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Beatlemania is back, yeah, yeah, yeah!

## **Fest explores band's legacy, Nashville connection**

By TIM GHIANNI  
Senior Writer

"Who is your favorite Beatle?" was the teen-pop question of the day back when the band conquered the world.

But George Harrison's sister — who was the fans' radio correspondent, doing "Beatles reports" all those years ago — is hard-pressed to answer.

"Mum always taught us not to play favorites," says Louise "Lou" Harrison, her native Liverpool still flavoring her voice four decades after she moved with her mining engineer husband to southern Illinois. "Mum said we should treat everybody equal. I liked them all equally."

The legacy of all four is being celebrated beginning tomorrow when Fab Four at TPAC: The Nashville Connection begins its fundraising stand.

Harrison, 73, admits that "my brother had a much softer spot in my heart than the rest did." Her voice softens even more when she admits she still misses the so-called "quiet Beatle," who died of cancer Nov. 29, 2001.

Of course, her brother was lead guitarist for The Fabs, as he referred to them in his *When We Was Fab* late-career celebration/lamentation of the raucous early years. He outlived just one of his brethren, John Lennon, who was gunned down by a crazed assassin 21 years before.

Drummer Ringo Starr and left-handed bassist and showman Sir Paul McCartney continue to make music.

As suggested by "The Nashville Connection" subtitle, the TPAC festival will focus in part on the quartet's local ties, including recordings Ringo and McCartney have done here.

It also will include merchandise shopping and swapping, panel discussions and, of course, music. One of the musical components will be The Long Players, a collection of top local musicians who gather to play, front to back, classic rock albums. In this case, guitarists Bill Lloyd and Steve Allen, bassist Garry Tallent (of the E Street Band, a well-known outfit fronted by some fella named Bruce), keyboard man John Deaderick and drummer Steve Ebe will be joined by musical guest stars in a salute to *Revolver*.

As Lloyd said recently, *Revolver* was selected because "it's really the last album before they exploded into psychedelic territory." That performance will be at 9 p.m. Saturday.

At 9:30 pm Friday, the early Beatles will be celebrated by 1964. . . The Tribute, a dead-on impersonation of the Beatlemania boys.

Louise Harrison is encouraging music fans to take in Thursday's 8:30 p.m. performance by Liverpool Legends, her band, fresh from a show-stopping run in Branson, Mo.

These guys — Kevin Mantegna (John), Davey Justice (Paul), Martin Scott (George) and Joe Bologna (Ringo) — come together to showcase The Beatles in fashion and music during three different eras.

"They do the full Beatles show," says Harrison. "They do the early Beatles *Ed Sullivan* stuff, come back with the Sgt. Pepper outfits, and then they do the rooftop (*Let It Be*) or *Abbey Road* era."

Keyboardist Bob Dobro takes on the duties of Billy Preston, the so-called "Fifth Beatle."

Harrison says audiences have called them "the most awesome combination of John, Paul, George and Ringo since the original ones."

But even here, as she excitedly talks about The Liverpool Legends, she doesn't forget her mum's "don't play favorites" words.

"As the unofficial Mum — they call me The Flying Mum — of the global family of the Beatles people, I have to be supportive of keeping The Beatles message alive. . . . All the things about love and peace that we need now more than we did, even back then."

She inherited the role of "Mum."

"When the whole thing first started, my mum and dad were



**Liverpool Legends, from left, are Davey Justice (Paul), Joe Bologna (Ringo), Martin Scott (George) and Kevin Mantegna (John).**

### **Getting there**

Admission to Fab Four at TPAC: The Nashville Connection ranges from a \$20 pass for Thursday events to a \$75 pass for the full festival, which is tomorrow through Saturday. There also are \$35 tickets for Friday or Saturday as well as \$60 tickets for those two days.

For tickets, visit the TPAC box office (downtown or at Davis-Kidd Booksellers in Green Hills), the Web site [www.tpac.org](http://www.tpac.org) or any Ticketmaster outlet. Tickets also may be purchased by calling Ticketmaster at 255-ARTS (2787). For information on offers for groups of 15 or more, call TPAC Group Sales at 782-4060.

All profits go to TPAC's education programs.

### **'Huge Beatles fans'**

Richard Courtney, founder and chairman of the Fab Four at TPAC event, says his love of the band was born early.

"A friend of mine had some teenage sisters," he recalls. "They were playing records by Elvis and Fabian and all that. The first time I heard *I Want to Hold Your Hand*, I was fascinated. I became sort of their pal for the rest of the year."

Courtney, who wrote the novel *I Never Saw a Beatle* in '87, says the basic attraction of the band is "the comfortability of their sound and the simplicity of their earlier stuff." The 9-year-old "didn't know what harmony was, but I kind of liked it."

Courtney and event co-sponsor Rogan Allen have big plans for the future. "We are huge Beatles fans and we think Nashville, especially with The Long Players (the all-star band fronted by Bill Lloyd), has something to offer that other cities don't. Other cities have 20,000 or 30,000 fans coming every year. It should happen here. It will happen."

All profits from the festival benefit TPAC education programs. Last year, when the inaugural event was held at the Belcourt; \$75,000 was raised for the theater's preservation. Courtney says the third annual edition already is being planned and will be held at TPAC. •

— TIM GHIANNI, SENIOR WRITER

answering hundreds of thousands of letters for them, signing them, 'Love, from Mum and Dad Harrison.' Now that they have gone, I have assumed the role of Mum."

Even the Flying Mum, who'll help celebrate the Beatles' work during her visit this weekend (she's hosting a Friday tea), has to admit there was something special about George. "He was very gentle and compassionate. He had an honesty, I suppose that's something that we had in our family.

"Our parents were always totally honest with us. It often comes as a shock when you find out that everyone is not as honest. (With George) there was this vulnerability because of his honesty. If he was engaged in some particular cause, he would be with it 100%. He was what he believed in. He did not just mouth words to pretend to be something. He was totally real."

And Harrison's reality was reflected in the family statement at the time of his death: "He left this world as he lived in it, conscious of God, fearless of death, and at peace, surrounded by family and friends."

"He often said, 'Everything else can wait but the search for God cannot wait, and love one another.' " •