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***The Beatles' Magical Mystery Tour* airs on
THIRTEEN's *Great Performances*
Friday, December 14 at 10 p.m. on PBS**

*Newly restored and with a remixed soundtrack, the surreal film makes
its national American TV debut*

The Beatles' Magical Mystery Tour -- the controversial surreal film made by The Beatles and broadcast by the BBC in 1967 and unavailable for decades – comes to THIRTEEN's ***Great Performances***, Friday, December 14 at 10 p.m. on PBS. (Check local listings.)

By the end of that year, The Beatles had achieved a creativity unprecedented in popular music. Their triumphant summer release *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* was both avant-garde and an instant hit. It went straight to No.1 in June and remained there for the rest of the year. They immersed themselves in the fiercely radical art of the new counter culture and decided to make a film on their own terms, not as pop stars but as artists. However, was their adoring public ready for the move?

The film featured six new songs: “Magical Mystery Tour,” “The Fool on the Hill,” “Flying,” “I Am the Walrus,” “Blue Jay Way” and “Your Mother Should Know.” They’ve all become classics but the loose unscripted narrative, very much in the experimental mood of the art of the time, proved too much for the majority of viewers.

Magical Mystery Tour is a surreal take on the British working class tradition of a coach trip to the seaside, featuring an eccentric cast of characters, some played by professional actors. Other passengers included friends, associates and people they’d just invited along for the ride. In September, they set off from London and headed west to Cornwall where most of the film was shot.

The film was broadcast in black and white at 8:35 p.m. on BBC One on Britain’s Boxing Day 1967 to a family audience expecting a frothy entertainment in the style of *A Hard Day’s Night* and *Help!* It followed a Petula Clark special and preceded a Norman Wisdom feature film.

While the music itself had been rapturously received in the form of a double EP high in the charts, the response to the film from the establishment TV critics and the majority of the 15 million adult viewers was negative to the point of vitriolic in some cases. As a result, the film was never nationally broadcast in the US and had only limited distribution elsewhere.

Some of the musical extracts have become familiar, and though the film did appear briefly on VHS in the late 80s, it has only otherwise been available on bootleg DVD. Forty-five years on, how many of its viewers are still around? And how many of them remember? The chances are that very few under the age of 50 have ever seen it. “***Magical Mystery Tour*** – is that the cartoon film?” is the most common response to the title. Its life has been lived as an album, albeit a monumental one, not even as the double EP of the original release.

Now, all this time later, the true setting of those fabulous songs is available again. The film has been fully restored to the highest technical standard with a remixed soundtrack. Properly presented for the first time, ***Magical Mystery Tour*** comes out of the shadows and onto the screen.

For 50 years, THIRTEEN has been making the most of the rich resources and passionate people of New York and the world, reaching millions of people with on-air and online programming that celebrates arts and culture, offers insightful commentary on the news of the day, explores the worlds of science and nature, and invites students of all ages to have fun while learning.

For ***Great Performances***, Bill O’Donnell is series producer, and David Horn is executive producer.

Major funding for the ***Great Performances*** telecast is provided by the Irene Diamond Fund, The Starr Foundation, Vivian Milstein, The Agnes Varis Trust, the Philip and Janice Levin

Foundation, and public television viewers. Visit **Great Performances Online** at www.pbs.org/gperf for additional information about this and other programs.

Photos and other material can be accessed at the THIRTEEN Online [Pressroom](#).

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“Magical Mystery Tour” Cast & credits:

John Lennon
Paul McCartney
George Harrison
Ringo Starr
Ivor Cutler (*Mr Bloodvessel*)
Jessie Robins (*Ringo’s aunt*)
Victor Spinetti (*army sergeant*)
Derek Royle (*Jolly Jimmy*)
Nat Jackley (*Rubber Man*)
Mandy Weet (*hostess*)
George Claydon (*photographer*)
Nicola (*little girl*)
Shirley Evans (*accordionist*)
Maggie Wright (*starlet*)
Jan Carson (*stripper*)
The Bonzo Dog Doo-Dah Band
(*band in strip club*)

Production: Denis O’Dell
Assisted by: Gavrik Losey
1st Assistant [Director]: Andrew Birkin
Director of Photography: Richard Starkey
Cameramen: Aubrey Dewar,
Tony Busbridge, Daniel Lacamore, Michael Seresin
Editor: Roy Benson
Design: Roger Graham, Keith Liddiard
Sound: Michael Lax
Sound Editor: Gordon Daniel

2012 Restoration

Restoration Supervisor and Colour Consultant: Paul Rutan Jr
Digital Restoration, Digital Colourist,
Digital Artist and Digital Continuity:
Randy Walker
Project Coordinator: Allan Rouse
Photochemical Preservation of 16mm Original Materials: Eque Inc., Los Angeles

Digital Restoration:
Kiran Jagtap and Team Eque,
Hyderabad India
Sound Producer: Giles Martin
Soundtrack and Songs Mixed at
Abbey Road Studios by: Sam Okell

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About WNET

In 2012, WNET is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of THIRTEEN, New York's flagship public media provider. As the parent company of THIRTEEN and WLIW21 and operator of NJTV, WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to over 5 million viewers each week. WNET produces and presents such acclaimed PBS series as [Nature](#), [Great Performances](#), [American Masters](#), [Need to Know](#), [Charlie Rose](#) and a range of documentaries, children's programs, and local news and cultural offerings available on air and online. Pioneers in educational programming, WNET has created such groundbreaking series as [Get the Math](#), [Oh Noah!](#) and [Cyberchase](#) and provides tools for educators that bring compelling content to life in the classroom and at home. WNET highlights the tri-state's unique culture and diverse communities through [NYC-ARTS](#), [Reel 13](#), *NJ Today* and the new online newsmagazine [MetroFocus](#).

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