

Ringo's

Missing

1960's

Premier

drum set



Gary Astridge

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In September 1960, Ringo paid a visit to Hessey's Music Centre in Liverpool to upgrade from his Ajax drum kit to a Premier. The decision was made in preparation for his October trip to Hamburg, Germany with Rory and the Hurricanes. They were leading the bill to play along with The Beatles at the Kaiserkeller in the St Pauli quarter near the Reeperbahn.

The kit that Ringo purchased wasn't a specific model found in Premier's drum catalog. The color selection was Mahogany Duroplastic and the kit consisted of a 14" x 4" Royal Ace snare drum, 12" x 8" tom, 16" x 16" floor tom, 20" x 14" bass drum and a set of matching bongos with 6" and 8" heads.

I learned that at the time of purchase, Ringo had a Rogers Swiv-o-matic tom mount installed. These mounts were popular because they gave drummers more suitable positioning options and they made breakdown and set up easier.

Ringo got a lot of use from this drum kit not only with Rory Storm & the Hurricanes but with The Beatles after joining them on August 18, 1962.

Most diehard fans never give much thought to the songs that The Beatles recorded with Ringo playing his Premier kit, not to mention the early recordings heard on The BBC Live and Anthology not to mention bootlegs. Anything prior to May 12, 1963 is the Premier kit. Here are some songs that may surprise you:

- Please Please Me
- Twist & Shout
- I Saw Her Standing There
- Boys
- Anna
- Chains
- Misery
- There's A Place
- Ask Me Why
- Baby It's You
- Do You Want to Know a Secret?
- A Taste of Honey

Premier drums shells were made of 3-ply Birch with Beech wood reinforcement rings. The hoops (or rims) were made of

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cast aluminum and the chromed hardware was plated at the same factory used by Rolls Royce Motor Cars in Crewe. The application of the Mahogany Duroplastic wrap, sometimes referred to as Root Beer Swirl, is one that I take issue with. When installed, the adhesive glue was applied along the top and bottom edges of the shell and along the vertical seam. This caused many of the wraps to crack and in some cases, pieces would break off the shell.

The overall sound of Ringo's kit was quite good. Give Please Please Me a listen, specifically to the fill before the bridge.

The last time that Ringo played his Premier kit was on the 12th May 1963, during a dress rehearsal for 'Thank Your Lucky Stars' at the Alpha Television Studios in Birmingham, England. This is when Ringo took possession of his first Oyster Black Pearl Ludwig kit.

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Drum City store manager Gerry Evans and an associate delivered the new Ludwig kit and took the Premier kit as part of the deal made with Brian Epstein, The Beatles manager. "I took his old Premier drum kit from him and brought it back to the store. We renovated it in our workshop, and then sold it. I ripped off the bit of material from the bass drum head where he'd handwritten the Beatles' name (referring to The Beatles bug logo sash) and threw it away. Anyway, we cleaned it up and sold it off the same week - and very, very cheaply. It would most likely be a collector's item if we still had it today" said Gerry Evans (Taken from Beatles Gear, Andy Babiu).

On a regular basis, through my Ringos-Beatlekits.com website, I receive emails from people claiming that they knew who had Ringo's old Premier kit or that they once

owned it. I diligently follow up each lead only to find dead ends.

I did have one credible story from a guy that said he bought the kit at Drum City during the right timeline. He played it around London and worked his way back to his hometown in Australia and sold it in 1965. Some of the information that he provided lined up but other specific details to his story were not historically correct. When I provided him with verifiable facts and historical timelines, he stopped communicating. I know that memories can change through the years and I was hoping to spark other possibilities but this too led down another dead-end street. Hopefully, this article will entice people to search what they have and reach out to me. Imagine the value, considering its historical significance and the fact that Ringo's first Ludwig kit sold for \$2.1 million USD in 2015.

[Spotify Playlist](#)