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Beatles anti-segregation contract sells for \$23,000

A document which reveals The Beatles refused to perform in front of segregated audiences in the US has sold for \$23,000 (£14,875).

The contract, relating to a California gig in 1965, was auctioned for four times its estimated value.

It was signed by the band's manager Brian Epstein, stating they will "not be required to perform in front of a segregated audience".

The contract also secured the Fab Four a payment of \$40,000 (£25,338).

Other requirements stated in the contract include a special drumming platform for Ringo Starr and the provision of 150 uniformed police officers for protection.

In the event, the security arrangements were not perfect.

The band played two sets, a matinee and an evening performance, at the venue on 31 August, 1965. At the latter, some of the 17,000-strong crowd broke through security barriers and rushed the stage.

The show was halted, and The Beatles were forced to wait backstage while order was restored.

They eventually finished their 12-song set with Help!, followed by its B-side, I'm Down.

The Beatles had previously taken a public stand on civil rights in 1964, when they refused to perform at a segregated concert at the Gator Bowl in Jacksonville, Florida.

City officials relented, allowing the stadium to be integrated, and the band took to the stage.

"We never play to segregated audiences and we aren't going to start now," said John Lennon. "I'd sooner lose our appearance money."

The struggle for racial equality in America later inspired Paul McCartney to write Blackbird.

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