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ow we move on to *Rubber Soul* – and now we start to get to the good stuff! From here on, and for the next few years, McCartney would dazzle fellow players with his instinct for great basslines and his knack for taking the bass guitar to ever-higher levels of achievement.

The group's sixth album was recorded in October and November 1965, as ever at Abbey Road and on a 4-track machine. In fact, Abbey Road engineers had started to find ways to get as much from the 4-track format as possible. Sometimes they filled three tracks and then mixed or 'reduced' them to the fourth track, or mixed a full 4-track down to one or two tracks of a second machine. Both methods provided more space for further overdubs to be added.

It's on *Rubber Soul* that McCartney makes his first consistent statement as a top-flight bassman. His playing is full of exuberance and enjoyment. Change was in the air – along with a strong whiff of marijuana – and during these sessions the group made a conscious effort to be different. There had been seeds of this on the earlier records, but the new album marked out The Beatles as musical innovators who were absorbing elements of folk, Indian, soul music, and more into the pop framework. "We always thought The Supremes were a bit boring, it always sounded like the same song almost, or very near," says McCartney. "They were trying to *keep* the Motown-Supremes sound. Well, we always *weren't* trying to keep the Beatles sound. We were always trying to move on. We were always trying to get a new sound on every single thing we did."⁵⁰

McCartney had a new sound available in the shape of the Rickenbacker bass that he'd acquired on a recent American tour. The California-based manufacturer, delighted by Lennon and Harrison's use of their guitars, gave him a new left-handed Rickenbacker 4001S bass guitar, which he started using straight away for the *Rubber Soul* sessions. He says that from that album onwards "it could have easily swung either way" between using the Hofner or the Rickenbacker in the studio, although the Rickenbacker does seem to have quickly become his preferred studio instrument.