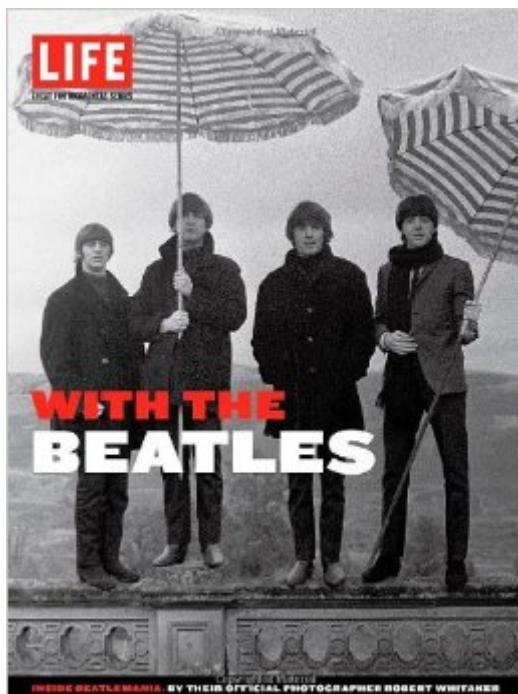


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# LIFE With The Beatles: Inside Beatlemania, By Their Official Photographer Robert Whitaker (Life Great Photographers Series)



## Synopsis

In the mid-1960s, when so much was happening in the world and the volume everywhere seemed dialed up to 11, the Beatles were the biggest thing on the planet. Their fans screamed from the fences as the Fab Four walked across the airport tarmac or into a vast stadium. They wanted to touch the Beatles. They wanted to know the Beatles. Who might help them? One photographer was inside. The young Australian Robert Whitaker had been noticed by Beatles manager Brian Epstein, who then hired him. When Beatlemania exploded, Whitaker was along for the wild ride. He was backstage, he was in the studio, he went to the boys' homes, he became their friend and confidante (He grew particularly close to John). Robert Whitaker fashioned many of the iconic Beatles images, and all his pictures of the band were taken in the period that Beatles fans most like to remember: when they were fab, when they changed our culture. Bob Whitaker-a great photographer, after all-was a friend of LIFE's and made contributions to earlier books on John Lennon and George Harrison. In the months before his death in September 2011, he was collaborating with us on this book, his Beatles magnum opus. In these pages are rarely or never seen photographs and his personal reflections, which add resonance to the images. For those who once wanted to touch the Beatles, wanted to know them, this is an essential document. It is full of vitality. Beatlemania was a crazy, crazy place to be, and it is captured here in all its nutty glory. Then, too, there are the famous Whitaker album covers, including the early drafts of the notorious-and banned-Yesterday and Today jacket. It is LIFE's good fortune, and it will be our readers', that Bob Whitaker talked about all this with us and others through the years. His testimony is that of a proverbial fifth Beatle: He was there, part of the scene. He saw it all, he recorded much of it on film, and he remembered even more. Here, then, is Bob Whitaker's final word on the Beatles-all his best photographs, all his reminiscences. LIFE is proud to bring forth this book. It does what we always try to do-present great photography-and it also pays tribute to a bygone time, a bygone band that we all loved, and a man who was a dear friend.

## Book Information

Series: Life Great Photographers Series

Hardcover: 304 pages

Publisher: Life; First Edition edition (September 25, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1603202315

ISBN-13: 978-1603202312

Product Dimensions: 10.5 x 1.2 x 14 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (53 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #727,850 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #153 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Pop Culture > Beatles #336 in Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Photojournalism & Essays > Photojournalism #1098 in Books > Arts & Photography > Photography & Video > Photojournalism & Essays > Photo Essays

## Customer Reviews

\*\*\*\*\*SPOILER ALERT\*\*\*\*\* I love the Beatles. No..I ADORE them..particularly the "mania" years. So when I had the opportunity to get this book I eagerly took it as it's chock-full of images from my favorite Beatle period. However..lovely as the book is, it's not (imo) without its flaws. The narrative, for one, leaves much to be desired. I often felt like it was written by some fourteen year old. It was clumsy and awkwardly written in some cases and sometimes had poor syntax. The tone also reeked too much of "gushiness" vs. professional objectivity. Granted, we are talking about the "frilly and fun" mania years, but even the Life tribute to John had a more professional tone. Then there is the multiple references to "One Direction", a popular "boy band" from the UK. How one can even mention them in the same sentence as The Beatles, I don't know. Seems rather sacrilegious to me. A little further on when you get to the '65 years and images of "The Music of Lennon & McCartney", it is more than insinuated that by the looks on the boys' faces, they knew the "end was near" (to paraphrase). I found that highly laughable that the narrator could surmise that based on John and Paul's looks. He/she obviously arrived at this "conclusion" based on what we already know of events to come, but at that time, I doubt the boys were even thinking such things. They've certainly never mentioned it in interviews during that period..and while they looked bored, tired and even disinterested in some of these "L&M" shots, to suggest it was because they knew the "clock was ticking" is ludicrous. Perhaps they were tired/bored, etc. because it had been a long day of rehearsal for them. Also..

Robert Whitaker is my favorite Beatles photographer bar none, and he always has been. I fell in love with his pictures way before I even knew who he was. It was always his photos that most intrigued me and enthralled me. He seemed to have a talent that no other Beatles photographer possessed, and that was the ability to reach into the souls of his four subjects, through his camera lens. He seemed to capture something that not even Robert Freeman, maker of the famous half

dark, half light, cover photo for With the Beatles could do. Unlike the others, he had that uncanny knack for pulling the veneer away and revealing the real guy underneath. Also his use of light was always breathtaking. He was able to capture the beauty of the four young musicians, again in a way that no one could do. Perhaps that is not only due to great lighting, but because the veneer had dropped in the first place, so they seemed even more handsome, but in a way that was more natural rather than glossy. Whatever it was, Whitaker was a genius with a camera, and this book is a gift to anyone who ever thought the Beatles were lovely to look at. And of course you know they were. As for the commentary in this book, I disagree with one reviewer who said it wasn't just the same old, stock Beatles bio information. I found it lacking and somewhat boring. "Bob was as hip as John and as cute as Paul" (?) Seriously? Well into the 21st century and we're still doing "cute"? The least Life could have done was put the word in quotation marks to distance themselves from it. Wouldn't it have been better to use the more grown up adjective, 'handsome'? Even Whitaker's recollections were almost non existent, and when they did appear they seemed to repeat themselves.

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