



The Beatles: Their Golden Age DVD Review: A Short, but Information-packed Documentary on the Fab Four

It's not possible to thoroughly cover the Beatles' unparalleled career in an hour, but *The Beatles: Their Golden Age* attempts to do just that. Narrated by Les Krantz – a publisher, author, and filmmaker – *Their Golden Age* combines still photos with newsreel footage and scenes from the Beatles' movies. No Beatles music is included, though instrumental sound-alike tracks make up the film's score.

The documentary starts in the 1950s. Skiffle was all the rage in England and proved a major influence on budding songwriters John Lennon and Paul McCartney. The pair were introduced in 1957 and McCartney joined Lennon's band, The Quarrymen. George Harrison and Ringo Starr (replacing original drummer, Pete Best) joined later and the group's classic lineup was complete. The documentary does not go into detail about the death of Stu Sutcliffe.

We learn that the band cut their teeth playing seedy clubs in Germany and later became residents at the Cavern Club, where they caught the attention of Brian Epstein. George Martin became their producer and The Beatles would soon change the world.

The four Beatles themselves seemed taken aback by the attention their sudden fame had brought, prompting Harrison to quip, "We're just normal folk who've had a couple hit records." A couple hit records soon became every spot in the Top Five in America in April 1964.

THE BEATLES THEIR GOLDEN AGE



The documentary shows great footage from the '60s promotional film, *The Beatles Come To Town*, as well as from all of the Beatles' movies from *A Hard Day's Night* to *Let It Be*. We see Lennon discussing his first book, *In His Own Write*, but not his second, *A Spaniard In The Works*, and the film touches on Jimmy Nicol filling in on drums for Starr, who could not tour due to tonsillitis. Nicol later described the experience as "strange and scary."

Lennon's "Jesus Statement" and the subsequent Beatles backlash gets a fair amount of time in the film, but the weddings of Harrison, McCartney, and Lennon get less significant mentions. The same applies to the band's psychedelic period - with a clip from McCartney's famous interview where he talks about his LSD use, their visit with the Maharishi, and their eventual breakup. There's only so much one can cover in an hour and the documentary tries to get as much in as possible.

Given the time constraints and the fact that there was no original Beatles music used in the film, *The Beatles: Their Golden Age* does an admirable job of covering the group's history. While there may not be much new content for longtime fans, for people newly discovering the Beatles, this documentary would be a fine, if limited introduction.

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