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**BEATLEMANIAC**—"But naturally they make you want to scream, daddy-o; that's the whole idea of the Beatles' sound."

# Britons Succumb To 'Beatlemania'

By **FREDERICK LEWIS**

LONDON.

**T**HEY are fighting all over Britain. Rarely a night passes without an outbreak in some town or other. Sometimes it is a mere skirmish involving a few hundred police, but more often there is a pitched battle, with broken legs, cracked ribs and bloody noses. The police do their best, but it is well known that they are secretly in sympathy with the battlers.

The cause of this shattering of the English peace is a phenomenon called The Beatles. To see a Beatle is joy, to touch one paradise on earth, and for just the slimmest opportunity of this privilege, people will fight like mad things and with the dedication normally reserved for a Great Cause, like national survival.

The Beatles are four young men who play guitars and drums and sing pop songs they write themselves. This sounds like merely a minor accomplishment, but it isn't — not the way they do it, and the noise they make while they are doing it, and the spectacularly demented way they look while they are doing it. By comparison, Elvis Presley is an Edwardian tenor of considerable diffidence.

For months now they have been the preoccupation of the British, eclipsing the Govern-

ment, the prospects of a general election, Christine Keeler, even football. One shake of the bushy fringe of their identical, moplike haircuts is enough to start a riot in any theater where they are appearing and bring out the massed and augmented forces of order, ranging from the fire brigade to elderly auxiliary constables called up from retirement because there aren't sufficient ordinary coppers to cope.

**A** SAMPLE of the battle reports for the first ten days of November shows that in Carlisle, 400 schoolgirls fought the police for four hours while attempting to get tickets for a Beatles show; that in Dublin, young limbs snapped like twigs in a tremendous free-for-all during the Beatles' first visit to the city (the police chief, with characteristic Irishness, said: "It was all right until the mania degenerated into barbarism"), that at London Airport, a woman news reporter had her left hand kissed repeatedly, simply because the hand had accidentally brushed the sleeve of a Beatle; that during rehearsals for the Royal Variety Show, the Beatles were marooned inside the London Palladium for 13 hours because the authorities considered it

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(Continued from Preceding Page) unsafe for them to leave; and that in Birmingham; the only way the boys could evade the mob was to disguise themselves as police, complete with capes and helmets.

And you don't have to be a genuine Beatle to come in for the mob treatment. A lad in Bedford who has a similar haircut and a vague facial resemblance to one of the singers was set upon by a score of girls. "It's always happening to me," he said philosophically.

**T**HE four Beatles are John Lennon, 23, the leader of the group and the only one who is married; Paul McCartney, 21; George Harrison, 20; and Ringo Starr, 23. In nine months they have sold nearly 3 million records with titles like "From Me To You," "Twist and Shout" and "Love Me Do." Their music is basically rock 'n' roll, but less formalized, slightly more inventive. Their act, which includes much ad-libbing between numbers, is both hilarious and outrageous.

The ad-libbing is something they learned while they were working the clubs in Hamburg, the city which gave them their basic professionalism. Hour after hour, in three or four clubs a night, they toiled away at the massive, unvarying beat doted on by German audiences. To relieve the boredom they took to shouting English obscenities at the Germans. This went down very well, being beyond the comprehension of the audience, which thought the obscenities were an essential part of an act by an English beat group.

Nowadays, when the screams get too loud, the boys advance on the footlights and in unison shout: "Aw, shurrup!" Other words are added, off microphone. They tend not to be of the sort reproduceable in newspapers.

**F**OR special occasions the formula is varied slightly. At the Royal Variety Show the Beatles instructed the audience: "Those in the cheaper seats can clap their hands during the next number. The rest of you can rattle your jewelry."

Offstage, their comments are apt and, for people without the services of a script writer, neatly phrased. McCartney, on the popular reaction to the group: "The kind of impact we're having now is like what my old aunt felt when she first heard Bing Crosby." Harrison: "Naturally, I'm part of my generation, which means I couldn't stand waiting for a horse to take me to the village pub like they used to." And Starr, with the apposite quote on the long-term prospects of a short-term tradesman: "I suppose I'd like to end up sort of unforgettable."

Their impact on Britain has been greater than that of any other exponent of pop music.

There has been adulation before, with Johnnie ("Cry") Ray in the early 1950s and later with home-grown singers like Tommy Steele and Cliff Richard, but no one has taken the national fancy as have the Beatles. Their appeal is strongest to females between 10 and 30, but Beatlemania, as it is called, affects all social classes and all levels of intelligence.

At the Royal Variety Show the Queen Mother was seen clapping on the off-beat and Princess Margaret snapped her fingers to show she was with it, too. Prime Minister Sir Alec Douglas-Home could not get through his election campaign at Kinross without declaring to the electorate that he doted on the Beatles, and he gave

born. But when the nonsense is blown away, these seem to be the basic factors in the extraordinary success of the Beatles:

They are working-class, and their roots and attitudes are firmly of the North of England. Because of their success they can act as spokesmen for the new, noisy, anti-Establishment generation which is becoming a force in British life. In their uncompromising Northernness, they are linked with actors like Albert Finney in the theater and films and with novelists like Alan Sillitoe and John Braine.

**T**HE Beatles are part of a strong-flowing reaction against the soft, middle-class South of England, which has

Yearning is out. Jealousy and recrimination don't get into the lyrics either. Instead, the Beatle position concerning girls is cheerful and obvious: grab the bird you fancy and if it doesn't work there will be another one along in a minute.

This kind of rudely honest urgency is apparent, too, in the boys' feelings about the future. For them, the future is not some peaceful, pensioned retirement in the country: it is just around the corner, and probably includes the Bomb.

The massive forces of British psychology have been turned on the Beatles. The analyses range from the oh-gosh variety typified by the expert who told one news-



**ROYAL APPROVAL**—Princess Margaret chats with the Beatles after the Royal Variety Show in November. From left: Ringo Starr, John Lennon, George Harrison and Paul McCartney—all were born in Liverpool.

the right answer at an election meeting to the joker who asked him: "Would you let your daughter marry a Beatle?"

The most unpopular politician in Britain is Edward Heath, a Conservative minister who was rash enough to announce that he didn't think the Beatles spoke the Queen's English. His daily mail has since contained threats of violence and sinister drawings of black beetles. The Beatles' rehearsals now always begin with Lennon intoning: "We will now have the cursing of Edward Heath."

**T**HE reasons for their appeal have been analyzed and annotated in millions of words in newspapers, magazines, and sociological and psychological journals. They have generated as much fog as you will see on a winter's morning in Liverpool, the rough old port where the Beatles were

controlled popular culture for so long. The most important thing about the Beatles is that they come from Liverpool. In this city, where the Catholics and Protestants still fight every Saturday night after the pubs have closed, there are close to 300 beat groups performing in converted cinemas, cellar clubs—anywhere where an amplifier can be plugged in. The combined din they make has come to be known as the Liverpool Sound. The significance of the Sound is that it is a raspberry blown in the direction of London.

The rise of the Beatles also marks the end of American domination of popular music in Britain. Naturally, songs from the U.S. will continue to pour in, but the recordings which reach the hit parade have to be made by British groups. The songs which the Beatles write themselves have underlined a change in the attitude to sex in pop music.

paper: "We admire their freshness and innocence so much that it's almost like giving birth," to the sternly historical view which points out that some fertility symbols in pre-Hellenic culture took the form of guitar-shaped statuettes.

**T**HE Beatles' fan mail is perhaps a sounder guide. A Nottingham girl writes: "I have been crazy on you lot since May 27. I have also spent £3 16s 11d on you if my maths are correct." A Sunderland girl writes: "I sock anybody who says you're moody."

"All this nonsense about a 'Liverpool Sound,'" says Paul McCartney, "it doesn't exist, not really. It's a load of rubbish." John Lennon adds: "Well, it's fun, of course. We're having a fab time. But it can't last long. Anyway, I'd hate to be old. Just imagine it. Who would want to listen to an 80 year-old Beatle?"



**BUOYANT BEATLES**—Britain's frenetically famous pop-singers cut loose during rehearsals for a Royal Variety Show. Their fans marooned them in the theater for 13 hours.



*Right—*  
**BEATLE BATTLE**—Police struggle to restore order among a wildly adulatory crowd of teen-agers attending a Beatle concert held in Manchester.