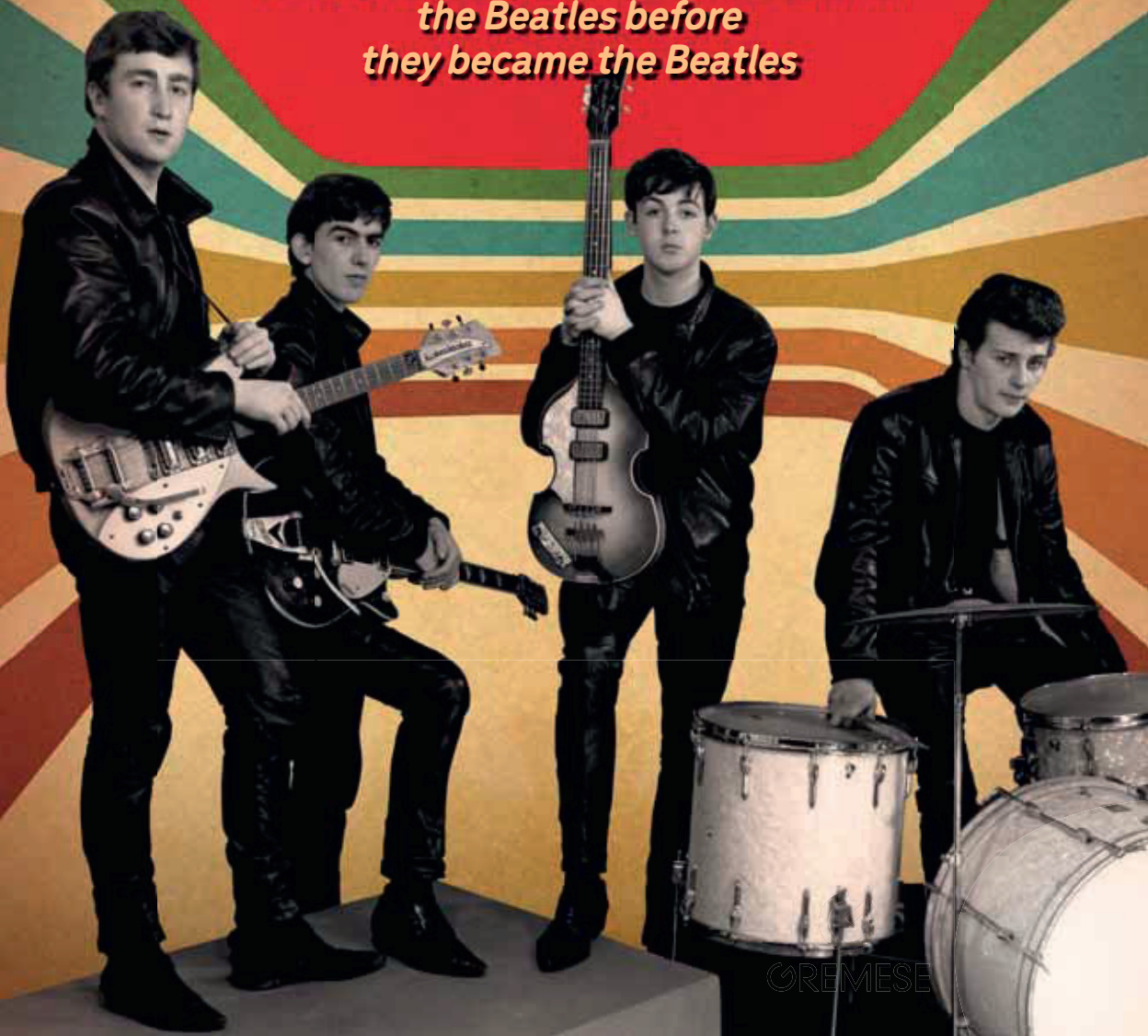


MARCO CRESCENZI

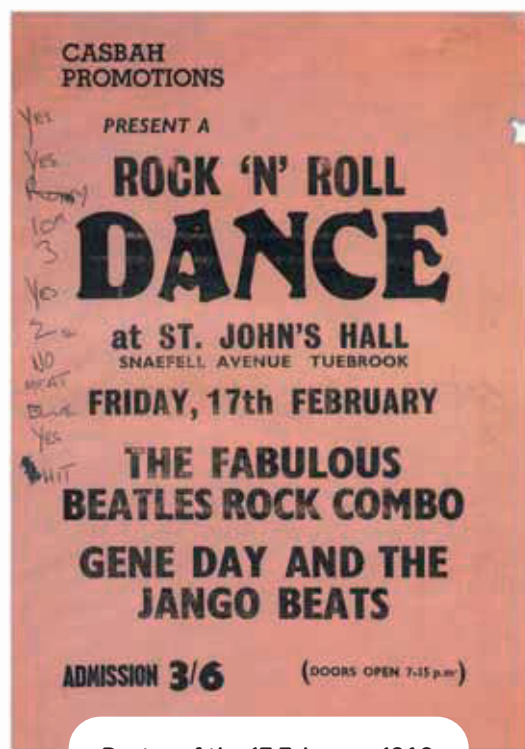
The SILVER BEATLES

*A Story of Struggle, Luck and Genius:
the Beatles before
they became the Beatles*



GREMSE

1960



Poster of the 17 February 1960 evening at the Casbah Coffee Club.

The Silver Beatles Are Born

It is now January 1960. The Beatles (the band's name for now, and we will see why), from three members were now four. This was with the arrival of Stuart Sutcliffe, a friend of John Lennon's since art school. Stuart's only merit (since he was absolutely hopeless at playing a musical instrument) was to have bought a bass guitar with the money he had earned from selling one of his paintings.

The quartet performed in a series of concerts from January to May 1960 – but each time under a different name. The following is a detailed list of these performances (and names):

January

Liverpool, Liverpool College of Art School Hall.
Student fete.
Performance as the Quarrymen.



**10 May 1960. The Beatles
audition for Larry Parnes
and Billy Fury.**

February

Liverpool, Cassanova Club.
Performance as the "Beatals".

23 and 24 April

Caversham, Fox & Hounds Public House.
Performance only with the duo John Lennon
and Paul McCartney as the Nerk Twins.

This abundance of different names brings us to 10 May, when after the umpteenth name change, the Quarrymen, Beatals etc. ceased to exist and became the Silver Beatles (which temporarily became the Silver *Beetles* during a tour with Johnny Gentle).

The members of the band were John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Stuart Sutcliffe, and the Cassanovas' drummer, Johnny Hutchinson. The latter was recruited at the last minute when their previous drummer, Thomas



Moore, left them high and dry (Moore, as in a scene from the most classic comedy, arrived in the middle of the performance...).

And so on 10 May 1960 the Silver Beatles went to audition for the band that would accompany Billy Fury on tour. Fury was a big Liverpool pop star who belonged to the stables managed by boss Larry Parnes.

When Parnes and Fury heard the Beatles, they were impressed. Yet they also both agreed that Stuart had to go. When Parnes asked if the band could play without Stuart, Lennon is said to have replied that it would be all the band or no one. And so no one it was for the Billy Fury tour, a glaring example of how to miss an opportunity by not being open to compromise. Since the band was not chosen for the Billy Fury tour, it was thought the band could play with another artist, Johnny Gentle, also a star in the Parnes stables. He would soon be going on tour to Scotland and northern England.

After the audition, the band performed another time under the unusual name of the Silver Beats:



Here and on opposite page:
Other images of the same audition. Bass guitarist Stuart Sutcliffe turned his back so that Parnes would not notice his lack of skill as a musician.

14 May 1960

Lathom Hall, Seaforth, Liverpool.
With Cliff Roberts and the Rockers, the Deltones, King Size Taylor and the Dominoes.

After that engagement, the Beatles left on the low budget tour with Johnny Gentle that wound its way through seven dates from Friday 20 to Saturday 28 May 1960. As even the most uninformed Beatlemania fan would know, for the tour some of the Silver Beatles invented stage names for themselves. John Lennon, however, kept his own (after all, he was the leader...), but Paul McCartney became "Paul Ramon", George Harrison "Carl Harrison", Stuart Sutcliffe "Stuart de Stael". The drummer, Thomas Moore, was happy to put "Tommy" next to his real family name. Here are the details of the concerts:

20 May 1960

Afternoon

Alloa, Town Hall.

Evening

Alloa, Town Hall.

With Tommy Steele, Alex Harvey & His Beat Band, Bobby Rankine.

21 May 1960

Inverness, Northern Meeting Ballroom.
With Ronnie Watt, the Chekkers Rock Dance Band.

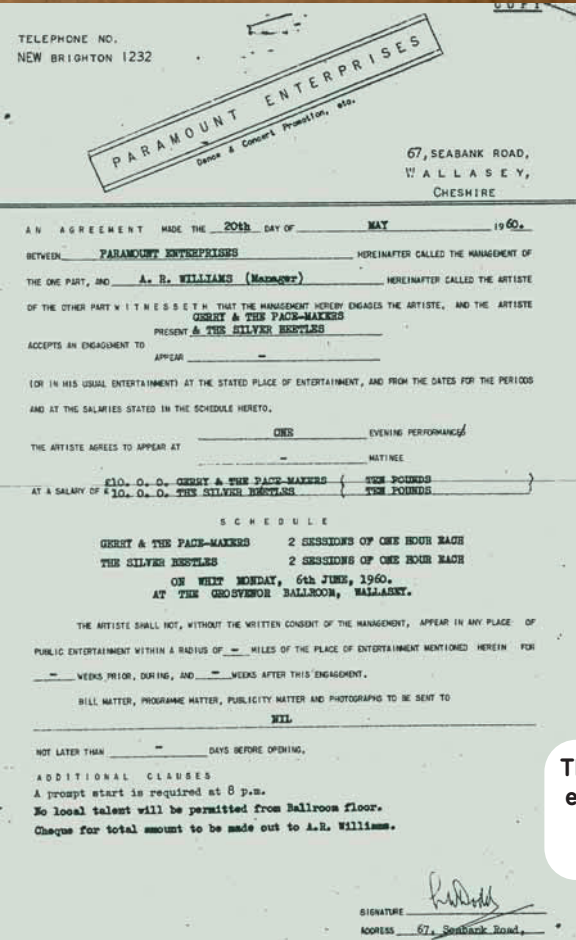
23 May 1960

Fraserburgh, Dalrymple Hall.

25 May 1960

Keith, St. Thomas' Hall.

The contract signed on 20 May 1960 for an evening engagement of the Silver Beatles at the Grosvenor Ballroom for 6 June of that year.



26 May 1960

Forres, Town Hall.
With Rikki Barnes & His All Stars, Lena & Stevie.

27 May 1960

Nairn, Regal Ballroom.

28 May 1960

Peterhead, Rescue Hall.

The Silver Beatles spent June, July and part of August performing in a series of quite unlucrative evenings in and around Liverpool:

30 May 1960

Liverpool, Jacaranda Coffee Bar.

2 June 1960

Neston, the Institute.

4 June 1960

Liscard, Corporation's Grosvenor Ballroom.

6 June 1960

Liscard, Corporation's Grosvenor Ballroom.
With Gerry & the Pacemakers.

9 June 1960

Neston, the Institute.

11 June 1960

Liscard, Corporation's Grosvenor Ballroom
(without Thomas Moore).

13 June 1960

Liverpool, Jacaranda Coffee Bar.



10 May 1960. In the centre, Billy Fury, and on the right, Larry Parnes, as they watch the Beatles (out of range) with perplexity.

THE SILVER BEATLES
(John Lennon, Paul McCartney,
George Harrison, Stuart Sutcliffe)

16 June 1960

Neston, the Institute.
With Keith Rowlands & the Deesiders.

18 June 1960

Liscard, Corporation's Grosvenor Ballroom.

23 June 1960

Neston, the Institute.

25 June 1960

Liscard, Corporation's Grosvenor Ballroom.

30 June 1960

Neston, the Institute.

2 July 1960

Liscard, Corporation's Grosvenor Ballroom
(with Johnny Gentle).

7 July 1960

Neston, the Institute.

9 July 1960

Liscard, Corporation's Grosvenor Ballroom.

10 July 1960

Liverpool, Jacaranda Coffee Bar.
Evening as backing band for Royston Ellis.

11-15 July 1960

Liverpool, New Cabaret Artistes.
Backing band for striptease artist Janice.
Repertory performed:
The Third Man
Summertime
Moonglow and Theme from "Picnic"
September Song
It's a Long Way to Tipperary
Begin the Beguine

15 July 1960

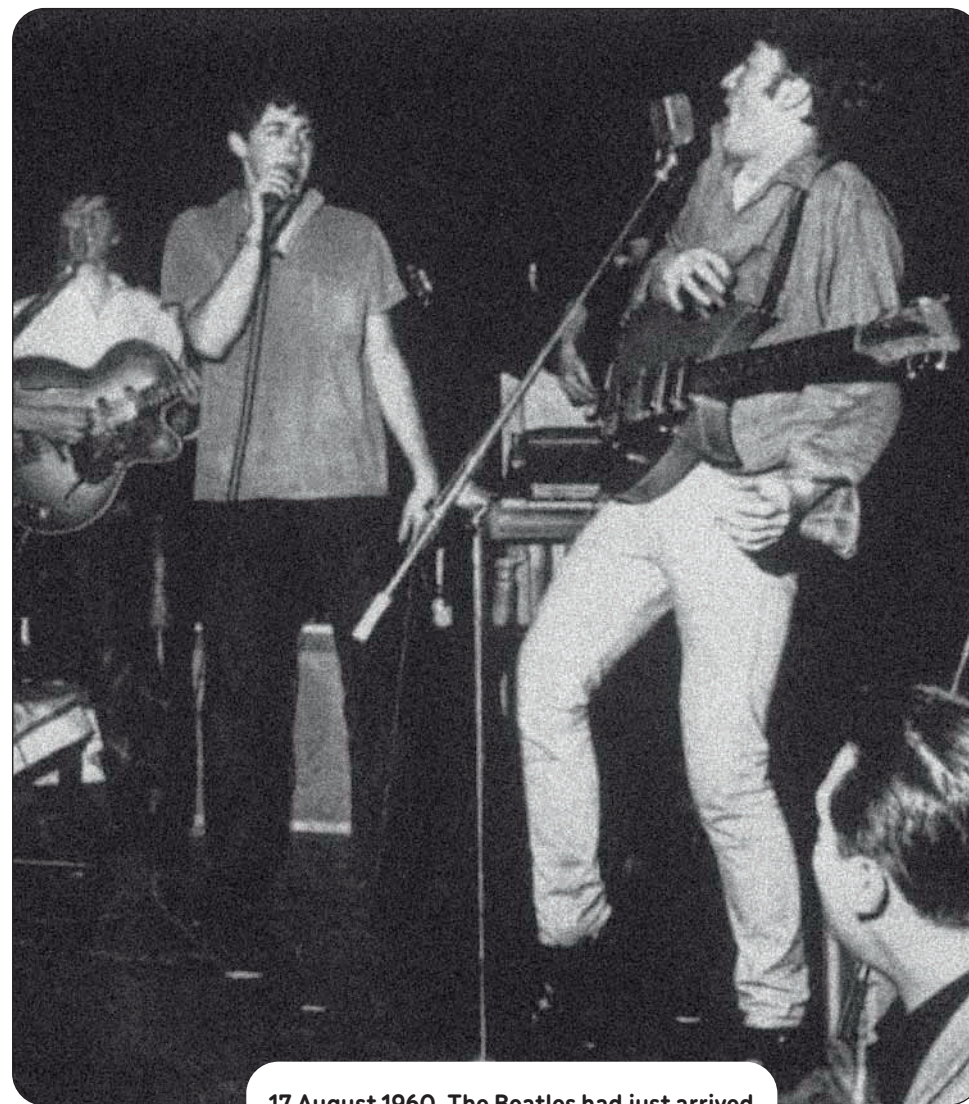
Liverpool, New Colony Club.

THE SILVER BEATLES
(John Lennon, Paul McCartney,
George Harrison, Stuart Sutcliffe,
Norman Chapman)

16, 23 and 30 July 1960

Liscard, Corporation's Grosvenor Ballroom.

intervene, and as a result the venue was closed. It could only finally reopen for business under the strict condition that rock 'n' roll be prohibited from its programs. It was becoming more and more difficult, the way things were going, for the band to perform at home. And so it happened that the Beatles, persuaded by their manager Alan Williams, found themselves on 16 August 1960 on a flight



17 August 1960. The Beatles had just arrived in Hamburg and were already sent onstage at the Indra Club.

Bye Bye Liverpool - Hamburg Here We Come!

Suddenly, the opportunity of a lifetime: "Here come The Beatles!" This was the cry of American teenagers everywhere in 1964 during the Fab Four's first tour to the U.S. In 1960, it had been announced that the name of the band would definitively be The Beatles.

During the band's final performance in Liverpool on 30 July 1960 at the Grosvenor Ballroom, the show was interrupted (or at least so the story goes) when a huge brawl broke out. There were some wounded, the police had to



Here and on opposite page:

17 August 1960. Onstage at the Indra Club, Paul McCartney and John Lennon get people from the audience to participate.

to Hamburg where they arrived at 5 pm. The members of the band were John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Pete Best and, finally, Stuart Sutcliffe. As you will recall, Pete Best's mother was Mona Best, the owner of the Casbah Club. And you will remember that the band took Pete Best onboard after a farce of an "audition" on 12 August. In fact, it was only because the band had been chronically out of a drummer for so long that they seized on Best.

On that 16 August 1960, they were bound for the dives of Hamburg's famous red light district, the Reeperbahn. The band was playing at the Indra Club that very evening, and would be there until 3 October. It was a gruelling feat of a total of 48 evenings and over 200 stage hours. Then, because of some of the complaints of the regulars at the Club who objected to the... noise (!) the owner – their 'employer' – Bruno Koschmider, decided to transfer the band to the Kaiserkeller, another one of Koschmider's clubs. The Beatles played at the Kaiserkeller from 4 October to 30 November 1960, for a total of 58 nights. Koschmider (whose past included the Panzerdivisionen during WWII), kept prodding them to "Mach schau!" ("Make show!"). In his mind, this meant the Beatles should be in a perpetual hysterical frenzy as they performed. The five musicians, however, after a short-lived period of reverent fear of Koschmider,

began to simply ignore their boss' ranting and raving. Indeed they remained provocatively frozen their whole time on stage.

During that time a new club opened in Hamburg at 136 Reeperbahn. It was the Top Ten Club, a venue of quite a different calibre than the Kaiserkeller (at least according to Hamburg standards). The owner of the new club, Peter Eckhorn, was determined to outdo Koschmider. He began by hiring his rival's bouncer Horst Fascher, and then performers, singer Tony Sheridan and the Jets, who were becoming very popular. The Beatles, who knew Sheridan, would sometimes go to the Top Ten after their own appearances at the Kaiserkeller to watch his shows. And not only to watch, apparently, since their boss Koschmider accused the Beatles of breach of contract (the clause that stipulated that they could not perform within a radius of 40 kilometres from the Kaiserkeller), Koschmider gave the Beatles a month's notice that he was firing them for having played at the Top Ten Club. The month's notice became much shorter than expected, thanks to Koschmider's "tattling". He tipped off the police that the minor George Harrison, breaking all laws in Germany, was performing in the strictly off limits quarter of the Reeperbahn. This resulted in George being expelled from West Germany and

sent back to Britain on 21 October. The Beatles, worried about another "close encounter" with their former "benefactor", escaped to the Top Ten Club where owner Peter Eckhorn put them up in the attic (if not out of charity, at least as a jab to his business rival).

One night, Paul and Best decided to collect their clothes and household things from the backrooms of the Bambi Kino, a third rate (third only because there was no fourth, fifth or sixth) cinema. Thanks to Koschmider's "generosity", the band had been lodged in the dressing rooms of the theatre. In their attempt to recover whatever they could in the dark, the two "burglar geniuses" thought of lighting a condom – something the Beatles were never without – and hanging it on one of the walls (according to other sources, however, the two in fact set the wallpaper on fire). Groping through the dim light, they managed to seize their things and hurry out, but completely forgot to put out the crazy lantern. The flame went out on its own in the squalid place, though this gave Koschmider the idea of accusing them of having tried to burn the cinema down. In less than an hour, McCartney was arrested by some diligent police officers and thrown in jail, and Best soon joined him. The next morning they were quite literally kicked out, and barely managed to get back to the Top Ten Club before they were arrested again and expelled from the country.

The two musicians arrived in Liverpool on 1 December, crestfallen, exhausted and, again, out of work. The Beatles who had survived, that is, John Lennon and Stuart Sutcliffe, suddenly found themselves without their comrades-in-arms and friends. John returned to Liverpool after several adventurous exploits. Stuart's girlfriend Astrid Kirchherr let him hide out at her place, so terrorized was Stuart at the idea of being "deported".

At this point, we must make a confession. The story told up to here is in fact nothing but legend. Documents discovered in the archives of the Federal Republic of Germany and reproduced here, indicate that the Beatles in fact entered Germany with normal residence permits on all of their trips, including the first one. Yet even today, it is believed and claimed that the boys crossed the border as students on a trip. The Beatles, however, had employment contracts and work permits in hand, in addition to their residence permits. The German authorities were perfectly aware of the reason for their trip – from the day before the band's arrival in Germany – and the venue where they were performing. Above all, it was clear that Harrison was a minor and that he would be working in a club in the red-light district. As for the other myth (according to which Lennon and Sutcliffe had gone into hiding), the documents clearly show that Sutcliffe had vouched for Lennon in order to keep him from being expelled on the spot. Considering how



Paul McCartney now showing the strain of keeping up with the infernal pace of performances.

rooted this myth is among Beatles fans, all of this documentation as a whole is of earth-shaking importance, as if, for example, an entire unreleased album by the Fab Four had suddenly been discovered! Before all of these pleasant arrests and expulsions, the Beatles had managed to do the only good thing of their entire stay in Hamburg. On 30 November they came to an agreement to perform at the Top Ten Club if their expulsion order were ever revoked.

The band's performances during this period could be summarized as follows:

THE SILVER BEATLES

(John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Stuart Sutcliffe, Pete Best)

12 August 1960

Liverpool, Wyvern Social Club.
Audition for a new drummer.

17 August-3 October 1960

Hamburg, Indra Club.

4 October-30 November 1960

Hamburg, Kaiserkeller.

With Rory Storm & the Hurricanes
(from 21 November without George Harrison).

The Beatles returned home again, but without Stuart. He arrived in Liverpool at the end of February 1961, only to then immediately turn around and go back to his Astrid. In the meantime, the band had begun performing at venues around Liverpool. Notably, on 27 December at the Town Hall Ballroom, where they were billed alongside the Del Renas, Searchers and Deltones.

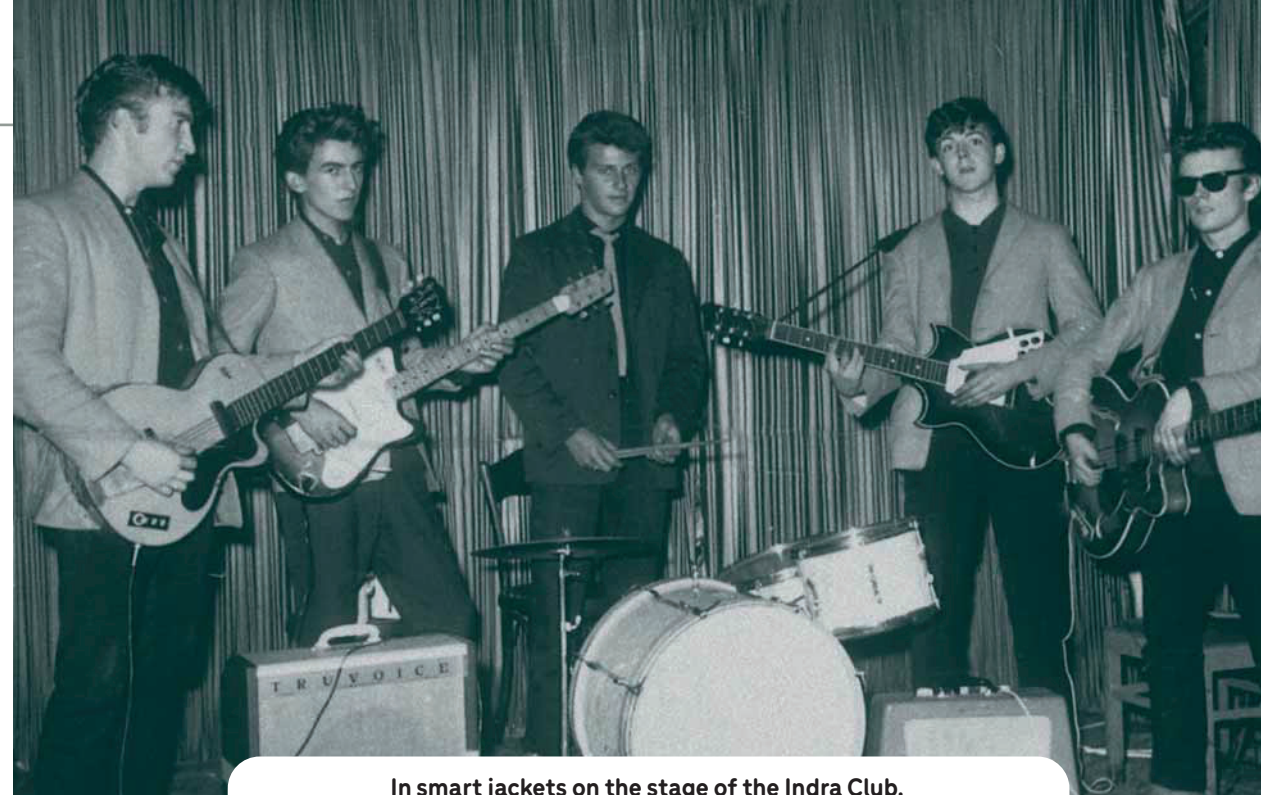
For the first time, scenes of hysteria broke out in the audience (though the term "Beatlemania" would be coined later). And, to be quite honest, the Beatles had actually been taken for a German band. Whatever the case, this

End November 1960

Hamburg, Top Ten Club.
With Tony Sheridan & the Jets.

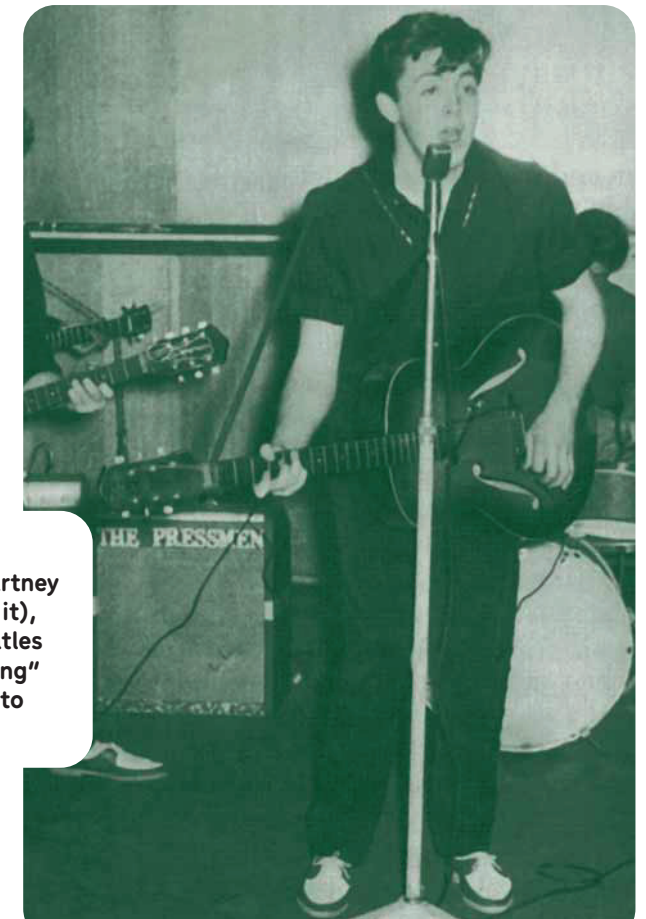


The poster announcing that the Beatles were playing from October to November 1960 in Hamburg.



In smart jackets on the stage of the Indra Club. The Club, famous thanks to the Beatles, resisted the test of time and is open still today.

resulted in McCartney and his buddies being booked for 36 concerts, from January to March 1961.



As can be seen on the amplifier behind Paul McCartney (with "The Pressmen" on it), in the early sixties the Beatles were famous for "borrowing" equipment they needed to perform onstage.

A story of struggle, luck and genius: the Beatles before they became the Beatles

Marco Crescenzi

THE SILVER BEATLES

A Story of Struggle, Luck and Genius:
the Beatles before they became the Beatles

Original English Edition, translated from the Italian.

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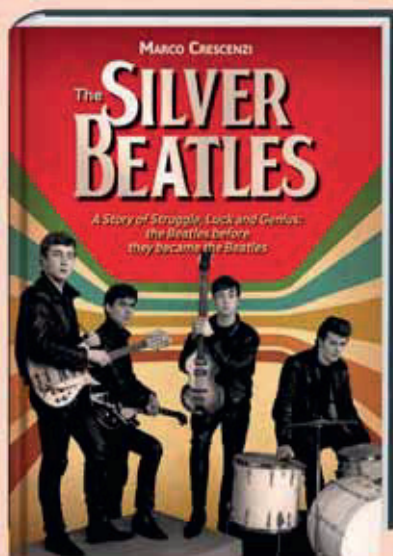


➔ Marco Crescenzi, an expert about everything concerning the story of the Fab Four, traces the first years of the most famous band in the world, a period often missing in official biographies. He explores the Beatles path of fate and fortune, their struggles and inspired talent. This journey is enriched by an impressive mosaic of rare photos, rediscovered documents, and many details of concerts and appearances of these early days.

The Beatles, the most renowned band in the history of music, didn't just spring into existence. Their journey began in the mid-1950s when John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, Stuart Sutcliffe, and Pete Best formed a group known as the Silver Beatles. They were simply four teenagers from Liverpool with a shared enthusiasm for American music and a dream to make it big.

Before they became the Beatles, they were the Quarrymen, a band started by John Lennon in 1956. The name change to „The Beetles“ was suggested by Sutcliffe, in honor of Buddy Holly's band, The Crickets. By August 1960, they had evolved into The Beatles we know and love today.

Their early years were filled with struggles and moments of both luck and genius. Playing gigs in places like Liverpool's Cavern Club and Hamburg's red-light district, they worked tirelessly, honing their craft. Their break came when they met Brian Epstein, who would become their manager, leading them to a contract with EMI.



This is the extraordinary story of the Beatles before they became The Beatles - a tale of determination, passion, and the will to succeed against all odds. As we mark the 60th anniversary of their first explosive hit „Love Me Do“, we celebrate not just the success they achieved, but the journey they took to get there.

As of today, The Beatles continue to make headlines, with the release of their final song „Now And Then“ and a documentary shedding light on the full story behind it.

➔ About the author:
Marco Crescenzi is an obsessive collector of anything concerning The Beatles. He currently works with the official Italian fan club "The Official Beatles Fan Club Pepperland". He is also a contributor to its official publication, the magazine "Nothing's Gonna Change Our Feeling". The author has also written for the music collector's magazine "RARO" and acted as consultant on many occasions to television programmes.

