

GARDEN IMAGES

By Helen Marketti

Intimidating glares between boxing greats Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier, the New York Knicks securing the NBA championship, Mark Messier of the New York Rangers lifting the Stanley Cup, George Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh, Pope John Paul II whose visit filled the entire 20,000 seat capacity are but a few of the momentous occasions that were witnessed and captured in stunning photographs at Madison Square Garden in New York City.

Also known as "The Garden" - Madison Square Garden has been the home for many historical events in sports, entertainment and politics. Capturing the emotion in the images so that people continue to remember, relive and learn from is George Kalinsky.

George has been The Garden photographer since 1966. He has attended over 8,000 events, took over two million pictures and those images have appeared on

over 1,000 magazine and book covers combined. His photographs have been used on CBS, ABC, ESPN, HBO and FOX.

George has taken portraits of famous people which include Presidents, Senators and so on, never knowing if an image he captures will have a significant meaning later. He photographed the



last public appearance of John Lennon and took one of the last images of John F. Kennedy, Jr. He has photographed with energy and excitement for over forty years. Having graduated with a degree in design from Pratt Institute, George had taken photographs to record his designs and creations (including the Princess telephone) and also took pictures of the world around him.

Originally he wanted to be a sports cartoonist and imagined his work on the cover of Time Magazine and on the covers of comic books. This was a dream he kept in mind until a day in 1966 while walking around Miami changed his career direction.

While walking past the Fifth Street Gym that day, George happened to spot Muhammad Ali walking in the gym with Howard Cosell. "I had my camera with me so I followed them but was stopped at the door by Ali's trainer, Angelo Dundee," explains George. "I asked him if I could take some shots and without thinking I said I was the photographer for Madison Square Garden." This turned out to be a self-fulfilling prophecy that would come true shortly thereafter.

Angelo Dundee had



George Kalinsky stands in front of his Elvis Presley, Jimi Hendrix, and Frank Sinatra billboards in Times Square

called George "Mr. Comedian" for the reference of being a photographer at The Garden and let George in the gym. He took some photos of Ali who was the first famous person that George ever photographed. After that he had heard that Muhammad Ali's championship fight had been cancelled so George had photos that no one else would be able to have access to. Knowing this he went to the Miami Herald and asked if they were interested in his photographs. The Miami Herald sent some of the shots of Ali around the country and now everyone was seeing George's photos.

Returning to New York George took his film to Madison Square Garden to show John Condon who worked in Public Relations. John liked the photos,

impressed that George brought his one and only roll of sports film that lead John to say, "If you have the chutzpah to bring me one roll of film, the only one you've ever taken of any sports action, then I have the chutzpah to hire you." That is how George's career began at Madison Square Garden. "When people ask me about photography and what it



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takes to be a great photographer I always tell them to read a design book," says George.

"Knowledge in design

element helps to learn how to take great photographs."

George uses his own ideas and creativity when photographing events at The Garden. "I move around at events to take photographs. For my own sanity I like to be in different spots. During a Knicks game I am usually



Mary J. Blige and Jay-Z

under the basket unless it's a playoff game - then I will move around more because of what is going on. I look to where the light is coming from when I take a photo. When photographing people, I'm looking for whatever emotion I can find. Like a great work of art to a painter...I paint with my lens."

He continues, "A great photograph will speak for itself. You need composition and emotion. If you don't have both in a photo then something is missing."

Photographing Judy Garland was one of the first assignments he ever had. Off stage she was troubled and lonely. She had difficulty standing and walking without assistance. But once she took the stage she was fine and felt at home. "Many performers are actually very shy," said George. "Once they are on stage they are comfortable because they love the audience and the audience loves them."

Many of George's images are currently on display at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland. The exhibit: *Live from Madison Square Garden: From the Lens of*



David Bowie

George Kalinsky will be on display until January 31st, 2010. Photographs included in the display are images of David Bowie, Elvis Presley, Robert

Plant, John Lennon and many more.

George has also brought other creative elements into his photos by adding splashes of color for a different look. "I like to experiment with different medias. I'm relatively new to this, having started in the last 3 or 4 years," said George. "People seem to love it. I am also interested in possibly trying 3-D images with photographs I've taken."

When asked what his thoughts were about his work over the years at The Garden, George responded, "Luck is a very important tool. Being in the right place at the right time. I have been very fortunate and blessed with tremendous opportunity. I have not taken the opportunity lightly. I have to rise to the occasion each time. I have been privileged to have documented a great amount of history with my photographs. Madison Square Garden is the world's largest arena, the biggest stage and I am very fortunate to have the best seat in the house."

For more information about George Kalinsky and where you may also see additional images of his photographs that include sports figures, entertainers and nature please visit: www.georgekalinsky.com

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