

Tony Robinson

Four Days in June: the liberation of a teenage generation

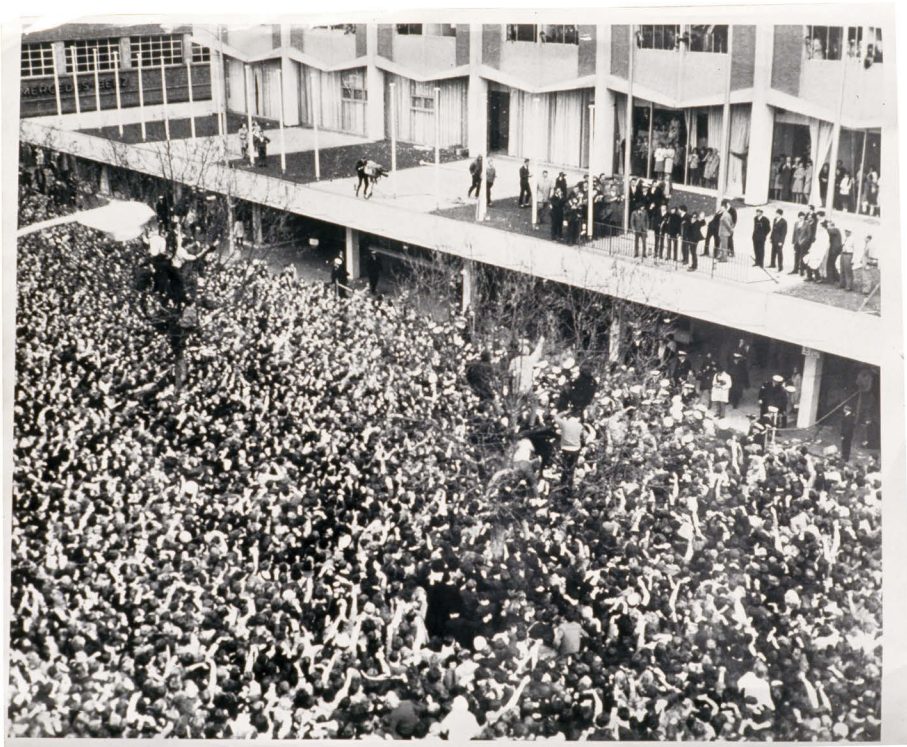
THE INCREASINGLY UNCONTROLLABLE reaction to public appearances of the Beatles, born in late 1963 and christened 'Beatlemania' by the time of their early 1964 American tour, foreshadowed the band's mid-year Australian visit. En route, Amsterdam police, despite the recall of 2000 officers and a willingness to employ rubber clubs, were unable to prevent 30 over-enthusiastic fans clambering aboard Queen Juliana's royal boat as it escorted the band along the city's famed canals. 'We might as well have mobilised the army, it wouldn't have made any difference' was the exasperated force's rueful impression.¹ Stopping briefly in Beirut, an angry airport manager, perhaps channelling Alabama police chief Bull Connor, ordered the mass hosing of fans.² At Bangkok airport Thai police struggled to deal with a 'near riot' of 1000 screaming fans.³ Hong Kong's reaction was no less ebullient, culminating in a ransacking of the band's hotel rooms immediately after their departure, eager fans helping themselves to any mementoes, apple cores and cigarette butts included.⁴

Like the radioactive clouds of Neville Shute's *On the Beach*, filmed in Melbourne only five years earlier, Beatlemania was sweeping south. As Australia prepared itself for the thrall Hong Kong police happily handballed a thankless job to Melbourne's CIB headquarters, offering only that 'you've got the Beatles now and may providence help you'.⁵

Charged with managing the exuberance of Sydney's youth who would after the Beatles made a midnight stop-over in Darwin, be the first Australians to greet the band, police Superintendent George Barnes grappled with the unknown. Fire hoses were at the ready, he declared, as a 'last resort'.⁶ Barnes hoped it wouldn't come to that, imploring fans to simply 'behave'.⁷

While the fictional Austin Powers would build a comedy genre around this same edict four decades later, acceptable public behaviour was a serious civic construct in mid-1960s Melbourne. A city named after a lord, capital of a state named after a monarch, was perhaps bound to slavishly imitate British sensibilities. The mid-nineteenth century gold rush underpinned Marvellous Melbourne's spectacular rise but came at a huge cost in the form of an equally spectacular economic bust. The twentieth century brought with it austerity and a reasserted moral conservatism, allowing the city to frown in equal measure on financial and moral misadventure.

Seeking to distance themselves from the excesses of the city's first sixty years, Melburnians spent the next sixty eschewing loose behaviour and social modernity. The influence of the temperance movement, responsible for the closure of up to half of the



Rennie Ellis, photographer, [Beatles greeting crowds at the Southern Cross Hotel, Melbourne, 14 June 1964]. Courtesy of the Rennie Ellis Photographic Archive, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria [H2011.2/82; H2011.2/83]

state's hotels between 1900 and the early 1920s and avidly supportive of the 1930 and 1938 referenda on liquor license abolition,⁸ endured through heavily restrictive licensing laws. Liquor's moral twin, gambling, continued to test the patience of legislators who had long known of the population's susceptibility to temptation, and only by the closest of Parliamentary votes in 1961, legalised an off-course totaliser.

No expression of rectitude was stronger than Melbourne's enduring Sunday coma, a day devoted almost exclusively to religious observance. Beyond church services, the 98.9% of Victorians who professed Christianity in the early 1960s⁹ were provided ample opportunity to exercise their faith. In 1961 Australian commercial radio featured 283 hours per week of religious programming¹⁰ and television was no less devoted, Melbourne viewers able to choose between three Sunday religious programs on HSV 7 alone.

While Sundays in mid-1960s Melbourne have been held up as an example of 'a city remarkably devoid of commercial activity and public entertainment',¹¹ it is more

accurate to say the decade witnessed the beginning of a sustained and ultimately successful challenge to an era of suffocating dullness. The vast majority of shops were prohibited from opening on Sunday and 1964 began with cinemas subject to laws rooted in the age of George III.¹² Melbourne's matrons had not heard of Jean Shrimpton, much less been shocked by her 'gloveless, stockingless, and hatless'¹³ Flemington Oak's Day appearance, and Carlton was yet to greet either its first pizza shop or Ron Barassi. Football, of indisputable cultural significance, was confined to Saturdays in its VFL form and would have to wait until 1970 before being permitted on a Sunday, and then only as a one-off event in tribute to a royal visit. A dedicated Sunday newspaper was still five years away.

The 1960s are commonly referred to as a decade of marked social transition but the currents of change were only stirring in 1964. Cinemas were granted the right to open for profit on Sunday evenings but only in response to the continuous circumnavigation of restrictions by entrepreneurs who had been imposing charges for programmes and seat reservations rather than admission.¹⁴ Football's second tier code, the VFA, had established a Sunday foothold in a few municipalities. Six o'clock closing endured but a successful mid-50s New South Wales extension of hotel trading to 10pm ensured ongoing agitation for change within the ruling Victorian Liberal Country Party government.

Commercial radio was agitating for change. Between 1961 and 1964 the total amount of free air time dedicated to religious broadcasting in Australia decreased by more than 20%.¹⁵ Program Manager at 3XY, Dick Heming, drew the ire of some listeners with his secular push, one declaring she had 'prayed to the Lord that [he] be struck dead'.¹⁶

Melbourne's Sunday tedium had its defenders, state MP Campbell Turner amongst them. In 1962 Turner lamented 'the failure of Parliament to carry out the law in respect of the law of Sunday', a day on which he would 'sooner see children at home with their parents or at church' than be tempted by sport and other attractions such as 'these new fangled bowling alleys', operating in defiance of the long standing laws.¹⁷ Reform of Sunday restrictions came slowly; speaking on the 1967 Sunday Entertainment Bill, Chief Secretary Arthur Rylah quoted an undertaking by the Cinematograph Exhibition Association that it would, if permitted to open earlier on Sundays, refrain from screening 'horror films or other objectionable films at these sessions'. He urged the industry to follow television's lead by ensuring that a 'very good type of film is shown on Sunday night', and warned that if this was not the case the legislation would be repealed.¹⁸

That the swinging sixties arrived in Melbourne later than elsewhere can be demonstrated by the thin pickings in the *Age* entertainment column the day before the Beatles' arrival; beyond the National Gallery's three hour afternoon's opening and a North Melbourne Art Gallery exhibition, only two soccer matches and three Victorian Football Association matches were on offer.¹⁹ Amidst this poverty of choice the widely publicised Sunday afternoon arrival of the Beatles was an irresistible attraction.



Rennie Ellis, photographer, '1964 Beatles Tour Programme signed to Kenn Brodziaak [the tour promoter]'. Courtesy of the Rennie Ellis Photographic Archive, Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria [H2011.2/77; H2011.2/78]

Older Melburnians, comfortable with the heavily regulated Sabbath, may have looked to the city's recent history in their hope the band's arrival would not generate civic misadventure. They were not without reason. The respectful pubescent reaction to Queen Elizabeth's 1954 and 1963 visits surely spoke of a young citizenry's innate maturity, as did the huge 1959 attendances at evangelist Billy Graham's rallies which drew the largest crowd ever recorded at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.²⁰ Compared to these powerful displays of respectfulness, the frenzied late 1960 airport greeting of music star Johnny O'Keefe might be considered an isolated event attributed to the novelty of rock and roll, if not overlooked altogether.²¹

The Beatles' Essendon Airport reception was exuberant but in a predictable and manageable way; a morning crowd of around 2000²² welcomed Ringo Starr, reuniting with the band after hospitalisation for tonsillitis. Fourteen year-old Marilyn Arthur screamed so hard that she 'burst a blood vessel in her throat',²³ thus becoming the first of hundreds of teenage casualties in Melbourne over the next few days.

By mid-afternoon when the remainder of the band arrived the airport crowd had more than doubled but their excitement was only a hint of what lay ahead. Victoria

Police, over 1300 officers short of the strength recommended by Chief Commissioner Porter six years earlier,²⁴ mustered 300 officers, a score fresh from the Police Depot. A troop of mounted police was also on hand but long before the band arrived at the Southern Cross Hotel, the city's bold tribute on the corner of Exhibition and Russell streets to modern architecture and the dawning jet set age, it was clear more help would be needed. Civilians, recognising the dangerous crush that was building, were quick to assist, and hundreds linked hands with police to maintain access.²⁵ Of the quarter of a million who turned out between the airport and city to witness the arrival,²⁶ 20,000 packed tightly around the hotel, overwhelming the best efforts of police, army and navy personnel and civilian volunteers to hold them back. By the time the band's entourage approached the hotel's Little Collins Street staff entrance chaos reigned supreme. Barricades were toppled and every vantage point seized; fans, predominantly teenagers, scrambled onto roof tops, others onto cars and street signs.

One fell ten feet when the tree branch beneath him gave way. Another, frustrated with her impeded view, 'began hitting a man over the head with her stiletto'.²⁷ Those who fainted, being of greatest risk of injury, were 'flung across' the saddles of police horses and extracted from the crush. Red Cross stations established nearby treated two hundred and ambulances conveyed fifty to hospital.²⁸ Lennon, speaking at the only press conference to ever feature five Beatles due to Jimmy Nicol's temporary replacement of Ringo Starr, called it 'by far the greatest reception they had received in any part of the world'.²⁹ Tour publicity officer Eleanor Knox, dragged clear by police after being knocked down by teenagers,³⁰ might have chosen stronger words. Freed of any self-consciousness Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* did just that, calling the out of control scene a riot.³¹

The massive crowd overwhelmed both the physical capability of police and their ability to rationalise its cause. One long serving officer alluded to history, describing the chaos as 'the second battle of Flanders'. It was, he said 'frightening, chaotic and all rather inhuman',³² a view shared by Channel 9 reporter Tony Charlton who, distressed by the surging mob and fearful of its consequences, berated mothers watching the scenes from home: 'if your child is out there you should be ashamed'.³³ How close Melbourne's Sunday afternoon pandemonium came to tragedy can only be speculated upon but television images of the 'solid swaying mass of humanity',³⁴ even fifty years later, suggest disaster was imminent. New South Wales Premier Jack Renshaw was no doubt sincere in his subsequent warning that 'scores of youngsters could easily have been killed in some of the mob scenes that developed in Melbourne', under the *Daily Mirror's* ensuing headline 'Beatle Alarm – Danger of Disaster'.³⁵

And everywhere, noise; Phil Spector's synthetic 'wall of sound' would define his contribution to music but Melbourne's organic version was simply awesome. The 'mass worship of frightening intensity'³⁶ shocked not just those seeking to control it. Television, then a presence in more than half a million Victorian homes,³⁷ used its newly acquired power of outside broadcasting to instantaneously convey the 'terrifying spectacle of swaying, weeping, trampling Beatle crazed thousands'³⁸ to homes across the state.

Significantly, it was commercial television that led the way. The decision of the longer established government controlled broadcaster, ABV 2, to pass up the opportunity was ridiculed by the *Melbourne Truth*, a newspaper more than happy to challenge Melbourne's long standing social conservatism. 'While Melbourne was rocked by one of the biggest sensations in years', the government broadcaster was accused of reserving its units for 'such important affairs as onion shows and young farmer contests'.³⁹

The power of outside broadcast technology, first demonstrated two years earlier in a Dandenong Ranges bushfire,⁴⁰ may have been denied to Channel 2 viewers who 'nodded through an afternoon of travel films and a band recitals',⁴¹ but it confronted countless others with its graphic mid-afternoon mayhem. Talkback radio would not emerge as a reflex medium until later in the decade, leaving newspapers as the principal expression of public opinion. Of this there was no shortage.

In fact, anticipation of the Beatles visit had seen public opinion fermenting in the preceding days. The Rev J. S. Anderson decried Beatlemania as simply the 'latest form of modern insanity', warning that if unable to succeed in 'reforming our ethical and spiritual standards, our civilisation is surely doomed to extinction'.⁴² Healesville's J. A. Henderson saw the phenomenon as 'a terrifying slump in our social standards [and] national standards'.⁴³ Langwarrin's F. Grainger blamed it on 'excessive and irresponsible publicity'.⁴⁴ L. Stellate of Brighton spoke for many who regretted the 'headlong plunge which is causing present day society to lose sight of what is meant by art, song, music, ornamental beauty and even love'.⁴⁵

Many of those putting pen to paper in the hours after the arrival's broadcast saw something more disturbing. Forty years prior to assuming the office of Governor-General, a young Peter Hollingworth, as the Brotherhood of St Laurence's Director of Youth Work, was adamant that the 'artificially induced reaction' was evidence that 'young people are being manipulated'.⁴⁶ Phyllis Frost, President of the National Council of Women of Victoria, took aim at the 'commercially stimulated excitement that serves no useful purpose in the lives of our young people and should not therefore be tolerated'.⁴⁷ Nineteen year old Damien Smith, a student and 'thank God, a normal and well adjusted one' questioned how 'radio, television and the press, knowing their powerful public responsibility have created and propagated the immense publicity blurb that occurred'.⁴⁸ Mrs L. E. Shingler of Glen Waverley detected a sinister dictatorial chord: 'if anyone had told me that I would be witnessing such mass hysteria of our own beautiful Australian youth . . . I would never have believed them! What does the future hold for us all when youth can be so easily influenced?'⁴⁹ Offered in jest, Lennon and McCartney's faux hotel balcony fascist salute would have done nothing to ease her fears.

This much is true; commercial interests were hard at work before and during the Beatles visit. A day did not pass without some corporate leverage being sought. Radio stations banded together in 'the Beatles network', Melbourne's 3UZ nominating itself as the 'Beatles Station'. Corporate endorsements proliferated; in the space of only a few days the band's name was associated with Ford and Australian Motors, BMC Morris, Kwit

Liquid, Spotless Dry Cleaning, Clean Surf Laundry Power, the Tea Council of Australia, Nestle and Foodland. Even residential land sales in Gosford, north of Sydney, were not immune from the hype, readers advised that they 'need not earn like a Beatle purchase a beautiful block of land'.⁵⁰ Opportunities were seized as they emerged; a deal to record a Melbourne performance and broadcast it on Channel 9 as *The Beatles Sing for Shell* was finalised as the tour got underway.

Marketers had stocked up ahead of the arrival with a wide array of band inspired merchandise suitable for the teenage audience including badges, tea towels, pendants, stamps, balloons, dolls and figurines. The push to exploit the commercial opportunity was driven in large measure by those close to the band, a McCartney biographer noting that 'if 1963 was the year a mass market discovered the Beatles then 1964 would go down as the year the Beatles discovered mass marketing'.⁵¹ Record sales rose, the anticipation of the tour no doubt helping shape 2SM's Top 100 music chart two months beforehand which featured Beatles songs at numbers 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 13, 19, 25, 26, 41 and 73!⁵² Yet it is apparent that the major sponsors of the tour, those firms spending most to associate themselves with the band, were promoting products that had little to do with the buying preferences and tastes of the band's most enthusiastic supporters. The apparent disconnect affords us, half a century on, a window on tectonic shifts underway within Melbourne.

The city in 1964 was spreading rapidly. What had once been the province of the Golden Mile and its immediate shadow was fast being claimed by a sprawling suburbia. In the same week the Beatles hit Melbourne, the Victorian Football League (VFL) announced work would shortly begin on a showpiece south-eastern suburban stadium in Waverley designed to accommodate 157,000 people,⁵³ a number at that stage exceeding the largest recorded football crowd by a third.⁵⁴ The St Kilda Football Club also heeded a suburban yearning, the VFL confirming the following day the club's relocation from its namesake to Moorabbin.⁵⁵ An emphatic endorsement of this move was delivered the following April when more than 51,000 fans packed into the newly redeveloped Moorabin oval, a number that would never be exceeded.⁵⁶

A short drive from the city provided tangible proof of how suburbs were fast reshaping Melbourne. Forest Hill Shopping Centre, '17 acres of drive-in shopping' in the image of the trailblazing Chadstone development, opened in June 1964, complete with parking facilities for 1000 cars.⁵⁷ Enough of the 220,000 people who lived within a five mile radius helped clog the centre's car parks and surrounding roads, some passing by the nearly completed Channel 0 [later 10] television station whose location was in marked contrast to its established inner-city based rivals. Within a month Myer announced that its new Preston based shopping centre would be named Northland,⁵⁸ and in August the Victorian Government, conscious of demographic driven demand, revealed that the state's third university, to be known as La Trobe, would be established even further north.⁵⁹ By year's end Myer progressed its plans for additional shopping complexes: Southland at Cheltenham and Eastland at Ringwood.⁶⁰



'Not a fan in sight'. Replacement drummer Jimmy Nicol waiting on his own at Essendon Airport for his flight back to London. He did not even get a chance to say goodbye to the four Beatles as they were still asleep when he left for the airport. *Herald* (Melbourne), 15 June 1964. Newspix image, NPI 1390.

Like housing, shopping centres and universities were the writhing tentacles of suburban progress. Between 1954 and 1966 the outer suburbs of Melbourne grew at a dizzying pace. Ringwood's population more than doubled, Springvale and Dandenong trebled while in the north, Broadmeadows quadrupled.⁶¹ Some of this growth was at the expense of inner suburbs – Port Melbourne, South Melbourne, Richmond, Collingwood and St Kilda all saw their resident populations contract – the catalyst was the established radial train service. Laid down mostly in the 19th century, populations along its tentacles boomed, all enjoying cheap and easy rail access to the city, even on a Sunday afternoon.

The siren call of the suburbs was children. They were rapidly increasing, both in actual numbers and as a proportion of the overall population. Victoria's post-war baby boom restated itself in adolescent terms through the late 1950s; between 1954 and 1961

the number of 10 to 14 year olds increased by over 97,000 and the number of 15 to 19 year olds by over 65,000. They represented the biggest increases of all age groups in the period.⁶² In the following five years the number of 15 to 19 year olds grew by 32%, more than four times the rate of growth of 10 to 14 year olds.⁶³ Victoria's post-war fertility was inexorably leading to a demographic facelift. A decade prior to the Beatles visit Victorians aged 21 or younger made up 35% of the population. By 1966 their numbers had grown so quickly that they constituted 40%.

The response of youth to the band, a clear expression of preference by the baby boomer generation, was unmistakable, but could the void of alternative Sunday afternoon entertainment in Melbourne be an adequate explanation for public behaviour that Alan Field, the band's compere, described as 'the worst ever'.⁶⁴ The *Age's* claim that the band's key attraction was 'wholesomeness and their unaffectedly complete pleasure in being young'⁶⁵ only stated the obvious in respect of most emerging pop stars and bands. The Beatles' melodious tunes did not offer a clue either, with band members sufficiently candid to 'tell anyone who would listen that there was nothing particularly new or startling in any of the records'.⁶⁶ Even if the music itself was the attraction, few of the 45,000 who attended the Festival Hall concerts⁶⁷ heard more than a note, drowned out by the 'prolonged screams pitched somewhere between an air raid siren and an automatic paper towel dispenser'.⁶⁸ With the band 'least of anyone [knowing] the reason for their success',⁶⁹ an exact cause of Melbourne's mid-Sunday afternoon's madness is difficult to pin down.

George Harrison, whose contemplative nature would lead the Beatles to Indian mysticism, was perhaps the first, at least in Australia, to understand the band's deeper impact, noting how 'the shackles of outmoded disciplines and restraints'⁷⁰ were readily cast aside by young fans wherever they went. Melbourne's teenage population needed little encouragement. Surging in number and spirit, teased for months by a highly competitive local media seeking to embrace the world's most exciting musical phenomenon and feeling little obligation to the their city's 'Sunday silence',⁷¹ Melbourne's youth were primed for liberation.

The ease with which teenagers shed inhibitions their elders believed were securely embedded confounded many but the fact was the world of the younger Melburnian in 1964 differed enormously from that which had moulded their parents and grandparents. The country's wartime vulnerability was a shrinking memory, economic depression even more so. A rising standard of living entwined with technology's accelerating progress was introducing a new generation to the world around them more quickly than ever before. Fuelled by wartime research and development, scientific advances in design and technology were rapidly transforming civilian communications and their commercial applications. For the rising generation this progress made music more accessible than ever before and fundamentally reshaped the role of teenagers in Australia.

Television's arrival in Melbourne's Olympic year (1956) forever changed household entertainment. As the cost of sets fell in real terms each subsequent year

television ownership grew. In 1964 another 51,000 television licences were purchased across Victoria, a rise of almost 10% in a year.⁷² Those living outside Melbourne had to wait longer to share the fruits of the television explosion but by 1963 the ABC's television network included stations at Bendigo, Ballarat, Gippsland and the Goulburn Valley.⁷³ Sets were not cheap; a Phillips 23 inch set shop soiled model would still set the buyer back the equivalent of \$230,⁷⁴ far more than the then Basic Wage of \$30.70 per week,⁷⁵ but the rapid expansion of hire purchase was allowing working families to bridge the gap.

Television gave animated form to music, previously trapped in the sightless medium of radio and the static image of print media. Recognised early as a key attraction for younger audiences, music by 1964 had established a firm programming foothold. In the footsteps of Channel 9's *Bandstand*, an industry staple by that time, Channel 7's Sunday schedule featured half hour afternoon staples of Johnny O'Keefe's *Sing, Sing, Sing* and Brian Naylor's *Brian and the Juniors*.⁷⁶ Prior to his switch to commercial television, Pete Smith, headed Channel 2's offering, *Hit Parade Weekly*.⁷⁷ Reputations, however, counted for little for the new youth audience. When 59-year-old BBC trained newsreader Eric Pearce, assigned to Channel 9's live Beatle's arrival commentary team, tried to describe a phenomenon alien to anything he had seen previously, he was castigated as being 'completely out of his dignified depth'.⁷⁸

With each passing year television's innovation grew; the Beatles' Sydney arrival allowed Channel 9 in Melbourne to make use of its co-axial cable, for the first time beaming live intercity images. The Beatles continued to act as a marker for television's technological progress well after the Australian tour; two years later the band featured in the first satellite transmission between Britain and Australia.⁷⁹

Television's expansion piggybacked in part on the rapid electrification of the state. In 1963–64 the State Electricity Commission connected its millionth consumer and a year later was overseeing growth in demand that was 'well above normal', maximum demand jumping more than 11%.⁸⁰

Technology was already delivering the benefits of more affordable music before the advent of the Beatles in the form of the 45 revolution per minute (rpm) record. Cheaper than earlier forms of disc recording, the '45' was fast becoming the most popular form of retail music by the mid-1960s. Increased production levels helped push down the cost; a Philips recording cost 36 shillings in 1959.⁸¹ By 1964 records were half this price.⁸²

The emergence of the '45' as a music industry commodity and its highly successful extended play (EP) progeny which featured up to four recordings prompted a re-engineering of record players. The early century bulk style had evolved into the mid-century integrated household radiogram featuring a pre-transistor radio. A feature of most middle class homes by the mid-1950s it imposed parental musical tastes throughout the house. The portable record player was technology's early gift to teenagers, loosening parental control over what could and couldn't be played. Melbourne parents found the

device not only popular but affordable. Five years after Kreisler's 3-in-1 stereogram was being offered at 112 guineas,⁸³ H. G. Palmer's retailed four speed portable record players in 1964 at only 15 guineas⁸⁴ and Hannan's Bulk Store in Ringwood offered three-speed players for 13 pounds.⁸⁵

Smitten Beatles fans weren't alone in appreciating the new devices; aspiring musicians also discovered a utility. In their formative professional months the Aztecs spent their weeknights 'crouched over a portable record player with a pile of the latest 45s from overseas, learning and rehearsing new material'.⁸⁶

Telephony, a much older communication mode, was also being rapidly modernised and extended. In 1963-64 private phone services across Victoria grew by 32,811.⁸⁷ Public phone boxes numbered over 7100 in 1964, the number of instruments per head of population having risen to 262 per 1000 Victorians.⁸⁸ Their usefulness was apparent in the hours following the band's city arrival; all the telephone boxes had queues 'half a block long outside'.⁸⁹ In all, more than 601,000 Victorian services were in operation by 1964, the same year that Subscriber Trunk Dialling (STD) first enabled calls to be made between regional cities and Melbourne without an operator. With increased connectivity the anticipation and experience of the Beatles visit could be shared all the more easily, talkative teens helping lift Postmaster-General telephony revenue by 11.4% in 1964.⁹⁰

As significant as the spread of television and telephony and the innovations in music were, it was an established medium that for the second time in half a century stood in modernity's vanguard, its post-war triumph achieved through portability. The transistor radio was technology's most potent contribution to the popularisation of music, its popularity made very evident when the Victoria Police Lost Property Office was forced to stay open late following the Sunday afternoon crush.⁹¹ EMI's Managing Director had presented Prime Minister Chifley with an early model in the late 1940s⁹² and the product had become inexorably more portable and affordable. The transistor circuit was the key, announced to the world by Bell Laboratories in 1948, a product of the company's massive war time research program. Sport found a use ahead of music, with the 1954 Sydney cricket Test being described as the first transistor Test,⁹³ some patrons no doubt responding to Sutton's pre-Christmas invitation to take their Kreisler 'Xmas portable . . . wherever you go'.⁹⁴ By 1961 more than half of the 451,000 radios manufactured in Australia were transistors, a growth sufficient to ensure that radios by then outnumbered adult Australians.⁹⁵

With transistors came miniaturisation, and with that broader applications. Car radios were not new but design improvements were moving vehicle manufacturers rapidly to a position where they were becoming a standard accessory; by 1962 the Federation of Australian Radio Broadcaster's President Charles Carson was able to reflect on his industry's success in encouraging this trend with radios featuring in nearly 55% of all new cars.⁹⁶

For teenagers the transistor radio was a gateway to self-expression, freeing many from the musical dictates and, to at least some extent, control of their parents. Teachers at Adelaide's Walford Girls Grammar School discovered how fiercely this new found independence would be defended when, after confiscating the radios of students listening to a broadcast of the Beatles' Adelaide Town Hall reception, 200 students staged a sit down protest!⁹⁷ Forty years later, the wireless revolution would further empower its teenage generation, providing vision, music and instantaneous communication without so much as having to even get out of bed.

Radio's mobility maintained its competitiveness with television. Although television licences were growing in the first half of the decade by around 13% per annum, radio licences still outnumbered television licences in 1964 by over 40,000.⁹⁸ The portability of radio had another more welcome effect for users: it profoundly undermined the long standing compulsory licensing system which was abolished by the Whitlam Government in 1974.

The transistor radio was technology's champion in the rise of the Beatles, affording teenagers unprecedented access to music they enjoyed. Complemented by television's growing mastery of transmission, and the expanding telephone network enabling the experience to be talked about with friends, music was being democratised through technology's enfranchisement. The overwhelming public reception to the Beatles in 1964 Australia testified to youth's rapid embrace of technology and their instinctive use of it to articulate preference. Having given birth to a defined teenage audience, technology was quickly taken up by those who recognised and sought to exploit its commercial value.

In its first few years television was not ignorant of a growing teenage audience but keeping pace with it was easier said than done. Channel 9's *Bandstand*, launched in 1958 and destined to survive almost to the end of the black and white era, inspired the government broadcaster to hire Johnny O'Keefe the following year for *Six O'clock Rock*, its new host delighted to break the 'square sound barrier'.⁹⁹ Channel 9's aloofness spurred on television's newest arrival Channel 0, up and running only six weeks after the Beatles tour. In its first month the station launched *The Go!! Show*, a dedicated weekly pop music program. In December the station invested further in youth by commissioning *Kommotion*, a weekday half hour program that featured, amongst others in its crew, a young Ian Meldrum, destined as 'Molly' in later years to become the face of Australian popular music. In contrast with the family oriented theme of *Bandstand*, hosted by newsreader Brian Henderson, *Kommotion* was fronted by Ken Sparkes who had already made his mark as Sydney radio's youngest disc jockey when he was recruited from Mudgee in 1960.¹⁰⁰ The twin programs gave the new station an early lead in the youth market which continued well into the next decade, also opening a door for marketers eager to capitalise on the commercial power of this cohort. As well as its daily televised form, *The Go!! Show* spawned its own record label, allowing the cross promotion of musical talent. Television was learning quickly how to capitalise on the youth audience through integrated marketing and its lead was noted elsewhere.

Television's embrace of pop music had a secondary effect on youth culture, namely a growing acceptance of it as non-threatening. Whereas 1950s middle Australia had come to view 'bodgies' and 'widgies' as largely pejorative expressions of youthful *rebellion*, television's carriage of pop music into hundreds of thousands of Australian homes a few years later fostered a neutral image of youthful *expression*. Michelle Arrow's contention that 'television quite literally domesticated rock and roll'¹⁰¹ is as accurate as it is relevant; the Beatles could never have been so widely embraced by Australian civic leaders in 1964 had the harsher earlier view of pop music's effect on teenagers prevailed.

Notwithstanding television's promotion of pop music in the years leading up to 1964 and their own fevered reporting of the visit, Melbourne's three daily papers reflected little understanding of, or appetite for, the rising youth audience. To that point print media's specialisation was modest: the Australian Consolidated Press *Everybody* magazine, launched in 1961, had by 1964 included a supplement, *Disc*, dedicated to pop music. Between 1962 and 1965 *Young Modern*, Adelaide's magazine 'for the younger set',¹⁰² made its presence felt through its forceful and ultimately successful lobbying for an Adelaide visit in the Beatles' tour itinerary. Newspapers were much slower off the mark, reflecting perhaps the view of the *Australian Women's Weekly* whose teenage supplement was rooted in a belief that in parents, teenagers had ideal role models. Even a year after the band's visit Melbourne's *Herald* was yet to dedicate any coverage exclusively to teenage music, the currency of an emerging market. What newspapers missed, younger entrepreneurs did not. In February 1966 the weekly magazine *Go Set* debuted, its editorial recognising that 'for years it's been obvious that Melbourne was lacking a good journal that would cater for the tastes of active teen and twenty set'. The magazine promised to 'go all out to capture the imagination of the Movers'.¹⁰³

And what of the effect of the Beatles visit on Melbourne's music scene? This is harder to fathom but the starting point for local musicians was one of interest and curiosity more so than fawning adoration. Indeed, John Lennon's interest in meeting local identity Billy Thorpe, then only eighteen but already with a national number one hit under his belt suggests, if anything, that influences ran both ways. Thorpe, even though he had by that stage carved out a 'gritty, rebellious stance',¹⁰⁴ may have used the Beatles visit to recalibrate, with his band releasing before year's end a 'dewy eyed hand holding hit',¹⁰⁵ *Over the Rainbow*. It would not be the last time Thorpe changed musical direction; before the end of the decade he would discover, somewhat accidentally, then exploit, quite deliberately, the power of volume in a move that gave rise to an era of loud live rock music. Again, it was the suburbs that witnessed this transformation. Larger venues emerged in response to the landmark 1966 abolition of six o'clock closing such as Nunawading's Whitehorse Hotel, Moorabbin's South Side Six and Glen Waverley's Village Green Hotel, the latter, according to Thorpe, the 'bastion of rockindom'.¹⁰⁶ The rise of the suburbs would not stop, year by year staking a greater claim to the city's character; the closure of the Southern Cross Hotel in the mid-1990s a symbolic book end to the 1964 visit.

For Johnny O’Keefe the visit marked a sadder turning point. The inspiration for the younger Billy Thorpe, O’Keefe sought to defend an industry status quo, in 1965 refusing to allow ‘young, scruffy, long-haired poofter bands’¹⁰⁷ appear on his program. The attitude had less to do with fidelity to a musical style than it did with the more established rocker’s fear of fading fame, knowing ‘at 30 he was now considered passé and perhaps even a dinosaur by a new generation of music fans’.¹⁰⁸

At age 15 the visit afforded Mike Brady a taste of the industry that would become his life. A member of a little known band whose manager ingeniously plastered signs around the Southern Cross Hotel declaring ‘The Hearsemen welcome the Beatles to Melbourne’, Brady was amongst the thousands who stood outside Festival Hall unable to hear the Beatles above the screams of the audience. Fortune came his way when a vacancy shortly afterwards opened up in The Phantoms, an English born migrant group formed at Nunawading’s migrant hostel and sufficiently talented to support the Beatles throughout their Australian and New Zealand tour. Brady’s recollection is of 1964 being a turning point at which Melbourne dance music changed from an equal mixture of traditional jazz and rock to predominantly rock and ‘bands which had been instrumental grabbed singers’.¹⁰⁹

This transformation of musical band lineups, though it arose from the growing influence of the Beatles leading up to the visit rather than their actual presence in Australia, did profoundly shape Australian music. As John Tait has noted, local musicians by 1964 had identified that ‘beat groups were now the way to go’,¹¹⁰ swayed by the four Liverpoolians whose ability and willingness to share song writing, vocals and a charming on-stage presence testified to the emergence of a group as opposed to ‘a singing star with backing musicians’.¹¹¹ Within a short space of time local bands transformed; the Vibrators added a singer to become Billy Thorpe and the Aztecs, the Nocturnes became Ray Brown and the Whispers, the Mustangs recruited Jim Keays to become the Masters Apprentices and Harry Vanda’s Starfighters took on a beat drummer, singer and a new name, the Easybeats.¹¹² Those formed in the afterglow of the Beatles visit, the Twilights being one, largely used the new template.

Pop music was changing. Writing of the O’Keefe era, Jeff Apter has noted that ‘the star system, where solo acts would stand alone in the spotlight, which had been the way of the 1950s, was being overtaken by a new focus on groups’.¹¹³ Apter cites the decline of successful solo performers by the mid-60s, noting that Col Joye, one of the stand out young Australian performers of the late-1950s, faded from view after his 1962 hit *Today’s Teardrops* and did not achieve another number one song until 1973.¹¹⁴

On 17 June 1964, four days after their arrival, the Beatles left Melbourne destined never to return as a group. The visit left an indelible mark on the city. It allowed a new constituency to be heard in emphatic fashion. A rising army of teenagers were expressing a bold new view of the world, one in which the dictates of their parents and those to whom their parents looked for leadership would be increasingly challenged. Highly disorganised and spontaneous at first, it was nonetheless an unmistakable claim on the

future. Within a few years the expression gained articulation and political force. Arthur Calwell's June 1964 prescience of the 'quicksand' of Vietnam into which 'our young Australian manhood'¹¹⁵ would be conscripted resonated loudly on the same city streets six years later as more than 100,000 protestors marched in the Vietnam Moratorium. So too apartheid; the 1964 advertisements seeking financial aid for the defence of anti-apartheid activists¹¹⁶ would by 1971 morph into highly charged public demonstrations against the Springboks rugby tour. Youth opinion, once transformed into a willingness to take to the streets on matters of principle, was impossible to ignore and, not surprisingly, within a decade of the Beatles visit 18-year olds had secured voting rights.

The Beatles visit also afforded an early glimpse of a new phenomenon, that of modern celebrity. Unlike fame, born through historical association, earned slowly and carried permanently, celebrity was fleeting, rising and falling in reflection of shorter-term preference. Modern celebrity was a product of technology's rapidly increasing capacity to influence taste, cultivate sentiment and shape popular culture and it has since become a key underpinning of modern media entertainment. Technology's prerogative to grant celebrity came with a caveat. What was granted could be just as quickly and easily removed and no better example of this was seen in the forlorn image of Jimmy Nichol, the temporary replacement drummer, the day after Ringo Starr's reunion with the band. A celebrity one day, waiting alone for a flight back into obscurity the next.¹¹⁷

There was one other impact of the band's visit, barely noticed then but of significance in Melbourne ever since. Victoria Police, smarting from their Sunday afternoon's misjudgement, sought to retrieve their public image through a novel claim. Taking up advice offered by police in Hong Kong and elsewhere, the force, for the first time, used live television to study crowd behaviour. Access was limited to a single television set tuned to the commercial broadcasts but police nonetheless claimed 'crowd formations, moods and possible trouble spots were surveyed more closely than a general can scan a battlefield in war'. Identifying 'the value of TV closed and open circuits for crime detection and traffic control',¹¹⁸ Victoria's police force had, like the increasingly youthful citizenry it served, become an enthusiastic adapter of technology. There is more than some irony in recognising twin effects of the Beatles 1964 visit to Melbourne: a spontaneous and joyful defiance of parental strictures alongside the dawn of a new age of state sanctioned scrutiny of public behaviour.