

## DVD Review: *The Beatles: Rare and Unseen*

Author: [Kit O'Toole](#) — Published: [Aug 10, 2009 at 6:50 pm](#)



September 9, 2009 marks a bonanza for Beatles fans, namely the releases of *Beatles Rock Band* and the remastered back catalog. Capitalizing on this event is *The Beatles: Rare and Unseen*, a DVD purporting to include obscure, newly discovered footage and photographs. While the clips do intrigue, they are so short that the DVD had to pad the material with interviews. Many of the Beatles' friends and famous fans tell stories that may be new to casual fans, but hardcore Beatles enthusiasts have heard the anecdotes many times before.

Footage includes snippets of the four on vacation, in concert, and on film sets. All are accompanied by Beatle-esque instrumentals, not the original songs. One video features the four clowning around a pool while on vacation in the Channel Islands in 1963, mugging for the camera. Newly restored footage of the group performing at Liverpool's Casanova Club in 1962 shows them just before they began wearing suits onstage. While too brief, the clip illustrates The Beatles' onstage magnetism and power over the audience. The digital restoration does improve the video's quality, minimizing graininess and enhancing the colors.

Behind-the-scenes footage from *Help!* and *Magical Mystery Tour* display the Beatles during unguarded moments, although only Paul seems to be enjoying himself in the latter clip. The *Help!* outtakes entertain the most, with the four laughing and mugging for the camera during the "Another Girl" sequence. A few seconds of the "Ticket to Ride" segment shows John standing in the snow, obviously waiting to do another take.

Concert footage is limited to two clips: a 1964 Scotland appearance (Caird Hall), and a show at the Olympia Theater in Paris that same year. The latter clip proves to be the most interesting on the DVD, particularly because of the accompanying interview. Drummer Mickey Jones often socialized with the Beatles during their Paris stint; the group was part of a bill costarring Trini Lopez and Sylvie Vartan. Jones backed Lopez, and after his

segment would film the others' sets. Thus he shot the only existing film of the Paris shows. Even more fascinating, though, are Jones' recollections of driving Paul's Mini Cooper, laughing with John, and discussing drumming with Ringo. He charmingly adds that he was "in love" with the Beatles not just because of their talent, but because they were just great guys. Vartan adds her memories, exclaiming, "I thought they were hot!"

The DVD also contains excerpts from a 1975 interview John recorded in New York for French television. While this is touted as extremely rare footage, it actually has been shown before, most notably in the *Anthology* documentary.

Throughout *Rare and Unseen*, various photographs are displayed, which are a mixed bag; some have been previously published, others more rare, mostly circa 1962-1965. In front of the footage and photos sit various Beatles-related figures (as well as a couple of famous fans and academics) relating their memories of the group and providing commentary. The list is fairly impressive—Norman "Hurricane" Smith, Gerry Marsden, Tony Bramwell, Ken Dodd, Tony Barrow, Colin Hanton, Allan Williams, and Sam Leach, among others. Other fans and Beatles scholars spout the usual urban legends about John being the rocker and "real leader" of the group, Paul being the strictly melodic writer, and George not ranking in the Lennon/McCartney league.

While the rare footage indeed fascinates, the clips are too brief to really make an impact. The interviews reveal little new information, and the extras are a bit skimpy (just longer interviews with Collins, Dodd, Hanton, and Marsden as well as others). Casual fans may find the stories interesting, but hardcore fans may find the material too repetitive. Other than Jones' Paris footage, *The Beatles: Rare and Unseen* should interest only collectors who wish to own as many Beatles-related items as possible.