

Ringo: With a Little Help

Michael Seth Starr

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Extensive research and an injection of personality make this a definitive biography of the most underrated Beatle.

Richard Starkey evolved from working-class roots and a sickly childhood to becoming one-quarter of the most famous rock-and-roll band in history. In this most recent addition to a plethora of works written about the Beatles, *Ringo: With a Little Help* stands out as being focused solely on drummer Ringo Starr. Michael Seth Starr (no relation) has written several previous biographies about entertainment business personalities, and he's the TV editor for the *New York Post*.

Culling from an extensive bibliography and adding original content from his own interviews, Starr has written a definitive biography of perhaps the least well-known and most undervalued Beatle. Known as the “witty one” among John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison—the others had been together as a group for several years before the addition of Ringo—he seemed to be always keenly aware of his status as the last to belong.

Heavy emphasis on Ringo's early years (a burst appendix and two years in a TB ward left little time for schooling), being raised an only child by his strong mother, Elsie, and his later renown as the best drummer in Liverpool as part of the Rory Storm and the Hurricanes band make for very interesting reading. The history of the local music groups could almost stand alone as a book itself.

Following the eventual breakup of the Beatles, Ringo appeared to be rudderless, although he did pursue several acting ventures, along with playing with a variety of musicians. Some of those friends—Keith Moon, John Bonham, Harry Nilsson—did not make it out of the hard-living times, and Ringo himself had to face his own addictions. Later chapters detail this spiral and reemergence.

This is an in-depth, behind-the-scenes look at a musical icon who was shaped by his birthplace to be “tough, resilient, not a complainer” and destined to perhaps be a metalworker until fate interceded. At seventy-five, he is now one of rock's most legendary statesmen.

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