

## JOHN LENNON

Plastic Ono Band (Capitol)

## YOKO ONO

Plastic Ono Band (Rykodisc)



My introduction to this pair of pure rock masterworks came only a couple of years ago. I remember hearing them for the first time and coming to the realization of just how much of a punker John Lennon was in the wake of the Fab Four's highly public break-up. Inspired by John and Yoko's primal scream therapy sessions with Dr. Walter Janov shortly after the Beatles breakup in 1970, the Plastic Ono Band albums are hardly reminiscent of the Lennon songs I remember hearing when I was growing up. Billed as the smart Beatle's solo debut, John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band was an exercise in artistic expression through varying levels of mood and rage. Sparse folk numbers like "Working Class Hero" and gorgeous piano-based ballads such as "Isolation" and "Mother" seem to achieve the same fury and emotion shown on the squalling rockers "Well Well Well" and "My Mummy's Dead." The Yoko version of Plastic Ono Band, while comprised of more or less the same initial line-up of Lennon on guitar, Klaus Voorman on bass, and Ringo on drums, is far more aggressive and cacophonous than the Lennon version. As Ono transformed her voice into the sound of a cat burning inside of a guitar amp, the band took commercial rock 'n' roll kicking and screaming into the twisted world of avant-garde improvisation, attacking scales and rhythms with enough sonic violence to make both John Zorn and Thurston Moore plug their ears in mortal terror. Hearing Lennon's guitar wail on "Why" and "South Wind" gave me a completely different perspective on the man. It's a shame that the politics espoused by the Lennons at the time overshadowed these two great albums, but it's amazing to realize just how far ahead of its time this music was. It almost makes you wonder what kind of scene Lennon would be associated with were he here today.

— Ron Hart

For Fans Of: Beatles, Sonic Youth, Nirvana, Ornette Coleman, Frank Zappa

*I'm Your Fan* is a weekly column in which individual CMJ editors sound off about music and artists, both new and old, that are near and dear to their hearts.



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Songs: Ohia's flip-side, an alternate version of "How To Be Perfect Men" from the band's *Axxess And Ace* album. This extra-spooky take is wholly organic, created with just voice, guitar and a single drum.

— Kelso Jacks

For Fans Of: Palace, Loftus, Joel R.L. Phelps

Contact: Jeremy DeVine

Phone & Fax: 410.662.4061

Email: jdevine@mica.edu

Release Date: May 17

Marketing Data: Contrary to recent rumors, Rex has not broken up and is currently planning a U.S. tour.

## SINGLE

## ESSEX GREEN/SIXTH GREAT LAKE

The Essex Green/The Sixth Great Lake (7" EP) (Sudden Shame)

This 7" is listed as a split single, but the whole affair has been created by three people from the Ladybug Transistor, augmented by a couple of friends. The four songs here vary wildly, featuring three different vocalists, and instrumentation and arrangements are equally diverse, featuring everything from a *capella* singing to clanging '60s pop to folksy bedroom experimentation.

— Tad Hendrickson



For Fans Of: Ladybug Transistor, Strapping Fieldhands, Neutral Milk Hotel

Contact: Josh Bloom (Fanatic)

Phone: 888.385.1231

Email: josh@fanaticpromotion.com

Fax: 303.245.0286

Release Date: April 13

Marketing Data: Essex Green will release an EP on Elephant 6 followed by a full-length on Kindercore.

## A&amp;R PICK

## BUCK DEWEY BIG BAND

Friday Night Chicken Waltz (Fruitpunch)

Well, there's nobody named Buck Dewey on this album, and the featured quintet isn't really that big of a band, but *Friday Night Chicken Waltz* makes a pretty considerable ruckus. The Buck Dewey Big Band's free-wheeling amalgam of jazz, blues, funk, rap and other genres keeps the group a few steps ahead of those trying to label the band with a "neo swing" tag. When it does swing on this self-released CD, it stirs in two jiggers

of energy and a twist of lunacy. On the frenzied opener "Central Square," Matt Myers and Rob O'Dwyer play dueling vocalists, trading gruff lines that recall the pipes of



Louis Armstrong and Cab Calloway. Elsewhere, the five-piece gets loud and funky and cool and jazzy; it even takes a dip into reggae. In many cases, these party-makers find space where all of those sounds can get together and shake the floorboards.

— Steve Ciabattoni

For Fans Of: Mighty Blue Kings, Fishbone, Jazz Passengers

Recommended Tracks: "Innocent Kind," "Rasta Mog,"

"River Road,"

Contact: David Avery (Powderfinger Promotions)

Phone: 617.623.3824

Email: powderspam@aol.com

Fax: 617.666.6466

Marketing Data: Currently touring.

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