

# The Beatles Live! At Balboa Stadium 1965

Chuck Gunderson

America met the Beatles on Sunday, February 9, 1964, as a record television audience in 73 million homes tuned into the Ed Sullivan Show to see four longhaired British pop singers make their United States debut. The band's performance would remain etched in the memories of young people along with visions of man first walking on the moon and the gyrations of Elvis Presley. This is evident by the Beatles' continued popularity four decades after their much-publicized split in 1970. The group has sold one and one-half billion records since 1964 and they continue to have an immense presence in popular culture today.<sup>1</sup> Larry Kane, a journalist who personally traveled with the group during two of their American tours, commented:



*San Diego fans attending the Beatles film, A Hard Day's Night (1964), at the California Theatre hold up signs that read, "Beatles for President" and "My Parents Love the Beatles." August 12, 1964. ©SDHS, UT #85:F541. Union-Tribune Collection.*

Given the significance of some of the other stories I've covered, the Beatles and their tours might seem to pale in comparison. To some, the combat in the Middle East, a superpower summit...and even everyday stories of human conflict and achievement may appear more important than touring with a group of megastar musicians. But the events that began in America in 1964 were also major historical turning points, and the Beatles played a role in how our nation coped with its trials. The Beatles arrived in America just months after the assassination of President Kennedy and in the same year that the civil rights movement was blossoming. The band's music was liberating, along with the band members' dress and style, and all of these dimensions helped bring young people toward the activism that define the ensuing years.<sup>2</sup>

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**Chuck Gunderson**, an independent historian, received his BA from San Diego State University in 1993 and his MA in history at the University of San Diego in May 2007. He was vice-president and co-owner of Outdoor Media Group, an outdoor advertising company, until it was sold in 2003. He currently manages Music Artifact Exhibitors, LLC, and is responsible for developing an upcoming traveling museum exhibition on the Beatles from "Birth to Breakup." Mr. Gunderson resides in Utah.



San Diego Historical Society  
*Beatles' fans demonstrate in Mayor Frank Curran's office, March 1964. Kathy Sexton, San Diego area Beatles' fan club president, is on the right. ©SDHS, UT #85:D7835-9, Union-Tribune Collection.*

San Diego Beatles' fans had the opportunity to see their idols in person at Balboa Stadium on the night of August 28, 1965. Strangely, the concert was not sold out. More than 10,000 seats remained unoccupied at a time when "Beatlemania" was sweeping the nation. By way of contrast, shows at the Hollywood Bowl on August 29 and 30 were complete sellouts with 36,000 fans in attendance. This article suggests that promoters had limited time to sell tickets since San Diego was added to the tour schedule on June 7, not earlier. Rivalry between two local radio stations—KGB and KCBQ—also may have caused this unusual situation.

The Beatles—John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison and Ringo Starr—came together in the rough, post World War II, working class neighborhood of Liverpool, England. After initial success and a loyal local fan following, their manager, Brian Epstein, cleaned up their stage manners, which included smoking, swearing and vulgar gestures. He later took them out of the small dance halls that dotted the English countryside and dressed them in stage suits to conquer the world. After three hugely successful appearances on Ed Sullivan's weekly variety show, which aired a week apart, and sold-out concerts in Washington D.C. and New York's famed Carnegie Hall, the Beatles won over the American audience, particularly its teenagers. Plans were underway for the Beatles return to

the United States for a highly anticipated summer tour and fans in San Diego were eager and hoping to have the group select the city as a destination.

In March 1964, San Diego Beatles fan club president, Kathie Sexton, and others staged a peaceful demonstration in then Mayor Frank Curran's office with placards reading "Bring us the Beatles!" and "Let the Beatles try San Diego first!" She also presented Mayor Curran with a formal written request to invite the Fab Four to perform in the sunny seaside city. The only other big act to come to San Diego prior to the Beatles was an appearance by Elvis Presley on board the aircraft carrier *Hancock* on April 3, 1956, which was filmed for the Milton Berle show and performed in front of mostly sailors. Up-and-coming performers such as Bob Dylan and the Rolling Stones preceded the Beatles with concerts in 1964 but major acts generally bypassed the city for the larger Los Angeles market. Larger cities such as San Francisco and Los Angeles were deemed more significant in population and fan base. According to census figures at the time, San Diego's population in 1964 was approximately a million people compared to L.A.'s 7.5 million residents. Sexton and other San Diego Beatles' fans saw their hopes dashed when San Diego was not chosen to be on the itinerary for the summer 1964 United States tour. San Diego teenagers would have to wait another summer for a chance to see the group perform in their hometown.

Early in spring 1965, Beatles management announced the second tour of America and, again, San Diego was not chosen. Instead, the group opted to play in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Tour organizers surmised that San Diegans could drive the 150 miles north and attend one of the two shows the group was booked to play at the historic Hollywood Bowl. Even though San Diego was one of the country's larger cities, it remained in the shadow of Los Angeles. The announced summer tour schedule frustrated San Diego fans as the group was booked to play in less populous towns such as Portland and Minneapolis.

It took the efforts of two Los Angeles area promoters, Louis Robin and Allen Tinkley, to finally bring the Beatles to San Diego. The two had become friends while attending Claremont Men's College where they had booked one concert per year at the school's Bridges Auditorium. The first show they produced together was Duke Ellington and his Orchestra in 1952. After experiencing success locally, they began to stage concerts at other educational facilities such as El Camino College, Loyola, Arizona State University, and Stanford. Upon graduation, Robin and Tinkley went to work for Hughes Aircraft and Traveler's Insurance, respectively, but continued

SEE FORM 101, REV. 1-54 (Circle 1-54) CHICAGO ILLINOIS 60611-1429 ATTACHED RIDER IS HEREBY MADE PART OF THIS CONTRACT HYPERVILLE COLORADO 81668

**GAC** GENERAL ARTISTS CORPORATION  
AGENCY • ARTISTS' MANAGERS

AGREEMENT MADE THIS 7th day of JUNE 19 65

Address: NEWS ENTERPRISES, INC. (In full name)

referred to as "PRODUCER" and SISSY & BOBBO PRODUCTIONS (In full name referred to as "PURCHASER")

It is mutually agreed between the parties as follows:

The PURCHASER hereby engages the PRODUCER and the PRODUCER hereby agrees to furnish the entertainment presentation hereinafter described, upon all the terms and conditions herein set forth, including those on the reverse side hereof entitled "Additional Terms and Conditions."

1. PRODUCER agrees to furnish the following entertainment presentation to PURCHASER:  
THE SERVICES OF THE BEATLES plus complete supporting show.

2. Presentation to be presented by PURCHASER:  
(a) at BALBOA STADIUM, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA (Place of Engagement)  
(b) on SAUNDAY EVENING, AUGUST 28, 1965 (Date of Engagement)  
(c) at the following time(s): one (1) performance at approximately 8:00pm (PST)  
(d) commencing To be advised by Producer

3. FULL PRICE AGREED UPON Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000.00) guaranteed against 65% of the gross box office receipts after deductions of Federal, State, & Local Administrative Expenses, 4% usage.

All payments shall be paid by certified check, money order, bank draft or cash as follows:

(a) \$ 25,000.00 shall be paid to PURCHASER on or before the date of PRODUCER'S engagement.

(b) \$ 25,000.00 shall be paid to PURCHASER to PRODUCER not later than 9:00P August 28, 1965

(c) Additional payments, if any, shall be paid by PURCHASER to PRODUCER on later date 9:00 P.M. August 28, 1965

PURCHASER shall first apply any and all amounts derived from the entertainment presentation to the payments specified hereover. All payments shall be made in full without any deductions whatsoever.

4. SCALE OF ADMISSION: \$3.50, \$4.50 & \$5.50 to a maximum potential gross of \$120,000.00

News Enterprises, Inc. (PRODUCER)  
Sissy & Bobbo Productions (PURCHASER)  
3201 Wilshire Blvd.  
Beverly Hills, California

WITNESSES:  
General Artists Corporation: \_\_\_\_\_  
News Enterprises, Inc.: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\* THE ABOVE SIGNATURES CONFIRM THAT THE PARTIES HAVE READ AND APPROVE EACH AND ALL OF THE "ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS" SET FORTH ON THE REVERSE SIDE HEREOF \*\*\*

Signed performance contract for the Beatles to play in San Diego on August 28, 1965. Author's collection.



Coliseum on February 11, 1964. The plan was to package the live Beatles show with a previously held Beach Boys and Lesley Gore concert and show it with CCTV technology to theaters that National General owned nationwide. While the concert at the D.C. Coliseum was a tremendous success, the CCTV presentation in National General's theaters was financially disastrous. Tinkley later commented, "Fans had already seen the Beatles on three televised appearances on the Ed Sullivan Show; what they wanted was to see them live."<sup>3</sup> The experience so soured Robin and Tinkley that they subsequently turned down an offer by the Beatles' American agents, General Artists Corporation (GAC), to promote them in Southern California at the Hollywood Bowl in 1964. In a recent interview, Lou Robin recalled, "we thought that they were just another British group passing through and we were afraid we would have an empty house and would be left holding the bag. The Beatles at that time were still considered a little unproven."<sup>4</sup>

After the Beatles' enormously successful 1964 tour, Robin and Tinkley wanted the chance to promote the group on their upcoming 1965 West Coast swing. Bob Eubanks, of later game show fame, was again promoting them at the Hollywood Bowl, as he had in 1964, while Paul Catalana did the same at San Francisco's Cow Palace. Robin tried to convince Beatles management to revise their rigid "set in stone" touring schedule to include San Diego as an "add-on" date, but that had been accomplished only once before and at great expense. The flamboyant owner of the Kansas City Athletics, Charles O. Finley, convinced Brian Epstein to add his city to the first American tour in 1964. After going back and forth with offers, Finley wrote out a check for an unprecedented sum to have the Beatles perform in Kansas City. When the deal was complete "entertainment history was made. The \$150,000 Finley committed to the Beatles was...the largest fee ever paid for a single performance...at this rate, the Beatles would earn \$4,838 a minute for a 31-minute concert."<sup>5</sup>

Robin and Tinkley left National General to form Artist's Consultants, but they still held out hope of "buying" a date for the Beatles tour. Finally, after much negotiation and nudging, GAC offered Robin either Salt Lake City or San Diego as an "add-on" concert. Robin chose the latter. On June 7, Robin and Tinkley agreed on a performance contract to bring the Beatles to San Diego for a guaranteed appearance fee of \$50,000. This left them only eighty-one days to promote the event. Promoters in other cities generally had several months. On June 9, Tony

**the  
beatles**

Balboa  
Stadium  
AUG. 28 / 8 PM

Cannibal and the Headhunters  
Brenda Holloway  
Sounds, Incorporated  
King Curtis Band  
Discotheque Dancers  
Plus your favorite KGB personalities

**Tickets  
NOW on Sale!**

at Community Concourse Box Office!  
All Seats Reserved... Good Seats still available.  
Call 236-6525 for more information.  
Prices: \$5.50 - \$4.50 - \$3.50  
But Hurry! It's first come... first served!  
Mail Orders: Beatles, KGB, 4141 Pacific Hwy., San Diego.  
Send stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

*Newspaper advertisement from the San Diego Union promoting the upcoming Beatles concert. Author's collection.*

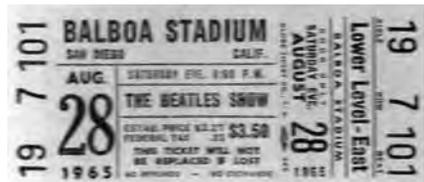


Balboa Stadium, November 1964. ©SDHS, UT #85:E2475, Union-Tribune Collection.

Barrow, the Beatles’ press agent, sent out a revised letter to all promoters of the 1965 tour that included a handwritten entry by Barrow to add San Diego as an official date, August 28, 1965.

Days after the San Diego concert was announced, optimism was running high. Robin and Tinkley felt they could sell out Balboa Stadium in a matter of weeks and cash in on the wave of Beatlemania that enveloped the U.S. The stadium, built in 1914, had a seating capacity of 34,500 and was the only logical place in San Diego to hold a large outdoor concert.<sup>6</sup> Robin made arrangements with the City of San Diego to obtain the necessary permits to stage the concert at Balboa Stadium. Because of Balboa Stadium’s lease provisions, the wooden stage on which the Beatles were to perform could only be constructed at one end of the Stadium. Another provision nullified field seating. As a result, the promoters were limited to offering only 27,041 tickets to fans. Prices for the seats were \$3.50, \$4.50 and \$5.50.

Another concern was security. The promoters were required to pay the city \$5,000 in advance of the concert for extra police. The *San Diego Evening Tribune* reported, “A campaign that has been likened to ‘McArthur taking the Philippines’ has been mapped out for the 140 San Diego police officers and the 110 private patrol police who will protect the Beatles from the



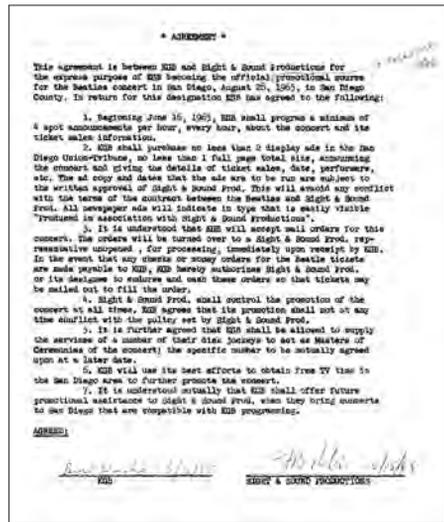
Unused concert ticket for the Beatles’ performance in San Diego. Author’s collection.

people and the people from themselves.”<sup>7</sup> To further complicate matters, Allen Tinkley sent an additional letter to Tony Barrow, suggesting that the Fab Four hold their customary press conference on board a boat as it circled San Diego Bay. Tinkley wrote: “The San Diego Bay is quite pretty and might prove interesting to the group,” adding, “[I]t has also been mentioned that there will be additional boats if any of the Beatles would like more time by themselves around the bay.” The press conference would also coincide with the San Diego Teenage Fair.<sup>8</sup> It was naïve to think that the Beatles could sail by themselves around San Diego Bay during the height of Beatlemania, particularly given the fact the group could barely leave their hotel rooms without being mobbed. The idea was quickly scrapped.

Two rival radio stations, KGB and KCBQ, competed for airtime to promote the upcoming concert. Written proposals, or “pitches,” were due in by June 10 to Robin and Tinkley who began calling themselves Sight and Sound Productions. In KCBQ’s pitch, general manager Lee Bartell touted a DJ named “Lord Tim of Liverpool” whose real name was Tim Hudson. In Bartell’s words, Lord Tim, “our newest disc jockey—direct from Liverpool, knows the Beatles personally, and will be in charge of promotion.”<sup>9</sup> What Bartell did not know at the time was that



Tim Hudson, “Lord Tim of Liverpool,” worked as a DJ for radio station KCBQ. Author’s collection.



KGB radio station sponsorship contract. Author’s collection.

Hudson’s purported personal relationship with the Beatles was non-existent. KCBQ also pulled out all stops by offering the promoters a seven-week blitz of “newspaper ads, mail-order coupons, news conferences and sponsor contests where the winners could claim such items as Beatle beach bags, Beatle records and albums, and 500 Beatle magazines.”<sup>10</sup> Bill Drake of KGB was even more direct in his proposal, promising, “Our on the air promotion will consist of every possible angle being covered. In effect you would own KGB...a complete saturation.”<sup>11</sup>

Robin and Tinkley wanted to take advantage of the listenership of both stations and offered a joint sponsorship. Drake of KGB in his letter to Lou Robin dated June 9, 1965, expressed the extreme competition between the two rival stations by responding, “There was talk of going

with two stations, Lou, but I would think that if KCBQ didn't have it to themselves, they *still* wouldn't be happy."<sup>12</sup> Dick Meads of Knoth and Meads, a local San Diego public relations firm hired by the promoters, wrote on June 10, "I have had three meetings with KCBQ and this is the deal. What it says is that they will do *anything* necessary to get the deal." Meads added in his note, "Between us—I can get anything else you may think is needed." Meads added the emphasis, thinking he could ask KCBQ to sweeten their offer to secure the deal. He concluded, "We can sell this damn thing (referring to the concert) in 2 weeks."<sup>13</sup> Meads did not come close to his prediction.

KCBQ wanted no part of a joint agreement and later sponsored a Herman's Hermits concert on August 7. Promoters saw this as direct competition to the Beatles concert as the Herman's Hermits were also rising British music stars. Since KCBQ

also had lower ratings than its rival, Robin signed an exclusive contract on June 15 with KGB to promote and sponsor the Beatles concert in San Diego. KCBQ, however, with their asset of Lord Tim, would not back down or go away quietly.

Lord Tim Hudson came to San Diego in July 1965 to assume his new duties at KCBQ. Lee Bartell had hired Hudson and immediately ran a promotional campaign touting Hudson as the first British DJ in the region and an ambassador of the British rock 'n' roll invasion. KCBQ housed him at the El Cortez Hotel. Hudson, good looking and in his mid-twenties, changed the look of the station. He



KCBQ "Beatle Day" pin. Author's collection.

sported a Beatles-style haircut, wore bell-bottomed pants, and looked as though he came in from the swinging mod streets of 1960s London. He used his suave British accent to promote himself and became particularly popular among women. His problems surfaced, despite his claims to the contrary, when he could not do the simplest of tasks such as working the controls, playing records, or punching in ads. Having never before been on the radio, all he could do was sit in the studio and talk on the microphone. His brief stint at KCBQ, in terms of radio work, was one of the station's worst staffing disasters.<sup>14</sup>

Within weeks of the long-awaited San Diego concert, Lord Tim somehow managed to secure permission from the Beatles management to travel with the group and to file reports from the road that would be aired exclusively on KCBQ.



A full-page advertisement in the San Diego Union showing Lord Tim Hudson. Author's collection.

To further compound the problem, KCBQ took out a full-page ad in *The San Diego Union* on June 24. The ad touted: "Lord Tim of Liverpool joins with KCBQ in welcoming his personal friends, the Beatles, to San Diego." It also proclaimed August 28 as "KCBQ Beatle Day" and told listeners to "Get your Beatle Day Pin Free." To add to the confusion, the ad listed KCBQ's phone number to obtain tickets to the show, something Robin and Tinkley never authorized.<sup>15</sup> KGB would later retaliate with legal action preventing Lord Tim or anyone else from KCBQ to be involved with the Beatles while in San Diego.

Ticket sales stagnated due to the misleading information about how to purchase tickets and which station was actually promoting the show. Lou Robin fired off a letter to the Beatles' press officer Tony Barrow: "KCBQ immediately proceeded to put out a great deal of misleading and confusing ticket sales information that was unauthorized...I find it hard to justify Tim Hudson (Lord Tim) or anyone else from KCBQ traveling with the show in place of a KGB representative...the sale is coming along at a fairly slow pace right now and we really need this added push with some unique approach."<sup>16</sup> Robin even suggested in a Western Union Telegram dated August 6, that KGB call the Beatles manager Brian Epstein in London to discuss the chaotic situation involving KGB and KCBQ.

America was a different place when the Beatles plane landed in New York City on Friday August 13, 1965, to begin another summer tour. The Watts riots had erupted in Los Angeles, reflecting the rise of urban discontent in cities across America. The Vietnam War had escalated. Jefferson Airplane, a rock 'n' roll group fronted by Grace Slick, had made their debut at the Matrix club in San Francisco, ushering in the psychedelic era. The Beatles were different as well. They were no longer thought of as a "flash in the pan" but regarded as genuine superstars and commentators for the younger generation. They were ahead of the times in their views on politics and culture. Even



Letter from Lou Robin to Tony Barrow, August 2, 1965. Author's collection.



Fans at Balboa Stadium, August 28, 1965. ©SDHS, UT #85:E7526, Union-Tribune Collection.



*The Beatles at Balboa Stadium press conference, August 28, 1965. ©SDHS, UT #85-E7526, Union-Tribune Collection.*

their performance contract stipulated that they would only perform before a non-segregated audience.

Larry Kane recalled that during the 1964 tour, concert promoters in Jacksonville, Florida, planned to seat the audience in a segregated fashion. Paul McCartney, interviewed before the show at the Las Vegas Convention Center in August 1964, told Kane, "We don't like it if there's any segregation or anything, because we're not used to it, you know...it just seems a bit daft."<sup>17</sup> Jacksonville promoters responded by quickly abandoning their attempt to segregate the audience. The Beatles also gave credit to black artists such as Little Richard, Chuck Berry and Fats Domino who inspired their work. By 1965, Kane noted, "No longer were critics forecasting an early demise or suggesting that their music belonged in the waste bin of history. Critics who had insisted that 'this too shall pass' were suddenly silent, or converted."<sup>18</sup>

The 1965 summer American tour kicked off in New York as the Beatles played Shea Stadium on August 15 to a record crowd of 55,600 people, the largest crowd ever assembled to take part in a rock 'n' roll concert. The show grossed \$304,000, the largest sum in entertainment history to date. The Beatles share of the gate was \$160,000 for a thirty-minute performance. Sid Bernstein, the show's promoter, recalled "If I wanted to charge higher prices, we could have done a million

dollar gate.”<sup>19</sup> They toured North America, stopping in Toronto, Atlanta, Houston, Chicago, Minneapolis and Portland, before taking a well-deserved five day break in a rented mansion in the Hollywood Hills.

Two days before the Beatles were due to arrive in Los Angeles, KGB attorneys sent a letter to KFVB, the Los Angeles area market sponsor, to seek support in possible legal action against KCBQ. The letter suggested in very strong language that KGB “had been irreparably harmed by KCBQ’s misrepresentations to the general public.” The letter further stated that the “plan of introducing a person known as ‘Lord Tim’...would add fuel to the prior misrepresentations of KCBQ, thus causing our client considerable damage.” The attorney concluded, “Accordingly, request is made of you that you [KCBQ] confirm in writing, by 4:00 P.M., August 26, 1965, that none of your personnel will introduce, or cause Lord Tim to be introduced at the concert.”<sup>20</sup>

Promoters then turned their attention to managing the Beatles’ arrival. Beatlemania had overwhelmed cities across North America. The Edgewater Hotel in Seattle, where the group stayed during its visit to that city in 1964, resorted to installing barbed wire around the property’s perimeter to keep fans out. In many cities, extra police were called to maintain order.

On August 28, 1965, the Beatles left their Los Angeles Benedict Canyon hideaway and boarded a chartered bus to San Diego. Ordinarily, they would have taken a flight but an airline strike was in full swing. The promoters initially offered a very elaborate tour bus but the Beatles’ management decided on their own arrangements. This would prove to have almost disastrous consequences. The group and their entourage arrived in San Diego aboard their rented bus in the late afternoon and the circus of staging another Beatles concert in America began.

Susan Clark, who works today as a nurse in a San Diego area hospital, got the opportunity to present the Beatles with the key to the city. She was one of



*On August 28, 1965, the Beatles were presented with the keys to the City of San Diego by several local girls. Susan Clark sits at far left. Author’s collection.*

many obsessed fans who spent hours in a bedroom surrounded by posters and newspaper clippings of the group, listening to Beatles 45s. Clark was “hooked” after she watched the group perform on the Ed Sullivan show. She described them as, “gorgeous, their music ‘fab’ and the hysteria surrounding them as infectious.”<sup>21</sup> She first saw the Beatles in person at the Hollywood Bowl after winning a contest sponsored by KCBQ. Her aunt and uncle drove the thirteen-year-old girl to Los Angeles and dropped her off at the concert. She described it as a dream come true.

In the summer of 1965, Clark heard on the radio that the Beatles were to play in San Diego. Determined to meet her idols, she wrote a letter to Mayor Frank Curran with the idea of presenting a “key to the city” to the group. Her girlfriends scoffed at her idea but, a week later, Clark received a letter from city hall. When she



*The Beatles performing on stage at Balboa Stadium, August 28, 1965. Author's collection.*

arrived, there were three other teenage girls in the mayor's office. They received passes to attend the Beatles press conference. Mayor Curran then asked Clark which Beatle she would like to present a key to. She remembered, "How could I ever pick my favorite, each [Beatle], at one time or another had been my favorite. At that point, I didn't care; I just wanted to be in the same room as the Beatles!"<sup>22</sup>

Clark arrived at Balboa Stadium on the day of the concert, numb with excitement. She was ushered into the press conference where, for the first time, she was in close proximity to John, Paul, George and Ringo. Clark straddled a barrier and snapped photos of the group. She described them as "lovely, handsome and witty." When the press conference concluded, Clark was told to enter another room and to leave her camera, pen, and paper behind. She was shaking her in shoes. She entered the locker room at the Stadium and was startled to see Ringo sitting on a stool eating Kentucky Fried Chicken, George lying on a cot watching a fuzzy television set, and Paul talking to the other girls. Clark was surprised when John Lennon approached her, asking for help with his tie. To this day, Clark cannot remember if she was successful in helping Lennon with his wardrobe. She recalled that Ringo offered her a piece of chicken and Paul told her she had beautiful eyes. Before posing for the obligatory photograph of the girls presenting the keys, George Harrison asked Clark if she wanted to watch television with him. She remembers that there was "nothing but snow" on the TV. In her haste to sit by George, she caught her nylons on the edge of the cot and ran them. Clark still owns that pair of hose. The Beatles lined up behind the girls and Clark presented her key to George Harrison as the photographer snapped the proof.<sup>23</sup>

The Beatles toured North America in the summers of 1964, 1965 and 1966 and held press conferences like the one Susan Clark attended before each concert. They were usually subjected to a variety of questions, some with little meaning, some

serious. During their first American tour, the Beatles replied to reporters using sarcastic British humor that poked fun at themselves, the fans, and even their own existence as pop stars. Questions such as “What did you eat for breakfast?” and “Is your hair real?” followed them for the rest of their touring days. Press conferences, however, soon gave way to more serious questions such as, “Do you believe that you represent a different type of morality?” and “How much interest do you take in the war that is going on in Vietnam now?” John Lennon replied to the latter in 1964, “Well, we think about it everyday, and we don’t agree with it and we think it’s wrong. That’s how much interest we take.”<sup>24</sup> The Beatles never left their humor behind, however. In Indianapolis a reporter asked, “Where do you gentlemen stand as far as the draft is concerned in England?” John replied, “About five eleven,” and Ringo quipped, “It comes from that door over there.”<sup>25</sup>

In San Diego, the Beatles faced, among others in the Balboa Stadium locker room, more than one-hundred reporters. Also in attendance were local talk show host Regis Philbin, radio and TV personality Wink Martindale, and folk-singer Joan Baez. The band was asked such questions as:

Q: What advice do you have for teenagers?

A: Don’t get pimples.

Q: What do you think of surfing?

A: Oh, I don’t want to try it. I can’t swim.

Q: It has been stated that politically you have a certain apathy. Since you’ve been now entitled ‘Members of the British Empire,’ has it changed your attitudes towards politics in general?

A: We’re not disinterested in politics, it’s just politicians are disinteresting.<sup>26</sup>

The show began at approximately 8 p.m. after 17,013 fans had filed into Balboa Stadium on a warm summer night. Four warm-up acts preceded each Beatles concert during their 1965 summer tour. The rhythm and blues sax extraordinaire, King Curtis, opened the show followed by Sounds Incorporated along with the Discotheque Dancers. Next was Brenda Holloway, a Motown singer, who had hits with “Every Little Bit Hurts” and “You’ve Made Me So Very Happy,” later recorded by Blood, Sweat and Tears. Cannibal and the Headhunters, who were becoming famous in their own right as pioneering Chicano rockers from East L.A., closed out with their hit “Land of 1000 Dances.”

<b>SIGHT &amp; SOUND PRODUCTIONS</b>	
3301 WILSHIRE BLVD., SUITE 305	September 23, 1965
BEVERLY HILLS, CALIFORNIA	CHERRYVIEW 34710
Cost Breakdown for the Beatles Show at Balboa Stadium, San Diego, Aug. 26, 1965	
Gross Ticket Sales	\$ 83,166.50
Advertising Income	100.00
Total Income	\$ 83,266.50
Less: Costs	
1. Beatles	\$ 50,133.17
2. Stadium Rent (10% of net receipts)	7,713.10
3. Interest on bank loan for guarantee	86.84
4. Long Distance charges	207.50
5. Secretarial printing	4.68
6. Messenger service	14.40
7. Air travel (LA to SD)	145.99
8. Sound system	725.00
9. Police	5,000.00
10. Travel expenses	211.69
11. Piano rental	53.50
12. Equipment rental	36.25
13. Nurses at Stadium	40.00
14. Ticket sales cost in San Diego	650.00
15. Ambulance service at Stadium	25.00
16. BMI music license	200.00
17. Ticket printing (27,041 quantity)	1,559.35
18. Posters	7.50
19. LA Times	672.45
20. Publicity and public relations -SD	500.00
21. Food for Beatles	33.96
22. House light man	20.00
23. Hangers and doorsmen	600.50
24. San Diego Union-Tribune	355.33
25. Stage lighting and draping	442.07
26. Misc.	35.69
27. Tips to crew, police, and firemen	130.00
28. Orange County newspaper ads	279.74
29. Car rentals -SD	74.60
30. Entertainment	85.96
31. Stage construction	289.00
32. Agency commission	900.00
33. Mutual ticket omission - LA	156.15
34. Mail order postage	50.00
35. Mail order processing labor	790.00
36. Federal Admission Tax	6,655.27
Total Costs	\$ 76,810.30
Net Profit	\$ 6,456.20

\* Legal action is being taken against the San Diego Police Dept. for a refund of \$750.00. If the refund is received it will be divided proportionally.

Promoters' balance sheet for the Beatles performance in San Diego. Author's collection.

Shortly after 9 p.m., Les Turpin, the program director at KGB (not Lord Tim of KCBQ) introduced the Beatles. Thirty-one minutes later it was over. The Beatles often joked among themselves how fast they could get through a twelve-song set, once finishing in twenty-five minutes. John Lennon later commented, "I reckon we could send out four waxwork dummies of ourselves and that would satisfy the crowds. Beatles concerts are nothing to do with music any more. They're just bloody tribal rites."<sup>27</sup> The Beatles soon realized that they could not recreate newer sounds on stage due to primitive sound systems in large stadiums. One year and a day after the San Diego concert, they gave their last live performance at San Francisco's Candlestick Park on August 29, 1966.

In San Diego, the Beatles raced through twelve songs: "Twist and Shout," "She's a Woman," "I Feel Fine," "Dizzy Miss Lizzie," "Ticket to Ride," "Everybody's Trying to Be My Baby," "Can't Buy Me Love," "Baby's in Black," "I Wanna Be Your Man," "A Hard Day's Night," "Help," and "I'm Down."<sup>28</sup> The next day, *San Diego Union's* Carol Olten headlined her review of the show, "Beatles Give Real Rousing Performance," but she focused more on fan hysterics than on the music played that evening.<sup>29</sup>

Morag McDonald remembers the show vividly. She and her family had just moved to San Diego from Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in May 1965 when Morag was nineteen. She recalled how expensive the tickets were. At \$5.50 each, she barely could afford them for herself and her two brothers. She went to the show in a new dress bought for the occasion and her two brothers sported new jackets and boots like the Beatles wore. McDonald recalls the chain link fence that was lined with police officers surrounding the track at Balboa Stadium. Several girls ran onto the field, attempting to scale it. A few were successful before they were caught by security. McDonald remembers staring at the Beatles as they performed, trying to believe she was actually seeing them live. Another San Diegan, Marc Lopez, was fifteen when he heard that the Beatles were to be in San Diego. Lopez, his little brother, and his babysitter sneaked into the concert by climbing a chain link fence and managed to find seats twenty rows back. He recalls the concert as "loud and hard to hear through all the screaming of the girls in the audience" but exhilarating.

At the end of the raucous concert, an eerie silence filled Balboa Stadium. Then, in Tinkley's words, "all hell broke loose." John and Paul ran off the field toward their bus parked nearby. Fans, meanwhile, broke through police lines and headed right for the stage. Tinkley saw Ringo caught up at the spectacle of the whole moment and quite enjoying it. George, who was watching the fans with the promoter, had the presence of mind to grab Ringo's arm and make a mad dash for the bus.

At first, the bus did not start. Then, as the fans started closing in, the engine finally turned over and the bus sped out of Balboa Stadium. According to Larry Kane, the problems did not end there. Mechanical difficulties forced the bus "into the parking lot of a San Diego mortuary [and] the Beatles were forced to switch to limousines for the ride back to Los Angeles."<sup>30</sup> Tinkley relishes this tale as he earlier had offered to provide the Beatles with a higher quality bus. The concert at Balboa Stadium and the ensuing chaos was all in a day's work for the Fab Four.

The San Diego concert was not a sell-out as 10,000 seats were left unoccupied. It was one of the few venues on the 1965 tour that had empty seats. This may have been due to the fact that the promoters had only eighty-one days to promote the "add-on" concert and sell 28,000 tickets. Other cities had over four months to promote their respective shows. There is also the possibility that San Diego fans

bought tickets for the Hollywood Bowl shows in the spring of 1965 when the tour was first announced, thinking that the Beatles were not coming to San Diego. Finally, fans may have been confused by all the misleading information regarding ticket sales that came as a result of radio stations KGB and KCBQ being locked in a competitive ratings battle.

In the approximately six hours the Beatles spent on San Diego soil, according to the promoter's balance sheet, the group earned \$50,135.17, only \$135.17 over their guaranteed appearance fee. The promoters provided the Beatles with four sheets and four cots, five one-gallon bottles of water, ten dozen cups, two cases of soda, two dozen assorted sandwiches, and two tubs of Kentucky Fried Chicken, the Beatles favorite American food.<sup>31</sup> The promoters spent only \$33.96 on food. Dick Meads commented later, "We were going to save the chicken bones the Beatles had just dined on and bag them up and sell them as "Beatles bones."<sup>32</sup> Promoters in other cities sold swatches of used bed linens and cut up small squares of hotel carpet that the Beatles had walked on. In the end, Robin and Tinkley made a modest profit of \$6,476.15.<sup>33</sup>

San Diego's police and private security forces, although stretched thin, survived the grips of Beatlemania that August night. Because of the melee at the end of the concert, Sight and Sound Productions contemplated legal action against the San Diego Police Department for inadequate protection and sought a refund of \$750.00. Richard Knoth, however, in a letter addressed to then Chief of Police Wesley Sharp, commended the man in charge, Lieutenant Ray Hoobler, who would later become the chief. He wrote, "It is our opinion, that because of the strength of his command and the readiness of his officers, a potentially bad situation was averted as the program came to a close."<sup>34</sup>

While Robin and Tinkley never got the opportunity to work with the Beatles again, they went on to successfully promote rock 'n' roll concerts throughout the nation. The Beatles, who never again returned to the city as a group, were rewarded handsomely to the tune of over \$50,000 for roughly six hours of work. Their concert became a footnote in the city's history but is still remembered by those who attended. The Beatles continued to make history, but Balboa Stadium, which once shook to the strains of "A Hard Day's Night," finally succumbed to the wrecking ball, its memories lost but not forgotten.

## NOTES

1. In various polls, the Beatles consistently rate as the most influential group in pop music history. When EMI (Electric & Musical Industries Ltd. of Great Britain) released a compilation album of The Beatles number-one hits in 2000, some thirty years after their breakup, it became not only a chart topper in 34 countries, but also EMI's most popular album of that year, selling 21.6 million copies. Lenny Kravitz Greatest Hits was a distant second selling 6.7 million copies. The Beatles even influenced the world of academia. Colleges and universities have added classes to various departments to study the group's music. The University of Southern California's class entitled, "The Beatles Albums: A Critical Appraisal," and Northwestern University's course, "The Beatles-A multidisciplinary Mystery Tour," are examples. The group is also part of the National Curriculum in the United Kingdom for children between the ages of nine and eleven. Hunter Davies, *The Beatles* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002), 8-9; <http://musictechnology.northwestern.edu/~gary/classes/Beatles/html/syllabus.htm> (accessed December 5, 2008).

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3. Allen Tinkley, interviewed by author, May 11, 2006.
4. Louis Robin, interviewed by author, February 10, 2006.
5. Mark Naboshek, *Beatles 64: Going to Kansas City* (New York: J.A.T. Productions, 2005), 6.
6. The San Diego Sports Arena opened in 1966 with a seating capacity of 12,000. Even if it had been built earlier, it could not have accommodated the Beatles as the group had become accustomed to performing in much larger venues.
7. *San Diego Evening Tribune*, August 27, 1965, A-2.
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11. Bill Drake to Lou Robin, June 9, 1965, Gunderson Collection.
12. Ibid.
13. Dick Meads to Lou Robin, June 9, 1965, Gunderson Collection.
14. Dave Leonard, *Aircheck: The Story of Top 40 Radio in San Diego* (San Diego: private printing, 2003), 20.
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20. Ira S. Epstein, Esq. to Joseph Bernard, August 26, 1965, Gunderson Collection.
21. Susan Clark Barron, interviewed by author, November 11, 2008.
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25. The Beatles, *Beatles Tapes III, The 1964 World Tour*, Jordon Records, B000001COU, CD.
26. "The Beatles Ultimate Experience: Beatles Press Conference, San Diego, California, 8/28/65," <http://www.geocities.com/~beatleboy1/db1965.0828pc.beatles.html> (accessed December 5, 2008).
27. Mark Lewisohn, *The Beatles Live!* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1986), 192.
28. *San Diego Union*, August 28, 1965, F-10.
29. *San Diego Union*, August 29, 1965, A-1.
30. Kane, *Ticket to Ride*, 248.
31. *San Diego Evening Tribune*, August 27, 1965, A-2.
32. Dick Meads, interviewed by author, June 18, 2001.
33. Balance Sheet, *Sight and Sound Productions*, Beverly Hills, California, September 23, 1965, Gunderson Collection.
34. Richard Knoth to Wesley Sharp, August 30, 1965, Gunderson Collection.