

## History & Pure Fun in 'The Beatles: Eight Days a Week - The Touring Years'

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on September 20, 2016 - 10:26am

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Rating: **5.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – They were the greatest show on earth, for what it was worth, but what they also were was one of the most fascinating show business stories in history. Director Ron Howard encapsulates John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr during their initial meteoric rise in the descriptively titled 'The Beatles: Eight Days a Week - The Touring Years.'

The Beatles history, in ten short years, continues to intrigue and delight rock music scholars and admirers. Ron Howard does a spectacular job of focusing on three crucial years, the years that The Beatles were a traveling road show. Beginning with their conquering of America in February of 1964, through their last organized live concert in San Francisco on August 29th, 1966, the four boys in the band became men, and faced a tsunami of adoration, backlash, surreality and collective joy. This is a love fest by Ron Howard, dedicated to the legions of his fellow baby boomer travelers, and subsequent devotees of a music group that still resonates to today.

In 1957, at a church festival in Liverpool, England, two teenagers met who were destined to re-create rock music. John Lennon and Paul McCartney got together and decided to form a group, and McCartney helped out by bringing in his young friend (and guitarist) George Harrison. After a series of intense roadshows in the next four years through their hometown, wider England and Hamburg (Germany), the last piece of their puzzle came together when they switched drummers to Ringo Starr in 1962.



First U.S. Concert: 'The Beatles: Eight Days a Week - The Touring Years'

*Photo credit: StudioCanal*

As their popularity soared in England and Europe, America was the final frontier. One month after President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, a Beatles fan in Washington, D.C., called a radio station to introduce the song "I Wanna Hold Your Hand" to the these United States, and two months later "The Ed Sullivan Show" featured the band itself. From 1964 through 1966, from city to country, The Beatles were the most popular act in the universe.

What most people forget, and what Ron Howard was able to remember, is that the story of The Beatles is one of the most improbable pieces of show biz history ever. It was a product of the right time, right place and right energy, yes, but it also featured the right four young guys – and youth was necessary to get through the madness – who also had the chops to produce. All the while, as they were going through the grinder of being on the road, with unprecedented popularity, they managed to keep producing pop music masterpieces that still survive the test of time.

Also available to the filmmakers was a cornucopia of 1960s news footage and film treatments of the band, that Howard was able to utilize to the fullest extent. In some instances, the footage is colorized, for an eye-popping look back to what it might have been like to be at that first historic concert (Washington, D.C., again). But really the time capsule is reopened through the black and white news footage, showing the "mania" of the fandom at the time, and glimpses of the act as it exploded. The excitement of it all is reignited in the film, and even as the inevitable backlash occurs, it's all a magical mystery trip.

Celebrity fanatics, news-man-on-the-scene Larry Kane and the two surviving members of the band (Paul and Ringo) give some added perspective through their memories. Whoopi Goldberg is unexpected, but she was truly a child of the 1960s, and lights up when she relates the story of her mother scoring tickets to the famous Shea Stadium concert in 1965 New York City. Ringo, true to form, spoke of the sound system at the Shea concert. which was piped through the baseball team's P.A. system. "Now on second base, Ringoooo Staaaaaaaar."





Paul McCartney and George Harrison Shake it Up, Baby  
Photo credit: StudioCanal

As a bonus to the story, the entire Shea Stadium concert (approximately 25 minutes) has been cleaned up and tacked onto the end of the documentary. If you love their music, you can revel in awe as it conquers a mass of 55,000 souls, in an era where a 500 seat auditorium was considered a success. The music throughout the doc and the concert is cleaned up and enhanced to perfection (credit to Giles Martin, the son of The Beatles original producer George Martin).

If you are a fan, this is something you have to see on the big screen (in Chicago, it's at the historic Music Box Theatre through Sept. 29th). However, the online video service HULU is also releasing the film in a digital format. Close the curtains, turn up the volume and go back to a time that cannot exist anymore, with a band that passed the audition.

*"The Beatles: Eight Days a Week - The Touring Years" is in Chicago at the Music Box Theatre – 3733 North Southport Avenue – through September 29th, 2016. See local listings for other theatrical releases and show times. Also available as a download on HULU.com. Featuring the music and memories of The Beatles – John Lennon. Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr. Written by Mark Monroe. Directed by Ron Howard. Not Rated.*



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