



Every day, DVDs surface purporting to contain “rare” Beatles footage and exclusive interviews. The latest entry in the parade, *The Beatles: Their Golden Age*, claims to be a “superb documentary” that “truly captures the magic as well as the pandemonium of ‘Beatlemania,’ from their delirious fans and madcap movies to interviews with each of the Fab Four.”

## THE BEATLES THEIR GOLDEN AGE



Its over-reliance on public domain footage and poor sound quality make it a miss for both longtime and new fans.

Narrated by publisher, author and filmmaker Les Krantz, the one-hour program gives a very brief overview of the Beatles’ career. However, the volume of the music (none of it actual Beatles music) frequently drowns out Krantz’s voice; other times his “p’s” are distorted.

Clearly unable to afford rare footage, the DVD instead shows one newsreel after another. While these films can be entertaining and charming, they become tiresome after a while. For example, when discussing their first world tour, the program plays clips from many of their stops. We see endless scenes of screaming girls from Sweden, Australia, and New Zealand, but no actual concert footage.

In addition, some aspects of the Beatles’ story are misstated. When Krantz cheerfully remembers that the group toured Hamburg and returned as stars, he fails to mention their dirty living conditions and the overall rough lives they led. *Their Golden Age* also confuses the order in which they recorded *Let It Be* and *Abbey Road*; in fact, the narrator only describes *Let It Be* as a “documentary,” not as an album.

Absolutely no mention is made of the well-known tension and in-fighting occurring within the band, which dramatically increased during the White Album sessions. Mispronouncing the Maharishi’s name as well as “Cirque du Soleil” (pronounced in the DVD as “Cirque du Soul”) additionally diminishes the documentary’s credibility

Even more frustratingly, the DVD liner notes announce that the show contains “scenes from their classic films.” This bends the truth a bit, since the program shows the trailers from their films, as well as some behind-the-scenes footage during the *Hard Day's Night* filming. The problem? The “backstage footage” actually derives from newsreels, making it less than rare. Stills from *Let It Be* briefly dance across the screen, but the other films are represented by easy-to-acquire trailers.

**[BEYOND THE BEATLES' HITS: *Think you know the Fab Four? Kit O'Toole's 'Deep Beatles' series takes you into some undiscovered corners of the group's ageless musical legacy.*]**

The quality of film greatly varies as well: For instance, the famous Chicago press conference during which John Lennon clarified his “Beatles are bigger than Jesus” comment is shown through scratchy, faded footage. Additionally, no DVD extras are included, just the hour-long program.

Longtime fans can skip *The Beatles: Their Golden Age*, as it includes public domain films they have seen innumerable times. Casual listeners wanting to learn more about the band would be better off watching *The Compleat Beatles* or the Anthology miniseries, as they include accurate information, truly rare footage, and insightful interviews.