



THE BEATLES'



RECORDINGS

THE REEL STORY

The Hamburg scene in the 60s is a vital part of rock history. It was here, according to legend, that **The Beatles**, and other acts, developed from boys to men – on and off stage. Here is the first half of a two-part story about the Fabs' fabled live recordings on stage at Star-Club, Hamburg, in December 1962, and the legendary scenethat surrounded them. Written by Dr Hans Olof Gottfridsson. Technical adviser: Richard Moore

THE BEATLES AS NATURE INTENDED

When releasing The Beatles' Star-Club recordings in the mid-70s, Lingasong used the slogan, "The Beatles when your granny wouldn't have liked them". This is probably not far from the truth. The Star-Club recordings still show them as a rather rough rock band, doing covers of US acts or obscure rock adaptations of romantic songs from musical plays or films, and with surprisingly few self-penned songs in their set. This was even more evident in their unedited form than on the many official or semi-official record releases. Their dialogue with the audience and on-stage chat could best be described as unpolished – and sometimes just rude – rather than the dashing and mostly charming humour with which they would later win over the world. Such bad behaviour is even more evident on the raw tapes than on the issued records, especially from John Lennon, who can be heard provoking,

mocking or being plain nasty to the audience, living up to his bad-boy reputation.

The atmosphere at the Star-Club was very easy-going but rough, and on these recordings The Beatles really are brash, tough and loud, as Lingasong promised in their advertising. But, perhaps first and foremost, the Star-Club recordings are a document of the very final days of The Beatles as they originally sounded before the firm of George Martin and Brian Epstein completely took over and every attempt to communicate with the audience on stage was drowned in a wall of sound.

During the second half of December 1962, The Beatles shared the stage at the Star-Club with US star act Johnny & The Hurricanes, fellow Liverpool bands The Strangers and Kingsize Taylor & The Dominoes, plus London-based dancer and vocalist Carol Elvin, brought in as a special Christmas guest. Also appearing at the club was Roy Young and Tony Sheridan & The Star Combo, who had just come back from Israel after a disastrous tour with Gene

Vincent (September to October 1962). In his black Gestapo-like leather outfit, Vincent, for obvious reasons, had not gone down all that well in the nightclubs of Haifa and Jerusalem.

By the end of the month, Cliff Bennett & The Rebel Rousers had arrived a couple of days early for their January shift at the club and though not billed, they also played a few sets. More British bands appeared at the clubs close by, the Top Ten and the Pigalle. They also turned up at the Star-Club for a chat or even a brief appearance on stage when they had the opportunity.

Colin Melander (Star Combo):

"The Beatles seem to get a lot of credit for the Hamburg scene, but there were many bands in the city who preceded them. While they were in Hamburg they were regarded as a minor band. They were just one band of many. They would spend hours

in the Star-Club listening to our band, The Star Combo, and asking Tony Sheridan how he'd play this riff and how he played that sequence. Tony was always willing to help."

THE STAR-CLUB - HOME OF LOST SCOUSERS, AND MANY OTHERS...

In April 1962 the Star-Club opened. Situated in an old cinema at Grosse Freiheit 39 in the notorious St Pauli district of Hamburg, from the day it opened the Star-Club was the No 1 club in Hamburg. For the better part of the 60s this club, boasting its own magazine, record label, radio programmes and a franchise concept allowing branches to be opened all across Germany, was the most famous rock venue in Europe. When it closed on New Year's Eve 1969, almost 400 different groups had graced its stage, most of them British.

Merseymania hit Hamburg long before anywhere else. The first wave of Liverpool acts had arrived in the city in late 1960, but the real flood came with the opening of the Star-Club in 1962. The Beatles, Gerry & The Pacemakers, The Big Three, The Undertakers and The Searchers are just a few of the bands that performed there. It wasn't just Liverpool acts that played the Star-Club that year. So did Johnny Kidd & The Pirates, The Jaybirds and Buddy Britten, and, when their popularity had faded back home, many original US rockers found opportunities in Europe and the Star-Club was a natural place for them to play. Gene Vincent, Bill Haley, Little Richard and Fats Domino all appeared at the Star-Club in '62. Others, like Pat Boone, came to watch, but never played. The club would also become a hangout for various celebrities, and guests in the autumn of that year included, amongst others, no less than Italian-French movie star Sophia Loren.

Bobby Thomson (Kingsize Taylor & The Dominoes): *"The Beatles always went down great at Star-Club, as did Gerry & The Pacemakers, The Searchers and The Big Three. They all worked hard, long hours, the crowd loved them."*

The Beatles had arrived for their third and final stint at the Star-Club on 18 December. By then the band was on the threshold of fame. Their new drummer, Ringo Starr, had almost completed his fourth month with the band and their debut single, Love Me Do/PS I Love You, reached No 17 in the *Music Week* Top 20 (20 December) when they were in Hamburg. By late 1962 the city didn't seem as sweet to them as it had before, and they were eager to complete their stint at the club with as little fuss as possible and



From the top: US star-act Johnny & The Hurricanes © Courtesy of Sonja Paris. The Beatles at Star-Club, still with Pete Best on drums performing with Roy Young © Roy Young. Star-Club 1962 ticket © Courtesy Rock'n'Research Kingsize Taylor & The Dominoes © Courtesy of Ulf Krüger

get home to carry on promoting their single and into the studio to complete what was to be their first LP, *Please Please Me*.

On New Year's Eve, 1962, The Beatles played their final set at the Star-Club and packed up their things – never to play at the club again.

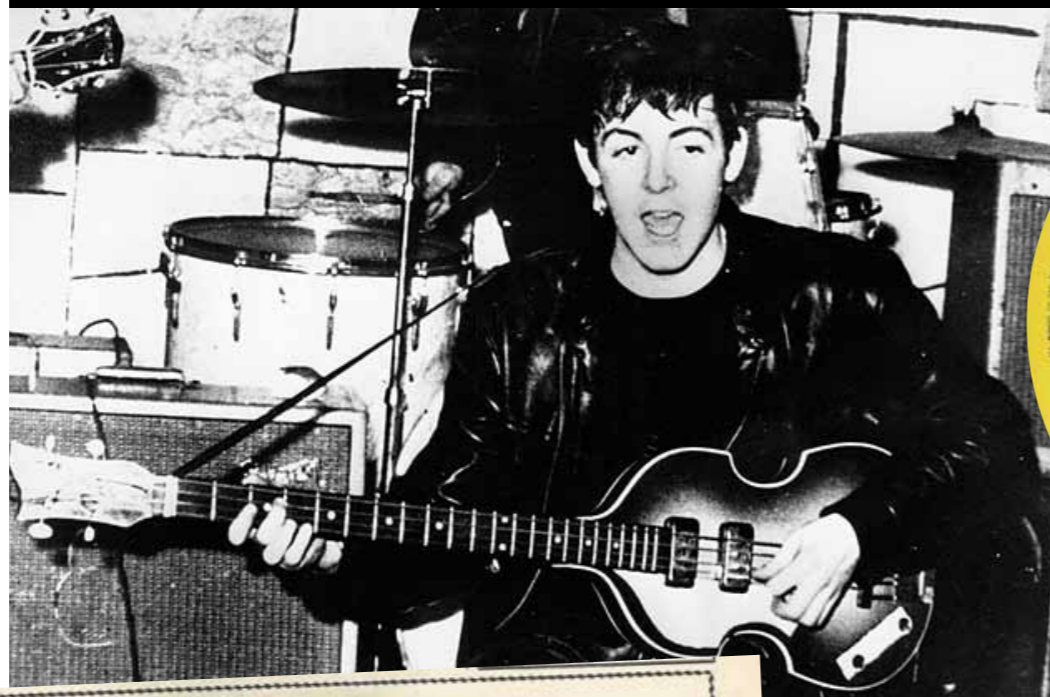
George Harrison: "Thanks for your letter, which I received just before Christmas. I hope you had a good one, or at least better than ours... We only have three more days to go, and then will be away from this place for good. (I hope)." (Letter home to Liverpool, 28 December 1962)

ROLL THE TAPE, PLEASE...

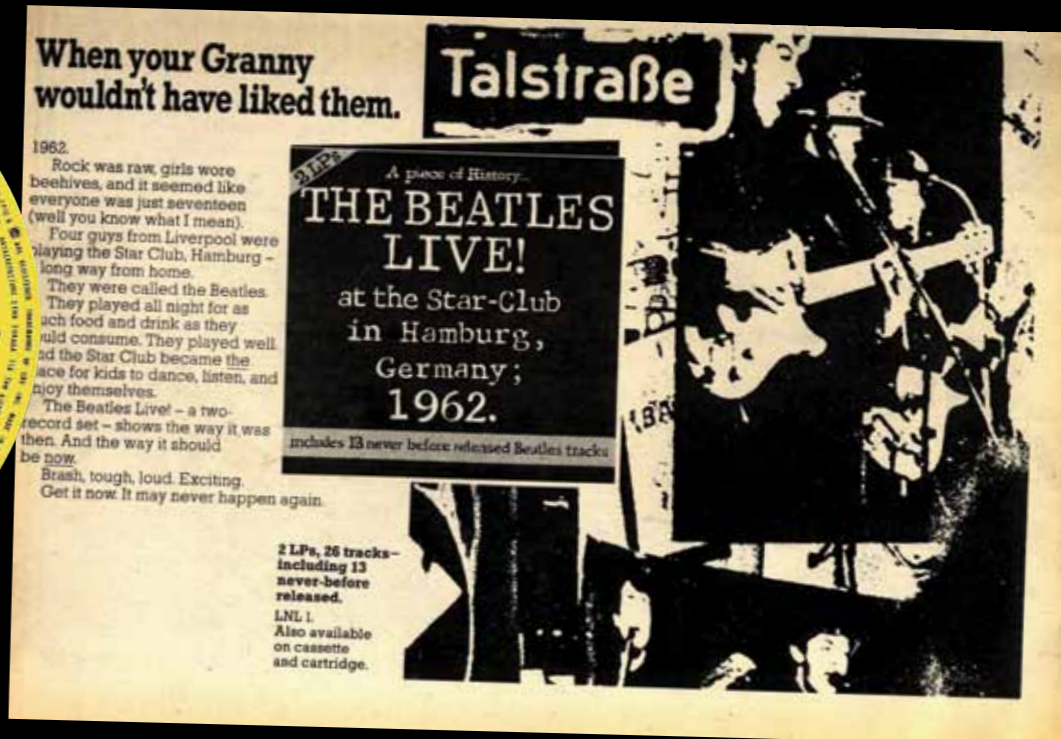
In October 1962 Kingsize Taylor and his band The Dominoes had returned to Star-Club after a radio show in Berlin. With him he had brought a brand new Philips RK 14 four-track mono tape recorder (also known as an EL3541), which was at that time the latest in technology. Originally Kingsize and The Dominoes used the machine to record their own rehearsals. Then in late November, Taylor had the idea to record the band to see how they sounded in a packed club. To do this he asked the help of Adrian Barber, who, during the autumn of 1962, had taken up the position as stage manager at the Star-Club. The guitar player and technical wizard of another Liverpool group The Big Three, Barber had been given a free hand to build a first-class sound system capable of recording at the Star-Club. At the time, however, Barber had not yet accumulated all his equipment and was happy to team up with Kingsize and use his tape recorder.

Barber set up Taylor's reel-to-reel at the side of the stage and connected it to a Sennheiser microphone hung from the ceiling of the club. After having set up, Barber and Taylor left the recorder by the stage throughout December for anyone to use. According to Taylor, the normal thing was to leave the recorder running all night, with anybody just turning the tape over when they noticed it had come to a stop.

Frank Allen (Cliff Bennett & The Rebel Rousers/The Searchers): "I remember the tape recorder sitting on a ledge at the side of the stage. I also remember Kingsize playing back some of the recordings of The Beatles the next afternoon. We (The Rebel Rousers) personally were never asked if we could be recorded and I don't think we would have objected. It would not have been considered



Beatles wishing fans Merry Xmas from the Star-Club ad (Pop Weekly No 17, 1962) Paul shot © Alamy. Label – it's Greek?? Ad for Star-Club record, *Melody Maker*, 1977



a serious or professional thing and we certainly would not have seen any future in any such recordings on a commercial basis. We were not offered beer like The Beatles. In fact, I did not even know there were recordings of The Rebel Rousers in existence until recently."

In early January 1963, Taylor packed up his recorder, together with his tape, and headed back to Liverpool. He'd captured three hours of material, including not only his own group and Cliff Bennett & The Rebel Rousers, but also almost two hours of material with The Beatles. After Taylor had brought the tape recorder back to Liverpool, it was never used again to record at the club, even when Taylor himself returned. Adrian Barber, however, carried on with his project of building a sound system and recording set-up at the club. His project included the first use of direct injection boxes, allowing him to take signals straight from guitars, cutting out the need for microphones in front of guitar amps. It's alleged that when Barber left the Star-Club in early 1964 for a successful career as a producer in the US, about 40 tapes had been recorded over the system, none of which have been heard since.

LOST AND FOUND

Kingsize Taylor and his band had played in Hamburg from October to December 1962. In January he was back in Liverpool for a couple of weeks, before returning to Hamburg for another stint at the Star-Club. Back home, Taylor transferred The Beatles' material from the original tape onto a twin-

track tape, with the use of his father's Grundig TK 120 recorder. He then offered The Beatles' manager Brian Epstein the tape. However, Epstein's and The Beatles' interest was minimal and, in a letter dated 9 May 1963, he writes to Taylor: "Thank you for giving us the opportunity to buy your tape recording of The Beatles. As there does not appear to be any commercial value to the recording I can only offer you £20 for your time and effort in producing the tape recording." For obvious reasons Taylor, by then back again at Star-club with his band, turned down the offer.

With his own career to tend to, it's not until 1967/68 that Taylor, who had left the music business, going back to his old trade as a butcher, returns his attention to the recordings once more. In an attempt to do something about the poor sound quality, he gave the tape to John Seddon, a record producer who ran a small private studio called Studio One on Temple Street, Liverpool. In the end not much comes out of the project and when Seddon's studio is closed down, the tape is forgotten and left lying in the abandoned studio.

The first Mersey Beat reunion took place at the Top Rank Ballroom in Liverpool (24 February 1971). At the reunion Allan Williams, once booking agent/semi-manager for The Beatles, learns of the Star-Club recordings from Taylor. The two of them decide to team up to get the material released on record.

According to Taylor, the first thing he and Allan Williams had to do was get access to Seddon's abandoned studio to retrieve the tape. After Seddon's studio was closed, all his stuff had been stashed in the cellar of the building. A security man for the building was contacted and allowed them access to the

cellar. Among heaps of papers and containers, at the bottom of a cardboard box full of rubbish, and after much searching, they finally found the tape.

Soon after, Bill Harry, originally the editor of *Mersey Beat* but now working as PR agent for artists such as Led Zeppelin, Suzi Quatro and Free, joined the team (May-June 1972) and he began to contact various record companies. This resulted in him having numerous meetings with record executives, taking them from London to Taylor's butcher shop in Southport to listen to the tape. Among the companies to take an interest was Polydor, but like other companies, when learning that the material had been recorded when The Beatles were already under contract with EMI, they backed out.

Harry next contacted his friend Bob Dick and through him managed to get in touch with K-Tel. Their legal team had found a clause allowing the recordings to be released and was interested in a deal which would have secured both Taylor and Williams some good money. They insisted the deal was to be kept a secret until everything was ready. Unfortunately it all fell apart when news about the Star-Club recordings, through Allan Williams' carelessness, hit the media in the summer of 1973.

In July, reporter Ed Blanche, writer for the Associated Press, wrote an article about the Star-Club recordings. It was originally published in the *Daily News* on 11 July, but repeated in several papers in the UK, Europe and North America in the following days. At about the same time, Allan Williams invited journalist Mike Evans to his home in Liverpool to play him the original Star-Club tape. Evans is allowed to hear it in its entirety, and his article, *Beatles Backtracks – The*

Strange Story Of The Hamburg Tapes, published in *Melody Maker* (4 August 1973), is the most detailed on the material to that time. By 17 September the recordings had also hit television through the BBC magazine show *Nationwide*, where a segment of Kansas City was played.

In July 1973, at the same time he'd kicked off his media campaign, Allan Williams approached George Harrison and Ringo Starr with the Star-Club recordings. Williams told the press at the time that they both got very excited when hearing about the recordings and immediately requested copies for Lennon and McCartney. In the deal presented to Apple, Taylor/Williams offered The Beatles the chance to buy the tapes with a retained royalty interest. On 31 October Kingsize Taylor provided Apple with a copy of the tape to be forwarded to George Harrison. If there'd initially been a genuine interest in the material from Apple it was dramatically toned down after hearing the tape. In the end they simply didn't think the material was up to standard for release.

"AR Williams... offered the tape or tapes to Apple Corps, but received no reply. Later Williams played the tapes to two of The Beatles and offered to sell them for £10,000 with royalties, but no sale resulted." (Statement from the 1977 court case/The Times, 7 April 1977)

It's not known if copies ever made their way to John and Paul. What makes it seem unlikely is that when Williams, after a Wings concert at Philadelphia's Spectrum (12 May 1976), met Paul backstage, he is said to have

promised Paul he'd send him a copy of the Star-Club tape.

The lost deal with K-Tel, together with the lukewarm interest from Apple, meant that Taylor and Williams' plans to put out the recordings stalled.

In 2005 auction firm CooperOwen offered for sale a three-page draft contract, set up between Messrs Daniel John Secunda (record producer) and Anthony Michael Secunda (manager/promoter) and Allan Williams and Edward Taylor for the release of The Beatles' Hamburg Star-Club recordings. The contract is not dated or signed, and the reason for deal's termination remains unknown.

THE RETURN OF MR MURPHY

In 1975, old Beatles' associate Tony Sheridan teamed up with his former producer from Hamburg, Paul Murphy, now head of London-based BUK Records (a subsidiary of Polydor), in an attempt to relaunch his career. Paul Murphy had himself been a part of the early Mersey scene and was also something of a "ghost of the past" in The Beatles' story, as he was responsible for Polydor releasing The Beatles/Tony Sheridan recordings, as well as Sheridan's re-recording of the tongue-in-cheek vocals for his and The Beatles' Sweet Georgia Brown at the height of Beatlemania in 1964. While working for Polydor in Germany, Murphy had also recorded Kingsize Taylor and his band.

On 5 September 1975, Murphy was in Liverpool for Sheridan's performance with the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra at the Philharmonic Hall. To cut a long story short, while in the city, Sheridan and Murphy met

with old pals Kingsize Taylor and Allan Williams. Williams mentioned the Star-Club recordings to Murphy who, after having heard them and consulting his lawyer (Walter Hofer), also present, decided to take a gamble to try to finally release them on record. After he'd made his mind up, Murphy acted very quickly and after just over a week he'd formed a separate company, Lingasong, for the release of the recordings. On 12 September, Williams on behalf of himself and Kingsize Taylor, signed a deal with Paul Murphy and the new company with the stated aim to get the recordings released to the general public.

Paul Murphy: "And then Allan said, 'You know we have these tapes. I've had them since 1972 [1971] but there is nothing we really can do with them.' As I'd been out of the country for a long time in that period, I said, 'What tapes?', 'The Beatles Tapes!'" (Beatles Unlimited No 13, 1977)

Paul Murphy immediately started working on the recordings at Chappell Recording Studios, London) and by late November he had finished going through the material identifying which tracks were by The Beatles and which could be used. He'd done his best to improve the sound quality and transferred the 11 tracks he considered for release onto a master tape. His original plan was to release a single LP.

By the end of 1975, Paul Murphy had devoted considerable time, effort and money to reconstructing the Star-Club material. He now desperately needed to get it released. Though Lingasong by now had a product ready for the shelves, they'd run into some serious difficulties finding a company willing ready to take the risk of releasing it. It was not until Murphy, through his lawyer Walter Hofer, came in contact with Lee Halpern, a US record pressing-plant owner and broker, that things finally began to happen.

Larry Grossberg (producer and director of the Star-Club record releases): "Lee Halpern and Walter Hofer embarked on a plan to get the Hamburg tapes, as Walter knew they existed. They flew to Europe and cut a deal with Taylor and Murphy. They actually brought the recording back to New York without even listening to its contents. Lee gave me the tape and I made a safety copy and listened to it over weekend - and, being a professional audio man, I was totally disappointed with the sound quality."

In the mid-70s, before the Star-Club recordings were officially released, Allan Williams was appearing at several Beatles

conventions giving speeches, promoting his book *The Man Who Gave The Beatles Away* and playing extracts from the recordings. The material also got an airing at radio stations prior to their official release; probably most notable is the US counter-culture syndicate radio show Earth News Service's airing of parts of My Girl Is Red Hot, which, due to being incomplete, was omitted from the later official releases.

DOUBLE H TAKES OVER

In mid-1976, Lingasong signed an agreement with Lee Halpern and a US company called Double H Licensing Corp. Through Double H, both new money and energy was brought into the project.

Independent producer Larry Grossberg, with the assistance of Jim Zipf and Kathy Dennis, got the job of reconstructing the Star-Club material for release. Work took place at Sound Ideas Studios (151 West 46th Street, New York - the site of the former Capitol Studios). In the pre-digital era everything was created using tape - copying from one machine to another.

When Grossberg took over the work, Paul Murphy had already started the process of reworking the recordings by copying them onto several 16-track/2" tapes, but Grossberg scrapped his work. He says he never even saw the 16-track/2" tapes, and so started from scratch, this time copying the original recordings to eight-track/1" tape. He then attempted to separate the different instruments and vocals by filtering each channel of the tape differently with the idea of rebalancing the sound and bringing forward the vocals. Grossberg had the advantage of owning a professional audio company in NYC (Martin Audio-Video), giving him access to technology no one else had at the time.

During this process they also attempted to restore songs by combining different performances, repeating sections and creatively editing recordings to create complete-sounding versions of material which only existed on the original tape in partial form. This was mainly achieved through crossfading rather than physical editing to ensure the edits were less noticeable. The sequence of tunes was also changed, with applause, crowd noise and on-stage announcements used to cover the transition between songs. Crowd cheering was also reinforced (these audience responses are not always overwhelming on the original tape). Finally the recordings were mixed back to mono and then processed to simulate stereo using an Orban/Parasound stereo synthesizer. The intention was to create the feeling of The Beatles in front of an audience in a Hamburg beer hall. The result was planned to be highly commercial rather than exclusively for diehard fans. (How different the released records are compared to the original material will become clear in the second part of this article.)

Larry Grossberg: "Lee [Halpern] knew I had experience in producing and specialty audio electronics and he was advised by one of his sons, Larry, who was working for his dad, that I would be ideal for the project. My first impression was, the recordings were piss poor. I creatively thought it should be produced as a 'continuous live show' - when you have a lemon, make lemonade - which made sense on a commercial scale, and not only to diehard Beatle purists, as purists are a small percentage of end listeners."

After four-and-a-half months of hard and expensive work in the studio and at a reported cost of \$12,000 per track, by December the process was thought to be complete. Tests with transferring the material to records in early January, however, showed that the sound was not yet up to the desired standard and another round of work in the studio had to be done. In late January, work was finally completed and test pressings could be distributed to potential record labels.

In October 1976, Paul Murphy/Double H had put the word out that they had plans to release the Star-Club recordings, something that made the headlines and stirred some media interest. By early December 1976, however, Double H was still undecided whether they should release a single or double-LP. There were even discussions of a three-record package including a book. Finally, by the end of the month it was reported that they'd settled for a double-LP with a release date early the next year.

AT LAST - THE BEATLES LIVE IN HAMBURG!

Early in 1977, Lingasong had acquired the right to the Star-Club tape from Kingsize Taylor. By February that year negotiations were well underway to release the recordings on disc. Manufactured under the Lingasong label, Double H licenced distribution world-wide to various record labels; Bellaphon (Germany), Victor (Japan), RCA (France and UK), Atlantic (US and Canada), Festival (Australia), Columbia (Spain and Israel), Ariola (Holland) and Inter Press (Scandinavia).

In early April 1977 the first 26 recordings were released in Germany with Japan and France following shortly after. The recordings were also released in Great Britain and several other European countries in the following months. Another four previously unreleased recordings were issued in the US in June of the same year, thereby making 30 tracks available. In the end the album was released more or less worldwide and made the charts



in some countries. Later the recordings were licensed to other companies and a large number of reissues on various labels followed, sometimes with slightly different mixes. One notable variant is the 1979 US/Canada album *The Beatles 1st Live Recordings Hamburg, Germany, 1962, Volume One* (Pickwick SPC-3661). This included for the first time Hully Gully, a recording that is from the Star-Club tape, though it is actually by Cliff Bennett & The Rebel Rousers.

Dave Wendels (Cliff Bennett & The Rebel Rousers): "Hully Gully is indeed us. One of the first things I noticed playing at the Star-Club was that the house Fender amps provided for all the bands, probably from constant use, didn't sound very good to my ears, and needed some serious maintenance! My solution was to use the little brown Fender Super amp that was in the backstage dressing room as a courtesy tuning-up aid as my onstage guitar amp. Before every set, I'd unplug it and park it next to me on top of the stage piano and that's what you can hear on Hully Gully!"

In 1991 Sony Music released parts of the Star-Club recordings, including Hully Gully, on CD. In February 1996 Lingasong, possibly with the intention of riding the slipstream of *Anthology's* success released a CD-box (LING 95) including the 26 tracks originally on the European version of their double-LP. The CD was re-released in March 1998 (LING 96) without the box.

When due for release in 1977, there were still questions about when the material was recorded. The sleeve notes for the original record indicates that it was recorded while Pete Best was still their drummer, though, on the particular night of the recording, Ringo Starr was sitting in. This is obviously wrong and the attempt to predate the recordings to early 1962 was probably written with The Beatles'



THE STRANGERS



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CAROL ELVIN



From the top: UK label. The Strangers © Courtesy of Ulf Krüger
The Strangers receipt travel cost Liverpool - Hamburg December 1962 © Courtesy of Rock'n'Research
Carol Elvin © Courtesy of Ulf Krüger
Cliff Bennett & the Rebel Rousers © Courtesy of Ulf Krüger



CLIFF BENNETT and the REBEL ROUSERS

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record contract with EMI in mind to avoid legal problems (the fact that The Beatles were under contract with Polydor/Bert Kaempfert Produktion from 19 June 1961 to 25 May 1962 wasn't widely known then). Later, 31 December 1962, The Beatles' last night at the Star-Club, has been given as the recording date. The truth is that since the tape recorder was left by the stage for anyone to use, it ran all night long throughout December 1962. The last collection of recordings on the original tape starts with The Beatles, but also includes Cliff Bennett & The Rebel Rousers, who didn't arrive at the club until the 31 December. The recordings may therefore date from any time between 18-31 December.

THE SUE ME, SUE YOU BLUES

In the process of releasing the Star-Club recordings, many record labels were contacted, but they'd all turned down the offer because they expected legal problems and saw it as impossible to release them without permission from EMI and Apple as The Beatles were already under contract when the recordings were made.

In late 1976, Paul Murphy told the press that legal clearance had been obtained from Apple and initially the news about the recordings being due for release did not cause any adverse reactions from The Beatles' camp, possibly because, like George Harrison had said when asked about the recording during a promotion tour in the US for his LP *33 1/3*, in November the same year, that they simply didn't expect anyone to want to release the material. A few months later the situation was very different.

On 21 January 1977, Paul Murphy was contacted by Apple who by now had gained interest in the planned release. More talks followed a couple of days later (31 January) and when he informed them on 23 March that a double-LP would be out in two to three months' time, Apple took immediate action to block the release.

On 1 April, Murphy got word from Apple that if he didn't stop his plans to release The Beatles' Star-Club recordings before 3:30 the very same afternoon, they would take action. No agreement was reached and a lawsuit was filed by Apple and The Beatles at London's High Court, seeking an injunction preventing the release of the recordings. It's also apparent that Murphy's rather ill-conceived publicity stunt for the upcoming record release only days before, sending out an apple to selected members of the press and asking them to come to the former Apple Building in London (3 Savile Row), something that for obvious reasons upset Apple, didn't improve relations.

The main strategy Apple had chosen for stopping the recordings in court was that releasing them would cause The Beatles

"grievous harm". The argument Lingasong successfully countered with was that the recordings had a historic value and, as long as they were advertised as historic artefacts, they wouldn't damage The Beatles' reputation.

The judge also decided that Apple filed their lawsuit so close to the release of the records it was unfair to Lingasong and Murphy. The judge stressed that Apple must have known about the plans to release them long before April and if they'd wanted to stop them they should have acted much earlier. Interestingly enough, the 1977 court case also shows that contrary to the second case in 1998, all parties had agreed that consent to the recordings had been given by at least one member of The Beatles.

"...it was common ground that some sort of oral consent was given to the making of the original tape." (Ruling from the 1977 court cases/The Times, 7 April 1977)

Strangely, the fact that The Beatles were, at the time of the recordings, under contract with EMI was never an issue for the court in 1977. It's also notable that EMI have never had any part in any of the lawsuits against Lingasong, not in 1977 nor in 1998. Arguing for the fact that when the Star-Club material was recorded The Beatles were already under contract would perhaps have been a more successful strategy for Apple, based on the fact that the Westminster parliament that very same year had passed a law making bootleg records illegal.

When Sony Music released the Star-Club recordings on CD in 1991, it sparked renewed legal attention from The Beatles and in 1992 Sony withdrew the titles. The new action was possible due to changes in the Copyright Act in 1989 which gave artists greater rights to prevent unauthorized manufacture and sale of their live recordings.

With their 1996/98 CD Lingasong opened up the field for a new legal battle between them and Apple. In early May 1998, after a four-day hearing at London's High Court where George Harrison personally gave evidence on behalf of The Beatles, Apple won the case, effectively banning any further releases of the Star-Club material.

In court in 1998 George Harrison denied any knowledge of the Star-Club recordings before they were released in 1977, something which Kingsize Taylor has strongly disputed. It has been shown here that The Beatles had already been offered the Star-Club recordings in 1963, but turned them down and that, in 1973, the tapes were copied for Harrison personally. Taylor has also made statements that, according to sworn affidavits in his possession from the High Court case in 1998, McCartney and Harrison had very different views on the matter, but that

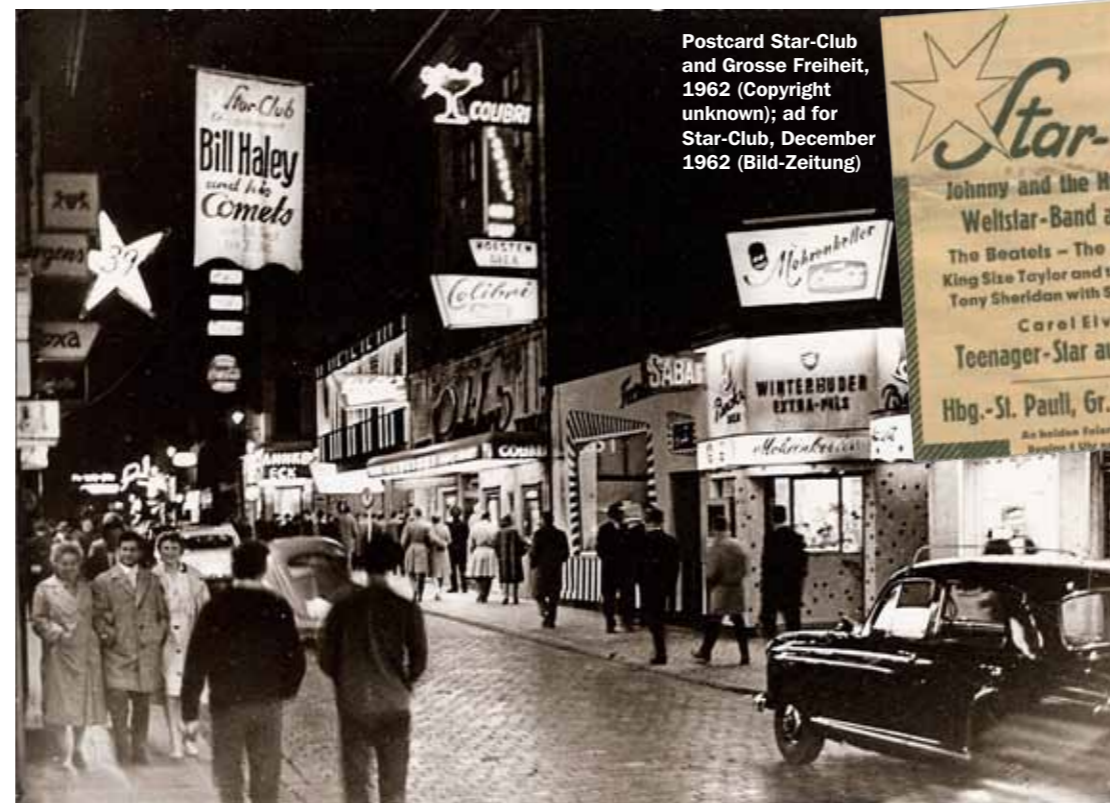
McCartney's statement was never used. For the court, Taylor asserted that he'd received verbal permission from John Lennon to record The Beatles at Star-Club in 1962, in exchange for buying him a couple of pints of beer, something backed up by Adrian Barber.

Barber also said that as far he remembered neither Paul nor Ringo had any objections against being recorded at the time and that they were thrilled with the idea of having the recordings released, something George Harrison strongly disputed in his testimony.

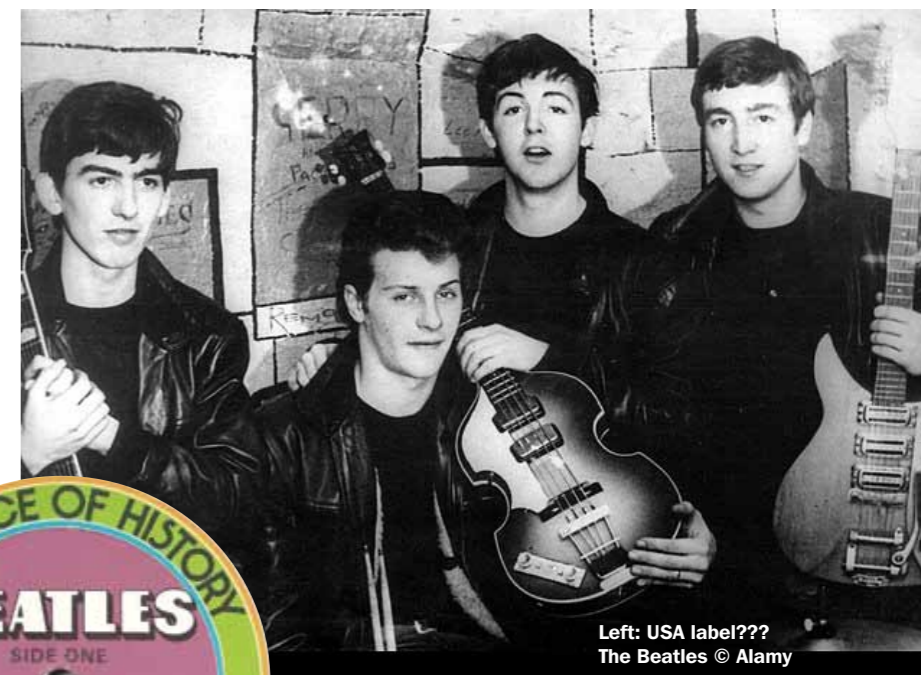
So, was Taylor given clearance for the release of the material in 1962? In 1977, it was agreed in court that he was; however, the court decided, in 1998, that this wasn't the case.

After the court case people with their own insight into the early Hamburg scene have made claims that George Harrison's stories about Hamburg were exaggerated, but in the end it was he who won the case for Apple. In 2014, attempts were made, without success, to get the earlier judgment of 1998 declared void due to Harrison's testimony being irrelevant to the case.

The fourth – and, to this day, final – court case concerning these recordings took place in 2008, when the Miami-based company Fuego Entertainment Inc tried to launch some of the Star-Club recordings as newly found tracks, alleged to have been recorded by a DJ working at the Star-Club in 1962. The story was obviously not correct and as Apple rightly pointed out the material was not new and had already been released on a bootleg. In the end Apple reached a settlement with Fuego not to release the material.



Postcard Star-Club and Grosse Freiheit, 1962 (Copyright unknown); ad for Star-Club, December 1962 (Bild-Zeitung)

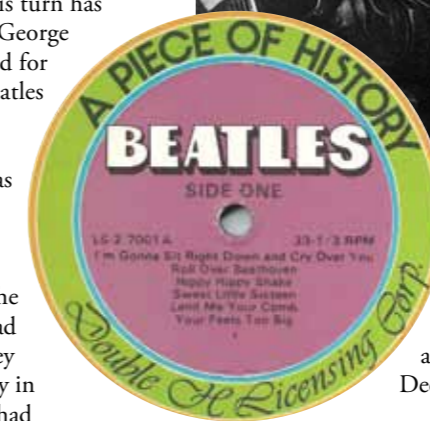


Left: USA label??? The Beatles © Alamy

OUR STARS FROM LIVERPOOL, THE BEATLES...

Though the members of The Beatles, especially John Lennon and George Harrison, always held their days in Hamburg in very high regard, they apparently never cared for the only extant recording of them from that time. Harrison was, from the beginning, of the opinion that the quality of the recordings was too inferior for release and, when issued in 1977, Lennon expressed very strong negative feelings against them calling them a "fucking fake". Ringo in his turn has expressed the same views as George – the sound is simply too bad for them to be marketed as a Beatles record. Paul McCartney has never officially commented, but rumour has it that he was not that bothered by them.

The question remains to this day why The Beatles failed to see the qualities of the Star-Club material and instead put so much effort and money into stopping them, especially in 1998 when these recordings had already been made available on record worldwide to millions and been bootlegged by so many. By then the group had themselves, within the framework of the *Anthology* project, released material of varying sound quality from their vaults under the Beatles' name, as well as including clips from the Star-Club tape on the soundtrack of the *Anthology* documentary. No answer can be given here. Clearly, from a fan's perspective Kingsize Taylor and Adrian Barber have at least given us the



opportunity to peek into the Star-Club on a few nights in December 1962.

Dave Wendels (Cliff Bennett & The Rebel Rousers): *"I do have one memory of John Lennon storming into the [Star-Club] dressing room after a set and throwing his guitar down, obviously displeased with something, and exclaiming 'That's it... if we don't make it this year, I'm going back to work!' Famous last words!"*

EPILOGUE: PROFESSIONAL RECORDING REACHES THE STAR-CLUB

In late October 1962, Siegfried Loch, label manager for Philips, visited the Star-Club for a concert with Fats Domino. Immediately impressed by the venue, he persuaded Manfred Weissleder, the manager of Star-Club, to give him permission to set up his mobile recording equipment in the club. The idea was to record what was going on stage from 4am to 6pm for a week. Starting

during the final week of February 1963 – a few weeks after The Beatles had made their last appearance at the club – Loch and his team recorded several hours of live material there including The Searchers, Sounds Inc, and Tony Sheridan & The Star Combo, who, due to being under contract with Polydor, had to perform under the pseudonym Dan Sherry.

Some 15 tracks were included on the LP *Twist At The Star-Club, Hamburg* (Philips P 48036 L/BL 7578) that saw a release in the UK and Germany in 1963. For those who listen to the disc, it also contains a little surprise. The earliest cover version of a Lennon & McCartney song, the then newly released Please Please Me. The track, strangely not listed on either the record cover or label, is by the London group Peter Nelson & The Travellers. More tracks from the session have been released on other records, while some still remain unreleased.

Next month's instalment will delve deeper into the content of the Star-Club tape; offer a guide to the various source materials in existence; and analyse what can how the official releases differ from the unedited recordings.

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Star-Club – Manfred Weissleder Hamburg phone book © Courtesy of Rock'n'Research