

'A Life With The Beatles'



by [Elaine Liner](#) on 19th August 2015

For some of us among 'the olds,' the Beatles provided the lush soundtrack of our lives. From first love (*I Want to Hold Your Hand*) to wedding song (*All You Need Is Love*) to funeral music (*In My Life*), the Fab Four gave us the tunes and lyrics that remain permanently on our personal playlists.

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So what a treat to hear a lot of those much-loved melodies and get a look at the behind-the-scenes history of how John, Paul, George and Ringo got together, and why they split apart, in the high-spirited, expertly acted solo bio-show *A Life with the Beatles*, playing at Sweet Venues Grassmarket. Glasgow actor Ian Sexon stars as longtime Beatles road manager Neil Aspinall, the man who drove the van, ironed the shirts, bounced the stalkers and soothed frayed nerves on hundreds of days and nights of international tours.

'I have witnessed the beginning and ending of everything at the same time,' says Aspinall in the show. 'I don't know why I'm still alive.' (In real life, he isn't, having died in 2008 at the age of 66.)

Often regarded as one of several men known as a 'fifth Beatle,' along with bounced drummer Pete Best, first manager Brian Epstein and longtime producer George Martin, Aspinall knew McCartney and Lennon as fellow 'Teddy Boys' in secondary school. Rewinding to those early years, bouncing from gig to gig before the hit

records happened, Aspinall describes John and Paul as 'ambitious and scared, shameless and delicate.'

Written by Davide Verazzani from a translation by Sabrina Macchi (the producing company is from Milan), *A Life with the Beatles* was staged for the Fringe by Edinburgh director Andy Corelli Jones. He's found a perfect vehicle to drive this one-act in veteran actor Sexon. Mimicking the flat voice of John Lennon, the growl of Ringo Starr, the boyish lilt of Paul McCartney and the posh vowels of George Martin, Sexon singlehandedly populates the stage with a crowd of other characters.

Sexon (who actually bears a strong resemblance to George Martin) is a highly physical performer. Dancing, leaping atop wooden cubes wrapped in Beatles album covers, collapsing into a chair and then jumping almost into the laps of the front row – Sexon is a Whirling Dervish of delicious energy. (If he does a little too much pantomiming of actions that don't need obvious visual cues, we forgive him. He's that much fun to watch.)

If you're a lifelong Beatles fan, you might even learn some new things from the Aspinall story. Like how the KKK in the American South held a Beatles record-burning ceremony (horrible) and the technical details of how the mind-blowing orchestral crescendo on *A Day In The Life* was created in the recording studio (amazing).

You'll even be invited to sing along. If you're anywhere around Baby Boomer age, you already know all the words by heart.

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