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Review: John Lennon: Rare & Unseen

John Lennon: Rare & Unseen MVD Entertainment Group

There have been many unauthorized collections of Beatles related newsreels, TV appearances and such since the dawn of the home video age. While these videos never contain Beatle music, oftentimes the segments are a revelation to fans.

John Lennon: Rare & Unseen, the accurately titled DVD from MVD Visual, would fall into the revelatory category. As a lifelong collector of all things Beatles (on official and, well, less official, audio and video) many of these clips were a first for me.

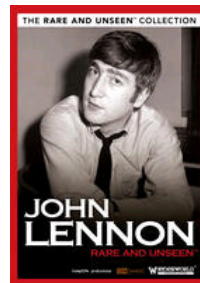
The highlight is the December, 1969 interview of John and Yoko for the BBC's *Man Of The Decade* program in which Lennon speaks candidly about religion, the peace movement and LSD. This footage, filmed at Lennon's Tittenhurst Park estate, has previously only circulated on poor quality, third and higher generation bootlegs so it was nice to finally have a clean copy of it.

There is also a smattering of fascinating interview footage of all four Beatles shot during their 1966 summer tour. They had been touring basically non-stop for two years and during that season there were a couple of incidents that led the band to decide to retire from the road. In July they were in the Philippines where they inadvertently offended Imelda Marcos when they turned down an invitation to dinner. The ensuing kerfuffle got so nasty that had to immediately leave the country. They resumed their tour in the US only to run into protests and death threats over Lennon's remark that the Beatles were "more popular than Jesus now." These interviews show the Fabs world weary and cynical, but filled with insightful wit, caustic humor and a candid matter-of-factness that would have been unheard of two short years previous.

Excellent footage from the 1969 "Bed In For Peace" shows a Lennon that was incredibly focused and energized, unlike the tired, bored and strung out Lennon as seen a few months earlier in the *Let It Be* film. Also included are all too brief interviews with former Quarrymen Colin Hanton and Beatles press officer Tony Barrow that provide intimate details of their friendship with Lennon.

All is not perfect, though. The editing is amateurish at times and the long interviews are cut into segments and

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