

= John Lennon =

John Winston Ono Lennon , MBE ( born John Winston Lennon ; 9 October 1940 ? 8 December 1980 ) was an English singer and songwriter who co @-@ founded the Beatles , the most commercially successful band in the history of popular music . With fellow member Paul McCartney , he formed a lucrative songwriting partnership .

Born and raised in Liverpool , Lennon became involved in the skiffle craze as a teenager ; his first band , the Quarrymen , evolved into the Beatles in 1960 . When the group disbanded in 1970 , Lennon embarked on a solo career that produced the albums John Lennon / Plastic Ono Band and Imagine , and songs such as " Give Peace a Chance " , " Working Class Hero " , and " Imagine " . After his marriage to Yoko Ono in 1969 , he changed his name to John Ono Lennon . Lennon disengaged himself from the music business in 1975 to raise his infant son Sean , but re @-@ emerged with Ono in 1980 with the new album Double Fantasy . He was murdered three weeks after its release .

Lennon revealed a rebellious nature and acerbic wit in his music , writing , drawings , on film and in interviews . Controversial through his political and peace activism , he moved to Manhattan in 1971 , where his criticism of the Vietnam War resulted in a lengthy attempt by Richard Nixon 's administration to deport him , while some of his songs were adopted as anthems by the anti @-@ war movement and the larger counterculture .

As of 2012 , Lennon 's solo album sales in the United States exceeded 14 million and , as writer , co @-@ writer , or performer , he is responsible for 25 number @-@ one singles on the US Hot 100 chart . In 2002 , a BBC poll on the 100 Greatest Britons voted him eighth and , in 2008 , Rolling Stone ranked him the fifth @-@ greatest singer of all time . He was posthumously inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1987 , and into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame twice , as a member of the Beatles in 1988 and as a solo artist in 1994 .

= = Biography = =

= = = 1940 ? 57 : Early years = = =

Lennon was born in war @-@ time England , on 9 October 1940 at Liverpool Maternity Hospital , to Julia ( née Stanley ) and Alfred Lennon , a merchant seaman of Irish descent , who was away at the time of his son 's birth . His parents named him John Winston Lennon after his paternal grandfather , John " Jack " Lennon , and then @-@ Prime Minister Winston Churchill . His father was often away from home but sent regular pay cheques to 9 Newcastle Road , Liverpool , where Lennon lived with his mother ; the cheques stopped when he went absent without leave in February 1944 . When he eventually came home six months later , he offered to look after the family , but Julia ? by then pregnant with another man 's child ? rejected the idea . After her sister , Mimi Smith , twice complained to Liverpool 's Social Services , Julia handed the care of Lennon over to her . In July 1946 Lennon 's father visited Smith and took his son to Blackpool , secretly intending to emigrate to New Zealand with him . Julia followed them ? with her partner at the time , ' Bobby ' Dykins ? and after a heated argument his father forced the five @-@ year @-@ old to choose between them . Lennon twice chose his father , but as his mother walked away , he began to cry and followed her . It would be 20 years before he had contact with his father again .

Throughout the rest of his childhood and adolescence he lived with his aunt and uncle , Mimi and George Smith , who had no children of their own , at Mendips , 251 Menlove Avenue , Woolton . His aunt purchased volumes of short stories for him , and his uncle , a dairyman at his family 's farm , bought him a mouth organ and engaged him in solving crossword puzzles . Julia visited Mendips on a regular basis , and when John was 11 years old he often visited her at 1 Blomfield Road , Liverpool , where she played him Elvis Presley records , taught him the banjo , and showed him how to play " Ain 't That a Shame " by Fats Domino . In September 1980 , Lennon commented about his family and his rebellious nature :

Part of me would like to be accepted by all facets of society and not be this loudmouthed lunatic poet / musician . But I cannot be what I am not ... I was the one who all the other boys ' parents ? including Paul 's father ? would say , ' Keep away from him ' ... The parents instinctively recognised I was a troublemaker , meaning I did not conform and I would influence their children , which I did . I did my best to disrupt every friend 's home ... Partly out of envy that I didn 't have this so @-@ called home ... but I did ... There were five women that were my family . Five strong , intelligent , beautiful women , five sisters . One happened to be my mother . [ She ] just couldn 't deal with life . She was the youngest and she had a husband who ran away to sea and the war was on and she couldn 't cope with me , and I ended up living with her elder sister . Now those women were fantastic ... And that was my first feminist education ... I would infiltrate the other boys minds . I could say , " Parents are not gods because I don 't live with mine and , therefore , I know.'

He regularly visited his cousin , Stanley Parkes , who lived in Fleetwood . Seven years Lennon 's senior , Parkes took him on trips and to local cinemas . During the school holidays , Parkes often visited Lennon with Leila Harvey , another cousin , often travelling to Blackpool two or three times a week to watch shows . They would visit the Blackpool Tower Circus and see artists such as Dickie Valentine , Arthur Askey , Max Bygraves and Joe Loss , with Parkes recalling that Lennon particularly liked George Formby . After Parkes 's family moved to Scotland , the three cousins often spent their school holidays together there . Parkes recalled , " John , cousin Leila and I were very close . From Edinburgh we would drive up to the family croft at Durness , which was from about the time John was nine years old until he was about 16 . " He was 14 years old when his uncle George died of a liver haemorrhage on 5 June 1955 ( aged 52 ) .

Lennon was raised as an Anglican and attended Dovedale Primary School . From September 1952 to 1957 , after passing his Eleven @-@ Plus exam , he attended Quarry Bank High School in Liverpool , and was described by Harvey at the time as , " A happy @-@ go @-@ lucky , good @-@ humoured , easy going , lively lad . " He often drew comical cartoons which appeared in his own self @-@ made school magazine called The Daily Howl , but despite his artistic talent , his school reports were damning : " Certainly on the road to failure ... hopeless ... rather a clown in class ... wasting other pupils ' time . "

His mother bought him his first guitar in 1956 , an inexpensive Gallotone Champion acoustic for which she " lent " her son five pounds and ten shillings on the condition that the guitar be delivered to her own house , and not Mimi 's , knowing well that her sister was not supportive of her son 's musical aspirations . As Mimi was sceptical of his claim that he would be famous one day , she hoped he would grow bored with music , often telling him , " The guitar 's all very well , John , but you 'll never make a living out of it " . On 15 July 1958 , when Lennon was 17 years old , his mother , walking home after visiting the Smiths ' house , was struck by a car and killed .

Lennon failed all his GCE O @-@ level examinations , and was accepted into the Liverpool College of Art only after his aunt and headmaster intervened . Once at the college , he started wearing Teddy Boy clothes and acquired a reputation for disrupting classes and ridiculing teachers . As a result , he was excluded from the painting class , then the graphic arts course , and was threatened with expulsion for his behaviour , which included sitting on a nude model 's lap during a life drawing class . He failed an annual exam , despite help from fellow student and future wife Cynthia Powell , and was " thrown out of the college before his final year " .

== = 1957 ? 70 : The Quarrymen to the Beatles == =

== = = 1957 ? 66 : Formation , commercial break @-@ out and touring years == = =

At age 15 , Lennon formed the skiffle group , the Quarrymen . Named after Quarry Bank High School , the group was established by him in September 1956 . By the summer of 1957 , the Quarrymen played a " spirited set of songs " made up of half skiffle and half rock and roll . Lennon first met Paul McCartney at the Quarrymen 's second performance , held in Woolton on 6 July at the St. Peter 's Church garden fête , after which he asked McCartney to join the band .

McCartney says that Aunt Mimi " was very aware that John 's friends were lower class " , and would often patronise him when he arrived to visit Lennon . According to Paul 's brother Mike , McCartney 's father was also disapproving , declaring Lennon would get his son " into trouble " , although he later allowed the fledgling band to rehearse in the McCartneys ' front room at 20 Forthlin Road . During this time , the 18 @-@ year @-@ old Lennon wrote his first song , " Hello Little Girl " , a UK top 10 hit for The Fourmost nearly five years later .

McCartney suggested his friend George Harrison as the lead guitarist . Lennon thought Harrison ( then 14 years old ) was too young . McCartney engineered an audition on the upper deck of a Liverpool bus , where Harrison played " Raunchy " for Lennon and was asked to join . Stuart Sutcliffe , Lennon 's friend from art school , later joined as bassist . Lennon , McCartney , Harrison and Sutcliffe became " The Beatles " in early 1960 . In August that year , the Beatles engaged for a 48 @-@ night residency in Hamburg , Germany , and desperately in need of a drummer , asked Pete Best to join them . Lennon was now 19 , and his aunt , horrified when he told her about the trip , pleaded with him to continue his art studies instead . After the first Hamburg residency , the band accepted another in April 1961 , and a third in April 1962 . Like the other band members , Lennon was introduced to Preludin while in Hamburg , and regularly took the drug , as well as amphetamines , as a stimulant during their long , overnight performances .

Brian Epstein , the Beatles ' manager from 1962 , had no prior experience of artist management , but had a strong influence on their early dress code and attitude on stage . Lennon initially resisted his attempts to encourage the band to present a professional appearance , but eventually complied , saying , " I 'll wear a bloody balloon if somebody 's going to pay me " . McCartney took over on bass after Sutcliffe decided to stay in Hamburg , and drummer Ringo Starr replaced Best , completing the four @-@ piece line @-@ up that would endure until the group 's break @-@ up in 1970 . The band 's first single , " Love Me Do " , was released in October 1962 and reached No. 17 on the British charts . They recorded their debut album , Please Please Me , in under 10 hours on 11 February 1963 , a day when Lennon was suffering the effects of a cold , which is evident in the vocal on the last song to be recorded that day , " Twist and Shout " . The Lennon ? McCartney songwriting partnership yielded eight of its fourteen tracks . With few exceptions ? one being the album title itself ? Lennon had yet to bring his love of wordplay to bear on his song lyrics , saying : " We were just writing songs ... pop songs with no more thought of them than that ? to create a sound . And the words were almost irrelevant " . In a 1987 interview , McCartney said that the other Beatles idolised John : " He was like our own little Elvis ... We all looked up to John . He was older and he was very much the leader ; he was the quickest wit and the smartest . "

The Beatles achieved mainstream success in the UK during the beginning of 1963 . Lennon was on tour when his first son , Julian , was born in April . During their Royal Variety Show performance , attended by the Queen Mother and other British royalty , Lennon poked fun at his audience : " For our next song , I 'd like to ask for your help . For the people in the cheaper seats , clap your hands ... and the rest of you , if you 'll just rattle your jewellery . " After a year of Beatlemania in the UK , the group 's historic February 1964 US debut appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show marked their breakthrough to international stardom . A two @-@ year period of constant touring , moviemaking , and songwriting followed , during which Lennon wrote two books , In His Own Write and A Spaniard in the Works . The Beatles received recognition from the British Establishment when they were appointed Members of the Order of the British Empire ( MBE ) in the 1965 Queen 's Birthday Honours .

Lennon grew concerned that fans attending Beatles concerts were unable to hear the music above the screaming of fans , and that the band 's musicianship was beginning to suffer as a result . Lennon 's " Help ! " expressed his own feelings in 1965 : " I meant it ... It was me singing ' help ' " . He had put on weight ( he would later refer to this as his " Fat Elvis " period ) , and felt he was subconsciously seeking change . In March that year he was unknowingly introduced to LSD when a dentist , hosting a dinner party attended by Lennon , Harrison and their wives , spiked the guests ' coffee with the drug . When they wanted to leave , their host revealed what they had taken , and strongly advised them not to leave the house because of the likely effects . Later , in an elevator at a nightclub , they all believed it was on fire : " We were all screaming ... hot and hysterical . " In March

1966 , during an interview with Evening Standard reporter Maureen Cleave , Lennon remarked , " Christianity will go . It will vanish and shrink ... We 're more popular than Jesus now ? I don 't know which will go first , rock and roll or Christianity . " The comment went virtually unnoticed in England but caused great offence in the US when quoted by a magazine there five months later . The furore that followed ? burning of Beatles records , Ku Klux Klan activity and threats against Lennon ? contributed to the band 's decision to stop touring .

= = = 1967 ? 70 : Studio years , break @-@ up and solo work = = =

Deprived of the routine of live performances after their final commercial concert on 29 August 1966 , Lennon felt lost and considered leaving the band . Since his involuntary introduction to LSD , he had made increasing use of the drug , and was almost constantly under its influence for much of 1967 . According to biographer Ian MacDonald , Lennon 's continuous experience with LSD during the year brought him " close to erasing his identity " . 1967 saw the release of " Strawberry Fields Forever " , hailed by Time magazine for its " astonishing inventiveness " , and the group 's landmark album Sgt. Pepper 's Lonely Hearts Club Band , which revealed Lennon 's lyrics contrasting strongly with the simple love songs of the Lennon ? McCartney 's early years .

In August , after having been introduced to the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi , the group attended a weekend of personal instruction at his Transcendental Meditation seminar in Bangor , Wales , and were informed of Epstein 's death during the seminar . " I knew we were in trouble then " , Lennon said later . " I didn 't have any misconceptions about our ability to do anything other than play music , and I was scared " . Led primarily by Harrison and Lennon 's interest in Eastern religion , the Beatles later travelled to Maharishi 's ashram in India for further guidance . While there , they composed most of the songs for The Beatles and Abbey Road .

The anti @-@ war , black comedy How I Won the War , featuring Lennon 's only appearance in a non ? Beatles full @-@ length film , was shown in cinemas in October 1967 . McCartney organised the group 's first post @-@ Epstein project , the self @-@ written , -produced and -directed television film Magical Mystery Tour , released in December that year . While the film itself proved to be their first critical flop , its soundtrack release , featuring Lennon 's acclaimed , Lewis Carroll @-@ inspired " I Am the Walrus " , was a success . With Epstein gone , the band members became increasingly involved in business activities , and in February 1968 they formed Apple Corps , a multimedia corporation composed of Apple Records and several other subsidiary companies . Lennon described the venture as an attempt to achieve , " artistic freedom within a business structure " , but his increased drug experimentation and growing preoccupation with Yoko Ono , and McCartney 's own marriage plans , left Apple in need of professional management . Lennon asked Lord Beeching to take on the role , but he declined , advising Lennon to go back to making records . Lennon approached Allen Klein , who had managed The Rolling Stones and other bands during the British Invasion . Klein was appointed as Apple 's chief executive by Lennon , Harrison and Starr , but McCartney never signed the management contract .

At the end of 1968 , Lennon was featured in the film The Rolling Stones Rock and Roll Circus ( not released until 1996 ) in the role of a Dirty Mac band member . The supergroup , composed of Lennon , Eric Clapton , Keith Richards and Mitch Mitchell , also backed a vocal performance by Ono in the film . Lennon and Ono were married on 20 March 1969 , and soon released a series of 14 lithographs called " Bag One " depicting scenes from their honeymoon , eight of which were deemed indecent and most of which were banned and confiscated . Lennon 's creative focus continued to move beyond the Beatles and between 1968 and 1969 he and Ono recorded three albums of experimental music together : Unfinished Music No.1 : Two Virgins ( known more for its cover than for its music ) , Unfinished Music No.2 : Life with the Lions and Wedding Album . In 1969 , they formed the Plastic Ono Band , releasing Live Peace in Toronto 1969 . Between 1969 and 1970 , Lennon released the singles " Give Peace a Chance " ( widely adopted as an anti @-@ Vietnam @-@ War anthem in 1969 ) , " Cold Turkey " ( documenting his withdrawal symptoms after he became addicted to heroin ) and " Instant Karma ! " In protest at Britain 's involvement in the Nigerian Civil War , its support of America in the Vietnam war and ( perhaps jokingly ) against " Cold

Turkey " slipping down the charts , Lennon returned his MBE medal to the Queen , though this had no effect on his MBE status , which could not be renounced .

Lennon left the Beatles in September 1969 , and agreed not to inform the media while the group renegotiated their recording contract , but he was outraged that McCartney publicised his own departure on releasing his debut solo album in April 1970 . Lennon 's reaction was , " Jesus Christ ! He gets all the credit for it ! " He later wrote , " I started the band . I disbanded it . It 's as simple as that . " In later interviews with Rolling Stone magazine , he revealed his bitterness towards McCartney , saying , " I was a fool not to do what Paul did , which was use it to sell a record . " He spoke too of the hostility he perceived the other members had towards Ono , and of how he , Harrison , and Starr " got fed up with being sidemen for Paul ... After Brian Epstein died we collapsed . Paul took over and supposedly led us . But what is leading us when we went round in circles ? "

= = = 1970 ? 80 : Solo career = = =

= = = = 1970 ? 72 : Initial solo success and activism = = = =

In 1970 , Lennon and Ono went through primal therapy with Arthur Janov in Los Angeles , California . Designed to release emotional pain from early childhood , the therapy entailed two half @-@ days a week with Janov for four months ; he had wanted to treat the couple for longer , but they felt no need to continue and returned to London . Lennon 's emotional debut solo album , John Lennon / Plastic Ono Band ( 1970 ) , was received with high praise . Critic Greil Marcus remarked , " John 's singing in the last verse of ' God ' may be the finest in all of rock . " The album featured the songs " Mother " , in which Lennon confronted his feelings of childhood rejection , and the Dylanesque " Working Class Hero " , a bitter attack against the bourgeois social system which , due to the lyric " you 're still fucking peasants " , fell foul of broadcasters . The same year , Tariq Ali 's revolutionary political views , expressed when he interviewed Lennon , inspired the singer to write " Power to the People " . Lennon also became involved with Ali during a protest against Oz magazine 's prosecution for alleged obscenity . Lennon denounced the proceedings as " disgusting fascism " , and he and Ono ( as Elastic Oz Band ) released the single " God Save Us / Do the Oz " and joined marches in support of the magazine .

With Lennon 's next album , Imagine ( 1971 ) , critical response was more guarded . Rolling Stone reported that " it contains a substantial portion of good music " but warned of the possibility that " his posturings will soon seem not merely dull but irrelevant " . The album 's title track would become an anthem for anti @-@ war movements , while another , " How Do You Sleep ? " , was a musical attack on McCartney in response to lyrics from Ram that Lennon felt , and McCartney later confirmed , were directed at him and Ono . However , Lennon softened his stance in the mid @-@ 1970s and said he had written " How Do You Sleep ? " about himself . He said in 1980 : " I used my resentment against Paul ? to create a song ? not a terrible vicious horrible vendetta [ ? ] I used my resentment and withdrawing from Paul and the Beatles , and the relationship with Paul , to write ' How Do You Sleep ' . I don 't really go ' round with those thoughts in my head all the time . "

Lennon and Ono moved to New York in August 1971 , and in December released " Happy Xmas ( War Is Over ) " . The new year saw the Nixon administration take what it called a " strategic counter @-@ measure " against Lennon 's anti @-@ war and anti @-@ Nixon propaganda , embarking on what would be a four @-@ year attempt to deport him . In 1972 , Lennon and Ono attended a post @-@ election wake held in the New York home of activist Jerry Rubin after McGovern lost to Nixon . Embroiled in a continuing legal battle with the immigration authorities , Lennon was denied permanent residency in the US ( which wouldn 't be resolved until 1976 ) . Depressed , Lennon got intoxicated and had sex with a female guest , leaving Ono embarrassed . Her song " Death of Samantha " was inspired by the incident .

Recorded as a collaboration with Ono and with backing from the New York band Elephant 's Memory , Some Time in New York City was released in 1972 . Containing songs about women 's

rights , race relations , Britain 's role in Northern Ireland and Lennon 's problems obtaining a green card , the album was poorly received ? unlistenable , according to one critic . " Woman Is the Nigger of the World " , released as a US single from the album the same year , was televised on 11 May , on The Dick Cavett Show . Many radio stations refused to broadcast the song because of the word " nigger " . Lennon and Ono gave two benefit concerts with Elephant 's Memory and guests in New York in aid of patients at the Willowbrook State School mental facility . Staged at Madison Square Garden on 30 August 1972 , they were his last full @-@ length concert appearances .

== = 1973 ? 75 : " Lost weekend " = = = =

While Lennon was recording Mind Games ( 1973 ) , he and Ono decided to separate . The ensuing 18 @-@ month period apart , which he later called his " lost weekend " , was spent in Los Angeles and New York in the company of May Pang . Mind Games , credited to the " Plastic U.F.Ono Band " , was released in November 1973 . Lennon also contributed " I 'm the Greatest " to Starr 's album Ringo ( 1973 ) , released the same month ( an alternate take , from the same 1973 Ringo sessions , with Lennon providing a guide vocal , appears on John Lennon Anthology ) .

In early 1974 , Lennon was drinking heavily and his alcohol @-@ fuelled antics with Harry Nilsson made headlines . Two widely publicised incidents occurred at The Troubadour club in March , the first when Lennon placed a menstrual pad on his forehead and scuffled with a waitress , and the second , two weeks later , when Lennon and Nilsson were ejected from the same club after heckling the Smothers Brothers . Lennon decided to produce Nilsson 's album Pussy Cats and Pang rented a Los Angeles beach house for all the musicians but after a month of further debauchery , with the recording sessions in chaos , Lennon moved to New York with Pang to finish work on the album . In April , Lennon had produced the Mick Jagger song " Too Many Cooks ( Spoil the Soup ) " which was , for contractual reasons , to remain unreleased for more than 30 years . Pang supplied the recording for its eventual inclusion on The Very Best of Mick Jagger ( 2007 ) .

Settled back in New York , Lennon recorded the album Walls and Bridges . Released in October 1974 , it included " Whatever Gets You thru the Night " , which featured Elton John on backing vocals and piano , and became Lennon 's only single as a solo artist to top the US Billboard Hot 100 chart during his lifetime.b A second single from the album , " # 9 Dream " , followed before the end of the year . Starr 's Goodnight Vienna ( 1974 ) again saw assistance from Lennon , who wrote the title track and played piano . On 28 November , Lennon made a surprise guest appearance at Elton John 's Thanksgiving concert at Madison Square Garden , in fulfilment of his promise to join the singer in a live show if " Whatever Gets You thru the Night " ? a song whose commercial potential Lennon had doubted ? reached number one . Lennon performed the song along with " Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds " and " I Saw Her Standing There " , which he introduced as " a song by an old estranged fiancée of mine called Paul " .

Lennon co @-@ wrote " Fame " , David Bowie 's first US number one , and provided guitar and backing vocals for the January 1975 recording . The same month , Elton John topped the charts with his cover of " Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds " , featuring Lennon on guitar and back @-@ up vocals ( Lennon is credited on the single under the moniker of " Dr. Winston O 'Boogie " ) . He and Ono were reunited shortly afterwards . Lennon released Rock ' n ' Roll ( 1975 ) , an album of cover songs , in February . " Stand by Me " , taken from the album and a US and UK hit , became his last single for five years . He made what would be his final stage appearance in the ATV special A Salute to Lew Grade , recorded on 18 April and televised in June . Playing acoustic guitar and backed by an eight @-@ piece band , Lennon performed two songs from Rock ' n ' Roll ( " Stand by Me " , which was not broadcast , and " Slippin ' and Slidin ' " ) followed by " Imagine " . The band , known as Etc . , wore masks behind their heads , a dig by Lennon who thought Grade was two @-@ faced .

== = 1975 ? 80 : Retirement and return = = = =

With the birth of his second son Sean on 9 October 1975 , Lennon took on the role of

househusband , beginning what would be a five @-@ year hiatus from the music industry during which he gave all his attention to his family . Within the month , he fulfilled his contractual obligation to EMI / Capitol for one more album by releasing Shaved Fish , a compilation album of previously recorded tracks . He devoted himself to Sean , rising at 6 am daily to plan and prepare his meals and to spend time with him . He wrote " Cookin ' ( In the Kitchen of Love ) " for Starr 's Ringo 's Rotogravure ( 1976 ) , performing on the track in June in what would be his last recording session until 1980 . He formally announced his break from music in Tokyo in 1977 , saying , " we have basically decided , without any great decision , to be with our baby as much as we can until we feel we can take time off to indulge ourselves in creating things outside of the family . " During his career break he created several series of drawings , and drafted a book containing a mix of autobiographical material and what he termed " mad stuff " , all of which would be published posthumously .

Lennon emerged from retirement in October 1980 with the single " ( Just Like ) Starting Over " , followed the next month by the album Double Fantasy , which contained songs written during a journey to Bermuda on a 43 @-@ foot sailing boat the previous June , that reflected his fulfilment in his new @-@ found stable family life . Sufficient additional material was recorded for a planned follow @-@ up album Milk and Honey ( released posthumously in 1984 ) . Released jointly by Lennon and Ono , Double Fantasy was not well received , drawing comments such as Melody Maker 's " indulgent sterility ... a godawful yawn " .

= = = 8 December 1980 : Death = = =

At around 10 : 50 p.m. ( EST ) on 8 December 1980 , as Lennon and Ono returned to their New York apartment in the Dakota , Mark David Chapman shot Lennon in the back four times at the entrance to the building . Lennon was taken to the emergency room of nearby Roosevelt Hospital and was pronounced dead on arrival at 11 : 00 p.m. ( EST ) . Earlier that evening , Lennon had autographed a copy of Double Fantasy for Chapman .

Ono issued a statement the next day , saying " There is no funeral for John " , ending it with the words , " John loved and prayed for the human race . Please pray the same for him . " His body was cremated at Ferncliff Cemetery in Hartsdale , New York . Ono scattered his ashes in New York 's Central Park , where the Strawberry Fields memorial was later created . Chapman pleaded guilty to second @-@ degree murder and was sentenced to 20 @-@ years @-@ to @-@ life . As of 2016 , he remains in prison , having been denied parole eight times .

= = Personal relationships = =

= = = Cynthia Lennon = = =

Lennon and Cynthia Powell ( 1939 ? 2015 ) met in 1957 as fellow students at the Liverpool College of Art . Although being scared of Lennon 's attitude and appearance , she heard that he was obsessed with French actress Brigitte Bardot , so she dyed her hair blonde . Lennon asked her out , but when she said that she was engaged , he screamed out , " I didn 't ask you to fuckin ' marry me , did I ? " She often accompanied him to Quarrymen gigs and travelled to Hamburg with McCartney 's girlfriend at the time to visit him . Lennon , jealous by nature , eventually grew possessive and often terrified Powell with his anger and physical violence . Lennon later said that until he met Ono , he had never questioned his chauvinistic attitude to women . The Beatles song " Getting Better " , he said , told his own story , " I used to be cruel to my woman , and physically ? any woman . I was a hitter . I couldn 't express myself and I hit . I fought men and I hit women . That is why I am always on about peace " .

Recalling his reaction in July 1962 on learning that Cynthia was pregnant , Lennon said , " There 's only one thing for it Cyn . We 'll have to get married . " The couple were married on 23 August at the Mount Pleasant Register Office in Liverpool . His marriage began just as Beatlemania took hold

across the UK . He performed on the evening of his wedding day , and would continue to do so almost daily from then on . Epstein , fearing that fans would be alienated by the idea of a married Beatle , asked the Lennons to keep their marriage secret . Julian was born on 8 April 1963 ; Lennon was on tour at the time and did not see his son until three days later .

Cynthia attributed the start of the marriage breakdown to LSD , and as a result , she felt that he slowly lost interest in her . When the group travelled by train to Bangor , Wales , in 1967 , for the Maharishi Yogi 's Transcendental Meditation seminar , a policeman did not recognise her and stopped her from boarding . She later recalled how the incident seemed to symbolise the ending of their marriage . After arriving home at Kenwood , and finding Lennon with Ono , Cynthia left the house to stay with friends . Alexis Mardas later claimed to have slept with her that night , and a few weeks later he informed her that Lennon was seeking a divorce and custody of Julian on grounds of her adultery with him . After negotiations , Lennon capitulated and agreed to her divorcing him on the same grounds . The case was settled out of court in November 1968 , with Lennon giving her £ 100 @, @ 000 ( \$ 240 @, @ 000 in US dollars at the time ) , a small annual payment and custody of Julian .

= = = Brian Epstein = = =

The Beatles were performing at Liverpool 's Cavern Club in November 1961 , when they were introduced to Epstein after a midday concert . Epstein was homosexual . According to biographer Philip Norman , one of his reasons for wanting to manage the group was that he was physically attracted to Lennon . Almost as soon as Julian was born , Lennon went on holiday to Spain with Epstein , leading to speculation about their relationship . Questioned about it later , Lennon said , " Well , it was almost a love affair , but not quite . It was never consummated . But it was a pretty intense relationship . It was my first experience with a homosexual that I was conscious was homosexual . We used to sit in a café in Torremolinos looking at all the boys and I 'd say , ' Do you like that one ? Do you like this one ? ' I was rather enjoying the experience , thinking like a writer all the time : I am experiencing this . " Soon after their return from Spain , at McCartney 's twenty @-@ first birthday party in June 1963 , Lennon physically attacked Cavern Club MC Bob Wooler for saying " How was your honeymoon , John ? " The MC , known for his wordplay and affectionate but cutting remarks , was making a joke , but ten months had passed since Lennon 's marriage , and the honeymoon , deferred , was still two months in the future . To Lennon , who was intoxicated with alcohol at the time , the matter was simple : " He called me a queer so I battered his bloody ribs in " .

Lennon delighted in mocking Epstein for his homosexuality and for the fact that he was Jewish . When Epstein invited suggestions for the title of his autobiography , Lennon offered Queer Jew ; on learning of the eventual title , A Cellarful of Noise , he parodied , " More like A Cellarful of Boys " . He demanded of a visitor to Epstein 's flat , " Have you come to blackmail him ? If not , you 're the only bugger in London who hasn 't . " During the recording of " Baby , You 're a Rich Man " , he sang altered choruses of " Baby , you 're a rich fag Jew " .

= = = Julian Lennon = = =

Lennon 's first son , Julian , was born as his commitments with the Beatles intensified at the height of Beatlemania during his marriage to Cynthia . Lennon was touring with the Beatles when Julian was born on 8 April 1963 . Julian 's birth , like his mother Cynthia 's marriage to Lennon , was kept secret because Epstein was convinced public knowledge of such things would threaten the Beatles ' commercial success . Julian recalls how some four years later , as a small child in Weybridge , " I was trundled home from school and came walking up with one of my watercolour paintings . It was just a bunch of stars and this blonde girl I knew at school . And Dad said , ' What 's this ? ' I said , ' It 's Lucy in the sky with diamonds . ' " Lennon used it as the title of a Beatles song , and though it was later reported to have been derived from the initials LSD , Lennon insisted , " It 's not an acid song . " McCartney corroborated Lennon 's explanation that Julian innocently came up with the name .



Lennon was distant from Julian , who felt closer to McCartney than to his father . During a car journey to visit Cynthia and Julian during Lennon 's divorce , McCartney composed a song , " Hey Jules " , to comfort him . It would evolve into the Beatles song " Hey Jude " . Lennon later said , " That 's his best song . It started off as a song about my son Julian ... he turned it into ' Hey Jude ' . I always thought it was about me and Yoko but he said it wasn 't . "

Lennon 's relationship with Julian was already strained , and after Lennon and Ono 's 1971 move to New York , Julian would not see his father again until 1973 . With Pang 's encouragement , it was arranged for him ( and his mother ) to visit Lennon in Los Angeles , where they went to Disneyland . Julian started to see his father regularly , and Lennon gave him a drumming part on a Walls and Bridges track . He bought Julian a Gibson Les Paul guitar and other instruments , and encouraged his interest in music by demonstrating guitar chord techniques . Julian recalls that he and his father " got on a great deal better " during the time he spent in New York : " We had a lot of fun , laughed a lot and had a great time in general . "

In a Playboy interview with David Sheff shortly before his death , Lennon said , " Sean was a planned child , and therein lies the difference . I don 't love Julian any less as a child . He 's still my son , whether he came from a bottle of whiskey or because they didn 't have pills in those days . He 's here , he belongs to me , and he always will . " He said he was trying to re @-@ establish a connection with the then 17 @-@ year @-@ old , and confidently predicted , " Julian and I will have a relationship in the future . " After his death it was revealed that he had left Julian very little in his will .

= = = Yoko Ono = = =

Two versions exist of how Lennon met Ono . According to the first , told by the Lennons , on 9 November 1966 Lennon went to the Indica Gallery in London , where Ono was preparing her conceptual art exhibit , and they were introduced by gallery owner John Dunbar . Lennon was intrigued by Ono 's " Hammer A Nail " : patrons hammered a nail into a wooden board , creating the art piece . Although the exhibition had not yet begun , Lennon wanted to hammer a nail into the clean board , but Ono stopped him . Dunbar asked her , " Don 't you know who this is ? He 's a millionaire ! He might buy it . " Ono had supposedly not heard of the Beatles , but relented on condition that Lennon pay her five shillings , to which Lennon replied , " I 'll give you an imaginary five shillings and hammer an imaginary nail in . " The second version , told by McCartney , is that in late 1965 , Ono was in London compiling original musical scores for a book John Cage was working on , Notations , but McCartney declined to give her any of his own manuscripts for the book , suggesting that Lennon might oblige . When asked , Lennon gave Ono the original handwritten lyrics to " The Word " .

Ono began visiting and telephoning Lennon 's home and , when his wife asked for an explanation , Lennon explained that Ono was only trying to obtain money for her " avant @-@ garde bullshit " . In May 1968 , while his wife was on holiday in Greece , Lennon invited Ono to visit . They spent the night recording what would become the Two Virgins album , after which , he said , they " made love at dawn . " When Lennon 's wife returned home she found Ono wearing her bathrobe and drinking tea with Lennon who simply said , " Oh , hi . " Ono became pregnant in 1968 and miscarried a male child they named John Ono Lennon II on 21 November 1968 , a few weeks after Lennon 's divorce from Cynthia was granted .

During Lennon 's last two years in the Beatles , he and Ono began public protests against the Vietnam War . They were married in Gibraltar on 20 March 1969 , and spent their honeymoon at the Hilton Amsterdam campaigning with a week @-@ long Bed @-@ In for Peace . They planned another Bed @-@ In in the United States , but were denied entry , so held one instead at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal , where they recorded " Give Peace a Chance " . They often combined advocacy with performance art , as in their " Bagism " , first introduced during a Vienna press conference . Lennon detailed this period in the Beatles song " The Ballad of John and Yoko " . Lennon changed his name by deed poll on 22 April 1969 , adding " Ono " as a middle name . The brief ceremony took place on the roof of the Apple Corps building , made famous three months

earlier by the Beatles ' Let It Be rooftop concert . Although he used the name John Ono Lennon thereafter , official documents referred to him as John Winston Ono Lennon , since he was not permitted to revoke a name given at birth . The couple settled at Tittenhurst Park at Sunninghill in Berkshire . After Ono was injured in a car accident , Lennon arranged for a king @-@ sized bed to be brought to the recording studio as he worked on the Beatles ' last album , Abbey Road . To escape the acrimony of the band 's break @-@ up , Ono suggested they move permanently to New York , which they did on 31 August 1971 .

They first lived in The St. Regis Hotel on 5th Avenue , East 55th Street , then moved to a street @-@ level flat at 105 Bank Street , Greenwich Village , on 16 October 1971 . After a robbery , they relocated to the more secure Dakota at 1 West 72nd Street , in 1973 .

= = = May Pang = = =

ABKCO Industries , formed in 1968 by Allen Klein as an umbrella company to ABKCO Records , recruited May Pang as a receptionist in 1969 . Through involvement in a project with ABKCO , Lennon and Ono met her the following year . She became their personal assistant . After she had been working with the couple for three years , Ono confided that she and Lennon were becoming estranged from one another . She went on to suggest that Pang should begin a physical relationship with Lennon , telling her , " He likes you a lot . " Pang , 22 , astounded by Ono 's proposition , eventually agreed to become Lennon 's companion . The pair soon moved to California , beginning an 18 @-@ month period he later called his " lost weekend " . In Los Angeles , Pang encouraged Lennon to develop regular contact with Julian , whom he had not seen for two years . He also rekindled friendships with Starr , McCartney , Beatles roadie Mal Evans , and Harry Nilsson . Whilst drinking with Nilsson , after misunderstanding something Pang said , Lennon attempted to strangle her , relenting only when physically restrained by Nilsson .

Upon returning to New York , they prepared a spare room in their newly rented apartment for Julian to visit . Lennon , hitherto inhibited by Ono in this regard , began to reestablish contact with other relatives and friends . By December he and Pang were considering a house purchase , and he was refusing to accept Ono 's telephone calls . In January 1975 , he agreed to meet Ono who claimed to have found a cure for smoking . But after the meeting he failed to return home or call Pang . When Pang telephoned the next day , Ono told her Lennon was unavailable , being exhausted after a hypnotherapy session . Two days later , Lennon reappeared at a joint dental appointment , stupefied and confused to such an extent that Pang believed he had been brainwashed . He told her his separation from Ono was now over , though Ono would allow him to continue seeing her as his mistress .

= = = Sean Lennon = = =

When Lennon and Ono were reunited , she became pregnant , but having previously suffered three miscarriages in her attempt to have a child with Lennon , she said she wanted an abortion . She agreed to allow the pregnancy to continue on condition that Lennon adopt the role of househusband ; this he agreed to do . Sean was born on 9 October 1975 , Lennon 's 35th birthday , delivered by Caesarean section . Lennon 's subsequent career break would span five years . He had a photographer take pictures of Sean every day of his first year , and created numerous drawings for him , posthumously published as Real Love : The Drawings for Sean . Lennon later proudly declared , " He didn 't come out of my belly but , by God , I made his bones , because I 've attended to every meal , and to how he sleeps , and to the fact that he swims like a fish . "

= = = Former Beatles = = =

Although his friendship with Starr remained consistently friendly during the years following the Beatles ' break @-@ up in 1970 , Lennon 's relationships with McCartney and Harrison varied . He was close to Harrison initially , but the two drifted apart after Lennon moved to America . When

Harrison was in New York for his December 1974 Dark Horse tour , Lennon agreed to join him on stage , but failed to appear after an argument over Lennon 's refusal to sign an agreement that would finally dissolve the Beatles ' legal partnership . ( Lennon eventually signed the papers while holidaying in Florida with Pang and Julian . ) Harrison offended Lennon in 1980 , when he published an autobiography that made little mention of him . Lennon told Playboy , " I was hurt by it . By glaring omission ... my influence on his life is absolutely zilch ... he remembers every two @-@ bit sax player or guitarist he met in subsequent years . I 'm not in the book . "

Lennon 's most intense feelings were reserved for McCartney . In addition to attacking him through the lyrics of " How Do You Sleep ? " , Lennon argued with him through the press for three years after the group split . The two later began to reestablish something of the close friendship they had once known , and in 1974 , they even played music together again before eventually growing apart once more . Lennon said that during McCartney 's final visit , in April 1976 , they watched the episode of Saturday Night Live in which Lorne Michaels made a \$ 3 @,@ 000 cash offer to get the Beatles to reunite on the show . The pair considered going to the studio to make a joke appearance , attempting to claim their share of the money , but were too tired . Lennon summarised his feelings towards McCartney in an interview three days before his death : " Throughout my career , I 've selected to work with ... only two people : Paul McCartney and Yoko Ono ... That ain 't bad picking . "

Along with his estrangement from McCartney , Lennon always felt a musical competitiveness with him and kept an ear on his music . During his five @-@ year career break he was content to sit back so long as McCartney was producing what Lennon saw as mediocre material . When McCartney released " Coming Up " , in 1980 , the year Lennon returned to the studio and the last year of his life , he took notice . " It 's driving me crackers ! " he jokingly complained , because he could not get the tune out of his head . Asked the same year whether the group were dreaded enemies or the best of friends , he replied that they were neither , and that he had not seen any of them in a long time . But he also said , " I still love those guys . The Beatles are over , but John , Paul , George and Ringo go on . "

= = Political activism = =

Lennon and Ono used their honeymoon as what they termed a " Bed @-@ In for Peace " at the Amsterdam Hilton Hotel ; the March 1969 event attracted worldwide media ridicule . At a second Bed @-@ In three months later at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal Lennon wrote and recorded " Give Peace a Chance " . Released as a single , it was quickly taken up as an anti @-@ war anthem and sung by a quarter of a million demonstrators against the Vietnam War in Washington , DC , on 15 November , the second Vietnam Moratorium Day . In December , they paid for billboards in 10 cities around the world which declared , in the national language , " War Is Over ! If You Want It " .

Later that year , Lennon and Ono supported efforts by the family of James Hanratty , hanged for murder in 1962 , to prove his innocence . Those who had condemned Hanratty were , according to Lennon , " the same people who are running guns to South Africa and killing blacks in the streets . ... The same bastards are in control , the same people are running everything , it 's the whole bullshit bourgeois scene . " In London , Lennon and Ono staged a " Britain Murdered Hanratty " banner march and a " Silent Protest For James Hanratty " , and produced a 40 @-@ minute documentary on the case . At an appeal hearing years later , Hanratty 's conviction was upheld after DNA evidence matched . His family continued to appeal in 2010 .

Lennon and Ono showed their solidarity with the Clydeside UCS workers ' work @-@ in of 1971 by sending a bouquet of red roses and a cheque for £ 5 @,@ 000 . On moving to New York City in August that year , they befriended two of the Chicago Seven , Yippie peace activists Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman . Another political activist , John Sinclair , poet and co @-@ founder of the White Panther Party , was serving ten years in prison for selling two joints of marijuana after previous convictions for possession of the drug . In December 1971 at Ann Arbor , Michigan , 15 @,@ 000 people attended the " John Sinclair Freedom Rally " , a protest and benefit concert with contributions

from Lennon , Stevie Wonder , Bob Seger , Bobby Seale of the Black Panther Party , and others . Lennon and Ono , backed by David Peel and Rubin , performed an acoustic set of four songs from their forthcoming Some Time in New York City album including " John Sinclair " , whose lyrics called for his release . The day before the rally , the Michigan Senate passed a bill that significantly reduced the penalties for possession of marijuana and four days later Sinclair was released on an appeal bond . The performance was recorded and two of the tracks later appeared on John Lennon Anthology ( 1998 ) .

Following the Bloody Sunday incident in Northern Ireland in 1972 , in which 14 unarmed civil rights protesters were shot dead by the British Army , Lennon said that given the choice between the army and the IRA ( who were not involved in the incident ) he would side with the latter . Lennon and Ono wrote two songs protesting British presence and actions in Ireland for their Some Time in New York City album : " Luck of the Irish " and " Sunday Bloody Sunday " . In 2000 , David Shayler , a former member of Britain 's domestic security service MI5 , suggested that Lennon had given money to the IRA , though this was swiftly denied by Ono . Biographer Bill Harry records that following Bloody Sunday , Lennon and Ono financially supported the production of the film The Irish Tapes , a political documentary with a Republican slant .

According to FBI surveillance reports ( and confirmed by Tariq Ali in 2006 ) Lennon was sympathetic to the International Marxist Group , a Trotskyist group formed in Britain in 1968 . However , the FBI considered Lennon to have limited effectiveness as a revolutionary since he was " constantly under the influence of narcotics " .

In 1973 , Lennon contributed a limerick called " Why Make It Sad To Be Gay ? " to Len Richmond 's The Gay Liberation Book .

Lennon 's last act of political activism was a statement in support of the striking minority sanitation workers in San Francisco on 5 December 1980 . He and Ono planned to join the workers ' protest on 14 December . By this time , however , Lennon had also quietly renounced the counterculture views which he had helped promote during the 1960s and 1970s and became more aligned with conservatism , though whether he had actually aligned to a more conservative world view is disputed .

= = = Deportation attempt = = =

Following the impact of " Give Peace a Chance " and " Happy Xmas ( War Is Over ) " , both strongly associated with the anti ? Vietnam War movement , the Nixon administration , hearing rumours of Lennon 's involvement in a concert to be held in San Diego at the same time as the Republican National Convention , tried to have him deported . Nixon believed that Lennon 's anti @-@ war activities could cost him his re @-@ election ; Republican Senator Strom Thurmond suggested in a February 1972 memo that " deportation would be a strategic counter @-@ measure " against Lennon . The next month the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service ( INS ) began deportation proceedings , arguing that his 1968 misdemeanor conviction for cannabis possession in London had made him ineligible for admission to the United States . Lennon spent the next three and a half years in and out of deportation hearings until 8 October 1975 , when a court of appeals barred the deportation attempt , stating " ... the courts will not condone selective deportation based upon secret political grounds . " While the legal battle continued , Lennon attended rallies and made television appearances . Lennon and Ono co @-@ hosted The Mike Douglas Show for a week in February 1972 , introducing guests such as Jerry Rubin and Bobby Seale to mid @-@ America . In 1972 , Bob Dylan wrote a letter to the INS defending Lennon , stating :

John and Yoko add a great voice and drive to the country 's so @-@ called art institution . They inspire and transcend and stimulate and by doing so , only help others to see pure light and in doing that , put an end to this dull taste of petty commercialism which is being passed off as Artist Art by the overpowering mass media . Hurray for John and Yoko . Let them stay and live here and breathe . The country 's got plenty of room and space . Let John and Yoko stay !

On 23 March 1973 , Lennon was ordered to leave the US within 60 days . Ono , meanwhile , was granted permanent residence . In response , Lennon and Ono held a press conference on 1 April

1973 at the New York City Bar Association , where they announced the formation of the state of Nutopia ; a place with " no land , no boundaries , no passports , only people " . Waving the white flag of Nutopia ( two handkerchiefs ) , they asked for political asylum in the US . The press conference was filmed , and would later appear in the 2006 documentary The US vs. John Lennon . Lennon 's Mind Games ( 1973 ) included the track " Nutopian International Anthem " , which comprised three seconds of silence . Soon after the press conference , Nixon 's involvement in a political scandal came to light , and in June the Watergate hearings began in Washington , DC . They led to the president 's resignation 14 months later . Nixon 's successor , Gerald Ford , showed little interest in continuing the battle against Lennon , and the deportation order was overturned in 1975 . The following year , his US immigration status finally resolved , Lennon received his " green card " certifying his permanent residency , and when Jimmy Carter was inaugurated as president in January 1977 , Lennon and Ono attended the Inaugural Ball .

= = = FBI surveillance and declassified documents = = =

After Lennon 's death , historian Jon Wiener filed a Freedom of Information Act request for FBI files documenting the Bureau 's role in the deportation attempt . The FBI admitted it had 281 pages of files on Lennon , but refused to release most of them on the grounds that they contained national security information . In 1983 , Wiener sued the FBI with the help of the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California . It took 14 years of litigation to force the FBI to release the withheld pages . The ACLU , representing Wiener , won a favourable decision in their suit against the FBI in the Ninth Circuit in 1991 . The Justice Department appealed the decision to the Supreme Court in April 1992 , but the court declined to review the case . In 1997 , respecting President Bill Clinton 's newly instigated rule that documents should be withheld only if releasing them would involve " foreseeable harm " , the Justice Department settled most of the outstanding issues outside court by releasing all but 10 of the contested documents .

Wiener published the results of his 14 @-@ year campaign in January 2000 . Gimme Some Truth : The John Lennon FBI Files contained facsimiles of the documents , including " lengthy reports by confidential informants detailing the daily lives of anti @-@ war activists , memos to the White House , transcripts of TV shows on which Lennon appeared , and a proposal that Lennon be arrested by local police on drug charges " . The story is told in the documentary The US vs. John Lennon . The final 10 documents in Lennon 's FBI file , which reported on his ties with London anti @-@ war activists in 1971 and had been withheld as containing " national security information provided by a foreign government under an explicit promise of confidentiality " , were released in December 2006 . They contained no indication that the British government had regarded Lennon as a serious threat ; one example of the released material was a report that two prominent British leftists had hoped Lennon would finance a left @-@ wing bookshop and reading room .

= = Writing and art = =

Beatles biographer Bill Harry writes that Lennon began drawing and writing creatively at an early age with the encouragement of his uncle . He collected his stories , poetry , cartoons and caricatures in a Quarry Bank High School exercise book that he called the Daily Howl . The drawings were often of crippled people , and the writings satirical , and throughout the book was an abundance of wordplay . According to classmate Bill Turner , Lennon created the Daily Howl to amuse his best friend and later Quarrymen bandmate Pete Shotton , to whom he would show his work before he let anyone else see it . Turner said that Lennon " had an obsession for Wigan Pier . It kept cropping up " , and in Lennon 's story A Carrot in a Potato Mine , " the mine was at the end of Wigan Pier . " Turner described how one of Lennon 's cartoons depicted a bus stop sign annotated with the question , " Why ? " . Above was a flying pancake , and below , " a blind man wearing glasses leading along a blind dog ? also wearing glasses " .

Lennon 's love of wordplay and nonsense with a twist found a wider audience when he was 24 . Harry writes that In His Own Write ( 1964 ) was published after " Some journalist who was hanging

around the Beatles came to me and I ended up showing him the stuff . They said , ' Write a book ' and that 's how the first one came about " . Like the Daily Howl it contained a mix of formats including short stories , poetry , plays and drawings . One story , " Good Dog Nigel " , tells the tale of " a happy dog , urinating on a lamp post , barking , wagging his tail ? until he suddenly hears a message that he will be killed at three o 'clock " . The Times Literary Supplement considered the poems and stories " remarkable ... also very funny ... the nonsense runs on , words and images prompting one another in a chain of pure fantasy " . Book Week reported , " This is nonsense writing , but one has only to review the literature of nonsense to see how well Lennon has brought it off . While some of his homonyms are gratuitous word play , many others have not only double meaning but a double edge . " Lennon was not only surprised by the positive reception , but that the book was reviewed at all , and suggested that readers " took the book more seriously than I did myself . It just began as a laugh for me " .

In combination with A Spaniard in the Works ( 1965 ) , In His Own Write formed the basis of the stage play The John Lennon Play : In His Own Write , co @-@ adapted by Victor Spinetti and Adrienne Kennedy . After negotiations between Lennon , Spinetti and the artistic director of the National Theatre , Sir Laurence Olivier , the play opened at The Old Vic in 1968 . Lennon and Ono attended the opening night performance , their second public appearance together . In 1969 , Lennon wrote " Four in Hand " ? ? ? a skit based on his teenaged experiences of group masturbation ? ? ? for Kenneth Tynan 's play Oh ! Calcutta ! . After Lennon 's death , further works were published , including Skywriting by Word of Mouth ( 1986 ) ; Ai : Japan Through John Lennon 's Eyes : A Personal Sketchbook ( 1992 ) , with Lennon 's illustrations of the definitions of Japanese words ; and Real Love : The Drawings for Sean ( 1999 ) . The Beatles Anthology ( 2000 ) also presented examples of his writings and drawings .

= = Musicianship = =

= = = Instruments played = = =

Lennon 's playing of a mouth organ during a bus journey to visit his cousin in Scotland caught the driver 's ear . Impressed , the driver told Lennon of a harmonica he could have if he came to Edinburgh the following day , where one had been stored in the bus depot since a passenger left it on a bus . The professional instrument quickly replaced Lennon 's toy . He would continue to play harmonica , often using the instrument during the Beatles ' Hamburg years , and it became a signature sound in the group 's early recordings . His mother taught him how to play the banjo , later buying him an acoustic guitar . At 16 , he played rhythm guitar with the Quarrymen .

As his career progressed , he played a variety of electric guitars , predominantly the Rickenbacker 325 , Epiphone Casino and Gibson J @-@ 160E , and , from the start of his solo career , the Gibson Les Paul Junior . Double Fantasy producer Jack Douglas claimed that since his Beatle days Lennon habitually tuned his D @-@ string slightly flat , so his Aunt Mimi could tell which guitar was his on recordings . Occasionally he played a six @-@ string bass guitar , the Fender Bass VI , providing bass on some Beatles numbers ( " Back in the U.S.S.R. " , " The Long and Winding Road " , " Helter Skelter " ) that occupied McCartney with another instrument . His other instrument of choice was the piano , on which he composed many songs , including " Imagine " , described as his best @-@ known solo work . His jamming on a piano with McCartney in 1963 led to the creation of the Beatles ' first US number one , " I Want to Hold Your Hand " . In 1964 , he became one of the first British musicians to acquire a Mellotron keyboard , though it was not heard on a Beatles recording until " Strawberry Fields Forever " in 1967 .

= = = Vocal style = = =

When the Beatles recorded " Twist and Shout " , the final track during the mammoth one @-@ day session that produced the band 's 1963 debut album , Please Please Me , Lennon 's voice , already

compromised by a cold , came close to giving out . Lennon said , " I couldn 't sing the damn thing , I was just screaming . " In the words of biographer Barry Miles , " Lennon simply shredded his vocal cords in the interests of rock ' n ' roll . " The Beatles ' producer , George Martin , tells how Lennon " had an inborn dislike of his own voice which I could never understand . He was always saying to me : ' DO something with my voice ! ... put something on it ... Make it different . ' " Martin obliged , often using double @-@ tracking and other techniques .

As his Beatles era segued into his solo career , his singing voice found a widening range of expression . Biographer Chris Gregory writes of Lennon " tentatively beginning to expose his insecurities in a number of acoustic @-@ led ' confessional ' ballads , so beginning the process of ' public therapy ' that will eventually culminate in the primal screams of " Cold Turkey " and the cathartic John Lennon / Plastic Ono Band . " Music critic Robert Christgau calls this Lennon 's " greatest vocal performance ... from scream to whine , is modulated electronically ... echoed , filtered , and double tracked . " David Stuart Ryan notes Lennon 's vocal delivery to range from " extreme vulnerability , sensitivity and even naivety " to a hard " rasping " style . Wiener too describes contrasts , saying the singer 's voice can be " at first subdued ; soon it almost cracks with despair " . Music historian Ben Urish recalls hearing the Beatles ' Ed Sullivan Show performance of " This Boy " played on the radio a few days after Lennon 's murder : " As Lennon 's vocals reached their peak ... it hurt too much to hear him scream with such anguish and emotion . But it was my emotions I heard in his voice . Just like I always had . "

= = Legacy = =

Music historians Schinder and Schwartz , writing of the transformation in popular music styles that took place between the 1950s and the 1960s , say that the Beatles ' influence cannot be overstated : having " revolutionised the sound , style , and attitude of popular music and opened rock and roll 's doors to a tidal wave of British rock acts " , the group then " spent the rest of the 1960s expanding rock 's stylistic frontiers " . Liam Gallagher , his group Oasis among the many who acknowledge the band 's influence , identifies Lennon as a hero ; in 1999 he named his first child Lennon Gallagher in tribute . On National Poetry Day in 1999 , after conducting a poll to identify the UK 's favourite song lyric , the BBC announced " Imagine " the winner .

In a 2006 Guardian article , Jon Wiener wrote : " For young people in 1972 , it was thrilling to see Lennon 's courage in standing up to [ US President ] Nixon . That willingness to take risks with his career , and his life , is one reason why people still admire him today . " For music historians Urish and Bielen , Lennon 's most significant effort was " the self @-@ portraits ... in his songs [ which ] spoke to , for , and about , the human condition . "

In 2013 , Downtown Music Publishing signed a publishing administration agreement for the U.S. with Lenono Music and Ono Music , home to the song catalogs of John Lennon and Yoko Ono respectively . Under the terms of the agreement , Downtown represents Lennon 's solo works -- including " Imagine , " " Instant Karma ( We All Shine On ) , " " Power to the People , " " Happy X @-@ Mas ( War Is Over ) , " " Jealous Guy , " " ( Just Like ) Starting Over " and others .

Lennon continues to be mourned throughout the world and has been the subject of numerous memorials and tributes . In 2002 , the airport in Lennon 's home town was renamed the Liverpool John Lennon Airport . In 2010 , on what would have been Lennon 's 70th birthday , the John Lennon Peace Monument was unveiled in Chavasse Park , Liverpool , by Cynthia and Julian Lennon . The sculpture entitled ' Peace & Harmony ' exhibits peace symbols and carries the inscription " Peace on Earth for the Conservation of Life · In Honour of John Lennon 1940 ? 1980 " .

In December 2013 the International Astronomical Union named one of the craters on Mercury after Lennon .

= = = Awards and sales = = =

The Lennon ? McCartney songwriting partnership is regarded as one of the most influential and successful of the 20th century . As performer , writer or co @-@ writer Lennon has had 25 number

one singles on the US Hot 100 chart. His album sales in the US stand at 14 million units . Double Fantasy was his best @-@ selling solo album , at three million shipments in the US ; Released shortly before his death , it won the 1981 Grammy Award for Album of the Year . The following year , the BRIT Award for Outstanding Contribution to Music went to Lennon .

Participants in a 2002 BBC poll voted him eighth of " 100 Greatest Britons " . Between 2003 and 2008 , Rolling Stone recognised Lennon in several reviews of artists and music , ranking him fifth of " 100 Greatest Singers of All Time " and 38th of " 100 Greatest Artists of All Time " , and his albums John Lennon / Plastic Ono Band and Imagine , 22nd and 76th respectively of " Rolling Stone 's 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " . He was appointed Member of the Order of the British Empire ( MBE ) with the other Beatles in 1965 ( returned in 1969 ) . Lennon was posthumously inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1987 and into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1994 .

= = Discography = =

Unfinished Music No. 1 : Two Virgins ( with Yoko Ono ) ( 1968 )  
Unfinished Music No. 2 : Life with the Lions ( with Yoko Ono ) ( 1969 )  
Wedding Album ( with Yoko Ono ) ( 1969 )  
John Lennon / Plastic Ono Band ( 1970 )  
Imagine ( 1971 )  
Some Time in New York City ( with Yoko Ono ) ( 1972 )  
Mind Games ( 1973 )  
Walls and Bridges ( 1974 )  
Rock ' n ' Roll ( 1975 )  
Double Fantasy ( with Yoko Ono ) ( 1980 )  
Milk and Honey ( with Yoko Ono ) ( 1984 )

= = Filmography = =

= = = Film = = =

= = = Television = = =