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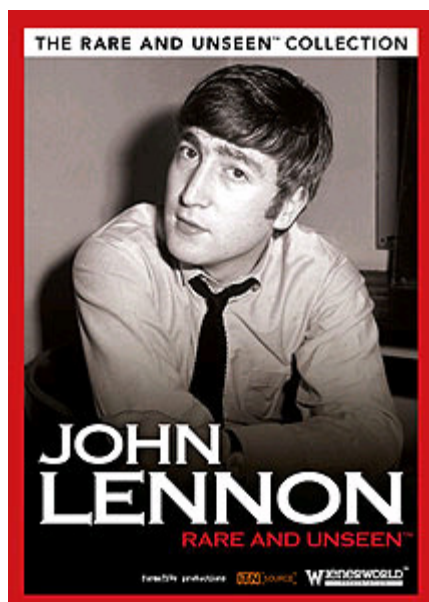
John Lennon: Rare and Unseen DVD

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By John Lane

The problem with the release of The Beatles' *Anthology* video in the late '90s is that it has spoiled Beatles fans the world over. Add to that the ever-flowing river that is YouTube, which has made curiosity-seekers even more complacent. Want to see a Beatles 1966 press conference? Bingo, with the click of a button you have your pick.

Perhaps it is the veritable abundance of organized material available to the average and dedicated fans that makes the DVD release of *John Lennon: Rare and Unseen* all the more disappointing and confusing. If I was in the eighth grade and had not yet seen the release of the *Anthology* or the birth of YouTube, then I might consider this DVD to be a kick. As it stands, maybe I'm just too jaded.



Right up front, the packaging notes that this DVD has nothing to do with the Lennon estate, Apple, or anything remotely officially Beatle-y—which means it’s a (cough) unofficial (cough, euphemism) type of product. I’m OK with that; the alternative nature of its existence doesn’t hack me off so much as it’s shlock-y assemblage.

We start with reminiscences from Phil Collins. My teeth involuntarily grit at this visage, but onward we go. As Collins goes on about the musicianship of The Beatles, we’re treated to backdrops and film clips that seem wholly disconnected.

To MVD Visual’s credit, as the DVD makes abundantly clear, there is no music or performing footage of The Beatles. Understood. Nobody wants to do prison time peeling spuds for Yoko in the basement of The Dakota. But . . .

To their disadvantage, the musical rip-off bits inserted are painfully cheesy. Chapters or sections move forward like this: a title reading “John Lennon on. . . Money,” with an arbitrary still photo of, say, a 1964-era John. Then the voice-over will be of a 1971-era John spouting off something about how they mismanaged Apple or something. THEN. . . the voice-over is egregiously punctuated by the chiming of a chord that is *supposed* to conjure up the sound of George’s twelve-string Rick opening “A Hard Day’s Night.” It gets tiring.

Elsewhere, there’s scattershot footage of The Beatles descending down airplane stairways and waving hello. . . or walking up airplane stairways and waving goodbye. . . as the sound of a song that *sounds like* (but isn’t) the backing track to “Penny Lane” is played. The effect is very Rutles-esque—but it’s like joining The Rutles and The Beatles together accidentally. I don’t know what else to compare it to, except that sometimes you can buy sushi that boasts crab spelled “krab” which means it’s not crab at all.

If there is something for the die-hards in *John Lennon: Rare And Unseen*, it’s in that one gets to see extended bits of footage from clips you’ve already seen before. So if you want about 30 seconds more of footage of John and Paul yakking on about how scared they were upon returning to England from the Philippines, and you missed seeing George or Ringo bite their lips or pick their nose, then this is the DVD for you.

John Lennon: Rare And Unseen was released by Wienerworld and MVD Visual on May 18 and is available to order from [See Of Sound](#).



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