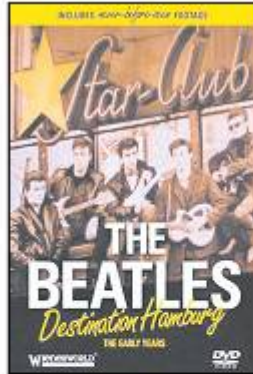

In Tune

The Daily News

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2008



“THE BEATLES — DESTINATION HAMBURG: THE EARLY YEARS” (Wienerworld/MVD Visual) ★★ — Even the hardest of hard-core Beatles fans will have a tough time getting much out of this DVD that focuses on the Liverpool band’s time in Hamburg, Germany, a couple years before Beatlemania exploded around the globe.

Most of the stories — endlessly long sets played in grungy clubs, original bass player Stuart Sutcliffe’s departure and eventual death, original drummer Pete Best’s unceremonious firing — have been told countless times before, and the film’s much-ballyhooed “never-before-seen footage” consists mainly of grainy black-and white exteriors of the Hamburg club scene.

Because it’s an “unofficial” production, the DVD contains no Beatles music. Instead, the soundtrack is comprised of contemporary Tony Sheridan & the Beat Brothers’ renditions of songs such as “My Bonnie,” “Money,” “Mess Around,” “Skinny Minnie” and “Johnny B. Goode.” The performances are marginal at best and, really, what’s the point of a Beatles documentary with no Beatles music?

Bonus features include a lengthy 1968 radio interview with John Lennon, Paul McCartney and Ringo Starr.

It’s interesting to a point, but like the rest of “Destination Hamburg” itself, isn’t especially revealing or compelling. (JS)