

Interview with Nikolai Vasin
at the John Lennon Cathedral Office, Pushkinskaia ulica 10,
St. Petersburg, June 13th, 2002.

This interview was conducted by MD-player and microphone and subsequently put down and translated into English by the interviewer. The interview is divided in three-minute tracks and track numbers are listed in the text. The track numbers do not necessarily coincide with breaks in the conversation.

Y: Yngvar Steinholt

KV: Kolia Vasin

In the following, brackets are used to:

- Signify words or phrases that have been added during translation to clarify implied points, improve readability or supply additional information.
- Add information on voice modes where this is a significant part of the message (laughter, audible smiles, ironic voice, etc.).

Square brackets are used to mark:

- Original Russian terms used by the interviewee, in italics.
- Unidentified or partly unidentified words and expressions
- My summary of phrases which could not be translated in full due to reduced audibility.
- Summaries of longer digressions, which have been left out.

For more extensive information on interview context, please see attached appendix (pp15-16).

TRACK 1

Y: When did you hear about The Beatles for the first time?

KV: It was in the beginning of 1964. I had just finished school, I was still a teenager, I was 18 years old. And I remember that I met, I even, I didn't learn about it from the radio, not from the papers. But I learned it by the way of what we call the jungle telegraph [narodnaia molvá]. I tell you *that* radio is the most important radio - the jungle telegraph. And so I met this friend of mine from school. And he asks:

-Have you heard the Beetle-beaters [zhuki-udarniki]?

I say:

-I don't even have an idea what that is. I know Bill Haley, I know Little Richard, but the Beetle-beaters I don't know.

-How can that be! That band's a must! It's the newest, coolest band in England!

That's what he told me, and he goes:

-I'll bring a tape player over to your place tomorrow and we'll listen to it!

And so he comes to me with a little Aides-player, a player from Riga, and we listen to a recording made from BBC radio, the frequency changes, noise, cosmic interference hardly lets the music through. I remember hearing a kind of music that I had never heard before. I had a feeling of utter [nevizny] and unusualness and I even leaned over to him and said something like:

-Now I'll be damned, that's something new, there wasn't anything like that before!

And that's it. That's how it began. And from then on the further the more. A whole cardboard box of recordings of the Beatle-guys were brought to me, that is the Beetle-beaters from Liverpool, that's what they were called at the time. On BBC Radio there was a musical programme and it call them the Beetle beaters or the beaters from Liverpool. And literally in the cause of a couple of months I became a passionate Beatles-fan. I suddenly felt spellbound, enlightened, I enjoyed everything wildly and I already started collecting all kinds of articles about them, I don't know what, recordings on bones there were, too. Then there was this newspaper from England, the Morning Star. I started running around to kiosks to get to know when the next issue would arrive, when it would be brought in and already in the early

morning I would run over and buy the fresh issue, because there were very often articles about pop-music. It was called pop-music back then.

TRACK 2

And articles about The Beatles [o Bitlakh]. And already by June 1964 the wallpaper in my room was Beatles all over. I remember the whole wall was about The Beatles and books about them and I remember that a lot of books about them were published in Prague, small booklets, and in Budapest a book called 'The Beatle Bible' was published, but that, in truth, was later. Well. And in such a manner, little by little I collected every detail. I ran, ran with the scissors and everywhere I cut out anything, exchanged, begged. It was, it was an entire epic which goes on still today.

And sometime around 1966 I already had my own Beatles-club at home. A group of enthusiast friends, who knew all the Beatles-records, every little thing, who wrote it, what words John or Paul or George or Ringo were singing, we could already tell the differences. In the beginning we scrutinised photos of The Beatles and went:

-That's George.

-No, it's not, it's John!

-That's Paul.

-No, that's Ringo [laughs]

And at that time in Russian they were called the Beatle-brothers, because they were united, their style of their clothes was the same, the hairstyles and they said the Beatle-brothers resemble each other.

Y: And how many fans were there around at that time.

KV: There were very many fans, I think there were a few thousands. Then they became a million [laughs]. Well that is how it started and...

Y: ...and then the bands appeared.

KV: And then in 1966, in the beginning of 1966 I remember that someone called me and said

-Listen, come with me to the dances, there's a band that's going to sing Beatles!
And I go to the dances, such a shy, introvert boy, now, well, and I look at the band on stage and they already have forelocks, electric guitars and I'm told they made the guitars themselves. Can you imagine, the boys made their own guitars. That is they took a panel of a sofa, cut it into the shape of a guitar, with the proper horn-shapes and made a neck from some strong wood, took strings from a piano, strung them onto the guitars and started playing [laughs]. I was even told a story about some such DIY-ers, that they put their entire house on end, sawing all the time in their flat. They sawed, the neighbours complained to the militsiia. The militsiia comes and finds in their flat an entire guitar-building workshop! [laughs] And on all [such guitars] they painted 'Rickenbacker', 'Muzima' and everything they wrote in proper English letters.

Y: That is 'real' copies?

KV: Yes, copies but such copies that people would come asking:

-Wow, what's it you've got there, an American Fender?

- Well, no, we made it ourselves. [laughs]

And they even learned how to make the strings. People who worked in factories were already using their benches to make strings. You see, the Russian DIY-ers [could] make everything, but unfortunately they couldn't make good music for a long time to come (Vasin in Steinholt 2002a: 4).

Y: Also presumably because of lack of sound equipment...

TRACK 3

KV: There wasn't much sound-gear, not much devotion, and there was a lack of talent among our musicians. They played well, they made good Beatle impressions, Rolling Stones they made, I remember, Kinks, Hollies, Animals, rock-'n'-roll numbers, our musicians occasionally sung Chuck Berry. But they didn't make very interesting things themselves. I can't remember that anything from the 60s... Some tried to sing in Russian, but that was uninteresting, boring and we regarded it as, well like what, like parody, you see. Parodies of The Beatles. That people just wanted, but were unable to. And only towards the end of the 70s good band started

emerging over here. In the mid-to-late 70s we were already listening to bands that sang in Russian and were more or less bearable. We could listen to them.

Y: And what were the first bands called?

KV: Such bands like Rossiiane emerged, then there was a good band called Mify with Iurii Il'chenko, in 1976 we got a-ah, Zemliane was another group, but they were copying Deep Purple, the Zemliane.

Y: And the Beatle-bands of earlier, from 1966-67?

KV: Ah, from 66 on there was a very good band called Argonavty, another good group was Lesnye brat'ia, Flamingo, Q-69... Favority was a nice band.

Y: Metastazy [sic]?

KV: Metastazy! But that was a band that only did English music, a little American. But generally we usually favoured English music. The English flag, if you had an English flag at home, well, you were regarded as, that you're really advanced, you see? You're cool. The English flag, if someone had a symbol like that, then it... It was the greatest treasure. And in any case we were collecting anything English, we cheered for the English world championship football team, you see, back then.

Y: And why exactly England?

KV: Because The Beatles were English! That means English music was hotter than any other music. There were lots of new ideas. It was the music of freedom, don't forget that we were living in a closed society. We lived behind the iron curtain and for me, for us, that music that we hadn't heard (before), that very English music, the music of The Beatles was a symbol not only of happiness and enjoyment but also a symbol of freedom for us.

TRACK 5

It was like if it had punched a hole in that wall, behind which we lived, it destroyed that wall and conceptually it was as if it brought us together with the whole world. And we wanted to know what was going on in the world behind the iron curtain, because the newspapers were lying. The papers wrote only politics and we didn't like politics, we knew that we were being fooled and therefore we believed in The Beatles. And we believed in their music and for us that was the very best time of attendance. We gathered together, drank wine, someone would put a bottle of wine in the middle of the table, we threw ourselves into [vrubali v] 'Help' or 'The Sergeant', 'Revolver' or 'Rubber Soul' or 'White Album' and flew away. We stuck together, we were brothers in music. Those were fantastic times.

Y: Did you understand the lyrics of The Beatles from the beginning?

KV: We translated the lyrics! Of course we knew them. Some of us knew English pretty well, found the lyrics somewhere in the magazines or by ear. Someone who knew English well listened attentively to the music, wrote down the lyrics and translated them. And they started to spread the lyrics, typed them on typewriters, usually, there weren't any photocopiers, they were banned. And we would give the beatle-lyrics to some girl who would discreetly type them at work, out of sight from the administration.

Y: Not more than seven copies?

KV: Yes there were maximum five to seven copies. And then, gradually all these books were compiled at my place. They are all self-made books. About The Beatles, about Elvis, about Russian rock, those I showed you, so that here is the whole history that I collected during these years, during these 50 years, well, 40 it is. Every little drop of it is here, down to the tiniest article, and from the Russian, pardon, Soviet [sovkovaia] press. Well I once even collected these moronic articles, but mostly I concentrated on articles that were to the point. That is they wrote the truth [pravda], about what really was, they didn't lie. And sometime in 1971 I arranged my first underground concert. We met there. I had met some new friends and we met to discuss the subject. We went through it all and decided to make a first gig. And so I became

something like a foreman of this underground club. They chose me, the meeting was a proper, solid one, but held carefully, of course. Without anything official, without documents, without any papers.

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We didn't write anything. But we met and decided to start an underground rock club, not a Beatle club. The Beatle club was home at my place. We made concerts for all groups. Who wanted to, could come and play. We didn't demand anything from anyone, see? It's now that we are doing the Beatle-birthdays, for instance for the next Paul McCartney's birthday I invite all the boys to sing Beatle-songs. And because that's a birthday, it isn't fitting to play neither Deep Purple nor your own things, right? And that's final. But back then we didn't set up any restrictions for anyone, we just said:

-Boys, tonight,

'cause we made concerts in the night,

-Tonight there'll be a concert at this or that school.

We made agreements with these school caretakers [*zavkhozy*], some sort of directors in their own right. Gave him a little bit of money, made home-made tickets, we drew them ourselves, those tickets, and sold them for a miserable price. Then, after concerts, we'd make banquets. Our bands from Piter played, of course. The concert would go on for a couple of hours, afterwards people went silently home and that was all. There wasn't anything special to it, no politics, nobody cried 'Down with the Soviets [*sovki*]!' or 'Down with those commies!' See? Nobody cried because we were disgusted even by speaking of them. And we were afraid. Everybody was afraid of politics. For political reasons you could lose your job or go to prison, see? For fifteen days, for a year.

So in this way we started making concert and it goes on to this very day. And the next concert coming up now is Paul McCartney's birthday. In five days. We'll meet by the Bay of Finland, we already met there every year for 20 years around the fire, we put a white tablecloth on the ground. Everybody brings something and puts it on the tablecloth, see. There's wine, snacks, sausage, cheese, everything and so our celebration may start. Afterwards when everyone has had something to eat and feels relaxed, the music begins. The boys bring guitars and we start

singing Beatle-songs. And the socialising goes on, someone would like to take a walk, someone would like to swim, see? So that's how it is, that's how our birthday celebrations have been held for about 30 years now. And in town too, we sometimes hold concerts on the birthdays of John and George Harrison, that is, in winter and we hold the concerts in a concert hall. And in summer we are outside. The birthdays of Paul Mc Cartney and Ringo are usually held outdoors, somewhere in the woods.

Y: Why do you think that exactly The Beatles had such an impact on Soviet youth of the 60s and 70s?

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KV: O-oh, you see. Beatles. The Beatles wrote their music themselves and played it themselves. That was their enormous, the enormous dignity of that band. Because most groups were merely playing music made by others [chuzhaia muzyka]. And Elvis Presley, the king of rock 'n' roll, wrote only five things himself. Although he performed almost half a thousand songs that he recorded during his whole career. You see? He wrote five in all!

[Knocks his finger repeatedly on the table during the following:]

But The Beatles, from the two hundred songs they recorded on their albums they wrote one hundred and seventy themselves, you see some difference there? Therefore. That is something of an extraordinary factor, isn't it? And extraordinary they were, too, those primates, see? There was a short distance between the souls, you see what I mean? When someone makes his music himself and performs it, it finds the soul of another, another human who listens. And it's colossal when the path is direct, goes directly from soul to soul. The music became a bridge between us. And The Beatles wrote the very best music of their time at that. They were above anybody else. They seemed to move the frames of both time and art and music and poetry and show, you see? And they are good-looking, too. They have the looks, they are handsome guys. They play great on their instruments, they record fantastic records, each and every of them sing very well, they make brilliant poetry, you see, that is, that is The Beatles.

Y. And always something new going on...

KV: Always something new, every new records differs from the preceding one. When rumours began circulating that a new release is coming up, that The Beatles are recording a new album, we got a feeling of suppressed happiness from the (future) acquaintance with that record. Again they wrote: 'In one month a new disc by The Beatles will be released.' and we were already warming each other up:

-Listen, In a month a new Beatle-record will be released, yeah, hurrah! [claps his hands and laughs]

Everybody were already celebrating: 'Oi! Magnificent! That's the greatest news!'. And we were exchanging news. Say one guy knows some kind of thing there, cause they've already played one song from the forthcoming album on the radio and he'll tell every other Beatle-fan in Piter about it. And he is already, it is as if he has merged with the voice of that radio programme:

-Oh, Petia, they already know the new Beatle-song over there

-Petia is cool, what a great guy!

You see, everything went around [laughs]. And a guy like that became the number one of our circle of friends and everyone would treat him with respect and ask:

-Petia, tell us about the new song by The Beatles! What's it called. Who's singing, John or Paul or George or what?

And he'll tell everyone everything and we will listen with open mouths:

-That's the stuff! That [claps hands] is gonna be one great album!

-Yes, of course it'll be a great one, The Beatles never make no weak albums.

And all the other bands lived on single hits, I think.

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One or two things were good, but The Beatles had only good things. Every record, not only single, but long player, was a hit. That is it went directly to spot 1. Afterwards we learned that every record by The Beatles had been a number one, can you imagine? 45s and LPs [diski] alike. Therefore. And then The Beatles was a very good kind of unity of characters. Paul McCartney was the soft one who sang ballads; John Lennon, such a powerful, passionate John, who sang the heavy things, you see, the one who always had a strained voice, who had a pain,

a pain in his voice. Then it was George Harrison, the mystically minded special beatle. We called him Special Beatle. And alongside him Ringo Starr, the great drummer who feels his fellows, his friends and always played brilliantly on the drums, always had a feeling of the mood of the things and didn't sing bad (either).

You see not only Paul and John wrote songs, later George began writing more and more [knocks finger on table] and Ringo more and more. Though Ringo only wrote a few things during his years with The Beatles. In the eight years they were together Ringo wrote three songs, George wrote 22 songs, you see. But John wrote 80 songs. And Paul McCartney wrote in all 65 songs, you see. That is John was the most productive. But the way in which their characters mingled, everyone would contribute something of his own to that music. That added many layers to the music, like a very tasty pirog, you see, it was a feast to listen to. And one of my friends, he literally said the following:

-Kolia, I listen to every Beatle-record five times. To begin with, first thing, I listen to the voice, play the record and listen to how The Beatles sing. Then, the second time, I listen to the lead guitar, carefully to the phrases in there, solos, see? Then I listen a third time and focus only on the bass guitar separately, listen carefully to how McCartney plays the bass. Then I listen a fourth time. I listen only to the drums.

You see? That's how people were listening to The Beatles back then. I think that they listen in the very same way even today. And then we did believe in the idea, that to understand The Beatles, you had to listen to that music time and time again. It often didn't get to you properly the first time. To let good music in it is necessary to listen to it many times and at some point, somehow during one of numerous listenings enlightenment is suddenly reached and I think: 'My God! But that's fantastic!' You see? That's what The Beatles did to us.

But then we began listening to other bands as well. For instance I listened a lot to Jimi Hendrix in my time.

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I loved the fourth album by Led Zeppelin and listen a lot to the second album, too. Later I listened a lot to Deep Purple. I loved the first album *Deep Purple in Rock* and so on and on. I

loved the Liverpool sound, zvuk Liverpoolia I loved a lot. I loved Singing Blue Jean Searchers, Mersey Beat, there was such a band. Then, Big Tree and so on and on again. I listened a little to Jerry and The Pacemakers. Yes, so there was a lot of interesting things there too. And at one point I even listened to Elton John, when he recorded *Yellow Brick Road*. I listened a lot to the first albums by Creedence, a lot to Doors, Janis Joplin I listened to and so on and on. There were many good bands. Then came art-rock. George Harrison gave the world raga-rock, then came hard rock and so on: There was lots and lots of everything.

The Beatles gave music a push ahead and all kinds of the most distinctive musics appeared. Art rock, for example Yes or Gentle Giant played such a... Then jazz rock was also a very special music. Blood Sweat & Tears, Chicago emerged and there was lots and lots of music. And we talked a lot about the festival at Woodstock. We talked about the fact that it was rock that gathered such a huge mass of people. Half a million young people had gathered in a valley to listen to music. You see. Not classic, not jazz, no other music. Not war music. You know that John Lennon said at some point that only rock had gathered such a mass of people. Even... Ah... Only war had been able to gather an equally large number of people together, at times of war, when lots of people were called to arms, were gathered for war and millions march, but they march with arms. But here there were people with guitars. You see what a great idea there was in rock! What did rock give us? Rock gave us freedom, love and peace, you see, and these things were sacred to us. And they remain sacred to this very day. That's why I'm building a cathedral for freedom, for love, for peace and for music.

Y: I see. What do you think, were Beatles and Beatle-fans a phenomenon that was limited to the big cities?

KV: I think it was everywhere, that Beatle-fans were everywhere. In Russia. In every little hole, as we used to say, in every... every village, in every little smalltown sat some little boy who listened carefully to the radio, who thumbed through all the papers and cut out things and made albums with articles about The Beatles, and listened to the BBC and Voice of America and was in some way at the navel of the earth. Navel, navel of the earth, you know there is such an expression. He was a little navel for himself out there in that smalltown and I know that all

over Russia there are thousands and thousands of Beatles fans, who sit in and wait, you see, they wait, drift around, collect everything, save it like photos of mom and dad, you see, photos of The Beatles under the pillow. Such was our relationship with The Beatles.

Y: Did the impact, the influence from The Beatles on Russian rock last long?

KV: I think it continues still today: Of course it was thanks to The Beatles that our bands of the 60s and 70s appeared. At first they sang in English, then they started writing their own things, then we got a Rock Club as a consequence. You know that well, the first Rock Club, again, in the country. To us it was both surprising and natural and we all went to the Rock Club and I listened to our bands. It was interesting, the 80s were very, very... It was a colossal creative lift, although they all, of course, were applied English and American ideas, ideas from The Beatles, ideas from new-wave [novaia volná], punk rock was for our guys... It was important to certain people, too. They also shook their heads and guitars and hollered something in some inscrutable language, some swahili, you know a language from which nobody understands a bit. But it's full of energy, no music but lots of energy, and people needed that too back then.

But nowadays many bands just simply take whole ideas, song structures and harmonies, all kinds of progressions from The Beatles, you see. The Beatles have not only beautiful melodies, but also interesting harmonies, interesting vocal things. Sometimes they have four voices and every voice sings its own piece, you see. All this is a colossal school of life and music and therefore we still have bands that copy The Beatles or borrow a lot from them, see. So good music is forever, it never goes away. It will remain forever.

Y: What aspects of the music of The Beatles do you think made the biggest impact on the works of Russian bands? How can you hear it in their music? Let's take Akvarium as an example.

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KV: Well, Akvarium above all listened a lot to the Beatles and only then took up the guitars, you see. The Beatles gave them their creative push. But if The Beatles have many directions,

Akvarium picked out only one direction, the acoustic, see. Akvarium played on acoustic guitars and just like Paul McCartney they used strings, violins and cello, see. And that, that all contributed to the lads finding some kind of sound of their own, a Russian sound, a Russian music, a sort of Russian chanson you see. Well.

Y. But what's Russian in Russian rock? Is it possible to identify some kind of Russian qualities in Russian rock?

KV: The same as all over the world! Love, peace, freedom. That's what that music brought us and when we heard the Rossiiane, Akvarium, Zoopark, DDT or Kostia Kinchev, see, we understood that in that music there is freedom, in that music is that, what we didn't have before them, before those guys. Earlier we had the, say, Kremlin's faithful, say, court-music, the estrada. Correct bald-headed people in ties stood forth and sang some pseudo-folk estrada songs, understand? Or they sang classic. 19th century, 18th century, 17th century, barocco or some opera, opera arias. That was all we got to hear. But rock gave us so much (more), so many new things. It began to open up life, not only in the West but over here too. Lots of interesting bands emerged here too and they played both acoustic music and electric music. Pardon! [gesticulated mike off table] And light music and heavy music, sometimes silly, sometimes wise, see. Sometimes it was some sort of philosophy on a sufficiently high level, that made it possible to keep thinking about it and keep it in mind.

Our bands made many good things, but they withered fast. Already towards the end of the 80s. In the beginning of the 80s it began to rise and towards the end of the 80s it ended. It all became uninteresting and the audience went cold, the halls went empty, less records were sold and so on and on, see? Well and I, for instance, towards the end of the 80s I began turning away from Russian rock. In the late 70s I heard Mashina vremeni, I began taking interest in Vysotsky and our bands from Piter. Akvarium. I listened a bit to Strannye igry, it was such a good band and I listened to Televizor, to Zoopark, to Kostia Kinchev and Alisa and after some time I turned my back on those bands. They didn't move me anymore. It was (all) there, but then I lost interest in them. And they started to perform less interesting music, write, compose. They just, well...

Y: Why was that? Did it have anything to do with the changes, that suddenly everything became possible?

KV: It seems to me that for everything there is a simple change. There's night there's day, see? Night passes, the sun rises, the day arrives, sun goes down, disappears and the night is on again. In the same way, the very same way, art develops, I think. It takes off, then comes down, then takes off and comes down again. It interests us and we love it, then on the contrary it wakes antipathy and some kind of sorrow, like they are boring you. See? I think only in that way.

Y: So you don't think, then, that this may in some way be connected to the pressure from the authorities, that when the pressure ceased...

KV: Now, now there is no pressure. After Perestroika there is no pressure, therefore music now develops in accordance with laws that we don't know. There can only be one law: Either it [the music] brings people joy or it doesn't bring people joy. Sometimes it does. In the 80s it did. Inspiration came to a whole array of our bands. Now that inspiration is gone, and that's all. And the powers just aren't part of it. That was earlier. The sovok [soviet man/system] put pressure, the sovok cut our wings and therefore the guys couldn't create properly, couldn't open up. They created in the underground [podpole], there was an underground [andergrund], see? Therefore we didn't have any beautiful, inspiring musics, from God, but there was such a music, like piracy. That's why it wasn't of very high quality, but it had the energy! It had the energy, life, it had something it wanted, it already had caprice, it is such a caprice in the human soul: 'I want to fly, but as yet I can't!'.

Appendix 1: Interview description

Because of a first interview, that was lost due to technical problems, both the interviewee and myself were better prepared on this occasion and the interview went faster and smoother, although it became less personal than the first. Vasin seemed more secure this time. He was sat

in his chairman armchair in his office, surrounded by an enormous amount of beatle-memorabilia, literature, his own compiled files and no less than seven models for Lennon Cathedrals. With my experience from last time I avoid any questions that might be interpreted as disrespectful towards the Beatles and refer almost entirely from challenging Vasin's views. It admittedly did make the conversation a bit easier. Vasin enjoys speaking and he tells his story with great enthusiasm in the manner of a professional fairytale-reader. He visualises by frequent use of direct speech. The interview is a performance in itself and should be listened to from beginning to end. I have tried my best, though, to transfer what little I could of the storytelling to plain text. The drawback of this style is a lack of spontaneity. The story is well rehearsed and might therefore entail a certain canonisation of events. Vasin's role in the Leningrad rock environment will become clear from the interview.

Appendix 2: The lost interview, June 8th.

An interview of a full 60 minutes was recorded on the same place the week before the interview presented above. It was lost due to technical problems. The panic-notes made after this interview are referred below. The notes are made from memory the same day as the interview was conducted. The first interview was a lot more personal than the second, therefore a few interesting angles exist in the notes.

Vasin first discovered The Beatles in 1965 [second interview: 'beginning of 1964'], around the release of the *Rubber Soul* album, but he got to know all kinds of songs simultaneously. He had heard rock-'n'-roll before and considered himself a fan. Elvis was the king, he knew Berry, Holly, Little Richard and others. It was something else and more interesting than *blat*. But still he had few friends, he was afraid of school, parents, classmates and preferred loneliness and the woods. But Beatles opened the doors to a new, active social life. His horizon widened, his appetite for life returned and he felt himself returning to life from mere existence. The Beatles brought people together and soon they were a circle of around 40 youths that started arranging concerts. Any enquiries from authorities were answered with this being only school dances.

He met with new music fans, they exchanged things [krutilis']: articles, recordings. The key word was not to buy something, but to get hold of [dostat']. From 1966 there were already

several bands, 8-10, around in Leningrad: Lesnye brat'ia, Flamingo, Metastazy and others. Vasin's maps show twist-dancing, well-built home-made guitars or Hungarian or East-German ones. From 1971 the birthdays of The Beatles were celebrated with concerts and get-togethers.

The Beatles expanded the notion of love. There was a Beatle-brotherhood in Leningrad. All bands up through the 70s, no matter what styles they normally played, all of them played Beatle-covers in addition to Kinks, Stones, Hollies, Who, hard rock and other things. But The Beatles was always the uniting element. But where the music of The Beatles ascended like on the wings of an eagle, Russian rock remained on the chicken level: it flapped its wings and jumped about, but never really took off. The role of The Beatles to Russian rock can't be underestimated.