

Vatican newspaper: Beatles' music better than today's pop songs

VATICAN CITY - The Vatican newspaper said the musical compositions of the Beatles were far more creative than the "standardized and stereotyped" pop music of today.

The Beatles' songs have demonstrated "remarkable staying power, becoming a source of inspiration for more than one generation of pop musicians," it said.

The newspaper, L'Osservatore Romano, published a lengthy and laudatory retrospective on the Beatles Nov. 22 to mark the 40th anniversary of the release of the "White Album," the group's groundbreaking double-record set.

"Forty years later, this album remains a type of magical musical anthology: 30 songs you can go through and listen to at will, certain of finding some pearls that even today remain unparalleled," it said.

With rock songs like "Back in the U.S.S.R." and "Helter Skelter," ballads like "Julia" and "Blackbird," and dreamlike pieces like "Dear Prudence," the album represents the "creative summit" of the Beatles' career, it said.

What characterized the "White Album" and the Beatles best music in general was an inventiveness that stands in stark contrast with popular music today, the newspaper said.

"Record products today seem mostly standardized and stereotyped, far from the creativity of the Beatles," it said. The modern pop music industry is too willing to sacrifice originality and fantasy in order to satisfy the consumer models it has adopted and promoted, it said.

The newspaper also recalled that the Beatles were recording with rudimentary tools compared to those used by the high-tech recording industry today. Even so, "a listening experience like that offered by the Beatles is truly rare," it said.

As for John Lennon's famous quip in 1966 that the Beatles were more famous than Jesus Christ, the Vatican newspaper dismissed it as youthful bragging.

"The phrase that provoked profound indignation, especially in the United States, after so many years sounds merely like the boast of a working-class English youth faced with unexpected success," it said.