

The Searchers – Meet The Searchers (1963)

Written by bluesever

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A1 Needles & Pins A2 Sweets For My Sweet A3 Saints And Searchers A4 Tricky Dicky A5 Where Have All The Flowers Gone A6 Twist And Shout B1 Love Potion Number Nine B2 Farmer John B3 Saturday Night Out B4 Stand By Me B5 Money B6 Since You Broke My Heart Drums, Vocals – Chris Curtis Lead Guitar, Vocals – Michael Pender Lead Vocals, Bass Guitar – Tony Jackson Rhythm Guitar, Vocals – John McNally

The Searchers' debut LP doesn't sound quite like any other album they ever issued. All of their Pye Records albums were rushed, but not like this -- faced with an extraordinarily popular hit right out of the box in the guise of "Sweets for My Sweet" (which rose to Number One on the U.K. charts), the group cut 11 more finished tracks in one day, drawn from the best part of their stage act. The music was as raw and basic a Liverpool sound as anything heard this side of the Beatles' debut album, *Please Please Me* (also recorded in one day), which this record paralleled, not only in sound but one key song selection, closing with "Twist and Shout" (albeit not in as striking fashion as John Lennon's raw performance). The attributes that the Searchers would build on, spirited playing, good harmony singing behind smooth lead vocals, and crisply defined lead and rhythm guitars, are all present in as stripped-down a form as they would ever be heard. The range of material reflects the personal tastes of the members, mostly early Motown ("Money (That's What I Want)") and other American R&B ("Farmer John," "Stand By Me"), and even one recent American folk hit, "Where Have All the Flowers Gone," which may well have marked the first time a band with electric guitars, bass, and drums had applied those instruments to a folk song, thus anticipating folk-rock by some two years. The tendency is to dismiss this record as an early effort by a group that quickly went on to do much more interesting work; in point of fact, along with the Beatles' debut album, *Meet the Searchers* is just about the best single document that one can find of what rock & roll in Liverpool was about, and it's played with so much spirit that one suspects it might've done well as a reissue during the late-'70s "power pop" boom. ---Bruce Eder, AllMusic Review

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