



John Lennon (9.10.40) — (9.12.80)

I was born too late for Beatlemania, but early enough to remember a Beatle-dominated world, where everything they said or did was reported and analysed in

The first record I bought was With the Beatles and the first song I was totally effected by was 'I Am the Walrus'.

Ten minutes ago, I was told that John Lennon had been shot dead. It's hard to know what to say. It's bizzare, and I can't see the justice in it. For me, John symbolised not only the Beatles, but the sixties as a whole, with all that naive but endearing idealism, humour and fervour. It was the decade when the post-war babies grew up with fresh attitudes and enthusiasm. That was all personified in John Lennon and I doubt if I'll ever listen to a Beatles record in the same way Ten minutes ago, I was told that John to a Beatles record in the same way

again.

And it has become more and more obvious over the last decade that Lennon was the major part of the most influential and commercially successful artists popular music has produced. The Beatles introduced the concept of the album and the single as separate entities, album covers as more than a portrait, the artist as songwriter, and generally pushed forward at such a rate that everybody followed at a distance. Almost singlehanded ed at a distance. Almost singlehanded they dragged rock and roll out of the fifties to artistic limits which have yet to be pass-

Even as a solo artist, John Lennon remained one of the most important per-formers of the seventies. Bowie has repeatedly acknowledged his debt to him, and even John Lydon owes more than he would like to admit. In fact, it's quite easy to draw a parallel between much of the early post-Beatle music and some of the more progressive English new wave bands of the present day.

The essence of his genius lay as much with his performance as with his writing. He had a voice which could tear me apart He could take other people's material, even classic and often-covered songs, and give a definitive version, seemingly with little effort.

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His personal honesty and frankness were obvious, and he suffered because of it, saying what he thought and watching the critics go to town. As early as 1965, he was condemned for saying the Beatles were more popular than Christ. Ironically, it was probably true.

He came out of the Beatles decade a very confused person who was smart enough to see through the whole Beatles star facade, but who didn't know what to do about it. In trying to get out of it, he only seemed to confuse himself more and latched onto any radical cause with childish ched onto any radical cause with childish innocence.

The most tragic thing is that Lennon finally seemed to have found some sort of happiness. He had a settled private life and had returned with a confident album.

As I said in a recent review of the album, most of Lennon's fans are totally fanatical. I must admit to being one of them. John Lennon's death means the door has been closed on part of my youth.

The Dream is over. Simon Grigg

