

In 1967 the Beatles were at the top of the world.

John Lennon was at the bottom of his.

Lennon Naked

On MASTERPIECE CONTEMPORARY

Sunday, November 21, 2010 at 9pm ET on PBS

The fabled, turbulent career of John Lennon comes to life in a highly-praised performance by Christopher Eccleston (*Doctor Who*), portraying the tormented superstar from the height of his Beatle fame to his romance with Yoko Ono and the breakup of the band, on *Lennon Naked*, airing on MASTERPIECE CONTEMPORARY, Sunday, November 21 at 9pm ET on PBS (check local listings).

The 90-minute drama recreates key scenes in Lennon's life from 1964 to 1971, with flashbacks to a turning point in his childhood when his separated parents forced him to choose between them. In a moment of indecision, he tragically got neither.

During its UK broadcast, the *Daily Telegraph* applauded *Lennon Naked* as "the most ambitious Lennon drama to date," extolling Eccleston for his "sheer brio" in channeling "a tragic anti-hero more complicated than Hamlet." The Beatles' hometown *Liverpool Daily Echo* praised the film as "frivolous, funny, passionate, and emotionally powerful—just like the man himself." And the *Sunday Express* hailed Eccleston for his "convincing and nuanced performance of the late, great Beatle."

Commemorating the 30th anniversary of Lennon's death, and the year that he would have turned 70, the film is followed on PBS by an *American Masters* special, *LENNONYC*, airing Monday, November 22 at 9pm ET.

Taking John and Yoko to the eve of their self-imposed expatriation to New York in 1971, *Lennon Naked* costars Naoko Mori (*Torchwood*) as Yoko and Christopher Fairbank (*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*) as Freddie Lennon, John's absentee dad, who abandoned his young son and then showed up 17 years later in a tabloid-inspired reunion that developed into a relationship—of sorts.

Also appearing are Andrew Scott (*Foyle's War*) as Paul McCartney, Claudie Blakely (*Return to Cranford*) as John's first wife, Cynthia, and Rory Kinnear (*Quantum of Solace*) as Brian Epstein, the Beatles' legendary manager whose death from a drug overdose in 1967 left the band, and especially John, emotionally adrift.

Allan Corduner (*Topsy-Turvy*) plays Art Janov, the primal scream therapist who helped John confront his childhood trauma. Other episodes that feature in *Lennon Naked* include John's fitful encounters with his surprisingly likable father; his arguments with Paul; the financial turmoil at the Beatles' troubled record label, Apple; the collapse of Lennon's marriage with Cynthia and his abandonment of their son, Julian; John's return of the MBE award from the Queen; and his and Yoko's hostile reception in England, which eventually drove them into exile.

Throughout, John reacts with a quick wit that is cool, funny, cruel, and incredibly self-revealing.

The film's title refers to the notorious album cover, *Two Virgins*, which shows John and Yoko without a stitch. But it also alludes to Lennon's renown as an artist who never held anything back—in his life or music—baring his soul with an abandon that bordered on the self-destructive.

* * *

Lennon Naked is a Blast! Films Ltd production, presented on PBS by MASTERPIECE. The writer is Robert Jones (*The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency*). The director is Edmund Coulthard. The producers are Edmund Coulthard and Katharine Lannon. The executive producer is Kate Evans. MASTERPIECE is presented on PBS by WGBH Boston. Rebecca Eaton is executive producer. Funding for the series is provided by public television viewers.

pbs.org/masterpiece

Online press materials available at **pbs.org/pressroom** and **pressroom.wgbh.org**

WGBH Press Contacts

Ellen Dockser, ellen_dockser@wgbh.org, 617-300-5338

Olivia Wong, olivia_wong@wgbh.org, 617-300-5349

