

DO YOU DARE VENTURE INTO... THE VIDEO VAULT

By Lane Van Ham
Staff Reporter

"Hey, kids. It's the Old Flick Fiend here with another movie for you. I'm still recovering from my sickness of last week -- cowl off to mummy for filling in for me -- so by George, I'm not gonna beat around the bush this time.

"If you like The Beatles and aren't opposed to seeing them fail miserably, you'll have a 'Paul' watching this one. You'll be seeing 'Starr's' after just a few minutes, and the scenes don't even connect, so you can get up and go to the 'John' in the middle! Heh-heh-heakkk-koff koff... eh, back into the coffin with me..."

"Magical Mystery Tour," The Beatles third movie, was originally shown on Dec. 26 (Boxing Day), 1968, on British TV. The opening line states "When a man buys a ticket for a Magical Mystery tour, he knows just what to expect -- the trip of a lifetime." The British population, though, had no idea what to expect, so imagine their surprise when this mess jumped out into their living rooms.

Unlike the tight, studio controlled "Hard Day's Night" and "Help!," "Magical Mystery Tour" is utterly chaotic. One minute it might feature kids and wrestlers on a playground while a calliope version of "She Loves You" plays in the background, and then without warning become a cross-country race.

Granted, it may have something to do with the fact that no script was ever written -- but what could go wrong? After all, The Beatles were coming off of the wildly innovative and influential "Sgt. Pepper"

album, and their movies had always been successful in the past. Paul McCartney conceived the movie as a sort of visual album in which the group, some friends, and an assembly of circus freaks would pile into a brightly colored van and travel around, filming all the nutty stuff that happened. Sounds like fun, right?

What McCartney (and the others) didn't foresee was all the complications involved in making a movie -- much less going at it without the unifying force of their manager, Brian Epstein, who had recently died. Upon hitting the road, press and fans swarmed the proceedings. Cast members discovered area hotels either full or unprepared to deal with such a large group.

Meanwhile, spontaneity was hard to force on the set. I get the feeling that appearing in "Magical Mystery Tour" was like holding a smile while waiting for a picture to be taken, or walking self-consciously across the store when trying on new shoes. It's evident that a loose idea had to be developed for most scenes, although not for the movie as a whole, which creates, as a final product, an hour long surrealistic roller coaster in which the audience constantly moves from continuity to chaos and back again.

We begin with Richard Starkey (that's Ringo Starr for you non-Beatles scholars) and his "Aunt Jessica" getting on the bus for their tour. From there, it all goes to hell. One minute, everyone is out in a field having their picture taken and then we're back in the bus for a glimpse at the travellers (the best of these is a weird man who fantasizes about frolicking on the beach

with "Aunt Jessica." Listen for the violins playing "All My Loving").

The movie also tells, for no apparent reason, of a land "beyond the blue horizon," where "four or five magicians spend their days casting wonderful spells." Actually it's The Beatles in funny red robes and pointy hats running around a lab with a checkerboard floor.

If you can stay with the movie long enough, you'll see a blond, moustached Elvis impersonator with a group identified as the "Bonzo Dog Doo-Doo Band." Herein lies the challenge for your stomach. Depending on the itchiness of your fast-forward finger, you'll also see a stripper, courtesy of "The Paul Raymond Revue Bar."

Needless to say, the press hated "Magical Mystery Tour." Even most Beatles scholars find fault with it. Phillip Norman, in "Shout!" calls it "a... progressively irritating home movie."

Of course, I really enjoyed it. I didn't want to, as I religiously await my next opportunity to rip on Paul McCartney (Lennon rules, folks), but he really came through on this one.

Except for the dull vocal performances, "Magical Mystery Tour" lives up to its name in every way. It's magical that something this weird ever got made, it's a mystery as to how it got on TV, and it's a tour through a strange collection of scenes that have no relation to each other. Actually, now that I think about it, the songs aren't so bad either: where do the strings and brass come from in the performance of "I Am The Walrus?" Win a date with me if you can explain it!

"Magical Mystery Tour" is available at most larger video outlets.

Twisters' owner is happy with new site but says he doesn't like downtown plan

By Bryan Peterson
Staff Reporter

Twisters record store owner John McCallum said he is happy with the present location of his store at 1401 O St. but added, "I just don't like the way we were forced to make a decision."

Twisters moved last April due to downtown redevelopment plans.

McCallum said the volume of the store's business has remained about the same as it was at the previous location on 11th Street.

"We have 2 1/2 times as much inventory as we had in the old location, so that has increased our sales. But as far as turning the inventory, it is about the same," he said.

The new location has almost twice as much room as the old one. According to McCallum, the store has tripled its selection of compact discs and cassettes.

The store sells fewer albums

now, but this is due to the music industry's emphasis on compact discs rather than a result of the move, McCallum said.

Despite the move and the changes it brought, the store's clientele has not changed much, McCallum said. He added that sales of used albums "have not been affected by the move."

"We're really happy here. We're able to increase our inventory dramatically because of the move. But that is circumstantial. I'm very unhappy with being driven off the block," he said. "I bought the business in that location and that is where I wanted to stay."

According to McCallum, he had no choice about whether or not to move. "They used condemnation. We were told they would take the property and ask us to leave through the process of eminent domain, which they did invoke."

McCallum has recovered from the move, but the process has been

along one, he said. Plans for downtown redevelopment were first announced four years ago, and the future of businesses in the area has been uncertain ever since.

"It's really hard. It's emotionally draining to spend three years being told, 'You have to leave but we're not sure when and we don't know why' and then it falls through," McCallum said.

Twisters survived the move, but other businesses have been closed because of downtown redevelopment. McCallum said, "The people at the Sam Lawrence Hotel, a great bar and restaurant, pulled out because of downtown redevelopment and it hasn't been reopened. A lot of retailers in the proposed redevelopment area are very worried about what the future holds, because there have been three and a half to four years of uncertainty. It takes away their ability to plan

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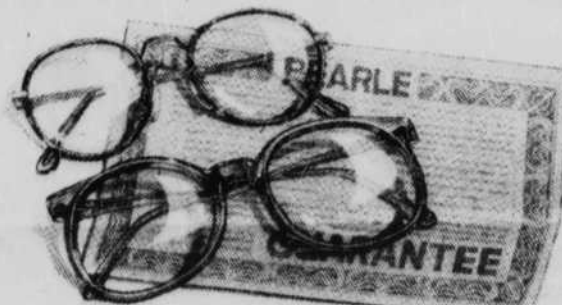


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