



## Diary of a Beatlemaniatic: A Fab Insider's Look at the Beatles Era

**Patricia Gallo-Stenman**

**Larry Kane, Contributor**

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There are many books about the Beatles and Beatlemania: books about the origins and history of the band, how they became so successful, and even what it was like inside the bubble of stardom. Patricia Gallo-Stenman's *Diary of a Beatlemaniatic* adds to the library of Beatles literature with its truly unique perspective of a young girl whose rabid enthusiasm was characteristic of a specific slice of the fandom.

The diary begins just before the British Invasion, and rings with the melodramatic and melancholic pining of a young girl for the superstars she idolized. Gallo-Stenman and her friends stood in line for hours to see the Fab Four, obsessing over teen magazines and bubble-gum trading cards, and they were quick to despise any woman that a band member dated.

The diary goes a long way in explaining who the screaming, fainting young women seen in old footage of Beatles concerts were, and why they were so overcome. It is also a wonderful firsthand account of what it was like to witness this specific period in music history.

Gallo was clearly a precocious young woman. A good student, she helped to found the fan club of Victor Spinetti, a friend of the Beatles who appeared in the Beatles movies. She also wrote a column for a Philadelphia newspaper that focused on music, fashion, and other topics of interest to teens. Perhaps most significant here is not what made her Beatlemaniatic, but how being a Beatlemaniatic helped her grow up.

This is an enjoyable, interesting perspective on the time and culture in which Beatlemania flourished. It demonstrates very clearly that the young girls who were the most devoted fans were not so different from any other teens, and that their devotion and passion could be healthy and even helpful in the process of growing up.

CATHERINE THURESON (July/August 2018)

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