



THE RUTLES

BRITISH writer Eric Idle, one of the outstanding Monty Python group of humorists, has created a classic comedy film for television in "All You Need Is Cash," starring 'The Rutles' a non-existent band which looks somewhat like the Beatles but isn't, sounds a lot like them but isn't, has similar adventures but not quite, and somehow achieves the total demolition of all Beatle mythology while at the same time reminding us of the wonderful times we all had, all those years ago when the Beatles were young and we were innocent.

Warner Bros. Records is privileged to have the record album which contains 14 songs from the film in a package (featuring a 16 page color booklet), conceived and written by Eric Idle.

Mr. Idle and the clever actors, musicians, and superstars who have readily aligned themselves with the concept of the Rutles/Beatles, have succeeded where no documentary could have succeeded, because they have taken powerful liberties with the personalities and events of the Sixties. They've warped them into a parody which is so close to what actually happened that, although I worked for the Beatles and now work on the Rutles project, I am myself amazed. Somehow it lays to rest all of the Beatle ghosts, and liberates the former mop-tops from their past.

What are the Rutles, and who were the Beatles? The Beatles were four lovable musicians from Liverpool, England, who became the most successful pop group in history. They made their fame and fortune in the Sixties, broke up in the Seventies and now pursue separate and successful lives. The Rutles (played by four actors and/or musicians and writers) were



invented by Mr. Idle, a thirty-four-year-old graduate of Cambridge University in England who has always seen the ironies of life in sharper outline than the average hard-working writer. Mr. Idle, thanks to the freedom possible within the labyrinthine bureaucracies of the British Broadcasting Corporation, has been able joyfully to point to many absurdities, at first through the disciplines of writing-to-order for other comic actors, later through Monty Python on TV and then through his own British TV series, "Rutland Weekend Television." The latter was a two-season, half-hour comedy series which he wrote and in which he appeared with, among others, Neil Innes, a musician and comedic actor formerly with the Bonzo Dog Band who wrote the words and music to all the Rutles songs.

It was in this series (which takes its name, Rutland, from the smallest county in Britain) that Mr. Idle first flew the Rutles kite, in a sketch. Later, on "Saturday Night Live," he developed the theme and now, on March 22nd on NBC, the whole Rutles Story will be told, just as it never happened. Those who have neither heard of the Beatles, nor care about them, will find some of the references obscure and therefore not funny, but for the masses who know the Beatles there is pleasure in abundance and words and music, and there are those who say that Mr. Idle has created a masterpiece.

In telling the story of the Rutles, Mr. Idle has somehow told the story of the Beatles as they and their staff remember it, and safe inside the satire we may all enjoy his creation:

"They gained their first manager, Arthur Scouse, as part of a bet they lost). So impressed was he with their music that he sent them immediately to Hamburg. Thinking that Hamburg was just outside Liverpool they accepted. It turned out to be not only in Germany, but in the very worst part of Germany. The Reperbahn in Hamburg is one of the naughtiest streets in the world. This is where they ended up far from home, and far from talented. In those days there was a fifth Rutle - Leppo - who mainly stood at the back.

He couldn't play the guitar but he knew how to have a good time, and in Hamburg that was more difficult. For five hungry working class lads there are worse places than prison, and the Rat Keller, Hamburg is one. For fifteen months, night after night, they played the Rat Keller before they finally escaped and returned to Liverpool. In the rush they lost Leppo. He had crawled into a trunk with a small German fraulein and was never seen again. His influence on the other

Rutles was so immeasurable that no one has ever bothered to measure it."

And then. . . .

"On their second visit to the States in early 1965 they played the world's first outdoor rock and roll concert at Che Stadium (named after the Cuban guerilla leader Che Stadium). As a security precaution the Rutles arrived at the stadium by helicopter a day early. This enabled them to be safely out of the place before the audience came in. It was a brilliant public relations coup. The kids were screaming so hard that thousands never noticed the difference. Promoter Syd Bottle described it as the most exciting twenty minutes of his life."

To make the story credible and surreal at the same time, Eric Idle has used, though sparing, real characters. There is an interview with Mick Jagger (played by Mick Jagger), a close friend of the Beatles, and, by implication, of the Rutles.

Jagger: "They'd heard about us 'cos for a while we were the South's answer to the Rutles."

Interviewer: "Were you billed as that?"

Jagger: "We were billed as that, yes. When we got up to Birmingham it'd say 'London's greatest answer to the Rutles.'

Interviewer: "Were they trying to sell you songs at that stage?"

Jagger: "A bit later on they did, yeah. The one for that was Dirk really. He was real hustler for the songs. Any old slag he'd sell a song to. I remember they came down once and we were trying to rehearse and they said do you wanna song and we said 'yeah.' We were always really open to songs 'cos we didn't write our own and the Rutles were always well known for their hit-making potential ability. So they ran around the corner to the pub to write this song and came back with it and played it to us and it was horrible. So, we never bothered to record it. I used to see them a lot then. The Rutles in London, particularly Nasty. Nasty and I got on well. Barry used to get a bit drunk in nightclubs, you know, and start punching out the Bigamy Sisters."

Likewise Paul Simon:

Interviewer: "When did you first meet the Rutles?"

Paul: "I met Nasty about two days after I met Dirk. They were and we were together and we were at the screening of some avant-garde film in a hotel in London. They were there and Dirk was carrying this portable tape machine with him and whoever he spoke to, he'd put the microphone out in front of them and it was extremely intimidating. I was intimidated anyway to be in the same room with them. Nasty was very quiet, but very fascinating to watch, almost like a cartoon character.

Several years later I met Stig and we went to see Rabbi Shankar at the Royal Albert Hall. He was very close with Rabbi Shankar and we had a drink afterwards and talked a while."

Interviewer: "Did that influence your music?"

Paul: "No."

Interviewer: "What do you think their place is in musical history?"

Paul: "It's probably easier to place them sociologically as a phenomenon than to judge them at this point musically as to where they'll stand. Certainly they would be like any of the other enormous popular music phenomenon: Sinatra, Presley and the Rutles. People say 'Who will be the next Rutles?', you know. I don't think there will be the next Rutles. I think it will be something else you know, some other entirely new transformation."

Interviewer: "Did the Rutles influence you at all?"

Paul: "No."

In addition to Mick Jagger and Paul Simon, the cast includes members of the Not Quite Ready For Prime Time Players from "Saturday Night Live" as well as Bianca Jagger, Rolling Stone Ron Wood and many other distinguished performers.

The film was made in Liverpool, London, New York and in New Orleans, and there is a very high class feel to the work. One is drawn into the lives of the Rutles; you share their fun and enjoy their music and if you are fairly quick you will catch most of Eric Idle's vast and well articulated range of puns.

There are, too, moments of sadness, when Beatles fans all over America will recall their youth, that all too brief and shining moment when the four mop-tops gave them reason to believe life was fab and gear.

The album, a particularly well conceived and executed program of Beatles-styled music, stands up well, as they say, in its own right.

-Eric Manchester/Derek Taylor

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