in the Stonebridge area of London where *The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus* was filmed on December 10 and 11 of 1968.

**Cheltenham Cemetery:** Site of Brian Jones’s grave in Cheltenham, England.

**Essential Albums by Other Artists That Were Influential On, Admired By, or Influenced By the Rolling Stones in 1967-mid-1969:**

**The Beatles, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*** (EMI, the Beatles' eighth album, 1967). Probably the Beatles' most famous album, and still considered the most representative musical document of the psychedelic era. The Beatles and George Martin became more adventurous in the studio than they'd ever been
before and, arguably, they'd ever be again. Sound effects, exotic instrumentation, distortion, and grand orchestration were deployed on a remarkably eclectic set of songs that ran from anguished epics to vaudeville, Indian music, chamber pieces, and hard funky rock. Though sometimes described as a "concept album," the concept was loose and vague, and more related to the consistently kaleidoscopic mood of a set whose total effect was greater than the sum of its parts, rather than to any definite story or theme. Key tracks: "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds," their dreamiest psychedelic song; "With a Little Help from My Friends," the catchiest good-time number, and one of Ringo's most celebrated vocals; the "Sgt. Pepper" theme, which introduced the conceit of an album being presented as a concert by a fictitious group serving as an alias for the Beatles; and the closing "A Day in the Life," one of the most effective fusions of two entirely different Lennon and McCartney songs into one. The Rolling Stones, with some justification, were sometimes accused of being unduly influenced by Sgt. Pepper (and its cover art) on the psychedelic album they issued a few months later, Their Satanic Majesties Request.

The Beatles, The Beatles (aka The White Album) (EMI, the Beatles' tenth album, 1968). Continuing to increase the technological sophistication of the production, yet for the most part moving away from psychedelic rock to earthier hard rock and folk-rock, this late-1968 double LP was easily the Beatles' most diverse album. While a "back to basics" approach informs much of the material, in fact some of this doesn't fall into that category, or indeed any easy label. Hard rock, 1950s-styled rock, blues-rock, folk-rock, folk, avant-garde, country, Tin Pan Alley, vaudeville, saloon music, lushly orchestrated pop – all can be heard on The White Album, with some styles mixing in the same song. In hindsight, it also shows the group becoming less united, with some tracks featuring just three, two, or even only one of the Beatles. Nonetheless, the standard of the songwriting in particular remained high, as did the imagination of arrangements and level of instrumental work. The record also marked a growth in the quality and quantity of George Harrison compositions. Besides standing alongside Beggars Banquet as a major entry into the “back to basics” trend in late-'60s rock, there is a coincidental Stones connection. The all-white cover design couldn’t help but generate speculation
that the nearly-all-white *Beggars Banquet* cover was following the lead of *The White Album*, though the *Beggars Banquet* album was actually finished first (though released a bit later because of a dispute over the original cover, which showed a toilet). The similarity of covers is probably coincidental.

**The Beatles, *Let It Be*** (EMI, 1970). Mostly recorded in January 1969 before the sessions for *Abbey Road* started (but, confusingly, released in spring 1970 six months after *Abbey Road* was issued), this has often been characterized as a failed attempt by a splintering group to get back to basic rock'n'roll. But though it isn't one of their better albums, it has plenty of fine music that lived up to its ambitions, including "Get Back" and "Let It Be."

**The Jeff Beck Group, *Truth*** (Epic, 1968). In truth this British blues-rock turning into hard rock was not the best work of either Beck or singer Rod Stewart, due in part to a shortage of good original material. It was extremely popular, however, especially in the US, and has been seen by some as providing part of the model for Led Zeppelin. Its tie to Rolling Stones history is that Ronnie Wood was the bassist. The only other Beck album with Stewart as singer, 1969's *Beck-Ola*, is less impressive.

**The Byrds, *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*** (Columbia, 1968). The Byrds made a sharp turn from folk-rock-psychedelia to early country-rock (still including some Bob Dylan material), largely due to the input of newcomer Gram Parsons, who was only with the band for this one album. Parsons met the Stones while the Byrds were touring in England shortly after this release; he left the Byrds right after that tour. An expanded two-CD edition includes a lot of material from the sessions that didn't make the original LP.

**Captain Beefheart & the Magic Band, *Safe As Milk*** (Buddah [sic], 1967). Since Ry Cooder’s first album did not come out until 1970, one assumes the Rolling Stones would be most likely to have heard his work as a guitarist on this record. This is by the most accessible record by Beefheart, a legendarily challenging avant-rock cult artist. Here Beefheart (real name Don Van Vliet) is more an off-kilter psychedelic blues-rocker than a defiantly inaccessible noisemaker, making weird but engaging tunes like "Abba Zabba,"
"Zig Zag Wanderer," and "Yellow Brick Road" with help from young guitar maestro Cooder.

**Creedence Clearwater Revival, Bayou Country** (Fantasy, 1969). In the few weeks between the time Brian Jones was fired and he died, he wanted to work on forming a new band. Apparently he had something like Creedence Clearwater Revival, and their hit “Proud Mary” in particular, in mind. This, their second album, has “Proud Mary” and other material (like the hit “Born on the Bayou”) that marked them as the hottest American roots-oriented band at the time Jones died, mixing updated rockabilly with some blues, country, folk, Southern R&B, and contemporary Americana lyrics.

**Bob Dylan, John Wesley Harding** (Columbia, 1967). Issued in the final days of 1967, this was the album that came to be regarded as the keystone "back-to-basics" statement turning rock music away from psychedelia and back to earthy country-rock. *Beggars Banquet*, along with the Beatles' *The White Album* and the Byrds' *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*, are often cited as major “back to basics” 1968 albums that followed in its wake. "All Along the Watchtower" is by the most famous song on what's mostly a very plaintive and stark record. His 1969 album *Nashville Skyline* would be yet more country-oriented and not nearly as good, but contains the classic hit single "Lay Lady Lay."

**The End, Introspection** (Universal, 1968). From 1965 onward, Bill Wyman wrote and produced some material for other artists, perhaps at least in part due to his lack of creative opportunities within the Rolling Stone. This obscure British psychedelic album is the most fully developed of those efforts, and more harmony pop-oriented than one might expect. A decent if not great record of slightly spaced out pop-psychedelia, it has something of a *Their Satanic Majesties Request* ambience in production, though much lighter and less menacing in feel. There is one little-known near-classic, “Loving Sacred Loving,” one of two songs here Wyman co-wrote, and unsurprisingly the one with the greatest resemblance to Wyman’s *Satanic Majesties* song “In Another Land” (in part because of the presence of Nicky Hopkins on harpsichord). Charlie Watts plays tabla on the other song Wyman co-wrote, “Shades of Orange.”
Marianne Faithfull, *Greatest Hits* (ABKCO, 1990). Other than Dusty Springfield and Lulu, Faithfull was the biggest female solo star of the British Invasion. Her wispy folk-pop, like "As Tears Go By" (written by the Rolling Stones) and "Summer Nights," dominates this compilation of her '60s work, which takes a darker turn with her late-'60s single "Sister Morphine" (released before the Rolling Stones' version, and co-written by Faithfull). By the late ‘60s her relationship with Jagger was overshadowing her musical career, which other than the “Sister Morphine” single had come to a standstill. Faithfull continued her career after the 1960s in a much earthier style and much lower voice.

Fleetwood Mac, *The Best of Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac* (Sony, 2003). Fleetwood Mac were the best of the British blues-rock bands that emerged in the late-'60s British blues room. Though the selection isn't perfect, this is the best compilation of Fleetwood Mac's early days as a blues-rock-rooted band. They were best on the achingly soulful songs written and sung by original leader (and brilliant lead guitarist) Peter Green, particularly "Oh Well" and original version of "Black Magic Woman." Green, like Mick Taylor, had previously been in John Mayall's Bluesbreakers; Taylor, in fact, replaced Green in the Bluesbreakers. Note that this music bears no resemblance to the pop-rock through which a much different lineup of Fleetwood Mac achieved superstardom in the mid-1970s.

The Jimi Hendrix Experience, *Are You Experienced?* (MCA, 1967). Though American, Hendrix didn’t start recording as a bandleader until he moved to London in late 1966, and rose to stardom in the UK before his band the Jimi Hendrix Experience first played the US at the Monterey Pop Festival in June 1967. His stunning debut album redefined the parameters of what was possible on electric guitar, incorporating feedback, sustain, fuzz, extreme volume, the works. It shouldn't be overlooked, however, that Hendrix was also a first-rate singer and songwriter who mixed sensitive and thoughtful concerns with his psychedelic musings. Includes (in its expanded CD form) the classics "Purple Haze," "Hey Joe," "The Wind Cries Mary," "Foxy Lady," and "Fire." Not an audible big influence on the Stones, who nonetheless well knew who he was since he was involved with an ex-girlfriend of Richards, made an unsuccessful pass at Marianne Faithfull, and was introduced by his
one good friend in the band (Brian Jones) at the Monterey Pop Festival.

**Robert Johnson, The Complete Recordings** (Legacy, 1990). Two-CD compilation of everything recorded (all in the mid-1930s) by the most famous pre-World War II rural blues musician. Includes the original version of “Love in Vain,” done by the Rolling Stones on *Let It Bleed* and *Get Yer Ya Ya’s Out.*

**The Kinks, Face to Face** (Universal, 1966). After the Beatles, the Kinks were one of the first rock bands to see the possibilities of albums as standalone documents with a consistency that didn't depend on the inclusion of hit singles. This was their first such statement on LP, Ray Davies flowering as a satirical songwriter with debts to British music hall (and it did include one hit, "Sunny Afternoon"). Though not explicitly acknowledged by the Stones, it certainly seems like Kinks recordings from this era must have been an influence on the more whimsical and vaudevillian tracks on *Between the Buttons.* A 2001 two-CD deluxe edition has mono/stereo versions and extra tracks.

**Alexis Korner, Both Sides** (Castle, 1970). After Brian Jones was fired from the Rolling Stones, he had plans to form a band with help from Alexis Korner. Who knows what they might have sounded like, but this record at least gives an idea of what Korner was up to around the time. There’s an almost manic stylistic diversity that ran from near-trad jazz and blues to near-blues-rock; a top-notch cast of supporting musicians; and seriously inconsistent quality, in large part because of Korner's hoarse lead vocals. This also has some nods to soul and heavy rock music along with the blues and jazz that were at his musical core, making substantial use of a horn section within a loosely blues-oriented format. Still, it must be acknowledged that the material was both erratic and wildly eclectic in nature. Korner came off best on the gentle folk-blues of his self-penned "To Whom It May Concern" and an interpretation of William Bell’s "You Don't Miss Your Water (Til Your Well Runs Dry)" that, while again no match for other versions, is heartfelt and doesn't over-reach itself. The 2006 CD reissue of the album added historical liner notes by Korner biographer Harry Shapiro and nine bonus tracks from 1969 studio and BBC sessions.
The Master Musicians of Joujouka, *Brian Jones Presents the Pipes of Pan at Joujouka* (Rolling Stones Records, 1971). In July 1968, Brian Jones produced this recording of trance-like Moroccan music in the Moroccan town of Joujouka. Unlike anything the Stones did with or without Jones, it is indicative of his wide-ranging interests, and perhaps of an influence he might have exerted on the band had he lived longer and/or had stronger input into their direction.

John Mayall, *Blues from Laurel Canyon* (Decca, 1968). The final album Taylor did with Mayall before joining the Rolling Stones, more noted for an indication of his style than for the rather average material and vocals. Some good non-album tracks Taylor did with Mayall show up on numerous compilations, like the searing instrumental “Knockers Step Forward.”

The Rising Sons, *Rising Sons Featuring Taj Mahal and Ry Cooder* (Columbia/Legacy, 1992). The Rolling Stones wouldn’t have heard this in the 1960s, since the Rising Sons only put out one official single while they were in existence in the mid-1960s. But as Ry Cooder and Taj Mahal were both in the band, it gives an indication of what might have made the Stones view them as kindred blues-rock spirits, Cooder playing on some late-’60s sessions and Taj Mahal getting invited to appear on *The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus*. The Rising Sons’ legacy is thankfully retrieved by this 22-track CD, which includes their single and much or all of what would have been on their unreleased album. It’s good if slightly schizophrenic folk-blues-pop-rock, somewhat ahead of its time in its anticipation of aspects of groups such as Moby Grape and Buffalo Springfield.

Traffic, *Mr. Fantasy* (Island, 1967). Like some other early British psychedelic bands, Traffic combined blues, soul, jazz, and rock, giving more weight to keyboards (by Stevie Winwood) than the usual rock group. They were lighter on the classical than Procol Harum or the Nice, however, and more inclined toward soul, particularly in Winwood's vocals. Their debut has plenty of strong songs with the kind of spacey lyrics in vogue in 1967 psychedelic rock, such as "Dear Mr. Fantasy," "Heaven Is in Your Mind," and
"Coloured Rain." In the Rolling Stones story, this is important for including Jimmy Miller’s most notable production work before he started to produce the Rolling Stones. There are several expanded CD editions of this debut, but make sure to get one that has their two psychedelic pre-album singles, "Paper Sun" and "Hole in My Shoe."

The Velvet Underground, *The Velvet Underground and Nico* (Universal, 1967). Though sometimes characterized as anti-hippie/flower power, this debut album was certainly extremely experimental in both sound (blending rock with the avant-garde and fierce electronic distortions) and lyrics (with frank songs about sex, drugs, and street life). For all that, chief singer-songwriter Lou Reed could write some very pretty and melodic love songs, like "Femme Fatale" and "I'll Be Your Mirror." This is probably the most influential and popular (if that's not an oxymoron) cult album of all time, gaining untold number of additional fans with each passing decade. Mick Jagger definitely heard it, since he cited the Velvet Underground’s “Heroin” as an influence on the droning guitars of “Stray Cat Blues.”

Robert Wilkins, *Original Rolling Stone* (Yazoo, 1990). Though much less well known than Robert Johnson, Robert Wilkins was another Mississippi bluesman who recorded during the Depression. The Rolling Stones did his song “That’s No Way to Get Along” as “Prodigal Son” on *Beggars Banquet*; it can also be seen and heard on the expanded edition of *Get Yer Ya Ya’s Out*. This has most of the recordings he made between the late 1920s and mid-1930s, including the two-part “Rolling Stone,” though the band named themselves after the Muddy Waters song called “Rollin’ Stone,” not this one.

Johnny Winter, *Johnny Winter* (Columbia, 1969). The Texas blues-rock singer-guitarist’s first album for a big label was heavily hyped, in part because of the huge advance he got for signing a contract. It merits a mention here because the opening track, “I’m Yours and I’m Hers,” was the unexpected opening song at the Rolling Stones’ concert at Hyde Park on July 5, 1969. The story goes it was chosen because it was a special favorite of Brian Jones, who had died a couple of days before. If so, Jones couldn’t have listened to it
for long; the album was only out for three months or so before Jones died.

**Various Artists, Blues Masters Vol. 8: Mississippi Delta Blues** (Rhino, 1993). No single blues compilation, or likely even any large blues collection, could fully encompass the blues Keith Richards reportedly immersed himself in as the Rolling Stones prepared to go back into rootsier music on *Beggars Banquet*. This is a good collection of the earthiest strain of blues, however, and Richards is likely to have heard most or all of these songs. The accent is on pre-World War II acoustic rural blues by major figures in the style like Robert Johnson, Tommy Johnson, Charley Patton, and Son House, though there are more modern electric blues sides that evolved out of the area by the likes of Muddy Waters, Howlin’ Wolf, Sonny Boy Williamson, Elmore James, and B.B. King.