

All You Need Is Ears Study Guide

All You Need Is Ears by George Martin

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



Contents

All You Need Is Ears Study Guide.....	1
Contents.....	2
Plot Summary.....	3
Chapters 1-3.....	4
Chapters 4-7.....	8
Chapters 8-11.....	13
Chapters 12-15.....	16
Characters.....	17
Objects/Places.....	20
Themes.....	23
Style.....	25
Quotes.....	27
Topics for Discussion.....	28

Plot Summary

"All You Need is Ears" by George Martin is a fascinating look at the world of legendary British record producer George Martin. Martin is probably best known for being "The Fifth Beatle," the one who produced The Beatles' earliest records and gave them much needed direction as well as a chance at signing with a major record label.

Martin is a humorous and humble man, relaying tales beginning with his childhood and through to the late-1970s, long after he and The Beatles had parted ways. The book is not entirely about The Beatles by any means. Instead, it starts with Martin's love for music and interest in learning the piano. Martin learned that it was possible to make a living writing and playing music. A big push came in the form of Sidney Harrison, a professor at the Guildhall School of Music. At the school, Martin continued to learn the art of classical music and piano and also took up the oboe.

After school, Martin knew that he had to get a day job. While working at the BBC Music Library, Martin received a call from Oscar Preuss, head of EMI's Parlophone records.

Martin worked at Parlophone for 14 years, starting as Preuss' assistant and ending up as the president of the company. Along the way, Martin was seen as a maverick that would do just about anything the executives would permit. Martin made a name for himself making comedy records and constantly looking for new acts.

It was Brian Epstein that introduced Martin to The Beatles. Their working relationship is legendary. Martin talks a lot about those days but focuses mostly on the technical side of the business. Martin gives detailed explanations of how the music was recorded and what methods were employed. The evolution of the processes over the years is amazing and Martin never seems to lose his enthusiasm for the music or the industry.

Fed up with EMI, Martin took the staff from the Parlophone's main department and formed a new company, Associate Independent Recording (AIR). Martin left it up to Epstein if he wanted the group to stick with EMI or come over to the new company. Either way, there would not be hard feelings. The Beatles stuck with EMI for a time but it was arranged that Martin would still produce their work.

Martin's relationship with The Beatles finally came to an end but with no animosity on either side. Martin went on to continue to work with various artists as well as in films.

Martin continues to be intrigued by the recording industry and all it has to offer while realizing that it may be time to let the next generation take over.



Chapters 1-3

Chapters 1-3 Summary and Analysis

Chapter one, "Classical Primer" begins with George Martin being awakened in a Paris hotel room. The person on the other end of the line is Brian Epstein. Brian has just returned from spending the evening with the Beatles and the group has been celebrating the success of "I Want to Hold Your Hand" because it hit number one in America. The success was hard won as American was the biggest and most difficult market in the world to crack. The Beatles had done it.

Martin was in Paris because the Beatles were preparing to make their French debut. In addition to performing at the Paris Olympia, the Beatles were also going to record in EMI's Paris studios. The year was 1964 and the Beatles were breaking all over the world.

The Beatles were big in Germany already and Martin was faced with the task of convincing John Lennon and Paul McCartney to record a German version of "She Loves You" and "I Want to Hold Your Hand."

Martin waited at the studio and although he expected the boys to be late, the producer was furious when no one showed up at all. Martin called the Paris hotel and ended up speaking to Neil Aspinwall, the tour manager. Martin alerted Aspinwall that he was on his way to the hotel and it was not going to be pleasant.

Martin went to the Hotel Georges Cinq to confront Paul, John, George, Ringo, Neil, and Neil's assistant, Malcolm. George ranted and raved but could not stay mad at the boys. It turned out that The Beatles were right in the end: recording in German was not a great idea.

Martin recalls his first experience with a piano at age six. In those days, the piano was the central gathering place for families. In the Martin family it was common to find the family gathered around the piano, particularly on holidays. George's grandmother had a piano in her home in Holloway, London. The grandmother would read poetry, the uncles would play tunes, and the children were expected to sing, dance or play the piano. George's talent became the piano.

George Martin was born in 1926, shortly before the start of the Great Depression. The Martin family lived in a two room flat with no electricity. There only water supply was a sink on the landing, also the site at which George's mother was forced to cook as there was no kitchen in the flat. There was also no bathroom and the children took their baths in tin tubs.

George was the apple of his mother's eye. At age five, George was sent to a convent school where his sister was being educated. Throughout Martin's career there would be a number of schools, including various elementary schools. Although George had only



had eight piano lessons before his mother got into a row with the piano teacher, George doggedly pursued his love of music and the piano. In school, George began to showcase what he could do and began to teach himself difficult pieces, such as compositions by Chopin, entirely by ear.

George's life was divided between music and a dramatic group called The Quavers. Martin also started a band known as George Martin and the Four Tune Tellers.

School soon came to an end and Martin was faced with the decision of a career. The young man considered various fields, from architecture to air craft design, but ended up working for a surveyor, a job that bored the author to death. Martin went to work in the War Office and eventually joined the Fleet Air Arm, a decision that did not please his family.

Martin enjoyed a successful career but never gave up on the music. In fact, it was through this enlistment that Martin landed his first spot on the BBC. During this time, Martin also attempted to improve on his talents by teaching himself to read music so that he could write in a proficient manner. It was not an easy task.

While Martin struggled with improving his skills, the amateur musician tried to make opportunities to expose himself to the craft. This effort led him to meet Eric Harrison, a pianist, who would introduce Martin to Sidney Harrison, a man Martin refers to as his fairy godfather.

Sidney Harrison was the Professor of Piano at the Guildhall School of Music in London. Eric Harrison convinced George to send a composition to Sidney to get an opinion. Martin did so, expecting little in return. The submission led to many years of correspondence, through which Harrison encouraged Martin to take up music as a profession.

After Martin's military stint was up, he decided that it was time to meet Sidney Harrison face to face. Harrison continued to try and convince Martin to turn music into a profession. After much talk, Harrison invited Martin to perform his compositions for the dean of Guildhall. Harrison said that if the dean liked the compositions as much as he did, then Martin would be enrolled at the school.

Martin took a job while he waited for school to start. In the meantime, Martin lived at home with his parents although the relationship with his mother had become strained. Mrs. Martin vehemently objected to George's girlfriend, Sheena, a fact which only made George want Sheena more. The relationship between George and his mother became so awful that he moved out of the house. The relationship never healed. Three weeks after George and Sheena were married, Mrs. Martin died of a cerebral hemorrhage. Martin admits that he probably would not have married Sheena except that it was a form of rebellion.

Martin graduated from Guildhall after three years. Although the piano was Martin's main instrument, he was also required to play a second instrument. Martin chose the oboe. After graduating, Martin tried to make it as a freelance oboe player but could not make



enough money to survive. Martin says this is due in part to the fact that he wasn't very good.

Forced to take a day job, Martin ended up sorting scores at the BBC Music Library. After only a few months, Martin received a letter from Oscar Preuss at EMI, asking if Martin would like a job at Abbey Road.

Chapter two, "Palates and Palettes," details Martin's overall opinion about music. Martin's first real love when it came to music was a piece by Debussy titled "L'Après-midi d'une faune." Martin was fifteen the first time he heard the piece and immediately found a copy of the score so he could learn how it was put together. Even now, after having gained significant knowledge of the technical side of music, Martin is still enthralled with the piece, calling it "the most magical, wonderful piece of music."

In Martin's eyes, music is something that can be painted. Classical music remains Martin's first love and he is often confronted with those who question his choices of venturing into the realm of pop music, as if it is a step down. Martin insists that it is not. After all, Schubert and Beethoven both wrote for the masses, something which might be considered pop music by the standards of their times.

Those who choose to write classical music are often faced with creating a new sound lest they be categorized by the style they emulate.

Martin found pop music to be more reward in some sense than recording classical music. In today's times, playing classical music live is almost never cost effective due to the size of the orchestra often required. On the other hand, pop music is easier to perform and also requires orchestration and arranging in the studio. Martin asserts that those things are difficult to teach. Martin had his own issues with those things while at Guildhall but overcame them with time.

Martin goes on to explain some of the techniques and purpose of the recording skills.

Chapter Three, "Abbey Road," begins with Martin relaying the tale of his first meeting with Oscar Preuss at Abbey Road. Martin was befuddled when he was invited to apply for a job at Abbey Road. It wasn't long before Martin learned that his fairy godfather, Sidney Harrison, was at it again. Preuss had been looking for an assistant for quite some time and asked a colleague if he knew of anyone that might be suitable. The colleague was a friend of Sidney Harrison, who in turn, recommended Martin.

Oscar Preuss was officially the head of Parlophone, one of EMI's labels. Martin talks a bit about the structure of EMI, how its labels correlated and how some of them were diminished and/or decimated during World War II or shortly thereafter.

Martin's job at Parlophone was to oversee the classic music end of the business. As a classical musician, Martin was perfect for the job. Martin has many interesting anecdotes about his time at Parlophone, including run-ins with the eccentric Dr. Karl Haas, EMI chairman Sir Ernest Fisk, and his experience in the London Baroque Society.



Martin claims that his experience at Abbey Road was invaluable in many ways, teaching him that in addition to having the technical abilities required to make recordings, one must also have diplomatic skills and tact, things which Martin often lacked.

Martin also discusses how important the talent was in 1954. There were far fewer singer/songwriters and musicians than there are today. Additionally, many of the musicians were not songwriters and vice versa. The separation caused a great deal of scheduling, organization, and work on behalf of the publishers, recording executives, and engineers.

As time went on, Martin became less than enamored with EMI. The company was not going in a direction Martin felt was wise for the business. Martin was doing the lion's share of the work, as well, but not getting paid nearly enough. Martin approached the powers that be to tell them that he had accepted another position. The plan was not to get EMI to match the offer but the executives made an attempt and Martin stayed.

Not long after, Oscar finally decided to retire and Martin was named as the new head of Parlophone.



Chapters 4-7

Chapters 4-7 Summary and Analysis

Chapter four, "All You Need is Ears," begins with a discussion on architecture. Martin has a fascination with architecture that he can easily relate to music. The comparison is particularly effective when Martin speaks about the evolution of both.

Martin is a student of classical music, not only in the sense of appreciating the music and being able to play it but rather, how the music was constructed and how it is relevant to today. Many people think that classical music is dead and that the techniques and methods once employed are no longer valid. This is untrue. Martin shows how those techniques could be used as building blocks to create new sounds, techniques and forms of music. This is where Martin is particularly effective in his recording abilities.

According to Martin, no voice is every completely in tune. There are variations in pitch and tone that may make the voice miss the mark on occasion, unlike a synthesizer or other well tuned instrument. As a producer, Martin often found that there were many singers that were very specific about the way they wanted to sound, even if being slightly off pitch sounded better, given the orchestration. Acoustics also play a large part in the recording process as do directional microphones and amplifiers.

Another strong point made by Martin is the fact that no matter what one's training, "All you need is ears." A common mistake made by producers and musicians alike is that they do not always protect their ears and in the end, suffer a great deal of damage. Damage to the ear is often long in coming but is usually permanent and sneaks up when one least expects it.

Chapter five, "Comic Cuts," begins with Oscar Preuss' retirement. It was assumed by most that Martin would take over as the new head of Parlophone but no one actually said anything until Preuss' retirement dinner. It made sense to put Martin at the helm since he was already doing all the work. At the time, Aside from Martin, the staff mainly consisted of three people: his secretary Judy; Alan Tulloch, Oscar's son-in-law, the promotional man; and Shirley Spence, Judy's assistant.

Once Martin took over the record label, Judy offered to resign, because she was worried about being part of the package. Martin, knowing how valuable Judy was to the organization would not allow it.

During this time, there are a lot of changes in Martin's life, from a binding a house to dealing with moving the business out of Abbey Road.

Martin talks about the dissolution of contracts between EMI, American Columbia, and HMV. Additionally HMV lost their contract with RCA Victor. Now the VMI staff left. However, the loss of revenue was enormous. To combat the loss, Sir Joseph Lockwood,



decided to buy an American label. Lockwood ended up buying Capitol records, including therapists of artists including Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, Stan Kenton, and Peggy Lee.

Meanwhile Martin continued to look for new talent and to try new things in the recording studio. One of Martin's first lives or recordings was at the drop of a hat with Donald Swann and Michael Flanders.

Martin speaks of his meetings with Dudley Moore and Peter Sellers. Martin and sellers ended up working together on many projects. According to Martin working with Sellers was a great deal of fun. Because the work was done in the studio, it was perfectly fine for Martin and sellers to collapse into fits of giggles. Martin also speaks of his various projects with Spike Milligan. The group was often involved in mad humor.

Warned that needed to be innovative, I came to sound effects, since there were no available tapes in studio. As a solution, Martin often contacted, the chief sound effects man at the BBC, who would often moonlight for Martin. It wasn't until the late-1960s that sound effects, tapes were usable. In today's world, sound effects are available for virtually everything.

During those early days in the recording studio, Martin and the artists often imbibed in Scotch and other drink. While taking a nip often loosened up nervous musicians, it also caused some problems when Martin was required to deliver bad news regarding royalties to Mr. Roberts, director of the Scottish Festival of Male Voice Praise, a very religious choir. Fortunately for Martin, the group, who was not one of EMI's larger clients in the producer quickly learned his lesson.

Chapter 6, "Two Heads Are Better Than One," details the duties of a producer. According to Martin, a producer was more or less an organizer, making decisions about what songs should be put on a record and taking on the job of advising the artists on their performances. The role of a producer today is much different than it was when Martin first walked into Abbey Road Studios in 1950. Martin tells stories of working with the engineers including the original recording process as well as the editing work. Once again Martin discusses the importance of controlling the microphones and how it is the placement of the microphones that makes the most difference when transmitting a frequency from the instrument and voice. Martin also discusses how to incorporate more than one sound into a record and the manner by which that is achieved. Also important is the level of sound, volume, and position. With the advent of stereo recording the producer now had new tools with which to create more tracks, remixes, and develop a better end product.

Chapter seven, "Hard Days and Nights," details Martin's first meeting with The Beatles. It was in 1962 that Sid Coleman called George Martin regarding a potential new group. The group was without a recording contract and Coleman asked Martin if he would be willing to see them. The group's manager, Brian Epstein, had made the contact. Up until this time, Martin was having moderate success with his comedy records, the thing that was putting Parlophone on the map. However, Martin was anxious to have a pop act on the label.



Brian Epstein went to Martin's office and right away the producer was impressed with the young manager. Martin was unaware at the time that Decca had already turned down The Beatles and this meeting was Epstein's "final, desperate attempt" to garner interest in this new group. Martin also found out that other record labels had turned Epstein down, including EMI.

Epstein started out by giving Martin a big pitch about a fabulous new group from Liverpool. According to Epstein, "everybody up there thought they were the bee's knees." Martin was skeptical that any kind of major talent could come out of any of the provinces but was willing to listen to the tapes Epstein brought with him. Martin admits that he wasn't completely blown away over the demo tapes from The Beatles. Instead, he recognized a rough sort of talent and was willing to give them a try. Martin told Epstein that he wanted to meet the boys.

John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Pete Best, along with Brian Epstein met George Martin at Abbey Road's number three studio. Martin recalls that it was "love at first sight." Martin was impressed by their appearance, which was created by Epstein. Most of all, Martin was taken by the engaging personalities of the group. Martin reflects that the group must have seen him as a fairly famous producer at the time. The Beatles were big fans of Peter Sellers' comedy and knew of Martin's other accomplishments. Martin says George Harrison was the most talkative person at the first meeting while Pete Best did not speak a word through the entire afternoon.

After hearing the band play Martin thought that it could be a good match although he was not pleased with Pete Best's drumming skills. Martin told Epstein that if he were to record the group, he would want to supply his own drummer. Martin was unaware that John, Paul and George wanted to kick Pete Best out of the group and replace him with Ringo Starr. Martin's remarks only encouraged the split.

The original contract with The Beatles would last for a year, during which Martin would record four titles. The contract also included possible options as well as a one penny per record sold royalty. At the time, one penny was a great deal.

Martin laments that at the time there seemed to be no obvious leader of the group. The boys tended to speak all at once, or even in turn, and Martin couldn't help but wonder which one would emerge as the frontman.

Martin talks about his first trip to the Cavern Club. The club was jammed full of teenagers, and there was no place for anyone to dance. Martin and Judy survived the evening, even though the club was cramped and loud. Martin talks about the fact that club was so hot that sweat condensed on the walls and it was a miracle that the boys were electrocuted from all the water.

On September 11, 1962, The Beatles gathered to record their first record. Martin felt it was important to get the group involved in the process from the beginning. This first meeting offered up Martin's first experience with The Beatles' wise-guy humor.



There was a bit of an issue the first time Ringo Starr came into the recording studio. Martin had already arranged for a session drummer and was unwilling to allow Ringo to sit in on the first recording. Ringo was very upset and understandably so. Martin makes it a point to say that he did not intend to offend Ringo but that time was valuable, and he was unwilling to break in a new drummer at that point. Ringo did play on the second song, and in the end, it was Ringo's contributions that ended up being released. Martin was pleased to find out that Ringo was more than he expected. Although Ringo is not the technical drummer he has a good solid technique and offers up individuality.

Martin's success with comedy records came back to bite him when he attempted to plug "Love Me Do." Everyone in the industry was expecting Martin to put out other comedy record and the producer had to work hard to convince the powers that be that this was a serious contribution.

Despite all the pushing done by Martin and Epstein, the record only hit number 17 on the charts. Brian was unhappy about the promotional efforts of EMI and began looking for an American counterpart. Epstein had definite ideas of the type of companies he was interested in, but Martin quickly advised him to look for someone who was hungry. Martin suggested that Epstein approach Dick James, a publisher who had recently started his own label. James immediately took on The Beatles.

Dick James was appreciative to Martin for the contact and offered the producer a share in his new company, Dick James Music. Martin turned down the offer because it seemed an ethical considering that he was under contract to EMI. It also seemed unwise to split his interests. Martin reflects that the decision cost him millions of pounds, although it was the right decision to make.

There was a conflict early on with The Beatles wanting to record nothing but their own music, and eventually Martin and The Beatles had to come to an agreement. About this time, the songwriting team of Lennon and McCartney started to emerge. Martin states that it wasn't the same type of collaboration presented by Rodgers and Hart, rather it was one asking the other for advice if he got stuck on a particular song. The group would play their songs for Martin, who would offer suggestions on ways to improve.

Martin details the recordings of several of the early songs. Epstein began introducing other acts to Martin, including Gerry and the Pacemakers, Billy J. Kramer and the Dakotas, and Cilla Black.

Epstein made his first trip to America with the idea of getting people interested in his list of artists. Epstein returned with a song written by an undiscovered Burt Bacharach. Martin was thrilled.

It was about this time that the recording schedules for Epstein's groups caused many sleepless nights. Epstein continued to bring groups to Martin's attention and although Martin advised Epstein take them on, the producer said that he simply did not have time to record them himself. Epstein would have to take over.



Over the years, Martin has often been asked if he could have written Beatles tunes. Martin says that he could not, as he lacked the group's simple approach to their music. Martin asserts that Paul was the most proficient musician and seemed to act as a sponge when it came to learning the actual trade. It wasn't long before Paul started taking piano lessons and Martin began teaching himself to play the guitar. The fact that The Beatles did not have much formal training in music caused some slight problems when it came to transcribing music for other insurance. Fortunately, Martin had a great deal of experience and was able to explain and work in new techniques of orchestration.

Martin points out that there have been a great number of musicians who could not write pop tunes to save their lives. There are also songwriters who are unable to play instruments. One of the best examples is Irving Berlin, the famous composer, who couldn't read music and only played the piano in G flat. Despite their shortcomings, Martin asserts that The Beatles were genius in their writing and performing and before long, fans began lining up outside Abbey Road to catch a glimpse of the future superstars.

Chapters 8-11

Chapters 8-11 Summary and Analysis

Chapter eight, "Layering the Cake," is about Martin's experiences in learning how to use various techniques to layer sound in the studio. Martin refers to it as painting sound pictures in which an artist or producer is able to extract an infinite number of colors. The ability to use those colors effectively is what creates a good piece of music. It is because of The Beatles' use of color in sound that Martin enjoyed working with them so much. Martin was always a bit of a maverick in the studio but often did not get to produce and record as many things as he would have liked. After The Beatles came along and began churning out gold records, Martin was free to do just about anything he wanted, with the full back up of EMI.

Martin goes on to explain the process of layering vocals and instruments, a process that was still relatively new to the industry. The ability to do this created a new avenue for recording and being able to adjust the volume individually. Martin also enjoyed using a compressor, a new toy that allowed the producer to quiet down the loudest sound and enhance the quietest sound to achieve balance as well as a rich sound.

The invention of new toys for the studio meant that Martin was always trying to get EMI to upgrade, a request that fell on deaf ears.

Martin made his first trip to America in 1958 to accompany Ron Goodwin on a promotional tour. Martin was also eager to see what the American studios were doing. By the time Martin returned to England, he was full of enthusiasm about the technology being used in the States. Unfortunately, the producer would have to wait five years before EMI upgraded. Even after the switch to a four track, Martin craved more and more. In the end, much of The Beatles music was recorded on two and four track, including the legendary and extremely complex Sergeant Pepper.

Chapter nine, "America Falls," details the arrival of The Beatles in America and the processes Martin and Epstein had to employ to get there. At the time, American records carried all the weight and Martin and Epstein both knew that it was imperative to break The Beatles in the U.S. Unfortunately, EMI's newly acquired label, Capitol Records, was not interested in The Beatles. It took two other record companies and four tries before the executives at Capitol would even consider taking on one of the group's records.

The Beatles finally arrived in America in 1964. It was clear that the group already had a defining presence in New York. There were people walking down the streets wearing Beatle wigs and there was a general atmosphere of hysteria. Martin asserts that the hysteria was not only due to the music, but to the general charisma of John, Paul, George, and Ringo.



A strange thing happened when Martin arrived in New York. Alan Livingston, head of Capitol Records, took over the show. Livingston made a point to keep Martin away from press conferences and away from the limelight in general. Martin was shocked when Livingston began to refer to The Beatles as Capitol recording artists. It was clear that Livingston was attempting to save face from the fact that he had turned down the group 3 separate times.

A tour of the U.S. got to the point where The Beatles were being forced to create diversions in order to get in the out of their hotel rooms. The boys began to develop code words in order to prevent being swamped in public.

Martin addresses John Lennon's famous quote about being more popular than Jesus. Martin states that the entire event was blown out of proportion and factually speaking, Lennon was correct. There were far many more people listening to Beatles records than there were going to church. Lennon never intended to say that The Beatles were more important than Jesus Christ. However, that is how the remark was interpreted. A lot of ugly backlash ensued.

Although records were literally flying off the shelves, Martin asserts that no one was getting rich. It was a popular misconception that Martin was wealthy due in part to the success of The Beatles. Martin laments the lack of appreciation and gratitude. It was clear that The Beatles appreciated Martin, but were simply not the type to vocalize their gratitude. Martin states that he did not expect open gratitude from the group and their general behavior of not giving a damn about anyone was part of the reason Martin liked them from the beginning.

Martin speaks of Brian Epstein's contributions and his death. Epstein had become addicted to amphetamines, after many late nights in the studio and to counteract his chronic insomnia. Epstein died of an accidental overdose. He was only 32 years old. Martin believes that if Brian had lived life would not have been easy. It seemed that the relationship between Epstein and The Beatles would soon come to an end. It is not clear if Epstein was aware of this.

Chapter 10 "Calling My Own Tune," begins with the quote, "Frustration has many fathers, but few children, among them the bitterness, anger and resentment."

Martin became disgruntled with EMI, due to the fact that he was making only 2,700 pounds a year. Martin began to crave more, not only in cash, but profit sharing and participation. In 1962, EMI offered Martin another contract with a salary of 3,000 pounds a year. Martin raised the proposition of earning a commission, but EMI was not interested in the pitch. Martin threatened to leave and EMI told him to go. Martin decided to stay because he could afford to be out of a job. The final straw came when Martin was denied the traditional Christmas bonus because he was making over 3,000 pounds a year. In the middle of 1964, Martin informed EMI executives that he was leaving the company. Martin met with one of the executives who offered him a commission against the department's overhead. It turned out to be that Martin would



owe the company money. The entire scheme was quite mean, and Martin knew that he had to leave.

Martin and Ron Richards took the staff from the department and started a new business, Associate Independent Recording (AIR). Martin left it up to Epstein whether he wanted to stay with EMI or switch to AIR. EMI approached Martin about continuing to produce The Beatles. Martin agreed if AIR could be paid upon a royalty basis and remain separate.

Martin discusses the ups and downs of operating AIR. There were issues with paying for the copyrights and there was the fact that none of the owners had any money. The execs at AIR forced to make a deal, which may have cheated them out of some royalties, but still allowed them to have their freedom.

Over the years, the relationship between EMI and AIR had been less than cordial. The relationship still suffered even though Martin and The Beatles made many significant records for the company. In 1967, the group recorded what is often referred to as the most influential record in pop history - Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.

Chapter 11, "A Dash of Pepper," assesses the experimental record, "Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band." According to Martin by the end of 1966, The Beatles had "an enormous string of hits," and it allowed them and Martin to do anything they wanted. The Beatles had been successful with creating a new sense of style for themselves. It was the era of the hippie and Flower Power, and Martin states that he was quite naïve as he was so involved with the recording that he didn't realize the boys were smoking pot.

Martin talks about the concept and recording of Sergeant Pepper. There were obviously changes in The Beatles interests and Martin respected their ability and willingness to try new things. Martin addresses the misconception that the song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds" was about LSD. The story goes that John's son Julian brought home a picture from school one day off a little girl floating in a black sky that was filled with stars. Julian's best friend had named the girl Lucy and Julian stated that the girl was Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds. The rest came from John's imagination. Martin plays that he always thought of John as and aural Salvador Dali when it came to music.

It wasn't until later that Martin discovered that The Beatles were doing a lot of drugs. It had purposely been kept from Martin for quite some time because he did not approve.

Martin goes on to talk about each of the songs on the album, how they were created, and the way each was received.



Chapters 12-15

Chapters 12-15 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 12, "Write in the Picture," detailed Martin's foray into creating music for the movies. Martin's first picture was "Take Me Over," a small budget, B-movie which starred the Temperance Seven. Although Martin was excited about the experience the group, fell far short of being musically proficient. Martin's second film was called "Calculated Risk." These experiences in writing for the movies helped him when The Beatles shot "A Hard Day's Night." That movie was the most successful out of all the films the group produced.

Martin goes on to discuss other movies with and without the Beatles and how the process worked in regards to film and an orchestra.

In chapter 13, "The Recording Angel," Martin commented that there is "no typical day in the life of a record producer." Over the years many people have asked Martin what his secret is for being a successful producer. Martin says that he has learned much from doing so many different things and unfortunately he does not have a simple answer. Martin often tells people that what works for one may not work for another. In the producer's words, "There is no magic formula."

Martin discusses the difficulty in being a record producer and is amazed that so many people want the job.

Chapter 14, "Building on AIR," talks about the early years of the business and how it was difficult to find studio space. Eventually, AIR got the idea to build their own studio rather than attempting to higher out existing facilities. Martin discusses the trials and tribulations with building a studio on a budget.

Due to an economic crisis in England, AIR began looking for an additional place to house an updated studio. The islands seem to hold great appeal to everyone, but Hawaii was too far away and the Caribbean was considered to be politically unstable. Finally Martin discovered the British colony of Montserrat. The group ended up building a super studio on a 30-acre farm. Clients can live in nearby villas, making it an ultimate site for Martin. The only problem is that the studio is constantly in demand.

Chapter 15, "Tomorrow Never Knows," discusses the future of the recording industry. Martin says he cannot begin to predict what will come in the way of technology in the recording industry. At the time the book was written, digital recording was being used, but was still expensive and crude. Martin goes on to explain the process and how it compares to recording techniques when the producer for started working at EMI.

Regardless of what happens, Martin looks forward to seeing what the future has to offer.



Characters

George Martin

George Martin (1926 -) is a British record producer and classical musician. Born in London, Martin was unusual in that he was born with a gift of music, a gift that belonged to no one else in his family. George took to the piano at a young age and proceeded to teach himself how to play a variety of compositions, most of which were classical in nature. Even at a young age, George was taken by classical music.

George began to seriously study music as a teenager. After school, George joined the Fleet Air Arm and managed to keep up with his musical interests. After his stint in the military, George went to work at the BBC's music library where he sorted musical scores.

Martin met Sidney Harrison when he sent some musical compositions to the professor for review. Martin and Harrison became friends and Harrison was instrumental in getting Martin into Guildhall School of Music on a scholarship. It was also Harrison that landed Martin a position at Parlophone/EMI.

Martin worked his way up through the ranks making recordings of classical music. After the retirement of Oscar Preuss, Martin took over as the head of EMI and used the opportunity to take the company in a new direction.

Martin is best known for his work with The Beatles. Often referred to as "The Fifth Beatle," Martin was instrumental in recording, and sometimes playing on, the Fab Fours records. Martin is credited with harnessing the talent of the group and playing a large part in creating the dynasty.

Martin is also known for founding the Associated Independent Recording Studios, of which he serves as Chairman of the Board. Martin, knighted in 1996, is officially retired.

Brian Epstein

Brian Epstein (1934-1967) was a well known English music entrepreneur. Epstein came by his musical intuition naturally as his family owned North End Music Stores (NEMS). Epstein is best known for his role as the manager of The Beatles although he managed the careers of other '60s hit makers including Gerry and the Pacemakers.

Epstein "discovered" the Beatles and worked hard to get the group an audience with record producer George Martin, head of Parlophone Records, a label under EMI. This was an especially daunting task since almost every record label in Britain had rejected the Beatles. Epstein had paid for a recording session at Decca but the management was not interested in the group. After Martin heard the band, he offered them a contract with Parlophone.



Epstein was known for his role at NEMS and also wrote a music column for Mersey Beat, one of the first magazines to feature the Beatles. Although Epstein had no prior experience as a manager, he did have very strong ideas about how a band should appear on stage and also had opinions on the groups' conduct.

Epstein went on to become an integral part of the Beatles, referred to by Paul McCartney as the "Fifth Beatle," a title often given to George Martin.

All night sessions and insomnia led Epstein to develop a drug habit, with the main drug being amphetamines. Although Epstein sought treatment, he died of an accidental overdose in 1967. Epstein was 32 years old.

Judy Martin

Judy Martin - George Martin's second wife.

Paul McCartney

Paul McCartney - British singer/songwriter and founding member of The Beatles.

John Lennon

John Lennon - British singer/songwriter and founding member of The Beatles.

Ringo Starr

Ringo Starr - British singer/songwriter and drummer for The Beatles.

George Harrison

George Harrison - British singer/songwriter and founding member of The Beatles.

Pete Best

Pete Best - The original drummer for the Beatles, replaced by Ringo Starr.

Frank Sinatra

Frank Sinatra - Iconic American singer, highly popular in the 1940s, '50s and '60s.



Oscar Preuss

Oscar Preuss - Head of Parlophone Records, responsible for giving George Martin his first job at a record label.

Neil Aspinwall

Neil Aspinwall - Served as the Tour Manager for The Beatles.

Objects/Places

London

London is the main setting used in "All You Need is Ears" by George Martin. This includes some of the surrounding areas although London is the hub.

The story begins in the late-1920s when George Martin was born. The conditions of the Martin home were sparse and the family had to make due with very little. At the time, this seemed normal, however and the family adjusted.

London was considered to be primarily a working class city, aside from those that work in Parliament or with the royal family.

London is a city in which one may have to travel to get to school. This was the case for George Martin who went to several different schools. Martin joined the military and returned to work at the BBC, an iconic media presence in London and the world.

Martin also attended the Guildhall School of Music where he would learn how to read music and play the piano properly as well as learning to play the oboe.

Martin eventually wound up at Abbey Road Studios, home to Parlophone, one of EMI's labels. It was at EMI that Martin would hone his skills to become one of the most respected and revered music producers that ever lived.

EMI

Electrical and Musical Industries (EMI) is a well known and prestigious recording company that operates world wide. It was at a division of EMI that George Martin honed his craft as a record producer and recording industry heavyweight.

When Martin first went to EMI, it was to work as an assistant to Oscar Preuss, who was at the time, the director of the EMI subsidiary, Parlophone. Martin was thrilled and terrified to have a job that was so demanding and technical although he quickly took to the job.

Although Martin worked as Preuss' assistant, it wasn't long before he was doing the lion's share of the work. After Preuss retired, Martin became the head of the division, allowing him to finally make the much needed changes that had not been ordered by EMI.

Over the years, Martin and EMI butted heads on many subjects. The disagreement about money and commission caused Martin to leave EMI to form his own company, AIR. The two companies worked together on various projects even after Martin split but the working relationship was never congenial.



It was at EMI that The Beatles recorded their work under the influence of Martin.

Abbey Road

Abbey Road - Home to Parlophone and EMI in London. Abbey Road became George Martin's world in terms of recording. Some of the most famous artists and records ever made came out of Abbey Road.

New York

New York - Site of The Beatles' groundbreaking entrance into American culture.

BBC

BBC - British Broadcasting Company is one of the most influential media establishments in the world. Home to the music library where Martin got his start.

Guildhall School of Music

Guildhall School of Music - School of music attended by George Martin.

Liverpool

Liverpool - Home to Paul McCartney and John Lennon.

Cavern Club

Cavern Club - The first big club played by The Beatles.

America

America - The ultimate market to break into for the Beatles. The location of the Beatles' biggest publicity splashes.

Germany - A large portion of the Beatles' early fans came out of Germany, prompting the group to records their first two big hits in German.

Germany

Germany - A large portion of the Beatles' early fans came out of Germany, prompting the group to records their first two big hits in German.

Drayton Park

Drayton Park - childhood home to George Martin.



Themes

Technical Knowledge

George Martin started out his musical career playing tunes on his grandmother's piano. As a youth, Martin had very little technical training in Music. It wasn't until Martin was a teenager that he delved into the world of theory and technique. Up until that time, Martin had been playing by ear and could not read music.

Thanks to Sidney Harrison, Martin ended up attending the Guildhall School of Music, a well respected learning institution. Martin broke his bad technical habits at Guildhall and showed great promise. It was Martin's job at Parlophone, a division of EMI, that allowed to him learn and grow in his technical prowess regarding the recording industry.

Martin became an expert on recording classical music, his first love. Martin also went on to use his skills to record comedy albums, plays, movies, and finally, pop music. Although Martin often complained about the lack of updated equipment at EMI, he still managed to do groundbreaking work with The Beatles.

It is clear that Martin gives a lot of weight to the technical side of the recording industry. Unlike many experts, however, Martin is eager to share his knowledge so that recording artists and record producers can make good music no matter that the genre.

The Beatles

One of the main topics in the book is The Beatles. Martin is often referred to as "The Fifth Beatle" due to his amazing amount of influence on their work and the overall sound of the records produced at Abbey Road studios.

When The Beatles came to George Martin, it was a desperate attempt to find representation. The Beatles and their manager, Brian Epstein, had been to every record company in London and had been rejected. Martin saw something in the group and agreed to give them a shot.

Martin and Epstein groomed The Beatles from a rough diamond into a highly gleaming stone. Epstein did not have any managerial skills but had connections in the industry and truly believed in the group's talent. Martin had an extensive amount of expertise and taught the group a lot about how the recording process works.

With the help of Epstein and Martin, The Beatles' music exploded around the world and the group quickly became the most sought after act to hit America in 1964.

Throughout it all, Martin was by the group's collective side, venturing into new territories and discovering new avenues in the world of music.

Music

George Martin was a born musician. It was thought to be odd since no one else in the Martin family possessed any great musical gift. Martin attributes some of this to the fact that the piano was the focal point of any family gathering and that the children were expected to participate. George took to the piano at age six. George begged his family for lessons, and had just eight of them. As a teen, George continued to express himself through music and eventually formed a band.

George's love for music began with classical compositions. When Martin was fifteen he heard what would become his favorite composition, "L'Après-midi d'une faune" by Debussy. Martin was also a fan of Ravel. Amazingly enough, Martin taught himself many compositions by ear as he could not read music until much later.

Martin's work at the BBC Music Library offered little in the way of musical fulfillment. However, the opportunity to work at Parlophone offered Martin the exact thing he needed and wanted - the access to recording equipment, artists, and music.

Part of the joy of being a record producer for Martin was learning the technical side of the business and how to create music in different ways in addition to making things sound as good as possible through the use of technique and intuition.

Martin had the opportunity to work in various genres. Although classical was his first love, the producer found that it could be equally challenging to produce other types of music, including pop.

Style

Perspective

The perspective used in "All You Need is Ears" by George Martin is that of a seasoned record producer who has spent decades in the recording industry, working with numerous styles of music, from classical to pop.

Martin began playing classical music as a child and had an obvious gift even before he sat down at the piano at age six. Martin was taken by the beauty and complexity of the music. So much so that he formed a group while he was still in school. Martin's world blossomed after he enrolled in the Guildhall School of Music with the assistance of Sidney Harrison, whom Martin referred to as his fairy godfather.

Martin's love of music increased exponentially at Guildhall and the future producer also gained the much needed technical knowledge necessary to pursue music as a career. The education came in handy when Martin took a job at Parlophone, a division of EMI.

During Martin's 14 years at Parlophone/EMI, the young man grew into a top notch producer and arranger. Long before Martin was named head of Parlophone, he did nearly all the work. It was those years having to learn the entire business from the bottom up that gave Martin the edge to become highly successful at his craft.

Tone

The tone used in "All You Need is Ears" by George Martin is definitely partisan throughout the majority of the book. This applies especially when Martin is relaying his impressions or anecdotes about the industry and its players, including the musicians.

Martin has had a long career in the music industry. Although Martin is officially retired, he still keeps his hand in it and still serves as the Chairman of the Board for AIR.

The only parts of the book that are objective in tone involve the technical aspect of the music and recording industry.

There are many emotions that come through in the tone of the book. There is sadness when Martin speaks of the falling out of his mother and the deaths of his parents and Brian Epstein. There is a tone of fond remembrance throughout much of the book, particularly when Martin recalls his experiences with Sidney Harrison, The Beatles, and Brian Epstein as well as his wife, Judy.

There is also a tone of regret when it comes to certain stories and situations, from the times Martin made foolish choices at work to his ill treatment at EMI.

Overall, Martin runs the gamut of emotion throughout the book which leads to a richer reading experience.

Structure

"All You Need is Ears" by George Martin is a non-fiction work containing 270 pages. The book is broken into 17 chapters. The longest chapter is 27 pages in length; the shortest chapter is two pages in length. The average page length of the chapters is 18 pages.

There are three sections of photographs throughout the book, starting from George Martin's youth and ending in 1979, the year the book was published. Among these photos are several shots of Martin and various artists in the studio, including the Beatles, as well as influential people in the producer's life such as Sidney Harrison and Oscar Preuss.

The chapters are mostly chronological with some flashbacks or relevant information that goes along with the topic at hand. The first chapter deals with Martin's youth and blossoming interest in classical music. Chapter two deals with Martin's military service and first marriage. Chapters three through twelve deals with Martin's years at Parlophone/EMI, including his comedy work with Peter Sellers, the years with The Beatles, and the ongoing battle for upgrades and support from EMI. This is also where Martin explains in great detail how the recording industry worked at the time he started in the business and how various techniques were employed in order to get the best sound or to create new methods.

Chapters thirteen and fourteen are mostly about Martin's venture with AIR and the direction of the business. Chapter fifteen is a short wish for the future and the up and coming music technology.



Quotes

"Fame and fortune as an oboe player lay on no discernible horizon, and it soon became clear that would have to take a day job as well."

Page 28

"To start with, the 'classical music' to people refer to when they use the term is old music, music that was written at least 50 and more often at least a hundred years ago."

Page 31

"Much of pop music depends on arranging and orchestration - things which are often difficult to teach."

Page 33

"I was sheep among wolves, and didn't even realize it."

Page 48

"John was a fanatically hard worker, but that could have some funny consequences."

Page 56

"Unlike the synthesizer, no human voice is ever perfectly in tune."

Page 68

"In real life, we have two ears, not one; so you really ought to have two microphones."

Page 76

"At the start, I was like a master with his pupils, and they did what I said."

Page 133

"So perhaps it was with some desperation that, amazingly, EMI sent me to America in 1958, to see what the opposition was like."

Page 143

"Fired with enthusiasm for these new techniques, like children wanting more sweets, and more, and more, we soon found that the four-track system ran out of tracks all too quickly."

Pages 149-150

"If our excitement seems over dramatic, in retrospect, it is important to remember that no British artist had gotten so far breaking into that market in the same way."

Page 158

"In having to devote a great part of my time to the established artists like the Cilla and the Beatles, I still managed to find room for some of my old 'nutty' ideas."

Page 189

Topics for Discussion

How might George Martin's life had changed if he had continued with piano lessons as a child?

Do you think Martin's life would have turned out differently if he had not married Sheena?

What was Sidney Harrison's motivation in helping Martin?

Do you think Martin should have been fired when he berated the EMI chairman by mistake?

How might Parlophone have changed if Martin had left when he had planned?

Do you think Abbey Road would have gained its present level of fame without Martin's influence?

Who do you think was more influential on the Beatles: George Martin or Brian Epstein?

Do you think The Beatles would have been as successful without Martin's input?