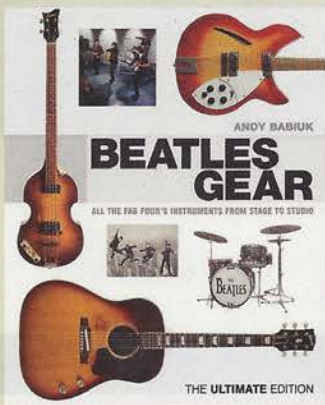




All You Need Is Gear

Andy Babiuk Updates & Expands His Classic Book About The Fab Four



THINK OF THE BEATLES. IF YOU'RE OLD

enough to have seen them on the *Ed Sullivan Show* in 1964 (or you've watched the video), what do you remember? For millions of adoring fans, it was the smiles and the haircuts and those matching suits. But for many young musicians, it was the gear: Paul with his Hofner bass, John and George with their Rickenbacker and Gretsch guitars, Ringo behind his Ludwig drums.

"This instrumental lineup would become America's first impression of the Beatles, an image permanently etched on the minds of U.S. '60s youth," writes Andy Babiuk in *Beatles Gear*. "The instruments that they used that night on TV instantly became known as Beatle Instruments and provided a shopping list for every aspiring group . . ."

They also provided inspiration for Babiuk, who set out in the '90s to catalog all of the Liverpudlians' instruments, amps, effects, and assorted musical accessories—even John's guitar strap. His tireless efforts yielded the first edition of *Beatles Gear*, published by Backbeat Books in 2001. Since then, Babiuk has continued to refine the volume; several updates have been published, there are German and Japanese editions, and total sales exceed 150,000 copies.

And now there's a new version: "The Ultimate Edition." What makes it ultimate? For one thing, some of the material in Babiuk's original manuscript was not published, until now. More important, after

the first edition appeared, he got increasing cooperation from the surviving Beatles and associates of the band. "I could have been just some wacky guy writing another Beatles book," he says. "They didn't know. But after my book came out, they all embraced it. It's been the most rewarding thing for me personally."

The new version has more photos and more details about all of the group's gear. For bassists, there is exhaustive information about every instrument used onstage or in the studio, beginning with Stu Sutcliffe's Hofner 500/5 bass and continuing through Paul McCartney's two trademark Hofner 500/1 "violin" basses and his Rickenbacker 4001S, as well as the Fender Bass VI that was used in the studio by John or George when Paul was playing guitar or keyboard. All of the bass amps are there, too, from Sutcliffe's Watkins Westminster, to McCartney's Cavern-era rig with the "Coffin" cabinet built by Adrian Barber, to the ever-more-powerful Vox stacks from the mid-to-late '60s.

The most enticing bit of new bass information is a photo of McCartney using a left-handed Fender Jazz Bass in 1968, during the sessions for the "White Album." Babiuk says he had heard rumors that Paul had used a Jazz Bass when making that landmark recording—but Paul told him no, not until later, in *Wings*. Then Babiuk got a call from his friend David Fricke, an editor at *Rolling Stone*. "In their archives, they had some photos by Linda McCartney that were taken during the making of the White Album," says Babiuk. "And lo and behold, there's a picture of Paul playing a lefty Jazz Bass, sitting next to George in the studio." The instrument is a stock sunburst model with block inlays and a bound fingerboard, indicating that it was made in the early CBS era, 1966–68.

Not content to catalog everything that the Beatles used, Babiuk compiled a companion volume, *Rolling Stones Gear*, that was published last year. Will he continue to update both? "Well," he says, "I'm tired. It's been like having a term paper due every day for years. I think this is good for now—but it really has been a labor of love." —JIM ROBERTS