

Flowers IORR



Why Buy?

If you are 17 and your favorite band releases an album with some songs you do not own is it a rehash? A rip-off? A compilation? Or, is it just a new album? Does it matter if the United Kingdom got a new album at the same time or not? The answer is no, because most people in 1967 did not even know there were separate US and UK releases and even fewer people knew how an album was put together. So, for the Summer of Love the Stones gave us a bouquet of *Flowers*.

Flower Power and the Summer of Love

Flower power is an expression coined by Beat poet Allen Ginsberg in 1965. It began as a symbolic way to transform war protests into life-affirming peaceful protests. Flower children embraced the symbolism by dressing in vibrantly colored clothes, wearing flowers in their hair, and distributing flowers to the public. The term eventually was used as a reference to the hippie movement and the so-called counterculture of drugs, psychedelic music, psychedelic art and social permissiveness.

The Summer of Love was a social phenomenon that began just about the time *Flowers* was released during the summer of 1967. A focal point of the Summer of Love was San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury, where tens of thousands of flower children converged. The Summer of Love encompassed hippie music, drugs, anti-war sentiments and protests, and the burgeoning free-love scene throughout the American coasts. It was into these waters that Stones manager Andrew Loog Oldham waded with a musical gift for the United States.



The Title

London Records, Decca's American branch, needed product for the beach that summer. They released *Flowers* on June 26, 1967. It has been described as a grab bag of 12 tracks the Stones had lying around.

Lou Adler was a well-connected record producer during the Summer of Love and he is credited with coming up with the title to this American release. It says so, right there on the reverse side of the cover. That was the power of Lou Adler. Oldham was on board with flower power and obviously approved the title. Clearly, flowers were on his mind too as here releases this flower-themed ad in the June 26, 1967 edition of New Musical Express for another of his clients the same day London Released the *Flowers* album. *Flowers* played against the background of the Summer of Love. Patti Smith said, "The *Flowers* album was for loners and lovers only. It provided a tight backdrop to a lot of decadent fantasy."



Keith Richards said, “*Flowers* was put together in America by Andrew Oldham because they were begging for product. All that stuff had been cut a year before and rejected by us for not making it. I was really surprised when people dug it, surprised when it even came out!”

If the London record company was celebrating the summer of love with *Flowers*, it was also providing many U.S. fans with a catch-up opportunity. The compilation brings together several songs that had been left off the U.S. versions, thus vindicating ignorant 17-year old fans who thought it was a new album.

The Cover

The album cover was built on the same strategy used to assemble the album content. Oldham looked around at unused photos from previous shoots and chose five headshots taken by Guy Webster sometime during the Stones March 6-9, 1966 return to Los Angeles to continue recording *Aftermath*. During that time, a second photo session with Webster took place in Guy’s studio. Examples from that shoot are seen below. Notice how the shirts and collars match those of the album cover. Headshots, cropped from the March 1966 *Aftermath* photoshoot were recycled for the *Flowers* album cover.



One writer said, “The Flower Power-era album jacket was unpromising, a crude rendition of the Stones as the heads on weedy-looking stems.” Another writer said, “With its dumb cover art (as bad as the Mainstream Big Brother jacket, only bad on purpose), its cheap song selection (half repeated from previous albums), and its incongruous use of the already meaningless 'flower music' idea (although it did sound at first as if nasty Mick had given up 'hard rock,' now didn't



it?) the tendency was to half-dismiss it as another London Records exploitation. Only later did we realize how strong and unflowery the new songs were, and only now do we suspect that perhaps *Flowers* can be construed as a potshot at *Sergeant Pepper* itself, as if to say, 'Come off this bullshit, boys. You're only in it for the money.'

The title refers to the album's cover, or the album's cover refers to the title, your choice. The cover does not mention the band's name, by now, an Oldham trademark. It does announce the title in a psychedelic and flowery font that is quite representative of the Flower Power Summer of

Love style. Headshots, from left to right, of Keith Richards, Bill Wyman, Brian Jones, and Charlie Watts appear in color tinted oval portraits at the top of the album. These are the Guy Webster

portraits from the March 1966 photoshoot for the British version of *Aftermath*. There are flower stems beneath the portrait of each band member springing forth from the word *Flowers*, reinforcing the idea that the Stones are flower children too. Tom Wilkes arranged Webster's photographs and supplied the other graphics.



One writer claimed, "The closely cropped head shots convey an unsettling wariness that reflected the gathering storm enveloping the band. The Rolling Stones were about to embrace the shadow they understood all too well." Okay, if you say so.

Look at the flower stems. Whose stands out as different from the rest? Brian Jones' stem, alone, has no leaves on it. Bill Wyman claims that Jagger and Richards intentionally chose a leafless stem for Jones, as a prank. He later said, "Mick and Keith's idea of a joke was that Brian's flower should have no leaves on the stem. Truth is, I never got it." Some people have since decided that Jones' leafless stem was a bad omen. It was certainly unusual, in retrospect, but if anyone made the connection in advance of Brian's untimely death, it was not recorded.



The Reverse Side

Caught up in the recycling theme of *Flowers*, Wilkes shuffled the same five Webster headshots from the front cover to the back. Here Jagger, Richards, Jones, Wyman, and Watts form the five yellow-tinted petals of a single flower. Jones is the lower right flower petal signifying what, we cannot say, but in the 'Paul is dead' tradition, it must portend his death in some yet undiscovered way.



RUBY TUESDAY · HAVE YOU SEEN YOUR MOTHER, BABY, STANDING IN THE
SHADOW? · LET'S SPEND THE NIGHT TOGETHER · LADY JANE · OUT OF
TIME · MY GIRL · BACKSTREET GIRL · PLEASE GO HOME · MOTHER'S LITTLE
HELPER · TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT · RIDE ON, BABY · SIT'TIN' ON A FENCE

Arranged by The Rolling Stones / Produced by Andrew Loog Oldham / Title concept by Lou-in Adler / Photography by Guy Webster / Graphics by Tom Wilkes
Design-Execution by The Corporate Head
Liner: P5 503/LL 3508 / London Records, Inc., 539 West 25th Street, New York, N. Y. 10001

The tracklist is shown in two different colors. Wouldn't it be insider fun if one shade was from *Aftermath* and the other from *Between The Buttons*? Alas and alack the different colors follow no such pattern. Even so, one cannot shake the feeling they portend Jones' tragic and untimely death.

Webster and Wilkes



Both of the artists who created this cover have died. Guy Webster (left) began his career by bluffing his way into teaching a photography class in the US Army. He soon became one of the most in-demand rock'n'roll photographers, shooting most major acts of the 1960s when they came through Los Angeles, including Bob Dylan, The Doors, and The Beach Boys. Webster also shot the US cover for The Rolling Stones' album *Big Hits (High Tide and Green Grass)* (1966) in Beverly Hills.

Tom Wilkes was born and raised in southern California. In 1967 Wilkes was the art director of the Monterey Pop Festival and art director of A&M Records. He has an extensive resume of album cover art and design including *Beggars Banquet* and Neil Young's *Harvest*.

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