

Know that John loved and was inspired by Bermuda

- YOKO ONO

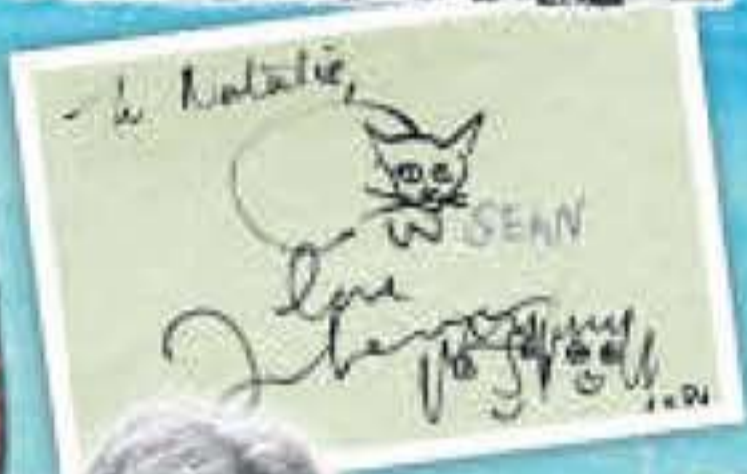
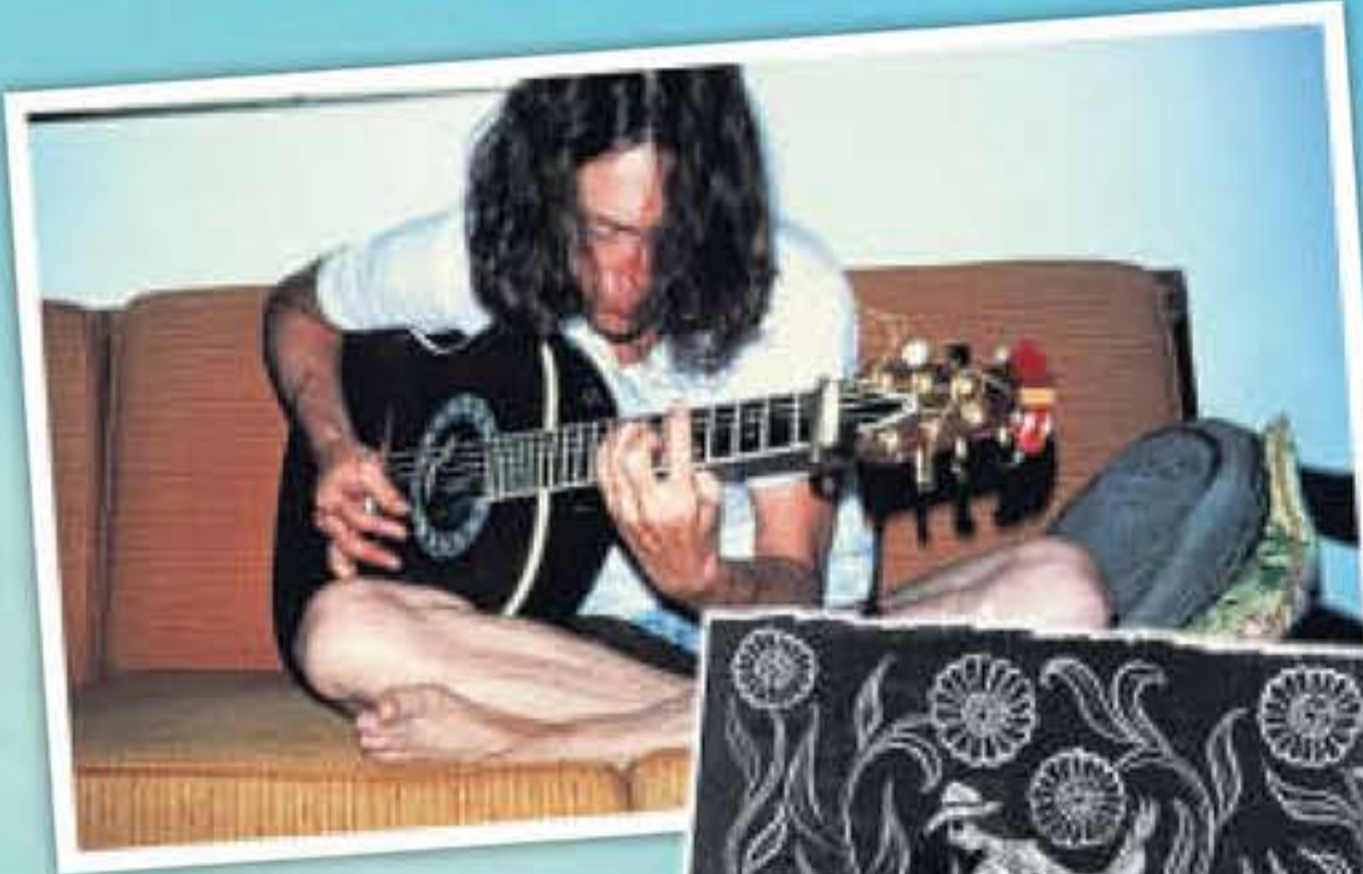
4 LENNON BERMUDA



DOUBLE FANTASY SCULPTURE DESIGN



JOHN AND SEAN IN BERMUDA, 1980



By SIMON COSYNS

IN 1980, the year he was shot dead, John Lennon embarked on a life-affirming adventure.

At 8pm on June 4, the former Beatle boarded a 43ft sloop called Megan Jaye at Newport, Rhode Island, and set sail for idyllic Bermuda.

The voyage took a week and involved a raging three-day storm but it left Lennon invigorated by the power, fury and beauty of nature.

He likened dealing with the towering waves to being lowered into New York's Shea Stadium by helicopter with The Beatles in 1965 to be greeted by 55,000 screaming fans.

Perhaps he also felt a strong connection with his merchant seaman father Alf, who had passed away four years earlier.

In any event, the storm blew itself out and Lennon arrived safely in Bermuda on June 11. One crew member recalls a "beautiful, crisp afternoon".

The star's message in the ship's log was addressed to the Megan Jaye herself: "Dear Megan, there's no place like nowhere, and thanks, Hank (a pseudonym)." Joined later by his "Beautiful Boy"

Sean, who arrived by plane, Lennon spent the best part of two months on the British colony 640 miles off the American coast.

While there, his creative juices began flowing and he wrote songs that would appear on his final album, *Double Fantasy*, including *Woman* and *Cleanup Time*. He even named the album after the exquisite *Double Fantasy* freesia which he saw in the Bermuda Botanical Gardens because he felt it perfectly described his marriage to Yoko Ono.

Another product of his creative burst was the poignant *Grow Old With Me*, which appeared on 1984's posthumous release *Milk And Honey*.

Of course, he never grew old with Yoko but this little-known episode in Lennon's 40-year-old life is being commemorated by a book, *Lennon Bermuda*, filled with intriguing firsthand accounts.

Journalist Scott Neil, who works on Bermuda's daily paper, *The Royal Gazette*, expertly pieced together the story which is beautifully illustrated by

local painter and sculptor Graham Foster.

The book tells of the stir Lennon caused as he strolled around the capital, Hamilton, and the old town of St George's despite taking the name of John Greene, how he enjoyed clubbing at *Disco 40*, taking boat trips with Sean and discovering the precious flower that meant so much to him.

It contains revealing photographs of the singer, quite a few with four-year-old Sean and one of him intently composing a song on the acoustic guitar he'd bought on the way to catching the boat in Newport.

He looks happy, healthy (despite his fondness for French Gitanes cigarettes), relaxed and at home, thoroughly enjoying his time away from the bright glare of publicity afforded by cities such as New York and London.

The book comes handsomely packaged with two CDs of John Lennon songs, Beatles and solo, reimagined by a host of artists including Bryan Ferry, Judie Tzuke, Paul Carrack and Maxi Priest.

dedicated to John, *Walking On Thin Ice*, as well as affectionate efforts by Bermudan recording artists.

Last year, Foster's stunning *Double Fantasy* sculpture, cast in a type of steel that weathers well, was unveiled at the gardens.

In her foreword to *Lennon Bermuda*, Yoko, 80, says: "I am pleased that John is being honoured."

"Knowing that he loved and was immensely inspired by Bermuda. His spirit is now a part of the beautiful botanical gardens, where I hope peace and love will grow."

Her words are set opposite John's handwritten lyrics for *Woman*, which he wrote at his rented house in the Fairlylands residential enclave.

With Yoko in New York, his words serve as a touching letter to the love of his life, signing off with the lines: "So let me tell you again and again and again, I love you now and forever."

It seems strange to think that four months after returning to his New York home, and with the *Double Fantasy* album riding high in the charts, Lennon's life less ordinary was snuffed out.

Years later, it was reported that he made this telling comment as he prepared to board his flight from Bermuda: "I guess it's time to say goodbye to paradise."

There's a remix of Yoko's hit song

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