

The Times (London), 7/7/64

Off-Beat Film on Beatles

London Pavilion: *A Hard
Day's Night*

From Our Film Critic

One nice thing about this first film to star the Beatles: it is not, by any manner of means, the usual sort of thing British film makers come up with to exploit the latest show business sensation. Indeed, if anything it goes rather too far the other way: it is so rough and grainy, so choppy and new wave in its editing, so obtrusively handheld in its camerawork that by the end, more than a little dazzled and deafened, one may find oneself thinking back nostalgically to the good old straight-forward days of *Orchestra Wives*.

However, let us not look a gift horse in the mouth. The director, Mr. Richard Lester (late of *The Running, Jumping and Standing Still Film* and *The Mouse on the Moon*), has had a real go, and a lot of his bright ideas come off very well: the way, for instance, that several of the numbers are treated as contrapuntal sound track accompaniments to screen action of quite another sort: the outbursts of Goonish visual humour; the freshly observed London locations and the vivid glimpses of backstage (or in this case behind the screen) show business life. The main trouble is rather that there are too many bright ideas, flung at us one after the other with no spacing and hardly any quiet patches for us to get our breath back before the next outburst; the whole film is oddly unremitting in its attack, and consequently muffs a number of its potentially most telling effects.

Also, the handling of actors does not seem to be Mr. Lester's strong suit: a number of usually excellent players like Mr. Victor Spinetti and Miss Anna Quayle seem ill at ease as the film flashes past them, though Mr. Kenneth Haigh manages a good cameo as the producer of a teenage television show frantically spotting for trends. But the illustrious four come over agreeably enough as genuine personalities, if hardly yet as actors. Which, after all, is precisely what is required of them: Mr. Alun Owen's screen play takes us, often amusingly, through a hectic day in the life of a pop group who happen to be called John, Paul, George and Ringo; and in the course of it they get through a variety of numbers, some familiar, some new, all Lennon-McCartney. For millions of fans anything more elaborate would be a breach of faith.

Screen: The Four Beatles in 'A Hard Day's Night'

British Singers Make Debut as Film Stars

By BOSLEY CROWTHER

THIS is going to surprise you—it may knock you right out of your chair—but the new film with those incredible chaps, the Beatles, is a whale of a comedy.

I wouldn't believe it either, if I hadn't seen it with my own astonished eyes, which have long since become accustomed to seeing disasters happen when newly fledged pop-singing sensations are hastily rushed to the screen. But this first fiction film of the Beatles, entitled "A Hard Day's Night," which exploded last night at the Astor, the Trans-Lux East and other theaters hereabouts, has so much good humor going for it that it is awfully hard to resist.

In the first place, it's a wonderfully lively and altogether good-natured spoof of the juvenile madness called "Beatlemania," the current spreading craze of otherwise healthy young people for the four British lads with the shaggy hair.

The opening shots, behind the credits, are of three of the fellows running ahead of a mob of howling admirers chasing after them as they break away from a theater where they have played a singing engagement and race for a waiting train. And all the way through the picture, there are frenzied episodes of the Beatles' encounters with squealing fans and with reporters who ask silly questions, all in a facile, witty vein.

But more than this, it's a fine conglomeration of madcap clowning in the old Marx Brothers' style, and it is done with such a dazzling use of camera that it tickles the intellect and electrifies the nerves.

This is the major distinction of this commercially sure-fire film: It is much



Wilfrid Brambell and Ringo Starr in scene from new movie

The Cast

A HARD DAY'S NIGHT, screenplay by Alun Owen; directed by Richard Lester and produced by Walter Shenson for United Artists. At the Astor, Broadway at 45th Street; the Trans-Lux East, Third Avenue at 58th Street, and other theaters in the metropolitan area. Running time: 87 minutes.

John	John Lennon
Paul	Paul McCartney
George	George Harrison
Ringo	Ringo Starr
Grandfather	Wilfrid Brambell
Norm	Norman Rossington
T.V. Director	Victor Sainetti
Shake	John Junkin
Millie	Anna Quayle
Simon	Kenneth Haigh
Man on Train	Richard Vernon
Hotel Walter	Eddie Miller

more sophisticated in theme and technique than its seemingly frivolous matter promises. With practically nothing substantial in the way of a story to tell—nothing more than a loosely strung fable of how the boys take under their wings the wacky old grandfather of one of them while preparing for a London television show—it discovers a nifty little satire in the paradox of the old man being more of a problem, more of "a troublemaker and a mixer," than the boys.

"'e's a nice old man isn't

'e?," notes one of the fellows when they first meet Granddad on a train. And another replies, with courteous unction, which parodies the standard comment about the Beatles themselves, "'e's very clean."

This line, which runs through the picture, may be too subtle for the happily squealing kids who will no doubt be its major audience, but the oldsters may profitably dig. And, of course, everybody will be able to enjoy the rollicking, madcap fun.

There's no use in trying to chart it. It comes in fast-flowing spurts of sight gags

A Lively Spoof of the Craze They Set Off

and throw-away dialogue that is flipped about recklessly. Alun Owen, who wrote the screenplay, may have dug it all out of his brain, but Richard Lester has directed at such a brisk clip that it seems to come spontaneously.

And just one musical sequence, for instance, when the boys tumble wildly out of doors and race eccentrically about a patterned playground to the tune of their song "Can't Buy Me Love," hits a surrealistic tempo that approaches audio-visual poetry.

Sure, the frequent and brazen "yah-yah-yahing" of the fellows when they break into song may be grating. To ears not tuned to it, it has moronic monotony. But it is always relieved by pictorial compositions that suggest travesties—or, at least, intelligent awareness of the absurdity of the Beatle craze.

Unless you know the fellows, it is hard to identify them, except for Ringo Starr, the big-nosed one, who does a saucy comic sequence on his own. But they're all good—surprisingly natural in the cinema-reality style that Mr. Lester expertly maintains. And Wilfrid Brambell as the old man is dandy, a delightfully comic Irishman. Many others are also funny.

It is good to know there are people in this world, up to and including the major parties, who don't take the Beatles seriously.

New York Times, 8/12/64



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The BEATLES



"A Hard Day's Night"



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And I Love Her
I Should Have Known Better
I'm Happy Just To Dance With You
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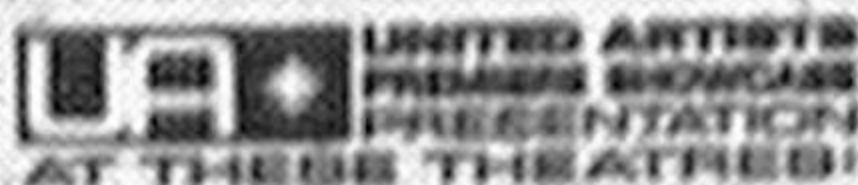
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Bother Me • Can't Buy Me Love

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AMUSEMENTS & TV LOG

WEEK
OF
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ZOOM!

Flying Beatles
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For Detroit



The Beatles are flying high and will land in Detroit early this September in conjunction with the opening of their new film, "A Hard Day's Night."

The film is due to premiere Sept. 2 at 15 neighborhood theatres and drive-ins.

Thirty-six hours of the group's life is represented in the excursion directed by Richard Lester.

Traveling with the quartet—now in third place in British pop music charts with the title song from their film success—is their manager, Brian Epstein, and a road manager.

Some 20 other performers round out the troupe.

To avoid excesses of expression by local fans, helicopters will be used for crowd control at the airport when the Beatles land and dummy buses will be employed to baffle persistent pursuers.

Surprisingly, the movie has been received well by the critics.



Detroit Daily Press, 9/1/64

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Check Movie Guide for 2nd Feature

Ann Arbor News, 9/3/64

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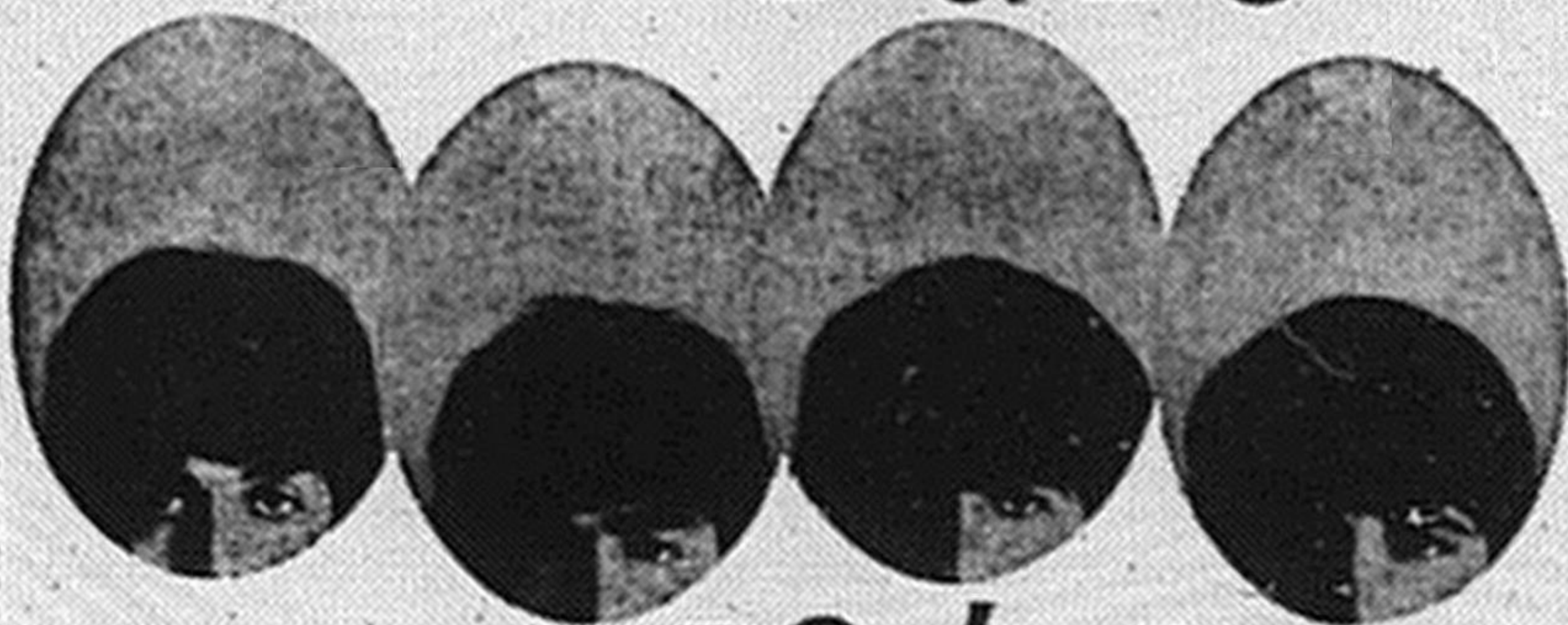
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WILFRID BRAMBELL

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THE WORLD'S FAIR"

The Beatles Add Detroit To Conquests

A six-foot snow fence and 100 police officers formed the first line of defense for the invasion of Detroit by Britain's Beatles early Sunday.

An estimated crowd of 3,000 Beatle-niks swarmed around Metropolitan Airport to greet the mop-haired singers who later sent other thousands of fans into ecstasy at two Olympia performances.

The 60 Sheriff's deputies and 40 State Police assigned to keeping the peace when the Beatles arrived, gave up on the parking problem entirely and just let the young folks park wherever they could find a vacant spot.

The crowd, which began to gather at the airport about five hours before the Beatles were due to arrive, was orderly but more than a little noisy, the police said. There was no effort made to rush the plane or to interfere in any way with the Beatles take-off for a Detroit apartment hotel.

The welcoming committee made no attempt to follow the limousine which brought the four into town. Their car was escorted to the city limits by four car loads of police.

At Michigan Ave. the cavalcade was met by a Detroit police motorcycle escort and whisked off to the Whittier Hotel, where teen-age fans clustered throughout the day.

Early Sunday a spokesman for the Sheraton-Cadillac Hotel, where the Beatles were rumored to be staying, allowed that the hotel had been deluged with more than a thousand phone calls from 7 p.m. Friday till 7 a.m. Saturday, about the boys.

He said the youngsters would not believe that their shaggy heroes were not at the hotel and hung around in droves. Hotel officials were more than unhappy at not being Beatle headquarters—as they estimated the damage from the invasion of youthful worshippers would far exceed the Beatle hotel tab.

Two bachelor foster fathers, Elmer Wallace and Norman L. Chinnock, who bought a home at 1705 Seminole to house five girls "inherited" when their mother died last December, decided to charter a bus to take their new daughters to Olympia Sunday night to hear the Beatles and thus beat the expected traffic jam.

Word got around Indian Village and by the time the big DSR coach departed there wasn't a single seat left. It was filled almost to overflowing with eager, squalling neighborhood children.

Beatles Seen, but Hardly Heard

By AL HOLTZ

"Really, Sergeant, we aren't going to hurt them," a press photographer told a Detroit police officer Sunday at Olympia Stadium.

The sergeant was at one end of a long line of men in blue uniforms leading to the dressing room of the Beatles. Three other officers blocked the dressing room door to all but Olympia and Beatle management.

The Beatles' first performance of the day ended. Their aides huddled them into their well-guarded cell.

And then — perhaps a Detroit first — members of the press were also herded into a well-guarded room, and "ordered" to stay there.

Detroit Beatle show promoter Art Schurgin had given the order — only he knew why.

The room — more like a garage — was large and unfurnished, with the exception of about 20 wooden desk chairs and a table at which a press conference was later held.

The Beatles not only captured the hearts of thousands of teenagers, but left Detroit \$60,000 richer—for two 20-minute performances at Olympia Sunday.

They arrived at Metropolitan Airport at 1 a.m. Sunday morning and were whisked to their suite at the Whittier Hotel.

At Olympia, thousands of youngsters and their parents lined up just to catch a fleeting glimpse of the Britons.

A 300-man contingent of police and private guards were also lined up.

When the Beatles got on stage, hundreds, possibly thousands of flashguns went off from the seats, creating an eerie glow throughout the stadium.

The Britons began to sing immediately, but they could hardly be heard. This didn't bother the fans. All they wanted to do was look, cry, scream and moan.

Then it was over. The Beatles had come and gone in an instant. It didn't seem to be worth the admission price. But the fans

didn't care. They were left in a state of shock.

During the performance the noise was too much for one guard. He slipped two bullets out of his cartridge belt and plugged his ears.

One 14-year-old girl was dragged away screaming and crying. "No, no, no—I love them." It took four policemen to subdue her.

The scene was multiplied many times over.

Between shows, the tense-looking Britons held a news conference. At the conference Ann Marston, 1960 Miss Michigan, presented a Beatles' scrapbook to the singers. Diane Cenate, 22, 14540 Euclid,

Allen Park, who was Miss Armed Forces in the Miss USA World pageant held here last week posed for cameramen. The beauties were just as thrilled with the singers as the hundreds of other spectators.

In the words of Paul McCartney: "It's all very flattering. We got a very nice reception here. But how can I say that I like Detroit? I haven't seen it."

*Detroit Daily
Press, 9/8/64*