



**London Calling: The London issue**

# threesix five

**Going Underground:  
Harry Beck and the  
iconic Tube map**

**Keep It Simple  
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British masters of**

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# GOING UNDERGROUND

## Harry Beck and London's iconic Tube map

By Dan Carrier

The tube map almost never made it out of its creator's notebook. The designer was Harry Beck, a young draughtsman who drew electrical circuits for the Underground. Beck's biographer, Ken Garland, befriended him in the 1950s, and before the designer's death in 1974 he uncovered the story behind the creation of what Beck called "the diagram".

"As a native of a small village in Devon and

moving to London to study art, I found the metropolis impossible to navigate," Garland recalls. "I would get on the tube and see Harry's diagram. London suddenly made sense, and so I asked people at the college if they knew who the designer was."

Garland was told that HC Beck could be found at the London College of Printing, where he taught part-time, and he paid him a visit. They soon became friends.





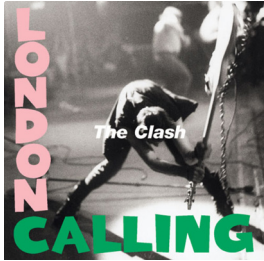


# Reader's poll: The 5 best album covers ... ever

The album cover dates from 1939, when Columbia Records art director Alex Steinweiss decided his label's offerings might find a wider audience with some added visual appeal. Since the very first Steinweiss design, an album of showtunes by Rogers and Hart, album covers have represented the apotheosis and nadir of graphic design, and have touched all points in between.

Last month, we asked our readers to select the best album covers of all time. In the age of the digital download, the album cover is sadly a lost art – which probably explains why 90 percent of the albums that readers selected come from the 1960s and the 1970s. Here are the Top 5:

5



**The Clash,  
'London Calling'**  
(1979, CBS Records)

Pennie Smith was snapping photos of the Clash at New York's Palladium when she captured one of the most iconic images in rock history. Paul Simon was annoyed by the relatively quiet audience, so he began smashing his bass guitar against the floor. Clash singer Joe Strummer loved the photo, but Smith tried to convince him it was too out-of-focus for the cover. The pink and green lettering of the design was an intentional echo of Elvis Presley's 1956 debut album.

4



**The Beatles,  
'Abbey Road'**  
(1969, Apple Records)

Beatles nuts who believed that Paul McCartney died around 1967 and was replaced by a doppelgänger found a lot to examine on this cover. They saw the picture as a funeral procession: John as the preacher, Ringo as the mourner, George as the gravedigger and barefooted Paul as the corpse. Iain Macmillan shot the cover on August 8th, 1969, outside of Abbey Road studios. The shoot involved just six frames and 10 minutes of work. Tourists flock to the spot, and it's been parodied countless times.

3



**Nirvana,  
'Nevermind'**  
(1993, Geffen Records)

Spencer Elden, the naked baby on the cover, said he feels weird about his bizarre role in history. "It's kind of creepy that many people have seen me naked," he said. But what does this cover mean? "Kurt was intellectual and deep-thinking about his work," says Fisher. "I must assume that the naked baby symbolized his own innocence, the water represented an alien environment, and the hook and dollar bill his creative life entering into the corporate world of rock music."

2



**Pink Floyd,  
'Dark Side of  
The Moon'**  
(1973, Harvest Records)

Hipgnosis had designed several of Pink Floyd's previous albums, with controversial results: the band's record company had reacted with confusion when faced with the collective's non-traditional designs that omitted words. Their initial inspiration for Dark Side was a photo of a prism on top of some sheet music. It was black and white, but a color beam was going through it. Hipgnosis presented the prism design along with some others ideas to the band.

1



**The Beatles,  
'Sgt. Pepper's  
Lonely Hearts  
Club Band'**  
(1967, Apple Records)

The cover was originally going to show the Beatles playing in a park. That slowly evolved into the final concept, where they stand amidst cardboard cutouts of their heroes. The band originally planned on including Leo Gorcey, Gandhi, Jesus Christ and Adolf Hitler. Common sense kicked Hitler off the cover, the still-lingering bitterness of John Lennon's "bigger than Jesus" comment eliminated Jesus and Gandhi got the boot over concerns that India wouldn't print the album.