

The Beatles In Cleveland

By Helen Marketti

The last line of the concert poster reads "Don't Miss this Historic Show!" Historic indeed as the ticket prices alone seem embarrassing by today's rock and roll standards.

For the best seats going for \$5.50 rock and roll fanatics witnessed opening acts such as the talented female trio, The Ronettes. Wearing their matching outfits with stylish big hair and unison movements they sang "Be My Baby" and "Da Doo Run Run" before exiting the stage.

The crowd was more than warmed up by then on a summer night in Cleveland, Ohio. In fact they were bordering on a chaotic frenzy that was only going to be pushed further to the brink when the "main event" was introduced and took the stage: THE BEATLES!

There is no denying that The Beatles created a powerful surge during the 60s that broke through barriers of culture, society, traditional image and of course, music. Now over forty years later we are still rockin' and reelin' from the impact of their contribution as each generation finds their own way to resonate with a band that continues to influence the masses. What is it about them that has such staying power?

"It was their music, their attitude, their look and style," explains Dave Schwensen. "Their tunes were catchy and the lyrics mean as much today as they did back then. You could express yourself better as a male because of them. The original stars had been in correct alignment."

Dave's book *The Beatles In Cleveland* (North Shore Publishing) is a reminiscent page turning collection of those who remember when The Beatles were in Cleveland. Many may be surprised to learn that The Beatles did two concerts in Cleveland, Ohio. September 15, 1964 and August 14, 1966 have now taken an official foothold as part of Cleveland's rich rock and roll history through Dave's book.

Growing up in near by Vermilion Dave remembers when The Beatles debuted on the Ed Sullivan Show on February 9, 1964. He instantly became a fan and it seemed only natural when The Beatles came to Cleveland that Dave wanted to be there. His parents willingly obliged and took him.

"Seeing The Beatles in concert has always been a conversation piece since I was in eighth grade," Dave remembers. "People always thought it was cool that I had seen them in person."

Writing the book seemed to naturally fall into place as one story lead to another. Dave explains, "When I moved back to the area I became more interested in writing.. I began writing concert reviews for the Lorain Morning Journal. One night I needed something to write about and just could not think of anything. So I decided I would write about having seen The Beatles in concert."

After the article went to print Dave began to receive emails from people who wanted to know more about his experience of having seen The Beatles. From there he received personal stories from those who had attended either one or both Beatle shows in Cleveland as well.

"That's when I started the web site," Dave said. "Now there was a place for people to share their stories and photos. The emails still kept rolling in."

Each person seemed to know of someone else whom they felt Dave should talk to and that is how it all began. He was able to speak with original Cleveland DJs such as Jerry G. Bishop and Jack Armstrong, original promoters, journalists, photographers, fans who were there and many others.

"It was networking with all of the connections I had and finding out more about the Beatle gigs in Cleveland," Dave said. "Some of the folks I have interviewed have since passed away (Jack Armstrong, Joe Stipe) so I am very grateful to have had a chance to speak with them."

The Beatles In Cleveland was warmly welcomed and appreciated even by those who have their own footprint in Beatles history. Bill Harry, founder of the Mersey Beat newspaper in Liverpool, England had been an art college classmate and friend of John Lennon. Bill was part of their close circle of friends in the early days. He wrote the foreword for Dave's book.

Ken Mansfield who was the former US Manager of The Beatles Apple Records was hesitant at first about Dave's book. "He suggested that I write about all of their US concerts," Dave remembers. "He didn't think it was enough that I was only going to write about their two shows in Cleveland. I told him that I wasn't at any other shows elsewhere. I wanted to write what I already knew something about."

Once Ken Mansfield had received the finished copy of the book he contacted Dave and said that he could not put the book down once he started reading it.

Dave is currently making appearances in various cities to discuss his book and offer a unique visual presentation that is unlike any other. He is also using his book presentations as a key note topic at many events which has been very well received. He has other motivational topics to choose from also such as "Humoring Your Clients and Coworkers" and "Humoring Your Friends and Family".

Dave's experiences and background are more than recording Beatles events in Cleveland. He is a nationally recognized comedy coach who conducts seminars and workshops in cities across the United States. He has worked as a Talent Coordinator for A & E's *An Evening At The Improv*. He also booked talent for Improv Comedy Clubs in New York City and Hollywood. He has served as a comedy consultant for many television and film productions including, *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson and Jay Leno, *Late Night* with David Letterman, *The Today Show*, *Comedy Central* and many more.

When asked if a Volume II of *The Beatles In Cleveland* were a possibility Dave said, "I think so because I am still getting emails from people who have stories and photos to share. Although I try not to live in the past I do love great memories."

www.thebeatlesincleveland.com



The Beatles with Jerry G. Bishop (1966) - Cleveland, OH



The Beatles In Cleveland (Book Cover)

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