

Music Maker

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Beatlemania The 1960's Phenomenon

Beatlemania was the name given to the intense fan following and media interest in the pop group 'The Beatles' which performed during the 1960s. The band was made up of four members, John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr.

The unknown band started off playing in Hamburg, Germany and later in the Cavern Club in Liverpool. They wore suits and the same uniform distinctive 'Beatle' hair cut. Their second single 'Please Please Me' was recorded in 1962 and shot to number two in the official UK charts.

With the runaway success of 'Please, Please Me' the Beatles found themselves in huge demand for the whole of 1963. They appeared on numerous TV shows as well as writing and recording new singles and albums. The music papers were full of

stories about The Beatles and magazines for teenage girls regularly contained interviews and colour posters. Nineteen sixty-three was also the year The Beatles started to tour the United Kingdom.

The first nationwide tour started in February and lasted for four weeks. It was headed by sixteen-year-old Helen Shapiro and followed by five other acts, the last of which was The Beatles. A local journalist wrote, 'a great reception went to the colourfully dressed Beatles, who almost stole the show, for the audience repeatedly called for them while other artists were performing!'

The second tour lasted for three weeks and began in March. American stars Tommy Roe and Chris Montez led this tour. However, throughout this series of concerts the crowds screamed and screamed for The



Beatles and for the first time in UK history, the American stars were less popular than a UK act.

The third tour started in May and lasted for three weeks. This time the bill was headed by Roy Orbison, a highly successful American singer. However, at the opening show, the American star proved less popular than the Beatles and very quickly the souvenir programs were reprinted to place The Beatles above Orbison.

On October 13th 1963 The Beatles appeared on 'Sunday Night at the London Palladium', the UK's top TV variety show hosted by the young Bruce Forsyth. The show was broadcast live to 15 million viewers. One national newspaper reporting the phenomenal nationwide interest in The Beatles gave it the name 'Beatlemania', and from that day on the name stuck.

The fourth UK tour took place in November. Three days before the tour was to start The Beatles flew into Heathrow Airport to be greeted by thousands of screaming fans, journalists and photographers standing in pouring rain. The wild scenes at the airport caused the British Prime Minister to be obstructed by the crowds and Miss World to be completely ignored. An American TV presenter, Ed Sullivan, was also held up at the airport. He was heard to ask, "Who the heck are The Beatles?" Shortly after, he invited them to America to appear on 'The Ed Sullivan Show', which was watched by 73 million American viewers. This led to The Beatles being recognised as the founders of the live stadium concert after they went on to perform in front of 55,000 fans in Shea Stadium, New York.

Beatlemania. The 1960's Phenomenon

Section A

Choose the best word or group of words to fit the passage and put a ring around your choice.

The Beatles performed music during the 1960s. They wore

1 **jeans** **shorts** **suits** **caps**

and the same distinctive hair cut. Their

2 **first** **second** **third** **fourth**

single shot to number

3 **one** **two** **three** **four**

in the UK charts. Newspapers and magazines were full of stories and coloured

4 **pictures** **articles** **posters** **images**

of The Beatles. They started their first tour in February of

5 **1961.** **1962.** **1963.** **1964.**

In October they were seen by

6 **5 million** **10 million** **15 million** **20 million**

people when they appeared on the TV programme 'Sunday Night at the London Palladium' with Bruce Forsyth.

Section B

1 What was 'Beatlemania'?

2 Name the four members of The Beatles.

3 What was their second single called?

4 What does the phrase 'The Beatles found themselves in huge demand' mean?

5 Why do you think The Beatles were the last act on the posters, which described their first nationwide tour?

6 Why were souvenir programs of their third tour reprinted?

7 How did the name 'Beatlemania' come about?

8 Which three famous people were held up at Heathrow airport by the Beatles and how did this happen?

9 What is unusual about the spelling of the word 'Beatles'?

Section C

Imagine you were at Heathrow airport when The Beatles flew in. Write a brief newspaper article describing the scene you witnessed.