Time Tested

50 years ago: 1963. In many ways a momentous year. At the end of August The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom culminated with Martin Luther King's famous I Have A Dream speech. A month later a box of dynamite was planted in the 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham AL set to explode during church services; it killed four young African-American girls aged 10-14. And on November 22nd President Kennedy was shot to death. For those old enough to have lived through these events they still resonate personally. Significant deaths include Pope John XXIII, a quartet of great poets (Robert Frost at 88, William Carlos Williams at 79, Theodore Roethke at 55, and Sylvia Plath at 30), Edith Piaf and Patsy Cline, and Jean Cocteau. C. S. Lewis and Aldus Huxley both died on the same day as President Kennedy. Many works released in 1963, ranging from books and films to albums, still resonate in our culture.

The top ten best selling books are a mix of the well-known, the known, and the forgotten:

- 1. The Shoes of the Fisherman by Morris West
- 2. The Group by Mary McCarthy
- 3. Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters, and Seymour-An Introduction by J.D. Salinger
- 4. Caravans by James A. Michener
- 5. Elizabeth Appleton by John O'Hara
- 6. Grandmother and the Priests by Taylor Caldwell
- 7. City of Night by John Rechy
- 8. The Glass-Blowers by Daphne du Maurier
- 9. The Sand Pebbles by Richard McKenna
- 10. The Battle of the Villa Fiorita by Rumer Godden

Neither these nor any other fiction title published in 1963 was selected for a Pulitzer Prize in 1964. Winners did include Walter Jackson Bate's famous biography of <u>John Keats</u> and Richard Hofstadler's also justly famous <u>Anti-intellectualism in American Life</u>.

Poetry saw the first book published by Mary Oliver, <u>No Voyage</u>, and <u>Other Poems</u>, William Stafford's <u>Traveling Through the Dark</u>, and James Wright's <u>The Branch Will No Break</u>, with its haunting poem, one of my favorites, "Autumn Begins in Martins Ferry, Ohio."

In movies it was a banner year: Cleopatra, <u>The Great Escape</u>, <u>Tom Jones</u>, <u>8 ½</u>, <u>The Leopard</u>, <u>The Servant</u>, <u>Irma la Douce</u>, and <u>Charade</u>. Two other films evinced promise. <u>Dementia 13</u> was the first film of a young director who would achieve fame with his quartet of great films in the 1970s, <u>Francis Ford Coppola</u>. And <u>From Russia with Love</u> was the second James Bond movie, following the surprising success of Dr. No; we now find ourselves with <u>23</u> from which to choose.

A Cantabrigian decided to host a cooking show on the local PBS station and the rest is history: Julia Child's <u>French Chef</u>. Across the ocean the longest running science fiction show of all time began: <u>Doctor Who</u>.

Two promising popular singing careers also began in 1963. One singer's debut album garnered her five Grammy nominations and three Grammies, and she has gone to become one of the most

popular singers of her time: <u>Barbra Streisand</u>. But surely the greatest debut in 1963 was the <u>Beatles</u>, whose first two albums, Please, Please Me and With the Beatles, were released in March and November in the United Kingdom. Due to difficulties with their U. S. distributor no albums were released until 1964 though their first single, "I Want to Hold Your Hand," was released the day after Christmas.

Other memorable releases from 1963 include Bob Dylan's <u>Freewheelin' Bob Dylan</u> and James Brown's <u>Live at the Apollo</u>. In jazz, still in its great period and as yet unfazed by the nascent pop music movement, more than one outstanding album was released in 1963. Charles Mingus released two, <u>The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady</u> and <u>Mingus, Mingus, Mingus, Mingus, Mingus, Mingus</u>. In addition Wes Montgomery released <u>Boss Guitar</u>, Dexter Gordon <u>Our Man in Paris</u>, Thelonious Monk <u>Monk's Dream</u>, Kenny Burrell <u>Midnight Blue</u>, Jackie McLean <u>One Step</u> Beyond, and Donald Byrd A New Perspective.

We clamor daily for the latest, most popular items, continually striving after something always changing. But how many of these items will be worthy of our attention fifty years hence? Can we see the young band that will turn into the Beatles, or the new show that will change TV forever? The above creators and creations have stood the test of time.