

<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/18/arts/music/tony-sheridan-singer-backup-up-by-the-beatles-dies-at-72.html>

With the news that Tony Sheridan died and that the Beatles, d/b/a Apple Corps gave away the rights (technically, charged less than the usual rates) to the movie 'Good Ol' Freda' (about their former staffer Freda Kelly), it was all Beatles, all day. The first appearance by the Beatles (also known as the "Beat Boys" for this purpose and for some versions of the 45-rpm records) was as Sheridan's backing band on the 1961 "My Bonnie," so he was their first recording employer; he had met them during their German appearances, when he was among the most popular British singers. The Beatles then included Pete Best, who later was replaced by Ringo Starr, and Stu Sutcliffe played with them during this Hamburg period as well.

In the loosely-connected style that you all expect with me, I had a Beatles moment, when I played hooky and last night saw 'Sound City,' the Dave Grohl-directed documentary about the Van Nuys, CA warehouse/recording studio with the famous Neve Board, the analog taping facility that hosted so many great rock and rollers from the late 1960's until its demise. It is a great movie, for a number of reasons: the backstory is about an important recording studio, one as famous as any, that recorded Fleetwood Mac, Tom Petty, Nirvana (1991's Nevermind, hence Grohl's interest), Neil Young, and literally dozens of other important bands: <http://buy.soundcitymovie.com/>. Grohl produced this fascinating homage to the studio and its owners and staff, and then rescued the Neve Board for his own taping purposes. Equally fascinating is the technological tale it tracks (get it? tracks!!) during the switch from analog music to the more computerized but less-soulful digital recordings made today.

I urge you to see the movie (it only played a week in Houston, and I was the only person at the 5:20 pm showing last night), and buy the cd album Grohl cut with former Studio City musicians on the equipment, including Krist Novoselic (hence, 2/3 of Nirvana). He also talked about his own musical influences, including the Beatles, who would not have struck me when I listen to Nirvana or Foo Fighters. And then he records a song with Paul McCartney, where they riff and improvise together, but also show how talent and hard work count. And then they wrestle on the couch. It is a transcendent moment, uniting these wonderful musicians who have given me and my Posse such joy over the years. Watching the technical recording side of rock and roll leaves me awestruck—think of the unique sound at the Motown basement and the dilapidated Sun Records, the 4 tracks used by the Beatles at Abbey Road, the mixers and synthesizers that Brian Wilson used for Smile and especially Good Vibrations, and the various computerized sampling and digitizing used today by rockers and rappers. In some respects, it has never been easier to make music—or harder to make your sound heard in the cacophony of the marketplace today.

God bless rock and roll.

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**Beatles Lend Songs to Film About Former Employee, 'Good Ol' Freda' will premiere March 9th at SXSW, Rolling Stone, February 20,**

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