

# Tim Saunders talks to Gerry Marsden, the lead singer of Gerry and the Pacemakers

GERRY Marsden formed Gerry and the Pacemakers with his brother Fred in the late 1950s.

But it wasn't until 1962 that they were signed by Brian Epstein who managed Cilla Black and The Beatles. In the early days, The Beatles and Gerry and the Pacemakers performed together as the Beatmakers.

The Pacemakers made their name with hits like How Do You Do It and I Like It and with ballads like Ferry Cross the Mersey.

"In those days pop groups didn't make videos like they do today but made films instead. The Beatles made A Hard Day's Night and Brian Epstein thought that we should make one too. So we made Ferry Cross the Mersey, written by Tony Warren who originally wrote Coronation Street. Tony asked me to write the theme song."

Arguably the biggest hit for Gerry and the Pacemakers was a Rodgers and Hammerstein song, You'll Never Walk Alone.

"For four decades it has remained the anthem of the crowds at Liverpool Football Club, played before kick-off every Saturday, inscribed on the club gates and always the most popular concert request".

Not surprisingly, Gerry is a keen Liverpool supporter.

After much success, Gerry and the Pacemakers split in 1967, the year Brian Epstein tragically died from a drug overdose.

All the band members except Gerry pursued different careers.

"Fred went to work for British Telecom, putting his drum kit in the garage and never touching it again. Les Maguire joined the Royal Navy and is occasionally recognised

playing the piano in Merseyside.

"Les Chadwick moved to Australia where he formed a successful employment agency."

Gerry went into musicals where he took the lead role in Charlie Girl alongside Dame Anna Neagle and Derek Nimmo.

"After five years, I was fed up and had to sing again. It's in my blood."

Today, Gerry is the only original member of Gerry and the Pacemakers.

"I am joined by Steve Thompson and Tony Young. They're the best I've played with - which is no disrespect to the other band members I've had, but we all gel really well."

With his new set of Pacemakers, Gerry has made over twice as many albums than he did in the 1960s and has been busy writing much new material.

He performs in Gerry Cross the Mersey at the Grand Theatre, Leeds on December 3.

**Brian Epstein 19 September 1934-27 August 1967**

Epstein's family owned a music store in Liverpool where Paul McCartney's family bought a piano.

He attended Clayesmore School in Blandford, Dorset, and RADA with Susannah York and Peter O'Toole.

Dropping out, his father put him in charge of the record department of the North East



Music Stores (N.E.M.S.).

He first spotted The Beatles on a concert bill but was overlooked for an M.B.E. when The Beatles were awarded it in 1965. The

Beatles always said that M.B.E. stood for "Mr Brian Epstein".

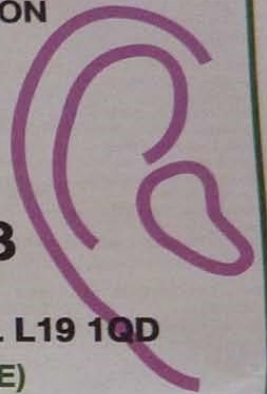
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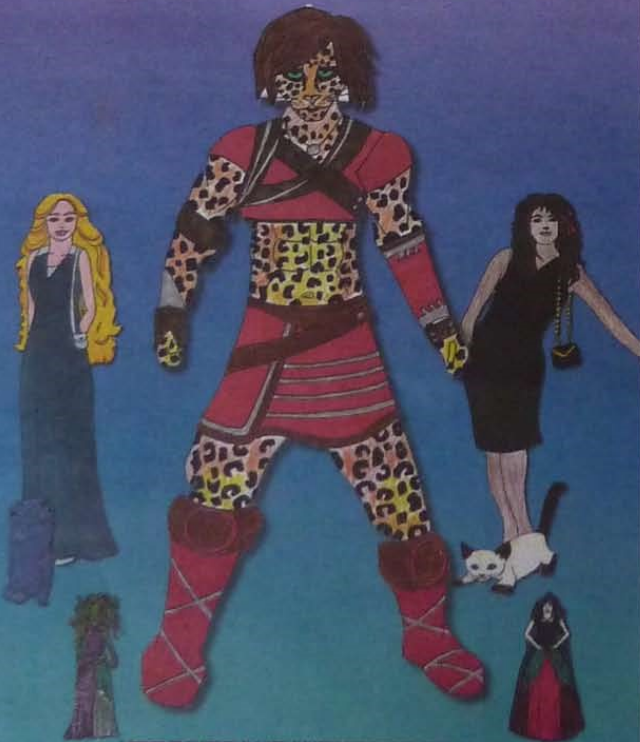
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