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## "The Beatles Rare And Unseen: Unofficial Account Of The Biggest Band In The World"

September 01, 2009  
by Peter Lindblad

### In Review

**The Beatles**

**"Rare And Unseen: Unofficial Account Of The Biggest Band In The World"**

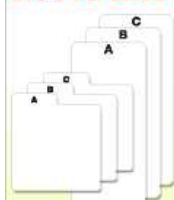
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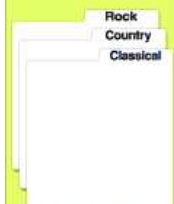
Grade: ★★★★★

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The story of The Beatles has been told at least a million times in a million different ways, but when it comes to the Fab Four, if the words "rare" and "unseen" are attached, it always raises an eyebrow. Thankfully, this documentary — for the most part — isn't just a rehashing of old tales everyone's heard before, and it does deliver on its promises.

Aside from the occasional throwaway commentary about how great and ahead of their time The Beatles were and how those who weren't there will never understand the mania that surrounded them, the DVD doesn't succumb to cliché, and its enthusiasm for the subject matter is infectious.

Packed into 90 minutes, the fresh, smartly paced narrative flows from firsthand accounts from Beatles insiders like recording engineer Norman

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Smith, the band's press officer (from 1962-1968) Tony Barrow, tour manager Sam Leach, Quarrymen drummer Colin Hanton, Gerry Marsden, childhood friend and roadie Tony Bramwell and others. Fleshing out the story, analysis of their music from Phil Collins and pop music professor Sheila Whitley is keen and insightful, as is the perspective on the Beatles' cultural impact by social historian Dominick Sandbrook. And it's all pulled together with highlights from a revealing John Lennon interview in New York that was recorded by French TV.

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None of it, however, is as essential and intimate as the previously unseen home movies showing The Beatles at play — particularly the footage from February, 1966 captured during the filming of "Help!" from the Bahamas and that which from a January 1964 appearance at Paris' Olympia Theatre. Included also are rare photos that bring Beatlemania to life, while the earliest known film of the Beatles onstage in Liverpool in February 1962 and the only existing footage of their tour of Scotland — from Caird Hall, Dundee in October 1964 — are archival treasures to be savored and watched time and time again.

Who says there's nothing new under the sun when it comes to the Fab Four?

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