

Beatles stages - Preamble

According to a survey carried out in 2004, the Beatles topped the list of the most successful groups in Germany of all time. According to figures from RTL Chartshow, it was these very four lads from Liverpool who had more hits than anyone else during the first decade of the German hit parade throughout its history. Interest in the creative legacy of and story behind the legendary Group has not waned in Germany and, with this in mind, the powers that be in the city of Hamburg now want to turn the Reeperbahn, the city's red-light district, into a centre for Beatlemania. In this area, known for its dubious reputation, all buildings associated with the early history of the popular British rock group will be immortalised. The centre of the district will become Beatles Platz, or Beatles Square. In actual fact, it is not really a square, but a T-junction. Here, they are making an asphalt replica of a vinyl record which will contain the lyrics to Beatles tracks. At the edge of the square there will be a monument to the Liverpool quartet. It will be protected from vandals by bullet-proof glass and will be illuminated at night. Beatles fans and Beatles lovers will also be able to look at the police cell where the Beatles spent time following their arrest in 1962 on the eve of their deportation to England (the members of the band did not have work permits). Two of the three clubs where the Beatles performed during the Hamburg days still exist to this day - these are the "Indra" and the "Keiserkeller", but the third - "Star Club" - burnt down in the 1980s, and is set to be reconstructed. Future members of the Beatles repeatedly spent time in Hamburg during the 1960s. In 1960, Alan Williams, the unofficial impresario of Lennon, McCartney and Harrison, sent the young musicians to go and get experience in the clubs and concert halls in the flourishing city of Hamburg. And whilst there, they got to know drummer Ringo Starr, at the time a member of Rory Storm & the Hurricanes. Seven months in Hamburg proved to be the first test of the Beatles' stamina. Their baptism of fire was in the Indra club, where the Beatles gave exhausting concerts lasting many hours before uncontrolled crowds, gradually widening their repertoire, getting used to all manner of excesses and investing such energy on stage that they would hold the attention of even the most unruly sections of the audience. In 1961 in Germany, the Beatles performed their first studio recording, playing to the British rock guitarist and singer Tony Sheridan. Published only after the group had split up, this material is more of historical interest, acquainting us with the Beatles during their infancy. It is not their own sound, nor is there even any defined pattern. Astrid Kircher, a German incidentally, advised them to cut their fringes and unwittingly turned out to be one of the creators of the band's image. Years later, John Lennon said: "I did not grow up in Liverpool, but in Hamburg", meaning, that the Beatles life story would not be complete without the Hamburg chapter. All of which adds up to the fact that Germany occupies a special place in the story of the group and the discography that is the Beatles.