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All You Need Is Love

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SCPS students delve into the magical world of the Beatles

All You Need Is Love

When SCPS Associate Professor John Kimsey first introduced his course *The Beatles and the Creative Process*, there was so much he wanted to impart.

"Although people may think they know all there is to know about the Beatles, there are a lot of things behind the scenes that they don't know," says Kimsey, who was a professional musician for many years before turning to academia. "And I don't just mean trivia. I mean the artistry, the craftsmanship, the way in which the Beatles did what they did and achieved what they did, which is really extraordinary."

True to his vision, the course delves into everything from the story of the Beatles' rise from rags to riches set against the social, historical and political context of the time to their songwriting, musical practices and recording innovations. He also uses the course to look at creativity in the modern world and what he calls "the politics of culture."

As a surprise gift for the students, Kimsey invites a group of fellow musicians to play an impromptu Beatles

concert to illustrate musical concepts. "We always end up getting students involved, with everyone singing and playing percussion on 'The Word' and 'We Can Work It Out.' That's always big fun for everybody," says Kimsey, who received the Excellence in Teaching Award for 2020.

For SCPS student Alix Lalanne, what originally appealed to him because it fulfilled a competency requirement ended up being one of his most interesting courses.

"Quite a few people who have not taken the course think, 'Oh, it's the Beatles course, what am I going to learn?' But don't judge a book by its cover. In many ways, this is a history course that is also full of life lessons. And it is very engaging," says Lalanne.

While the Beatles are a particular draw for those who grew up listening to their music, Kimsey has seen a wide range of ages among his students.

"Some of them were people who were around at the time and remember the whole Beatles phenomenon," says Kimsey. "Sometimes there is a young



person who's very well versed in the Beatles because their parents or their grandparents raised them on the Beatles. All of the students have been impacted by the Beatles for one reason or another—sometimes before they start the class and definitely once they've finished."

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