

ON STAGE The Bay City Rollers wear white trousers, cuffed at mid-calf, striped football socks and gawdy suspenders. Everything is trimmed in tartan, except the tennis shoes that complete the outfit.

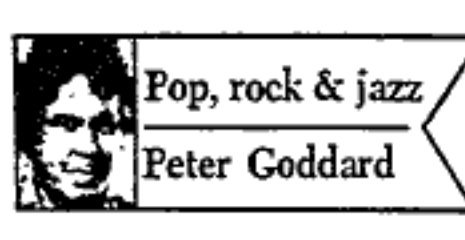
The Bay City Rollers hype may create the new Beatles

SUNDAY, JULY 27:
The deep sobs startle several passengers on the British Airways charter flight from London to Toronto. A stewardess rushes to the source of the sound to find an 11-year-old girl being comforted by her parents.

"She's okay," says the father with some embarrassment. "It's all about some rock band back in England. She'll forget about them soon."

The girl is wearing a powder blue T-shirt trimmed in tartan. The words across the front read: Bay City Rollers.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 25:



Pop, rock & jazz
Peter Goddard

"Tartan Terrors Wow Teeny Boppers," shouts one headline. "Bay City Siege," screams another. Then there's the one that starts "Teeny Terror" and goes on to report how 250 fans, mostly girls, required first aid, with 30 of them being sent to hospital after a Roller concert at the Odeon Cinema in Hammersmith in which several fans fell from a balcony.

Sid Bernstein is thinking about Shea Stadium. It's the first time in the day the chunky, 48-year-old concert promoter has really relaxed in his New York office. The phones are still ringing, of course. They are always ringing. Deals are always being made. But for the moment he allows his thoughts to drift away to Shea Stadium.

Shea, the bowl-shaped home of the New York Mets, Giants and Jets, is to Bernstein what the Arc de Triomphe was to Napoleon. It's the symbol of the single finest day in his life — Tuesday, Aug. 23, 1965, the date the Beatles played in Shea and Bernstein became known as the man who brought the Beatles to North America.

Master plan

Carol Strauss, of C. J. Strauss & Co., which handles Rollers' publicity on this side of the Atlantic, has been sending out press clippings like those for months. The master plan is to get across the idea that Rollermania is the genuine article, which it is, and not just another clever New York-based publicity stunt, which, in a way, it also is.

The hype isn't necessary in Britain. The Rollers have replaced the Beatles in London Sunday Times editorial cartoons. Each Roller record is an instant hit. Their fan club in East Lothian, Scotland, receives 2,500 letters a day. And when lead guitarist Eric Faulkner recently had a birthday, he was deluged with 25,000 letters and 5,000 parcels.

The hysteria has reached such proportions that during a Roller concert in Mallow Park, Leicestershire, 90,000 fans showed up. Things got out of hand when the helicopter carrying the band touched down and thousands of girls scrambled over the steel barriers, forcing the group to flee to a tiny island in the middle of a lake.

Now he wants to do it all again, this time with the Bay City Rollers, five young Scots from Edinburgh who've already set Britain back on its ears. They're 18 to 25 years old, they have clean white teeth and they're cute.

The Bay City Rollers.

The name is whispered in Bernstein's office. But the whispering is growing hysterical. He was only the producer of the Beatles' concerts, first at Carnegie Hall, then at Shea. But he's the Rollers' "American representative," a euphemism meaning that along with the band's manager, Tam Paton, he runs the whole show. Bernstein hopes it will be a show to make North America forget the Beatles.

TV matters

It's TV exposure that matters. Let the kids see other kids going crazy and—presto!—the craziness will spread.

Dr. Jerry knows this. Dr. Jerry (otherwise Jerry Carrol) is a disc jockey on New York's WPIX-FM and the first person on radio to really push the Rollers. As Dr. Jerry sits in Bernstein's office listening to the new Roller single, La Belle Jeanne, his face grows tense.

He flew to Britain to see the band and was bumped in the eye in the wildness that followed the concert. He's a fan. But he also knows what being close to the Rollers means. He knows that another New York disc jockey, Murray the K, became known as the "fifth Beatle" because he was first on the scene.

So Dr. Jerry sits listening to La Belle Jeanne, saying "great, just great," and David Stein is in one corner expounding his brand of rock

Fans wrote

And it might happen. Three weeks ago the Rollers appeared from London via satellite for the start of ABC-TV's Saturday Night Live With Howard Cosell show. Fan mail from Valerie Dunham in Napa Valley, Calif., Mara Zeman in White Plains, N.Y., Paul Tyler in Hamilton, Ont., and several thousand other fans poured into Bernstein's office.

Tonight the band will be on Cosell's show live with screaming fans ready to tear them off the stage. NBC has already finished an hour-long documentary to be aired later this month. Gabe Paul, president of the New York Yankees, is talking about a concert at the newly renovated 75,000-seat Yankee stadium next year. The Superdome in New Orleans has offered Bernstein \$50,000 for a single Rollers concert.

Tartan-trimmed fans imitate their heroes



The Tartan Terrors.

"The play needs a lot of work," he said in a telephone interview this week, "but we're giving it a lot of work, and I think it will be in good shape by the time it gets to the Royal Alex."

Effort deserved

"The play and the author deserve that effort, because it's a brilliant play by a brilliant author. Alan Ayckbourn is the most prolific, and one of the most talented, playwrights we've seen in London in a long time; and this particular play of his, Absurd Person Singular, is in my opinion the finest comedy of the past 30 years."

From Toronto, the play moves to Chicago for five weeks, then Philadelphia for four, and so on. It makes for the kind of season Macnee likes best — work that permits him to travel back and forth among England (where he's just returned from the prestigious Chichester Drama Festival), the U.S. and Canada — "although," he adds with a slight laugh, "I've been an actor for 37 years now, not a good actor but I've been earning my living at it, and I've found that for me, as long as you're working, that's the most important thing."

Sid Bernstein smiles when he thinks of it and launches into his favorite story: How he discovered the Rollers.

It all started when David Stein, a pudgy, sad-eyed 27-year-old who occasionally worked for Bernstein, suffered a kidney infection earlier this year. Stein had to stay home and decided to listen to some British records a friend had brought over. One of the records was by the Rollers and Stein saw the light.

"The next Beatles," he said to himself. "The times are right. The Beatles came along when America was depressed, and now America's depressed again. This is it."

Stein told Bernstein, who remembered how he first heard about the Beatles while reading British newspapers. The whole thing was just crazy enough to intrigue the promoter. Three days later he was in London making a deal with the Rollers' manager.

"Then I went to Glasgow," says Bernstein, "and kept seeing all these kids with these crazy short pants and wearing plaid everything. I couldn't figure it out until I booked into my hotel that night. There were a couple of thousand girls outside who thought the Rollers were there, too. They were singing every Roller song they knew. When I woke up the next morning I knew every song."

But, as he knows, the Rollers' music isn't important. Not yet, anyhow. Several Rollers records have been released in North America and they haven't sold. Besides, the Beatles weren't very musical when they started.

"Listen you," one grim mother screams at her daughter dressed in a tartan-trimmed smock. "I didn't dress you up like this to have you stand around. Now get over there and get in that picture."

Before the little girl can move, the crowd has rushed somewhere else. For the Rollers have arrived, looking young and scared under the TV lights. Suddenly the crowd rushes them.

The Rollers, Eric Faulkner, 20, Les McKeown, 19, Stuart "Woody" Wood, the youngest at 18, Alan Langmuir, the oldest at 26, and his younger brother Derek, 23, have yet to develop that professional sense of cool that comes with being a celebrity.

"You get used to this," yells Alan as we're crushed by the crowd. "But it always is a surprise."

We're all being pushed up an escalator. The fans really don't know who is and who isn't a Roller and several surprised reporters find they are suddenly missing a sleeve. And the real Rollers, or "the kids" as all the agents, promoters and hangers-on are calling them, keep smiling at each other.

They haven't been completely immune from this pressure. After their British spring tour Eric and Derek were sent to a \$150-a-day health farm to recuperate from exhaustion. Les was so shaken by the craziness around him he had an accident in which a 76-year-old woman was run down and killed and his car was wrecked.

But they are prepared for America. "We've been wanting this for a long, long time," says Les, as I find myself almost carrying him up the escalator.

No girls

A camera man swings his equipment around and smacks me in the head, the lights go out briefly, and suddenly the crowd pushes us into the parking lot.

"No girls, no girls," their manager, Tam Paton (pronounced Pay-ton), is shouting. "They can't have girls in their career. It'll wreck their image. The magic will be lost."

Paton has been with the Rollers for seven years and already he is being compared to the late manager of the Beatles, Brian Epstein. But there is one difference: Where the Beatles and Epstein were almost equal partners, Paton runs every aspect of the Roller operation like a field marshal.

He books them two to a room in their hotel. He insists that the TV producers shoot all five of the Rollers because "each one is a star." And he insists on being in the same room when someone interviews a Roller.

"And never, never compare them to the Beatles," he says in his high-pitched brogue.

"Rollers fans don't remember the Beatles, they're too young. The Rollers are different."

He says this just as we are passing Shea Stadium on the way to Manhattan and the big time to come. Sid Bernstein, on the other side of the car, looks out the window.

You can almost hear him thinking: "It's gonna happen again."

Actor returns to the city that launched his career

By MARGARET DALY
Star staff writer

COMING to Toronto from London in 1952, for me, was like coming to some desolate hinterland," said actor Patrick Macnee. "Now it's by far the most exciting, sophisticated, cosmopolitan city in North America. I can't tell you how much I'm looking forward to coming back there."

Macnee, who'll be here Monday for a three-week engagement at the Royal Alex of Absurd Person Singular, the long-run London and Broadway comedy hit, credits Toronto with making an actor out of me.

He launched his acting career on stage at the Crest and with the ubiquitous infant CBC-TV drama department.

He's resigned to the fact that Torontonians, like everyone else, know him best for a later role.

Debonair Steed

Even now, five years after The Avengers ended its incredibly successful eight-year run on British, American and Canadian television, Macnee still is recognized on the streets as debonair, bowler-hatted John Steed, the indomitable detective who preceded—and, outdid—James Bond in bringing tongue-in-cheek barbarism to the British screen thriller.

The series developed such a cult following that it is always being replayed somewhere or other. In fact, this week CBLT launched a string of late-late reruns for Avengers weeks.

"Breaks is a good word for this series itself was a sort of break. I've often thought," Macnee said this week.



PATRICK MACNEE
The Avengers' fame lingers

"The reason for its phenomenal success had to do, I think, with the liberation of its heroine" (first Honor Blackman, then Diana Rigg, then Linda Thorsen). "That rather broke new ground in the '60s. Not just the judo and the leather costumes, but the obviously adult kind of give-and-take relationship, the equality, between her and Steed."

"The other thing I think people liked about the show was its nice deft comic flair, which again was new for thrillers then."

"But even my part in The Avengers, which was of course the most successful of my career, I owe to my years as an actor in Toronto, you know," Macnee added.

"It was Sydney Newman (now film consultant to the federal government, former National Film Board chief, and one-time head of drama for the BBC) who cast me in the series, based on his knowledge of my work for the CBC."

In those fledgling days of the CBC drama department, Newman was only one of the now-big names Macnee recalls working with.

He did what was to become the first televised drama in Canada, a play based on a Robert Louis Stevenson work, with Lorne Greene, Austin Willis and Barry Morse; and he also remembers working with John Colicos, Kate Reid, John Draine, Robert Goulet, Don Harron, Norman Jewison, Bernie Slade, and a host of others between 1952 and 1954, the era aficionados think of as the Golden Age of CBC drama.

Superior plays

They did Shakespeare, Ibsen, all the classics — in productions which Macnee recalls as being "vastly superior to anything in Britain at the time, and at least the equal of the very best being done in the U.S."

When he came to Toronto — on 48 hours' notice to do a videotaped The Moonstone — he lived at the YMCA for several months, until he could afford to share an attic apartment, in an old house on Prince Arthur, with the recently retired drama critic of the Globe and Mail, Herbert Whittaker.

That house, by the way, is one of the few things in the city Macnee remembers that's still here.

"When I was in Toronto two years ago (in The Secretary Bird at the Royal Alex) I took a walk down Prince Arthur and there it was, one of only about two or three houses on the block that still stood."

"I couldn't believe the changes in the rest of the city — it was the first time I'd been there in almost 10 years."

Now his son Rupert lives and works here, as a director of televi-

sion documentaries, although he'll be on assignment out of the country when Macnee arrives Monday from Wilmington, Del., where the road company of Absurd Person Singular is trying out the play for a week before it opens here.

"The play needs a lot of work," he said in a telephone interview this week, "but we're giving it a lot of work, and I think it will be in good shape by the time it gets to the Royal Alex."

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An international success looks for fame at home

By SID ADILMAN
Star staff writer

ON the United States and British commercial thriller circuit this season, big money and high expectations of tough-minded publishers are riding on a Canadian novel, King of White Lady.

"I was absolutely caught up in it," says Harvey Ginzberg, editor in chief of Putnam's publishers in New York. "It's got a marvellous storytelling quality, and a lot of convincing information about a world I was not familiar with."

King of White Lady is an action story about a top cocaine dealer who makes the important Bogota connection, which, according to police, is the source of much of the world's trade in that champagne of drugs.

From Ginzberg's enthusiasm and purchase for U.S. hardcover rights flowed a U.S. paperback deal and King's selection as a fall offering from the mammoth U.S. Book-of-the-Month Club.

King of White Lady also secured confirmed deals for separate hardcover and paperback editions from British and other Commonwealth publishers, and interest from Hollywood producers whose bids so far for a screen version have reached \$100,000.

All this brings joy to Toronto's Lester and Orpen, the book's two-fisted Canadian publisher.

Before one copy had been sold anywhere, King's author, R. Lance Hill, a 32-year-old Toronto-born former car racing champion, had collected between \$70,000 and \$75,000 in advance payments.

Nails, his first book, also in the popular thriller genre, has earned him \$25,000, good reviews, and sales in England and a Canadian movie deal from Toronto's August Films.

"We saw in the first section of that first novel a sense of power in the writing, that's what we look for in an author," says Malcolm Lester, who with his partner, Eve Orpen,

discovered and set Lance Hill off on a writing career. "King of White Lady is the first Canadian book to produce this kind of international interest before publication," Lester says.

But in Canada there's hardly been a whisper about it or Lance Hill: No invitation for him to join the Writers' Union, not even a trickle of Canadian reviews so far, and no requests for TV interviews, which Hill says he will refuse because he insists on privacy.

"Why is it?" Hill asked angrily this week, "you get recognition everywhere else in the world, but not in Canada? Why don't people here care?"

Lance Hill's background itself sounds like the plot of a Hill action novel.

A driver all his life, he is the son of a civil engineer who regularly uprooted his family to find work across Canada. Hill has been a bouncer, loan company collector, salesman, a hot rod car driving

champion, and a columnist for race car magazines.

Now married, he lives on a rented 230-acre farm north of Toronto but won't say exactly where. "I don't want to be bugged by race car people. I've left all that behind me, maybe being a product of travelling around a lot you can forget your surroundings quickly and leave careers behind you."

Hill says that his mother, a former school teacher who was interested in literature, tried to encourage him to write at an early age. "If you get something thrown at you when you're a kid it may take 25 years, but it gets through."

Now that it has he wants to be taken seriously.

"King of White Lady, which I really consider my first book because Nails was just an exercise to see if I could write, is a serious work of fiction . . . and if someone doesn't take it seriously I'll ride them up the middle."



R. LANCE HILL
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