

Beatles Microphone

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Donated by Ernie Kyger and
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The microphone is a Western Electric 633A “Saltshaker” microphone, a model introduced in the late 1930s. It was produced continuously through the late 1960s and used by big and small radio and television stations and the major networks. This particular microphone comes from the studios of local radio station WWDC-AM.

In November 1963, Marsha Albert, a 15-year-old from Silver Spring, heard about a new English band, the Beatles, and urged WWDC DJ Carroll James to play their music. At that time, Beatles records weren't available in the U.S., but a friend of James procured one from London. When James played "I Want to Hold Your Hand," it marked the Beatles' U.S. radio debut, introduced by Albert. The response was overwhelming, prompting James to correspond with the band and arrange for an interview upon their U.S. visit.

The Beatles arrived in the United States on February 7, 1964. After their famous appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show (February 9, 1964), the Beatles performed their first concert at the D.C. Coliseum on February 11th. Earlier that day, James interviewed them on his morning show, using this very microphone. This historic artifact symbolizes the intersection of music history and broadcasting, capturing the excitement of the Beatles' breakthrough in America.