



Lennon remembered

Matt Siegel, former WBCN announcer and current host of WCVB-TV's *Five All Night Live*: "Sometimes I think that after all that exposure in the public eye, John Lennon must have had absolutely no sense of who he was; he didn't really know the effect he had on people. I think what he was striving for — desperately — was simply to be treated as a man, and that's why he loved Yoko so much. She didn't treat him as a Beatle, a symbol, but as a human being. She criticized him. He surrendered himself to his feelings for his wife, and I think that's what kept him sane. Now that he's dead, he'll be deified. It's almost as if the world has him now; he didn't want to be deified, but it's going to happen. I'm going to do it on the show tonight (last Wednesday). He's a public figure and the public wants it."

Barb Kitson, singer with Thrills: "I was seven years old when Beatlemania hit and I found out from a 16-year-old girl that Cousin Bruce was playing Beatle records on WABC all the time. That's when I was first aware of rock 'n' roll, aside from Chubby Checker. I'll never forget a school talent show in Dobbs Ferry, N.Y. in 1964. There were these four junior-high guys wearing official Beatle wigs and Beatle sweatshirts. 'All My Loving' was playing over the PA and these guys mouthed the words. They were screaming!"

Peter Wolf, lead singer and lyricist for the J. Geils Band: "Here was a 40-year-old guy who had been on the bubble-gum cards and he was still making rock 'n' roll records. I don't think I can adequately verbalize my feelings, aside from the clichés — 'a great musician,' 'a tragic event,' etc. It's too large for me, and I can't find any way to translate or share it."

Jerry Brenner, president of Jerry Brenner Productions Inc., the Reading-based independent record-promotion concern: "All I can say is that I feel the '60s are over. I always felt some flicker that the Beatles might get back together, for one concert anyway. The world is in a sad situation, and this makes it worse. Lennon only brought joy to people."

Ran Blake, pianist, composer, and chairman of the New England Conservatory's Third Stream Department: "I can't help but feel a little envious of the publicity he got, which, say, Mingus or Bill Evans didn't get when they passed away. He was a great songwriter, but there were others. Less than one-half of one percent of all musicians — and I think I'm even being optimistic — leave life with the feeling that their music has had any effect, even on a local level. Lennon was, of course, very much appreciated in his lifetime. I'm sure there were tragedies, a hard Liverpool childhood... but how wonderful that he's now alive in Heaven, or wherever he is, and that he had so many blessings."

Ric Ocask, songwriter/singer/rhythm guitarist for the Cars: "Lately, his place of residence was so publicized — in *Playboy*, *Esquire*, the *Soho Weekly News* — and I think that has a lot to do with the horrible thing that has happened. He was always my favorite Beatle: he wrote the best songs, he was seemingly the most radical, and he was never too schlocky. He was the one who really made the Beatles the Beatles. His music was definitely an inspiration. The great thing about the new album was that it was Lennon again — his whole, personal sound."

Rowena Harris, president of Independent Marketing and Production Services Inc. — IMPS Inc. — a New Jersey-based record-promotion concern: "I got in on the end of Beatlemania. We would catch snatches of them on WBAM, 'the Big Bam,' because none of the black stations had strong enough signals to reach Tuskegee (Alabama). They were saying something I liked, but I was a little afraid. The South was still segregated, and you listened to Jackie Wilson, the Miracles, etc. By the early '70s, after black people had been through so much and gotten into themselves during the '60s, it was okay to like the Beatles. They wrote some beautiful tunes, and their attitudes helped change the attitudes of millions of people."

Oedipus, WMBR and WBCN announcer: "John Lennon was the only punk in the Beatles and the only one who had any relevance to the modern wave of

music. He always did anything he wanted to do, as long as he felt it was right — he said the Beatles were more popular than Jesus, he gave up the Beatles for Yoko, he devoted himself to peace, and he loved basic, high-energy rock 'n' roll. He started in a leather jacket and his attitude remained in a leather jacket."

Stan Getz, tenor saxophonist: "I didn't take to the Beatles until about five years after they exploded in America. My kids played their records, and I had a block against them at first, because of their image. But when I approached them musically, I found them to be a very original group. Lennon was my favorite. He had the most ballsy-sounding voice — I loved its rasp — and, of course, he's one of our great contemporary composers. He was also one of the leaders of the generation that started the new freedom back in the '60s, but I feel that it has become freedom without responsibility. Lennon started it for musical reasons and for reasons of personal expression, but some of the freedom has boomeranged, which makes Lennon's death even more terrible. There's such a high amount of violence in our country's guts right now. Maybe his death at the beginning of the '80s will show that this violence must stop."

Maxanne Sartori, former WBCN announcer and current East Coast director of A&R for Elektra Records: "I think it's ironic that a person who spent most of his adult life trying to communicate should be taken away by someone so frustrated by his inability to communicate. Ban all guns."

David Minehan, songwriter/singer/lead guitarist for the Neighborhoods: "Without question, his music changed my life. What excited me most about him was that he used his musical freedom to spread ideas, to give a shit about society, not just to brush it off with the proverbial pop songs."

Arnie Ginsberg, formerly New England's favorite rock 'n' roll DJ on WMEX, currently host of an oldies show Sundays from 6 to 9 p.m. on WXKS-FM, and station manager of WXKS-AM and -FM: "I emceed their shows at the Garden in 1964 and at Suffolk Downs in '66;

we said hello, but that's all. They had so much attention that I felt I was doing them a favor by not trying to be involved at all. Just before the Beatles arrived, music had become boring. The Spector sound had been overdone and music almost wasn't fun anymore. I followed the European charts and played Beatles records on the air in '63, before the British Invasion, but there was absolutely no reaction. Then, when I emceed that first show, I'd never seen a reaction like that."

"I think the Beatles are more responsible than anything else for bringing great musicians into rock 'n' roll. They transformed the music into an adult form, and it attracted listeners and musicians who had looked down on the music. And, of course, Lennon had a great deal to do with that."

Gunther Schuller, composer, conductor, author, former French horn player, former president of the New England Conservatory: "What I admired about him so much was his absolute seriousness and integrity as an artist and as a person. He seemed to abhor any form of sham and spoke out against it unhesitatingly, whether it was sham in music, the social arena, or personal matters. The element that impressed me most was the clarity of his mind; he cut right through to the bone of an issue. There were no considerations of 'What's in it for me?' or 'Is it safe to do?', which enabled him to state an issue in a very succinct and hard-hitting fashion. And it put whoever he was addressing, whether it was one person or the world, on their toes. He raised the level of discussion immediately. I didn't agree with everything he said, but I admired his clarity and the uncorruptibility of his thinking, and his music-making was part of that."

Joe Perry, former lead guitarist/songwriter for Aerosmith, currently leader of the Joe Perry Project: "I had taken up guitar before I heard the Beatles, when I was 13, but they were the ones who made me think I really wanted to do it for myself. They had the songs; that's world history now. Aerosmith played one of my favorite Lennon songs, 'Come Together,' in the movie version of *Sgt. Pepper*. As much as I disliked the movie, I was really excited by the opportunity to play that song in it. I'm proud that he knew me through us covering his song. I worked with Jack Douglas for years in Aerosmith, he produced my first solo album, and he did Lennon's new record. Lennon used the same engineers, same tape operators, and same studio (the Hit Factory, in New York) as we did. I was always asking Jack about what John was doing in the studio; Jack told me that John was very optimistic about his music, that he felt these were the right moves for him. You know, sometimes a fan asks you for an autograph, and you sign it. Then the next day, the same fan is back asking for another autograph. So you sign again. There's no way of telling... You can't walk around with five bodyguards all your life."

Sid Bernstein, promoter of the first Beatles concerts in America, held at Carnegie Hall, and their two legendary Shea Stadium appearances: "I really didn't know John very well. We first met at a reception, it's almost 17 years ago now, that Capitol Records threw for them, and he impressed me so much. He was so astute, so aware; he knew everyone's game in that room... One night he needed tickets for a Jimmy Cliff concert I did at Carnegie Hall — this was 1974 or '75 — and I asked my kids to give up their tickets. We spent about three hours together that night. Jesus, I wanted to be his friend. One night he called me up and asked me to give him the name of my favorite Italian restaurant; I recommended Paolucci's, on Mulberry Street. He enjoyed the meal so much that the next day he sent me a room full of flowers. The card was signed, 'John and Harry.' For a while I had no idea who John and Harry could be, but then I remembered, John Lennon and Harry Nilsson... My office is in his neighborhood, and I bumped into him on a beautiful day last spring. He and Yoko were out walking, arm in arm. He'd always ask me how my kids were; it was always the children. The time and love he gave his young son... There will always be John Lennon's music to play for our children and our children's children." — compiled by James Isaacs