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Von Ray Connolly

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Von Ray Connolly : The Ray Connolly Beatles Archive (English Edition) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Ray Connolly Beatles Archive (English Edition):

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Boswell of the Swinging SixtiesVon Tanja KinkelIf memoirs and biographies are written with the benefit of hindsight and quite often with one particular, unifying agenda (scores to settle, or defenses to make), letters and diaries are the perfect counterpoint in terms of research because they can't offer big pictures, they offer glimpses of the here and now, and the agenda in them keeps changing. And then, as of the 20th century, there are interviews. And articles based on

same. They, too, can be great and insightful material (as long as you keep the whole part in mind where even a seemingly straightforward interview with no interjecting descriptions is already edited by the journalist and their editor, according to what he or she deems important, and of course whoever is giving the interview has their own reasons for doing so and usually something to sell. In the Beatles' saga, some journalists and their writings are more prominent than others. Maureen Cleave for the January 1966 interview with John Lennon containing the "more popular than Jesus" quote that started the furore which was to end the band's touring days; Jann Wenner for the 1970 Lennon Remembers published in Rolling Stone which Wenner still insists on seeing as the definite John Lennon, and which certainly defined how the rock press and much of the public saw John Lennon (and the other Beatles) for years to come, never mind how much of it was contradicted by other interviews. And then there's Ray Connolly, who became one of the journalists with direct access to the band ca. 1967, was particularly close to John in 69/70/71, somehow miraculously managed to be on friendly terms with Paul through the breakup period as well (I don't think any other press members pulled off that one, they all took sides for one or the other), wrote the script for one of Ringo's most successful film appearances (That'll be the day), and was and is friends with Paul McCartney's younger brother Mike throughout the decades. Based on the collection of his Beatles related articles, which is now collected as an e-book, he strikes me as the anti Jann Wenner in many ways. Not least for his insistence on the equality of talent between the two main Beatles songwriters (Rolling Stone and Wenner follow the "John's the one true genius!" party line to this day), but also for the way he keeps between the two extremes of Lennon presentation, rejecting both the sainted apostle of peace/persecuted artist image and the vicious non stop angry thug (most recently spotted in Lennon Naked). His reported John keeps having wit and charm and generosity along with the capacity for cruelty and self absorption (and thus makes it understandable for readers what people saw in him beyond the amazing talent). His collection of Beatles articles also contains some great Ringo interviews (starting with some made directly after India, as Ringo returned long before the rest of the gang did, and had time at his hands), and he's good with the one article portraits as well, whether it's of producer George Martin, Mal Evans (one of the two Beatles roadies; as opposed to the other one, Neil Aspinall, who went on to become the head of Apple, Mal had a tragic fate), Allen Klein, Pete Best or Cynthia Lennon. His reporting and image of Yoko varies; he was one of the first journalists to interview her at length (one interview from 1968 is included) and his descriptions of her and John in early articles are positive (and he was trusted enough by the very distrustful Ono-Lennons to be given the task of taking care of her younger sister Setzuko when she visited New York, but as the years go by he becomes steadily more critical. The Beatle he had least access to and consequently least writes about is George, and consequently while there are articles about the Bangladesh concert and an obituary, there is no George interview. ("In fact, though we knew each other, George and I never hit it off. Perhaps he thought I was too close to John and Paul, or should have shown more interest at a meeting one morning with a few other journalists at which he'd talked about his spiritual journey into Indian mysticism. Or was it simply that he was distrustful of most journalists?" writes Connolly in one of the explanatory texts he intersperses between articles.) Speaking of obituaries, the other two are for John and for Linda McCartney, both very touching, but you can tell he saw more of either than of George. The collection starts with a Paul interview which was an attempt at damage control after Magical Mystery Tour flopped spectacularly and ends with a George Martin interview apropos last year's documentary about GM, with an epilogue that is, simply put, absolutely charming fiction: Ray Connolly imagines what would have happened to the four Beatles if Beatlemania had not happened and the band had dissolved in 1963 instead. It's written with much humour and affection for all parties concerned, and ends with a bit of shameless and endearing happy ever aftering. Regarding the interviews, articles and explanatory notes in between: I was familiar with some that used to be online, and also with some quotes because biographers used them later, but sometimes reading the entire article instead of simply the one quote picked out by biographers gives a different context, and/or enriches the old one. Take for example one Paul quote that shows up in many a biography (and showcases the McCartney propensity for using the plural in certain situations): "John's in love with Yoko, and he's no longer in love with the three of us." The article this quote hails from is from an interview directly after the news about the Beatles break-up had gone public, another attempt at self explanation, and the longer passage it's from is as revealing as the single statement cherry picked by biographers: "I didn't leave the Beatles. The Beatles have left the Beatles, but no one wants to be the one to say that the party's over. Last year John said he wanted a divorce. All right, so do I. I want to give him that divorce. I hate this trial separation because it's just not working. John's in love with Yoko, and he's no longer in love with the three of us." And just when one thinks, again, about Paul being disingenious with the "three of us" phrase, there is, a few paragraphs later, the amazingly direct: "I was jealous because of Yoko, and afraid about the break-up of a great musical partnership." Also, while several of the direct quotes made it into the biographies, Connolly's descriptions from the original articles didn't, and that's a shame, because they allow you to imagine everyone concerned, as in this 1970 article about John and Yoko: "Yoko smiles, amused at all this, as though humouring a teenage boy. Contrary to popular belief, they are, in fact, rarely that serious with each other. Rather it's the reverse as John chides Yoko, poking fun at her and enjoying a teasing relationship. "It was Yoko that changed me," he scoffs. "She forced me to become avant garde and take my clothes off when all I wanted was to become Tom Jones. And now look at me. Did you know that avant garde is French for bullshit?" Yoko, for her part plays bashfully along, ignoring his swipes at her

upper-class and artistic background. "At fifteen I wanted to be a fantastic opera singer and go to La Scala," she suddenly says. "My range was very wide and I would have liked to have been a coloratura soprano." "She also wanted to be a nightclub singer," John jibes back. "Well, yes, that was a secret ambition. Also, I wanted to become an actress." Does Connolly have blind spots? Absolutely. There is one passage from an description of the 1971 party for Yoko's big exhibition and John's 31st birthday party which made me furious and scream "rape culture". But generally, he gives you the impression of writing with sympathy but without apologia or attempting to present his subjects as always being in the right. (Case in point: he sees the ending of the Paul/Jane Asher relationship as mostly Paul's fault. He also seems to have been the only journalist to whom the amazingly discreet Jane, to this day stonewalling any inquiries about their five years relationship, said something about said relationship after it ended, to wit: "Jane (...) told me how naive she'd been so far as other girls were concerned. But there were other problems. She was also unhappy about drugs, which were as common among rock stars then as they are now, and definitely not thrilled by Paul's friendship with some of the Rolling Stones." The Rolling Stones bit is news to me. Must be a reference to either Mick Jagger or Brian Jones, since he didn't befriend Keith Richards until decades later.) All in all, a very recommendable collection: not as a replacement for a biography (it does expect you to have at least a rough outline in your head to how the whole Beatles thing went down, explanatory footnotes notwithstanding), but a good addition, and a source from an eye witness as opposed to speculation after the fact. If Connolly isn't quite the Boswell or Pepys of the Swinging Sixties and Dangerous Seventies, he comes close.

Kurzbeschreibung Most books about the Beatles are by writers who never met them. Ray Connolly was lucky. He was a journalist and he knew all of them, John Lennon confiding in him that he'd left the Beatles four months before it became public knowledge; and later Paul McCartney asking him for an interview so that he could explain his side of the break-up. Before that, Connolly went to Beatles recording sessions at the Abbey Road studios, knew the Beatles' wives, visited the homes of three of them, and was a frequent visitor to the Beatles' Apple London base. In the front row at George Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh in Madison Square Gardens, he also followed the Magical Mystery Tour around England's West Country, and when John Lennon decided to send his MBE back to the Queen it was Ray Connolly he phoned to break the news. Later, when John Lennon lived in New York, there would be letters from him, while Ringo had the second lead in the movie *That'll Be the Day* which Ray Connolly wrote. This isn't a biography of the Beatles. Nor is it a dissertation on their music or an analysis of their lyrics. It is Ray Connolly's story of the Beatles, a selection of some of his many interviews with them and others connected with them, as well as articles, reviews, news stories and reflections that he's published over the past forty five years in various British national newspapers as well as several pieces being published here for the first time. Home, culture and Lady Madonna - Paul; Ringo back from meditating - It was just like Butlins; The Magical Mystery Tour - Maybe we goofed, says Paul; Sometimes I go to John's house and play with his toys and sometimes he comes and plays with mine - Ringo; The Apple boutique from take-away to give-away; The enigmatic Yoko; Paul talking about the White Album; Great and turbulent times at Apple; If George leaves, he leaves said John, during the unhappy filming of *Let It Be*; On the roof - the last gig; Paul marries Linda and John marries Yoko; The Ballad of John and Yoko; There are various ways of doing business and there's Allen Klein's way. Elvis, Dylan, John Lennon and me; Paul talks about the Abbey Road album; Paul is dead and John's MBE goes back to the Queen; I've left the Beatles said John; A weekend in Canada with the Lennons; You're the journalist, not me said John; Paul on Why the Beatles broke up; John and 'the Ignoble Alf'; John talking about his songs; John performing flea or crutch for the world's social lepers?; George and the Concert for Bangladesh; 'Imagine that's the B-side', said John; John and Yoko's early days in New York; Michael X and John; 'No more four gods on stage, says John; Ringo in the movie *That'll Be the Day*; Paul on how he turned down John's invitation for them to play together again; John's Lost Weekend; Paul and his favourite songs; Paul the Japanese Jailbird; Unimaginable - December, 1980; Mark Chapman and what turns a fan into a killer; The story of Working Class Hero - the Beatles movie that never was; Twenty years after Sergeant Pepper - hit and myth? Paul talks about the Beatles Anthology; Linda McCartney 1941-1998; The story of Paul and Linda; That's the youngest tramp I've ever seen, when George first went to the Cavern; Paul back at the Cavern; George is stabbed; John, the FBI and MI5; Hospitals, gangs, drums and Ringo; Has Yoko whitewashed John's image? George the reluctant Beatle 1943-2001; Paul in Las Vegas; Liverpool Dr Winston O'Boogie Airport; Mal Evans - the gentle giant; That was so cruel, inhuman - Cynthia Lennon; Pete Best the man with a knife in his back; My lost Beatle interviews; A degree in Beatleology; Save Abbey Road; Lennon the Unfunny - never; Produced by George Martin. Kurzbeschreibung Most books about the Beatles are by writers who never met them. Ray Connolly was lucky. He was a journalist and he knew all of them, John Lennon confiding in him that he'd left the Beatles four months before it became public knowledge; and later Paul McCartney asking him for an interview so that he could explain his side of the break-up. Before that, Connolly went to Beatles recording sessions at the Abbey Road studios, knew the Beatles' wives, visited the homes of three of them, and was a frequent visitor to the Beatles' Apple London base. In the front row at George Harrison's Concert for Bangladesh in

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