

# THE 1966 MAPLE LEAF GARDENS BEATLES CONCERT POSTER

by Piers A. Hemmingsen

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A couple of years ago, I was asked by EMI Music Canada to help out with their project to produce a commemorative hard-copy book celebrating their 50th Anniversary in Canada (1949–1999). I supplied both original LP sleeves and the LP discography for their famous Capitol 6000 series, the series on which four Canadian Beatles LPs were released, including the very first North American release *Beatlemania! With The Beatles* (Capitol T-6051).

Nicholas Jennings, a professional author who had already penned the book *Before The Gold Rush*, was hired by EMI to both research and write the book. We had never met before, but we have become good friends ever since.

When I received the final proof of the book *Fifty Years Of Music – The Story Of EMI Music Canada* (Macmillan Canada, 1999), I was amazed at the quality of the content covering each decade and of the section that dealt with The Beatles in Canada. On page 42, there is a B&W photograph of the Fabs at the 1966 Toronto press conference. I immediately noticed the bottom portion of a poster on the wall of the Hot Stove Lounge that advertised the August 17, 1966 Beatles concert at Maple Leaf Gardens. At that moment, it became one of my missions to find out more about that poster.

It is a well known fact that the 1966 Toronto concert, apart from being their last in Canada, was not a sell-out like the '64 and '65 Toronto concerts. This explains perhaps why posters may have been hastily pulled together in the last days before the two shows on August 17 and put up on the walls of Maple Leaf Gardens. I have checked photos of the 1964 and 1965 press concerts and various Maple Leaf Gardens photos from the event and alas there were no posters to be seen. It is likely that the only poster for a Beatles concert in Canada was in fact the one hanging on the wall in that August 1966 photo.

For those that don't know, the Hot Stove Lounge was on the ground floor on the Church Street side of Maple Leaf Gardens. The building still



stands and the outside of the Hot Stove Lounge can still be seen today even though Maple Leaf Gardens stands empty.

Of course, I was interested in tracking down the original poster. I have often imagined that some lucky youngster related to someone at Maple Leaf Gardens (perhaps then owner Harold Ballard) became the proud owner of the Hot Stove Lounge poster and had it hanging in their bedroom or basement rec-room! However, it was possible that it was destroyed sometime shortly after the concert. Another larger banner had been prepared for the concert and this hung inside the Carlton Street entrance and was visible to fans as they entered the concert. This banner was

photographed in colour, but probably did not survive. I have a colour photograph of the banner and it is very impressive. The poster and the banner, I believe, were prepared, at the last minute, to improve the sluggish tickets sales – this is hard to believe, today – if fans, at the time, only knew that this would be their last tour!

Now, the mystery of whatever happened to that Beatles Hot Stove Lounge poster has been solved. And, there may have been more than one of these posters on display at the main entrance to Maple Leaf Gardens.

I spoke with Jeff Blake, a huge collector of original Canadian Rock And Roll posters from the Sixties. He has some posters from the hallowed

halls of Maple Leaf Gardens, including a Jimi Hendrix poster from 1969. These posters were made specially for the Gardens by a contract artist who used a combination of paint on heavy card / posterboard.

In the early summer of 2006, I received a phone call from Peter Miniaci, owner of the Beatlemania Shoppe in Toronto. Peter told me that he had received a call from the owner of a Beatles Toronto concert poster



and Peter asked me to help him verify its authenticity. After a few days, Peter was able to send me a photo of the poster. As I had only ever seen black and white images of the poster from pictures taken at the Beatles 1966 Toronto Press Conference held in the Hot Stove Lounge at Maple Leaf Gardens, I was absolutely thrilled to see the poster in all of its

colourful glory. I had not expected a light blue background or the lime green colour used for the large BEATLES text. Wow!

From everything I had researched, I was pretty

sure that there was just one or two posters prepared for the Beatles Toronto 1966 show. Peter advised that the fellow who was selling it was, at one time, the neighbour of a man who had been a security guard at Maple Leaf Gardens on the day of the concert, August 17, 1966. The security guard had taken the poster home (perhaps after hours!) and had eventually moved out to the western provinces, later in his life. This Beatles fan, who eventually purchased it from the retired security guard, had been after the poster for years! To date, this has been the only documented poster to survive from that final Toronto concert

Peter was organizing a Beatles convention in Toronto in the fall of 2006 and was arranging to have the rare poster on display there, as the owner was intending to sell it. It was exhibited in a glass case and security guards were on hand each day to install and remove the poster.

One of Canada's foremost collectors of vintage concert posters was alerted to the sale and came down to view the poster at the Beatles convention at the Metro Convention Centre, but alas his offer (rumoured to be in the region of \$20,000 CDN) was not enough to keep the poster's ownership in Canada. Sadly, the poster has left Canada to a U.S. collector. It sold for approximately \$25,000 USD. The collector who inspected the poster told me that it was colour painted on light card stock.

Fortunately, the poster was being sold 'copyright free' and with the help of *Beatology Magazine* publisher, and graphic designer, Andrew Croft, a recreation of the original poster was created and a sample image placed on my web site at [www.thebeatles.ca](http://www.thebeatles.ca). The recreation image is linked to a photograph of the actual poster as it appeared on display.

The original poster is an incredibly valuable piece of Beatles history and one can only expect it to appreciate in value. Only one original has surfaced in over 40 years, and all because of a security guard who probably did not realize the future value of the poster he had taken that day! It's not a great work of art, but it is an incredible piece of history.

*Piers Hemmingsen bio*



# The Beatles' Toronto Press Conference

**DATE:**

**August 17, 1966**

**Place:** Hot Stove Lounge,  
Maple Leaf Gardens, Toronto, ON

**Duration:** 16m 12s

**Tony Barrow:** May we please have quiet before we start with questioning!

**Reporter:** First question for John (reporter identifies himself as being from the *Hamilton Spectator*, religion editor). This tremendous enthusiasm of youth, if it were channeled into good causes, could have a tremendous effect. How about the Beatles starting a Feed The World's Hungry fund through the United Nations?

**John:** Well, you know. It's an idea. We can't just say yes or no, now.

**Reporter:** And, the second part of the question: What are some of the positive elements of Christianity, at its best, that you feel you can support?

**John:** The basic ideas of Christianity, we support that.

**Reporter:** Would you recommend them to the young people?

**John:** I'd recommend them for anybody. Old people, as well, you know.

**Paul:** Especially!

**John:** Especially, yeah. (laughter)

**Reporter:** Mr. Lennon, is there any connection...

**Tony Barrow:** I'm sorry may I ask again, please, to keep the noise right down, or otherwise most people who want to hear the questions won't do so – they'll hear the answer, but not the question. Could we have complete quiet?



**Reporter:** Is there any connection between the lonely people in *Eleanor Rigby* and your recent attempt to formulate an opinion on religion?

**John:** Well, there's a connection inasmuch as you've connected it. That's all. And it just happened at the same time, over here, but *Eleanor Rigby* came after that article. The article's quite a few months old, and *Eleanor Rigby* came a couple of months later.

**Reporter:** Mr. McCartney, what's the significance of your white [dog, fob, dove – the word is inaudible, but the reporter appears to be referring to a lapel pin. – Asst. Editor]?

**Paul:** Oh, I just opened this parcel and it was in it. I don't think it's significant.

**Reporter:** It's not a lucky charm or anything?

**Paul:** I don't think so. No

**John:** He doesn't think it's significant.

**Paul:** Sure, it's significant. Sure, it is significant.

**Reporter:** Mr. Lennon, do you possibly put a message in your songs as a sort of crusade or do you just make songs that you like because you think other people will like them?

**John:** I don't know, you know. I don't write them for other people, really. They're only for other people after they're finished, if they like them or not, then, you know. When I write them, or we write them, you know, it's gotta be for yourself.

**Reporter:** The Beatles, in general, you seem a very healthy bunch. You rarely cancel due to illness...

**John:** (says to George) I told you we were. (laughter)

**Paul:** Very healthy.

**John:** Well, George and I were disputing it. He's thinking we're unhealthy, and I was

saying we are healthy... or they wouldn't let us make films. (Lots of chatter)

**John:** All right, Tony.

**Tony Barrow:** Next question, please.

**Reporter:** This question is for John. John, what question do you dislike being asked the most?

**John:** At the moment, the one they're all asking when we first get in about the statement I made.

**Reporter:** Could you tell us about that?

**John:** Uh, well, you... (laughter) well, you ask me what you want to know about it, and I'll tell you. I'm just going to go over it and over it.

**Reporter:** This has been asked before. What did you really say? Was this taken out of context?

**John:** The words themselves weren't out of context, 'cause they were from an article. The article was out of context 'cause it was taken from the paper and from England, you know. That's how it was out of context.

**Reporter:** Do you feel this has hurt your image in any way?

**John:** Uh, no.

**Paul:** It's been straightened out, I think.

**John:** With a few people, you know, but I don't think I mind about them.

**Reporter:** George, I think the business of John's statement has been cleared up pretty well. I'd like to ask you what you think is really important in life? I tend to agree that probably the Beatles are more popular, if popularity is gaged, than Jesus. But, is popularity the most important thing? What is the most important thing in life?

**John:** Love.

**George:** Love is the main thing, I'd say. But, I mean, there's lots of things in Christianity that are so right, which all the people who said about us after the comment made, they don't really sort of keep up with what they are supposed to believe in. I mean, first of all, love thy neighbour like thyself. They tended to hate a bit more, didn't they, the people who disliked us? Well, for a kick off, that's not a Christian answer to whatever Lennon said.

**Reporter:** John, may I ask you, what is it, in your estimation, that can and does really inspire young people today?

**John:** I don't know, honestly, you know. I just know that what we're doing inspires them to a degree, but, not to inspire them to do anything else other than enjoy themselves.

**Reporter:** What you do excites them and makes them enjoy themselves. What is it that's inspiring them?

**Paul:** They get inspired by people who talk honestly to them. And, not people who take the long way 'round and talk in riddles. I think, you know, if they believe us on some things it's because we can say it like they would think it, 'cause we're exactly the same. We don't pretend to be anything better than we are, you know.

**Reporter:** Do you always play it straight, Ringo?

**Ringo:** ...N-n-nope! (laughter)

**Reporter:** Thanks very much.

**Reporter:** Paul, Don't you think, well, it seems to me that it's the grown-ups that are small-minded about all these things. The children don't seem to be at all and the complaint is that the children go home to their parents and they don't believe any of this. But, the parents are telling them what they should do. And, this is where the big mistake is made, is the parents leading them the wrong way.

**Paul:** Well, you know, there's a gap between the generations that's very hard to fill, because I don't think most children think of their parents as human beings till the children, themselves, are about sixteen, seventeen, you know.

**John:** Older than that.

**Paul:** Maybe older – they suddenly realize that they're just people like them and not, sort of, great big people to be feared. You know, that's the gap that should be healed.

**Reporter:** Thank you, sir.

**Paul:** Not at all.

**Reporter:** I'd like to address this to anyone here to answer. What are the Beatles going to do about their diminishing popularity?

**John:** What diminishing...? (laughter)

**George:** (sternly) For a start, there's no signs as far as we're concerned of it diminishing. Our records and our shows are still selling as well as ever.

**Paul:** You're finished, George. You're finished! (laughter)

**George:** You're just giving your opinion. And, if our popularity does diminish, well, we'll be the last to worry. (applause)

**Paul:** Hurray! (Paul whistles)

**Reporter:** To Mr. Lennon and Mr. McCartney, primarily : with the background instrumentalisation [sic] for *Eleanor Rigby*, aren't you really heading into something very new?

**Paul:** No, very old.

**John:** Violins are old.

**Reporter:** What's happening to pop music now, going back to the old?

**Paul:** It's not.

**John:** It's progressing, you know.

**Paul:** It's progressing, because it's having new things with the old, instead of just the old on its own.

**Paul and John:** Or, just the new.

**Paul:** It's combining them. You know, it's taking bits from everything and being, well, I don't know... liberal.

**Reporter:** You don't see yourself, at some point, going electronic?

**Paul:** Yes, you know. We could go anything.

**George:** But, not totally.

**John:** Oh, I could. (laughter)

**Reporter:** To the four of you, would you like to sometime visit Russia and other Iron Curtain countries?

**John:** As Beatles or as people?

**Reporter:** Both.

**John:** Yes, wouldn't mind.

**Reporter:** What kind of reception do you think you would get from A: the people and B: the officials?

**John:** From the people, it would be okay. I don't know about the officials. You know, I think it would be okay now.

**George:** Okay, now. (laughter)

**Reporter:** John, are you going to have a hand in writing your next movie?

**John:** Um, I don't think so. I hope not. I'd sooner somebody else wrote it. I don't know how to do it.

**Reporter:** When is it coming out, do you know?

**John:** I don't know when it's starting even. It'll probably be...

**George:** January, I think.

**John:** January, February.

**Reporter:** Gentlemen, you received the medals for assisting the British economy a couple of years ago. The economy is in kind of rough shape now.

**George:** And, we're still assisting it now. (laughter)

**Reporter:** Anything to give it a fresh boost? Any plans?

**John:** Well, we could give them the medals back. (laughter and applause)

**John:** Ah, it's very friendly here. I think I'll relax. (laughter)

**Reporter:** You're among friends.

**Reporter:** With people throwing some things on the stage, are you worried sometimes about getting hurt?

**John:** You worry about your eyes, mainly. You know, 'cause little things you can't see. (To one of the Beatles: Oh, it doesn't really matter. It's only for him, that one.) (laughter)

**Reporter:** John, I don't want to get too tangled in politics, but, I read that you weren't very excited about the situation in Viet Nam. I would be interested in knowing what your opinion, or any of the Beatles' opinion, about the question of the United States' involvement in Viet Nam and whether or not you see this as a possibility of a world confrontation with China, and whether you think it's dangerous, and whether you think it's important for people to become informed and concerned about this issue.

**John:** Yes. (laughter)

**John:** I mean, I mean, we all just don't agree with war for any reason whatsoever. There's no reason on earth why anybody should kill anybody else.

**Reporter:** But, will you... why don't you say... why don't you come out and...

**George:** The main thing is... the main thing is...

**John:** Because somebody would shoot us for saying it, that's why.

**George:** You know America is in there and the only thing is as somebody once said, "Thou shalt not kill means that, not, 'Amend Section

A." And, there's a lot of people who are amending Section A and who are killing. And, it's up to them to sort themselves out.

**Paul:** But, we can't say things like that.

**John:** We're not allowed to have opinions. You might have noticed, you know. (laughter)

**Reporter:** Continuing in that line, what do you think of the youthful Americans who are coming across the border to Canada to escape the draft? Are you in favour of the draft military discipline for the young generation?

**George:** I think anybody, who doesn't feel like fighting or feels like fighting is wrong, has a right not to go in the Army, because nobody can force you into going and killing someone.

**John:** But, they do.

**Paul:** Shouldn't be able to, really.

**John:** (half-heartedly) Ah, we've had it in Memphis, now.

**Reporter:** Paul and John, regarding your writing ability, have you ever thought of writing a musical such as *My Fair Lady*?

**John:** Nothing like that, anyway.

**Reporter:** Why don't you write one? **Paul:** We thought about writing a musical, but, not like *My Fair Lady*, because if we did one... there are people around that can write that kind of musical better than we can because they were doing that 50 years ago, you know. And, the only thing is that if we tried to write a musical, we'd try to write one with up-to-date tunes and up-to-date music. It's difficult to think what to do, 'cause everyone seems to go to 50 year-old ones. Well, you know, that kind of sort of era.

**Reporter:** Regarding *Eleanor Rigby* and *Yellow Submarine*, are you trying establish any sort of a trend in music, slightly away from rock?

**Paul:** No, I don't think we ever try to establish trends, you know. We try to keep moving forward and do something different. And, if in the meantime it starts trends, well, you know, that's okay. But, we never try, consciously, to start them.

**Reporter:** It's certainly original.

**Paul:** Thank you.

**Tony Barrow:** Could we take the last three questions – the first one?

**Reporter:** Can I ask Paul, it's either my imagination or are you employing less physical effort on stage, now, in your performances?

**Paul:** I don't know, probably, you know. I mean, you manage to sort out after a few years just how much jumping around will produce just how much sweat. Perspiration

**Reporter:** Mr. Lennon, when you were asked a question about Russia, you said, "The Beatles or people?" Do you think that you are...

**John:** I really meant, you know...

**Reporter:** Do you think you're people and if so, do you think you're going to split up and...?

**John:** Well, everything's possible, you know. There's no answer to that. We obviously are not going to go around holding hands forever. (laughter) We've got to split up or progress. I mean, we might... you know, I can't... it might happen. It's quite possible.

**Reporter:** This one is for Ringo. All of us pry so much in your lives and you're limited, your actions are limited so much by public demand and riots and mobs and things of that nature. What normal, everyday thing would you like to do that you cannot because of your fame?

**Ringo:** Um, well, the thing is when I... (is this on or is this on? Hello?) When we're off, you know, I live quite normally. It's only on tour it's ever like this and we're always in hotels and that. But, when we're off, I'm just like you, you know. (laughter)

**John:** He's one of those!

**Reporter:** Gentlemen, have you given any thought as to when your popularity might end, and if so, do you think you'll be around in another ten years time...

**Paul:** We'll be...

**Reporter:** ...and, why not?

**Paul:** You know... the only reason we won't be around is we'll be dead. But, uh, as Beatles, you know, we could be around. We could be around still doing the same thing as we're doing now, only we'll have developed a bit. But, you know, it'd be a bit embarrassing at 35. (laughter)

**John:** *Long Tall Sally*.

**Paul:** Yeah.

**Reporter:** Paul, I've gotten ten variations of the story of how you chipped your tooth. Can you set the record straight? How did it happen?

**Paul:** Um, it was Christmas and I'd had a few drinks and I went for a ride on a moped. And, I was watching the moon and I fell off. (laughter)

**Tony Barrow:** This here is the last question

**Reporter:** This question is for Ringo. Ringo...

**Ringo:** Again?

**Reporter:** You must get frightened sometimes with all these youngsters screaming so loud. If you do, what is the time or what city was this most happen at?

**Ringo:** The screaming never frightens you, it's just when they start a break and try to get on stage.

**Reporter:** At what point or what tour have you been the most worried about maybe being attacked?

**John:** Manila.

**Ringo:** Cleveland, I think.

**Reporter:** Cleveland on the current tour of this year?

**Ringo:** Yeah.

**John:** Oh, this tour.

**Ringo:** (to the others) Was it Cleveland?

**Beatles:** (exaggerated) Sure. Yeah. (laughter)

**Ringo:** They broke through there, you know. And, that was the only one.

**Paul:** Is that it? Thank you. Goodbye! (applause)

**John:** Thank you. (crowd noise)

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*Literal transcription by Brad Howard. An audio CD with the complete press conference is available from Number 9 Books.*

# Rediscovering The Beatles' Toronto '66 Concert Tape



By Brad Howard

I first received word about the possible existence of a Toronto '66 Beatles concert tape from a friend of mine, in early September 2007.

Someone named Tom had posted information about the tape on a discussion group moderated by Beatles recordings historian and author John Winn. In addition, Tom included some photographs of the taperecorder, the tape and the tape box.

I decided to reserve judgment on this tape. After all, Beatles fans had been scammed in the past – with previously available recordings offered as undiscovered gold or one of my faves: the “bulk erased” Beatles reunion session tape supposedly from the Seventies?

**Suspicious and red-flags were on the rise with each posting and response that seemingly only taunted the group.**

So, was this Toronto tape something new or something else? The initial responses directed at Tom were not very kind. Of course, Tom wrote in a very vague style and rarely answered a direct question directly. So,

suspicious and red-flags were on the rise with each posting and response that seemingly only taunted the group. In the end, Tom was not a very popular guy. The groups (Tom sent out his announcement of the tape to at least one other discussion group) were divided into two camps – the ones who believed him and the ones who didn't. Remarkably, both groups wanted to hear the tape, as proof of its existence. Of course, some wanted to hear samples, while others wanted the whole thing – for free. Several people were willing to pay for a copy of the tape. Some group members were optimistically cautious, while others mocked Tom and were, dare I say, meanspirited.

This hostility from Beatles fans was unexpected. Sure, Tom is quirky, maybe even peculiar. Unfortunately, his business-savvy evasiveness was misconstrued as being dishonest or was he hiding something?

## Someone of Persuasion

The story was that back on August 17, 1966, someone of persuasion had been able to get into Maple Leaf Gardens, just prior to the evening concert, with an UHER portable tape recorder. This man of foresight actually interviewed Gardens staffers and fans, before and after the concert – seeking their

opinions and comments. And, in a rare move, he taped the supporting acts and finally, of course, The Beatles.

**Although there have been rumblings about Toronto recordings existing, this tape remained unknown, for the most part, until now.**

The UHER 4000 Report-L was only manufactured from 1965 to 1966. It can record at four speeds (15'16, 1f, 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>, or 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inches per second) on 5" reels or less of 1/2" tape. The 140 minute recording, in question, was made on a tape manufactured by Audiotape – however the plastic spool does *not* look like it is an Audiotape reel (This is not a problem, as take-up reels were always interchangeable). Interestingly, at the time, Audiotape was owned by Capitol Records.

Supposedly, the concert was recorded at the 1f" speed. Great for extending the recording time of a tape (96 minutes per side), but not very conducive for recording music, especially from a distance (Generally, the slower the recording speed, the more bass sounding and distorted the recording)



Caption needed

## Fast forward to 2007

A tape copy of just the Beatles' portion of the concert was offered to the Canadian people via Library and Archives Canada. For whatever reason, a deal was never completed and the tape was eventually sold to Tom, in West Virginia, by the original owner's son. Supposedly, Tom is to provide a "cleaned up copy" to the Archives. As yet, this has not happened.

In late August, the tape was up for auction on eBay. Unfortunately, the highest bid, \$610, was below the reserve and the item did not sell.

To add to the mystique and confusion, the seller was not Tom, but a young man from Quebec, named Charles, who was representing him.

To prove that the tape was genuine, Tom announced to the discussion group, in September, that he would allow John Winn to hear samples from the tape to determine the tape's authenticity. One would think that copying the tape would be a simple matter and the transfer from tape to CD would take days. According to Tom, the first recording studio that he wanted to use didn't have a tape recorder that could play his tape at the right speed. In this day of digital, one wonders why the tape couldn't have been transferred at any speed and then digitally speed-corrected by a computer. However, the tape transfer took over a month and true to his word, Tom sent John Winn 17 brief audio clips from the concert.

John was able to confirm that this was indeed a never-before-heard Beatles concert from 1966. He was able to base this, in part, on George's introduction to *Yesterday*. Because the clips are so short, John was not able to positively identify the venue as Toronto. But, given the assertions by Tom and the people at Archives Canada, it can be



relatively certain that this is the case. Apparently, the gentleman who made the original recording can be heard mentioning Maple Leaf Gardens – and since the entire show is on the tape, most likely there is further evidence of Toronto being identified.

So there you have it – a "new" Beatles rediscovery – 42 years after the fact!

*Postscript: A Beatles concert tape with all of the supporting acts is rare, indeed. Tom, the current owner, had indicated that he would like to sell the tape. Back in September, Beatology arranged to interview Tom about his find. Unfortunately, the interview has not happened. Note: photographs and information used in this article have been taken from Internet postings on discussion groups, web-sites, ebay, and an email received from Library and Archives Canada.*

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