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Keith Moon: His final hours

June 23, 4:50 AM Music History Examiner Tricia Weight



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A sad reminder of The Who's prescient lyrics: "If I swallow anything evil, Put your finger down my throat."

On September 6th, 1978 Keith Moon attended a screening for the movie The Buddy Holly Story held by Paul McCartney and his wife Linda. The Who had just released the album Who Are You less than a month earlier to critical acclaim and the screening promised to be one of the biggest social events in London that year.

Moon had come to London's West End to escape from the world of rock and roll and all of the temptations it offered as he tried to kick an alcohol addiction that had been raging out of control for more than a decade. He was staying at a flat owned by friend Harry Nilsson with the woman he planned to propose to, Swedish model Annette Walter-Lax. He had been prescribed the medication Heminevrin, a strong sedative, to counter his withdrawal symptoms during detox.

Moon had been reluctant to attend the McCartney's preview party; he knew what temptations might possibly be waiting for him and he didn't trust himself to be strong enough to turn them down. He had been through failed rehab attempts before and had decided that the only way to guarantee success was to completely avoid all situations where alcohol would be served.

Keith Moon had many reasons to turn his life around: he was in love with Annette and had decided to ask her to marry him, his band's latest album was a huge commercial and critical success, more importantly, his health and his drumming were beginning to suffer from the years of drug and alcohol abuse. He also had one other motivation to dry out. He had passed out several times over the years in the middle of concerts, on one such occasion Pete Townshend had pulled an audience member up on stage and the 19 year old boy had filled in for him--to the audience's delight. The band had let him know, in no uncertain terms, that he could be replaced, and would be, if he didn't get his drinking

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