

TRAVEL

Cleveland Rocks!

Beatles exhibits add new dimension to musical legends

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STAFF WRITER

My 3-year-old son is an absolute Beatles fanatic. He knows the Fab Four by name, he sings the lyrics to entire songs, and even recites dialogue from *A Hard Day's Night*, the band's seminal movie. I don't mind. It's better than that smarmy toddler music, and it does make for interesting — albeit embarrassing — trips to the grocery store when he's belting *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*.

So when I told him we'd be taking a trip to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum in Cleveland, he naturally didn't know what the heck I was talking about. He is, as I mentioned, only 3.

John Lennon exhibit

But when I told him there was a special exhibit about John Lennon, well then, we couldn't get there fast enough. Is the "Are we there yet?" marker being isolated by genetics yet?

This summer, the I.M. Pei-designed museum on the shores of Lake Erie actually is host to two Beatles exhibits, both well worth taking the two-and-a-half hour drive.

Lennon: His Life and Work features artifacts from the per-

If you go...

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum is located at One Key Plaza in downtown Cleveland, Ohio.

Museum hours: 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily, Wednesday evenings until 9 p.m. You should allow three to four hours to view the exhibits.

Admission: \$15 adults, \$11.50 children 9-11 and seniors, and free to children under 8. Many Cleveland hotels include free admission to the museum as part of their overnight stay package.

For more information: Call 1-888-764-ROCK.

sonal collection of Yoko Ono Lennon. Clothing, including the white tuxedo from *Magical Mystery Tour* and numerous guitars owned by the late musician's son, Julian, are among the many items in this special exhibit that extends over three floors of the six-story pyramidal structure.

With the remaining Beatles still making headline news daily — Ringo's All-Starr Tour, George's cancer and Paul's recent engagement — it seems only logical that light be shed on John's memory. It was, after all,

20 years ago that he was shot outside the Dakota in New York City.

Let it Be

The exhibit includes a movie that chronicles John's life during and after the Beatles, with narratives from Yoko, Julian and John's first wife, Cynthia.

For those who grew up with the Beatles, the information is nothing new, and the colorized version of the Shea Stadium concert is downright pandering. But for those who are new to the Beatles' mystique, it's an engaging visual history lesson.

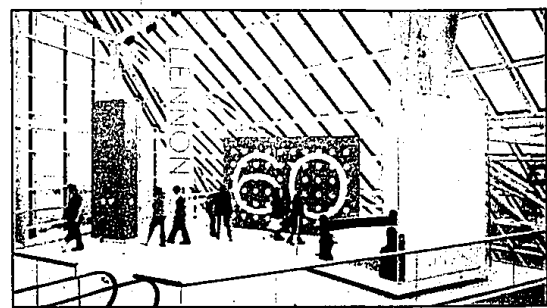
Lennon's Steinway piano, the bed from John and Yoko's famous "bed-in" and school report cards are also among the memorabilia. There's also nearly 40 original drawings, collages and paintings by Lennon, many which he drew for his son Sean.

The top floor is devoted to handwritten lyrics, which are the best example of the musician-as-artist. It's interesting to see that the lyrics to *Glass Onion* were first penned on the back of a brown envelope. Yet the room is strangely silent, making you that much more aware that lyrics are only half of what makes an extraordinary song.

It's got a Backbeat

Along with the Lennon exhibit, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame is also featuring *Stuart Sutcliffe: From the Beatles to Backbeat*. The exhibit documents the short life of Sutcliffe, a founding member of the Beatles who left the band in 1961 to pursue painting. He died in 1992 of a brain aneurysm.

In addition to photographs of the band that were taken by Sutcliffe's girlfriend Astrid Kirchherr, the exhibit contains numerous drawings, paintings and sketches by the artist. And these works serve to show that



In my life: Yoko Ono Lennon contributed many items to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in memory of what would have been John Lennon's 60th birthday.

Double Fantasy: The Lennon exhibit features photos and artifacts including the kimonos John and Yoko wore in the video from Starting Over.



what Sutcliffe lacked as a bassist, he made up for with a paintbrush.

His bold abstracts convey a sense of timelessness and brooding. And his drawings capture a range of emotions. The bombardment of other rock artifacts is strong on the lower level where this exhibit is located, but it's worth the effort to glance briefly at Bono's and Madonna's stage outfits and spend a little more time with Sutcliffe's work.

When the 160,000 square-foot Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum opened in 1995, many dismissed it as a ruse. Won't having a museum devoted to a genre that's inherently rebellious signal its spiraling descent into the mainstream?

Well, that hasn't happened. The emergence of rock 'n' roll unites the boomer generation in the same way that World War II does for its predecessor. And let's face it, visiting the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum may not be as historically significant, but it sure is a lot more fun than seeing a Civil War battlefield. Any 3-year-old can tell you that.

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