



## Handout 1 - A Day in the Life and “Surrealism” in the Recording Studio

### Terms:

**Multitrack Recording** - A process of sound recording that allows for the separate recording of multiple sound sources and the layering of sources recorded at different times.

**Surrealism** - A 20th-century movement in art that sought to release the creative potential of the unconscious mind. Methods such as “automatic drawing,” the “exquisite corpse” art game, collage and the irrational juxtaposition of images are often described as creating a “dreamlike” quality and suggesting that there are other realities and, thus, other realisms.

The Beatles’ final stadium concert was August 29, 1966. That December, the band began work on their next album. Paul McCartney suggested that The Beatles adopt alternate personalities and “pretend to be someone else,” and the concept for *Sgt. Pepper’s Lonely Hearts Club Band* was born. The band had begun experimenting with the sonic possibilities of studio technology, particularly “multitrack” recording, on their previous album *Revolver*. On *Sgt. Pepper’s* The Beatles pushed further, using the studio as an instrument to creatively render songs in ways they could not have performed them live on stage at the time. In particular, on “A Day in the Life,” The Beatles used eight tracks of tape--a first in England at the time--a full orchestra and several other uncommon techniques to produce a song that swims in a surrealistic collage of sound. The album artwork for *Sgt. Pepper’s* is an actual collage that includes more than 60 images.

While watching the accompanying video of “A Day in the Life,” take notes in the fields below:

List the instruments you hear and/or see performed. Note any instruments you did not see in the earlier footage of The Beatles performing live with an “\*”:

What elements of this video strike you as “real”?

What elements of this video strike you as “surreal”?

How is time represented in this video? Do you notice any cinematography techniques that distort your sense of time passing?