

## Give peace a chance

# Lennon, Plastic Ono Band heir to beatles

By STEVE GELLER

The formation of the Plastic Ono Band with their first single Give Peace a Chance and the 1969 Christmas declaration of "War is over — if you want it" were primary steps in the endeavors of newlyweds John Lennon and Yoko Ono in striving for world-wide peace protests.

Their most recent protest for peace attempts to reach the mass media in the form of their latest Apple release simply entitled Wedding Album.

Wedding Album is not a musical effort. It consists of two, one track sides which convey both messages as to the achievement of world peace as well as an example of a protest for peace.

The side called Amsterdam consists of a series of interviews from the seven day peace bed-in of a few months back.

"What we're really doing is sending a message out to the world," declares Lennon as he explains that while most people are aware of the need for peace, no one is really doing anything about it.

The Lennons suggest a series of protests to rid the world of universal peace apathy, but are careful to add that the demonstrations must be done peacefully as this is the only way of achieving true peace.

Protests most amicable to John and Yoko include going to bed for peace, growing long hair for peace, giving up a week of holidays for peace and sitting-in a bank for peace.

Yoko explains that "everything that happens to us is our responsibility" and that the actual violence in the world is a symbol of a universal violent atmosphere, using as an example the persecution of the Jews in Europe during the Second World War wherein the actual physical action was only the end result of a lengthy world-wide persecution.

In this striving for world peace,

the Lennons argue that only by making each individual realize that he can institute some form of anti-violence protest which would lead to peace then the world will become universally tranquil.

The Amsterdam portion of Wedding Album puts an end to any of the wild guesses as to the reasons behind John and Yoko's peace campaign. The sincerity of the Lennons with regard to their peace project is attested to by the interviews of the Amsterdam sleep-in.

Their only aim is to make mankind always conscious of the aspect of peace by both instituting their own peace protests and by encouraging others to engage in a "wage peace" campaign.

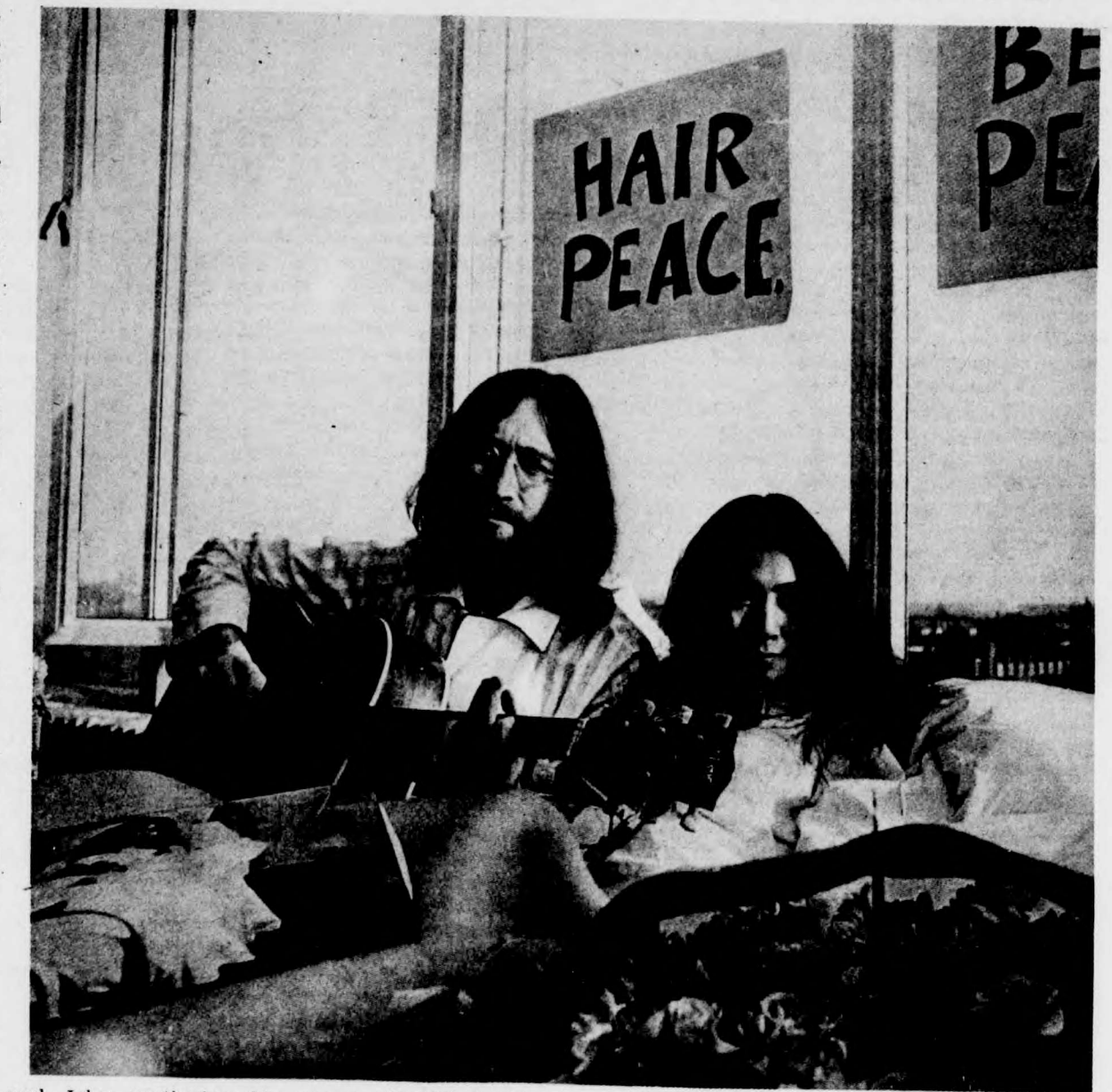
The John and Yoko side of the album consists of the sound of a steady heartbeat with Lennons repeating each other's name for 22 minutes and 23 seconds.

The emotional surge ranges from terribly loud and cold screams to whispery, heavy breathing. It makes the recently-controversial Je t'aime sound like Shirley Temple reciting Mary Had a Little Lamb.

Serving as an example of what the Lennons mean by protest for peace, the John and Yoko half of Wedding Album is an artistically sensuous way of saying 'lay don't slay'.

John Lennon is also presently making musical advances with the aid of the Plastic Ono Band. In spite of the horrendous screaming moans by Yoko Ono on the second side of their newest album, The Plastic Ono Band — Live Peace in Toronto 1969 (Apple SW-3362) will probably be marked as one of the significant albums of the year.

As the Beatles will probably split up permanently in the near future with Ringo turning to acting, Paul retiring to write music, George forming a group with Eric Clapton



and John continuing his peace campaign with Yoko and group, The Plastic Ono Band should become a prominent figure on the music scene.

John Lennon has said that he admires the musical style of the mid 50s/ early 60s rock 'n' roll era and that he would like to recreate the sounds of those times.

The Plastic Ono Band performs

the C.L. Perkins tune, Blue Suede Shoes (a gold record just over a decade ago), with the vitality enabling its reincarnation to fit perfectly into the contemporary music world. They also do justice to Money and Dizzy Miss Lizzie, before getting into Cold Turkey, a recently-written Lennon song which with its verses consisting of distinct short lines, breaking for a

few guitar chords, and combination of instrumental and vocally-combined chorus, resembles almost exactly the sound and style of the early 50s.

The indication from the Live Peace in Toronto 1969 album then is that a reversion to the musical patterns of a decade and a half ago are going to take over from where the Beatles do eventually leave off.

## The Band's return was grand, oh so grand

With their eyes looking down and their heads bowed as if in prayer, The Band slowly walked on stage. Like folk heroes returning home they were hailed with the thunderous applause of their huge Toronto following last Saturday night.

As they began their opening number, This Wheel's On Fire, they began radiating a friendly, engulfing warmth which quickly spread throughout the crowded Massey Hall.

The Band came back home, an example of how, after a decade, a local group had finally made good. The quality and feeling of their music, their attitude toward the audience as well as the crowd's feeling for The Band made for more than just a superb concert; what happened was an emotional experience.

The Band realized that they had to go to the United States to make the big time, a fact of which they appeared to be sorry. With an air of sincere simplicity, Robbie Robertson commented: "It's good to be home again." From then on, The Band presented one of its greatest performances.

For an hour and 20 minutes, they functioned like a jewelled precision watch, displaying a talent that cannot be reproduced on record. Their sense of timing was perfect. Each member of the group played not for himself but for and into each other.

It could have been only the result of 10 years of rehearsing and learning each other's exact movements and style.

Levon Helm, who occasionally exchanged his drums for an

acoustic guitar or mandolin, perched behind his set and watched over the other Band members.

Rick Danko, J.R. Robertson and Richard Manuel got into the very

depths of the group's southern gospel rock while Garth Hudson paraded around on stage, shoeless, from organ to piano, to accordion and to soprano sax, displaying a remarkable musical ability with

each different instrument. One of the evening's highlights was Hudson's intricate organ solo which evolved into a heavy Chest Fever toward the end of the concert.

S.G.

By PAT KUTNEY

Little can be added to the reviews of The Band by the three Toronto daily newspapers, which for once, simultaneously produced excellent criticisms and commentaries.

The performance of The Band (to two sellout audiences at Massey Hall last Saturday) gave me a mellow euphoric high that was only rivalled by a couple of concerts in the last year: one by Mother Tucker's Yellow Duck at the Electric Circus on a weekday and the other by the Grateful Dead at the Rock Pile.

The Band's music was complete in itself, like the meshing of the component parts of a small machine. Yet their songs did not fall into the rut of being artificial or stilted.

The honesty and simplicity and strength of character of The Band's members were controlling factors in each song. It is undoubtedly the honesty and simplicity of their music which explained the warm, even revered response they were accorded at the end of the show.

The band are certainly a group that Canadians should be proud of, rather than those mongers of garbage noise, Steppenwolf, who the business students were intending to bring in for Winter Carnival for the ridiculous figure of \$10,000.

Promoter Martin Onrot must be congratulated, not only for coordinating two well balanced lighting and sound systems, but for once again, being able to gauge the public's taste.

