






The Beatles' Best years

Original drummer with legendary band performs at Duke of Windsor

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July 4, 2003

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If you told a musician from Liverpool, England, that he was going to play at a place named the Duke of Windsor, he'd probably assume you were talking about a big castle with royal guards.

It's a good thing Pete Best is used to surprises in his career. Best has the distinction of being the first drummer for one of the most popular rock n' roll bands ever: The Beatles.

When the band was first getting off the ground in Liverpool, the group was known as the Silver Beatles. It was 1960 and the group didn't have a permanent drummer. John Lennon, Paul McCartney and George Harrison met Best, now 61, at a club named The Casbah. On Aug. 12, 1960, Best became the fourth Beatle. He played with the band for two years and at least 650 concerts, playing on the infamous track "Love Me Do." He also played in the Beatles' first recording sessions at Abby Road studios.

In 1962, Best was dismissed from the band for reasons that remain uncertain. Best claims today that he was never given an honest answer about why the band chose to split with him.

The Beatles went on with their careers and so did Best. After playing in other bands, he stepped out of music in 1968 to raise his family. For 20 years, he worked as an employment counselor for Liverpool's civil service office. In 1988, Best played a set at a Beatles convention. Within weeks, he had quit his day job and started playing music full time.

Best arrived in the United States on Wednesday for a 17-show tour. He will be talking about his book, "The Beatles - The True Beginnings," before The Pete Best Band takes the stage in Windsor on Thursday. The book details the Beatles' early years and first shows at The Casbah.

"It's about time the world knows about The Casbah; The true birthplace of the Beatles," Best said in a telephone interview from Liverpool. He calls the book: "The untold story about the unsung heroes."

For Beatles fans who want to hear music, have no fear. Best promised something for everyone, include some Beatles tracks.

"We're not a copy band, not a tribute band," Best said. "We like to give a cross section of people what they want."

"If they come out to the good old Duke, they'll get a great band," Best said.

To go

WHAT: Pete Best Band
 WHEN: 9:15 p.m. Thursday
 WHERE: Duke of Windsor, 522 Main St., Windsor
 DETAILS: \$15, 686-5775. Doors open at 6 p.m.; 69 Times plays at 8 p.m.
 ● Best talks about his book with 107.9 FM The Bear, 8:45 p.m.

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