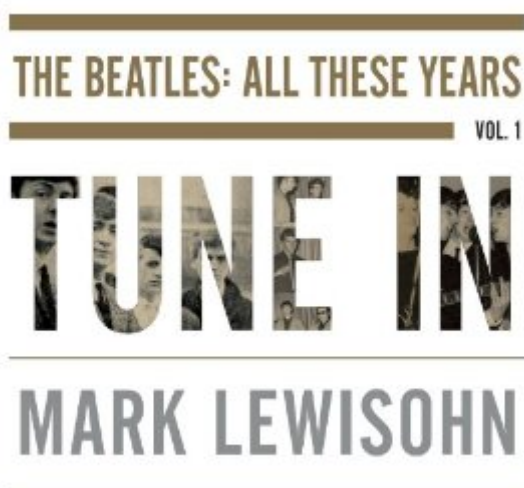


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Tune In: The Beatles: All These Years



Synopsis

Tune In is the first volume of All These Years - a highly-anticipated, groundbreaking biographical trilogy by the world's leading Beatles historian. Mark Lewisohn uses his unprecedented archival access and hundreds of new interviews to construct the full story of the lives and work of John Lennon, Paul McCartney, George Harrison, and Ringo Starr. Ten years in the making, Tune In takes the Beatles from before their childhoods through the final hour of 1962 - when, with breakthrough success just days away, they stand on the cusp of a whole new kind of fame and celebrity. They've one hit record ("Love Me Do") behind them and the next ("Please Please Me") primed for release, their first album session is booked, and America is clear on the horizon. This is the lesser-known Beatles story - the pre-Fab years of Liverpool and Hamburg - and in many respects the most absorbing and incredible period of them all. Here is the complete and true account of their family lives, childhoods, teenage years, and their infatuation with American music; here is the riveting narrative of their unforgettable days and nights in the Cavern Club, their laughs, larks, and adventures when they could move about freely, before fame closed in. For those who've never read a Beatles book before, this is the place to discover the young men behind the icons. For those who think they know John, Paul, George, and Ringo, it's time to press the reset button and tune into the real story, the lasting word.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Over the years I have read more books about the Beatles than I care to admit to and they vary in

quality from pretty good to absolutely terrible. However, when Mark Lewisohn announced that he would be writing the 'definitive' biography of the band, fans believed him. Lewisohn is not only THE Beatles expert, but he is also someone who has an obvious love for them. In other words, he is also a fan and the little details, which intrigue us, also interest him. This first volume looks at their family history and childhood, then splits into five chapters; taking detailed looks at the years 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961 and 1962. From the first, two things become abundantly clear - that the author understands the relationship between John and Paul and that he is keen to debunk myths that have become almost accepted - especially ones built around John's childhood. Yes, his childhood was difficult, but films such as "Nowhere Boy" have created a totally fictional account of what happened and even recent books, such as "When They Were Boys" by Larry Kane, simply repeats them. Stories of Mimi dodging bombs to visit the baby John in hospital or John's mother and father forcing him to choose between them in an emotional 'tug of love' are just that - stories. Mimi also gets a much more sympathetic portrayal and we learn how, rather than trying to keep John's father away from him, she even allowed him to write to his son from prison. They may have lost touch, but it was certainly not Mimi's fault that they did. Having established that he wants to tell the story as the truth, Mark Lewisohn is certainly not portraying the band in a better light, or concealing their flaws. They were young boys at this time, each with their own character traits and faults, as everyone has.

A review in a national newspaper criticized this book as being bogged down in too much detail. I disagree. The basic story of the Beatles is very well known, and it is this depth of detail that brings new insights, new revelations; so that the history you thought you knew becomes a whole new story. Reading the book you never get the feeling that you're wading through a mass of detail. This is because, firstly, the book presents you with so much new information. There is virtually a surprise on every page. Secondly Mark Lewisohn has such an easy narrative style, full of humour and with an obvious affection for the subject. The book was ten years in the writing, and it shows. He must have read every book, magazine, interview, article, contract, invoice, and scribbled beer mat. However, the author hasn't just accepted everything en masse; he's rejected anything that was embellished or exaggerated, in order to present the most complete history of the era. Some of the things that struck me include:*** The role of luck in the story. The government abolished National Service just before John Lennon was due to be conscripted. Without this lucky timing, instead of being in Hamburg, John would have been in the army [or, more likely, living in exile in Ireland. A similar dose of luck allowed John to obtain a passport in record time, literally at the last minute, which enabled him to take part in that all-important first visit to the Hamburg clubs. It was really good

luck which gave them two key management figures in Brian Epstein and George Martin; a couple of decent chaps in an industry full of sharks.*** The book not only gives us the story of the individual Beatles, but is also a snapshot of Liverpool life in the period.

Maybe I'm in no position to claim "the best" crown for Mark Lewisohn's incomparable, incredible, incandescent bio of the Beatles. I haven't read every Beatles book. That would be a full-time job. But I've read a lot of rock bios. And this one sits at the top. Lewisohn is helped in his endeavor by the Beatles themselves. John, Paul, George and Ringo were smart, funny and revolutionary, a biographer's dream. Their lives were a match for their music. The threads of those lives, along with the story of their era and their Liverpool, make for a captivating read. Lewisohn is an exhaustive and meticulous historian. He knows how to track down forgotten sources, sift through decades of interviews and tease out connections. It should be pointed out that this biography only covers Beatles history to the first recording sessions with George Martin in 1962. Within a year, Beatlemania would hit Britain and then spread the following year to America. Tune In begins with an author foreword then jumps to a moment in time. We look in on pre-Beatles John and Paul as they sit toe to toe with guitars to work out chords and lyrics. This was where the Beatles began, in bedrooms, in side rooms, in stolen moments, as two friends figured out songwriting. From there, the history backtracks to the genealogies of the various clans. Lewisohn lets you know where the families came from and how they got to Liverpool. You get some background on grandparents and parents and the war that ushered in the births of Ringo, John, Paul and George. The major events of pre- and early Beatles history are covered but in new and refreshing ways. Liverpool becomes a major character, as does the music of the 1950s.

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