

SEE  
HEAR  
YOKO

Bob Gruen and  
Jody Denberg  
for Yoko Ono



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# SEE HEAR YOKO

BOB GRUEN AND JODY DENBERG  
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Thank you, guys!

What a great birthday present!

I never got anything like this  
in my life.

Of course, I never lived  
this long either.

Stay around.

So we can have more laughs  
together.

Love you! Yoko



Yoko Ono is the most interesting and inspiring person I know, and I've always felt very lucky to be a part of her life. We met in 1971 shortly after she came to New York with John Lennon, and we soon became friends. We shared many laughs in good times and were there for each other in hard times. I traveled to Japan and Europe with Yoko and saw her as an artist and performer. Over the years I've taken many photographs of her at public events and in private moments. When Sean was born they called me to take the first photos of him to send to their families, and in introductions Sean has referred to me as his "uncle." It makes me very happy to be considered part of the family.

For Yoko's eightieth birthday Jody Denberg suggested that we could gather my favorite photos and combine them with quotes from his interviews with her to make a special book just for Yoko. I thought it was a great idea.

This is the book we made. After we gave it to her, Yoko called and said she liked it so much that she wanted us to publish it.

I must thank Hanna Toresson for creating the design of this book and Richelle DeLorenzo for her extensive work researching my files and Jody's interviews to select Yoko's quotes and the caption information.

BOB GRUEN, NEW YORK CITY, NOVEMBER 20

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I am a native New Yorker and turned thirteen shortly after Yoko Ono and John Lennon moved to the Big Apple together. They were a ubiquitous presence in the city during my teenage years, the first half of the 1970s—on TV, in the newspapers, and at political rallies and concerts. I never met either of them in those days but admired them from afar. I loved their albums. While John's records were globally revered, I felt like Yoko's music—as well as her art and writings—were personal communiqués. It was an illusion, but a rewarding one.

After moving to Texas for college and becoming a broadcaster and a journalist, I was finally able to snag my first interview with Yoko, in 1984. Over the next quarter century we spoke more than a dozen times: for magazines and radio programs, on the phone and at the Dakota, in studios and in a hotel room. She always illuminated our conversations with candor and patience.

Any fan of Yoko Ono's is familiar with Bob Gruen's definitive images of her, and I was no exception. After he agreed to collaborate on this project as a gift for Yoko, he sent me files of countless photographs of her, and I matched quotes from my transcripts to some of his pictures. I hope the result you are holding ultimately brings two key Yoko concepts to the fore—that she always lives life as art, and that a dream you dream together is reality.

JODY DENBERG, AUSTIN, SEPTEMBER 20



“The New York activists scene was going on. And John and I, when we came to New York, we jumped right into it. But before that, already in Ascot, we were watching a TV of Chicago Seven, that trial.”





Yoko Ono, John Lennon, Jerry Rubin, and the Plastic Ono Band onstage during the Attica benefit at the Apollo Theater, New York City, December 17, 1971.



“There are very few things that you can write about John because he said all, he wasn’t hiding anything. I think he was very eager to show his vulnerability to the world.”



Yoko Ono and John Lennon being interviewed by Henry Edwards for *After Dark* magazine at the St. Moritz Hotel, New York City, 1972.



Plastic Ono Elephant's Memory Band, (L-R) top row: Stan Bronstein, Gary Van Scyoc, Wayne "Tex" Gabriel, Jim Keltner, and Adam Ippolito. (L-R) bottom row: Rick Frank, Yoko Ono, and John Lennon during the recording of *Sometime in New York City* at the Record Plant, New York City, 1972.





(L-R) Roy Cicala, John Lennon, and Yoko Ono during the recording of *Sometime in New York City* at the Record Plant, New York City, 1972.



(L–R) John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Dick Cavett, and Shirley MacLaine on *The Dick Cavett Show*, May 1, 1972.

“John and I just met and sort of like two cars crashing, we just did it. But of course I was doing that kind of stuff before, but doing it with John was a different experience. Hear why and how he plays his guitar . . . his guitar and my voice having a dialogue. That’s something that I’d never done before.”



John Lennon, Yoko Ono, and Elephant's Memory onstage at *The Dick Cavett Show*, May 11, 1972.





“John was very astute about anything in the record world. He used to say ‘If somebody covered your song, they’re going to understand it. They’re going to know that soul is going to communicate and they’re going to know you’re a writer.’”







John Lennon and Yoko Ono during the recording of *Sometime in New York City* at the Record Plant, and during rehearsals at Butterfly Studios for the “One to One” concert, New York City, April 1972



Yoko Ono and John Lennon during rehearsals at Fillmore East for the “One to One” concert, New York City, August 1972.







Yoko Ono and John Lennon during rehearsals at Fillmore East for the “One to One” concert, New York City, August 1972.

“[John’s] a notch above every singer-songwriter in the world. Not just rockers: classic music, jazz, opera, you name it. And the way he was . . . you know, his diction is so incredible. I think that he’s the Shakespeare of our age, in that sense.”



John Lennon and Yoko Ono during rehearsals for the “One to One” concert at Madison Square Garden, New York City, August 1972.



Yoko Ono and John Lennon taking a walk along the Bank Street Pier, New York City, November 1970



“I knew [“Imagine”] was a very important song, and we were both hoping that people would understand it and it would communicate widely. But we didn’t believe it. I mean, part of us didn’t believe that it’s going to be a big song.”





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