

BRIAN EPSTEIN

b. September 19, 1934

d. August 27, 1967

THE BEATLES' MANAGER

*"I always thought
they were going to be pretty big."*

**Brian Epstein
was a British
music producer best
known for discovering
and managing
The Beatles.**

Brian Epstein was a British music producer, best known for discovering and managing The Beatles.

Born to a Jewish family in Liverpool, England, Epstein was expelled from two schools for his poor grades. At 16 he announced his desire to become a dress designer, but his parents insisted he work in the family furniture business.

In the early 1950s, Epstein enlisted in the Royal Army Services Corps. He was arrested at a gay nightclub for wearing an army uniform and was ordered to undergo psychiatric treatment. When he came out to the psychiatrist, the army discharged him for being

"emotionally and mentally unfit." He subsequently enrolled at the Royal Academy of the Dramatic Arts and was arrested outside of a public restroom where gay men met for sex. He left school and returned to Liverpool.

Epstein made his entrée into the music business managing his family's music store. He helped grow it into one of the largest music retailers in Northern England. During this time, he discovered the Beatles at a small Liverpool club. Though he had no experience managing bands, Epstein secured the Beatles' first recording contract. He is credited with influencing the Beatles' early style—black suits and mop haircuts—and hiring drummer Ringo Starr.

As the Beatles' success grew, so did their relationship with Epstein, whom they trusted and relied upon implicitly. John Lennon chose Epstein as the best man in his first wedding and as the godfather to his eldest son.

Epstein's sexuality was not public until after his death. Paul McCartney said the band knew he was gay when they signed with him, but didn't care.

To guard his secret, Epstein took vacations to Amsterdam and Barcelona, where homosexuality was not illegal. Epstein and Lennon were rumored to have had a sexual encounter in Spain, but Lennon denied it. "Well, it was almost a love affair," Lennon told *Playboy*, "... we did have a pretty intense relationship."

Epstein's memoir, "A Cellarful of Noise," which describes his early days with the Beatles and growing up Jewish, was published in 1964. Rumors circulated about his drug addiction. He died in 1967 at age 33 from an accidental overdose of sleeping pills combined with alcohol. The Bee Gees paid tribute to him in their 1968 song "In the Summer of His Years."

Epstein's family home was converted into a Beatles-themed hotel, Epstein House. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2014.



©GETTY IMAGES

lgbt[™]
HISTORY
MONTH

www.lgbtHistoryMonth.com

Copyright ©2017 – A Project of Equality Forum