

Imagine there's no Goldman; Lennon as he lived

★ ★ ★ 1\2 Imagine: John Lennon
Center

It is estimated that John Lennon is the most-filmed individual in history. *Imagine: John Lennon* takes advantage of that fact to string together archival footage — along with newly released material from Yoko Ono — to create a fascinating tribute to the most outspoken member of the Beatles.

The Fab Four were an exhaustively documented pop cultural phenomenon. After the band's breakup, John continued to court the media as resolutely as before.

He even went so far as to bring a film crew into his home and record entire weeks of his life, including everything from John cavorting with his son Sean

to a ten minute film of an official Beatle erection (not included in the movie).

However, all this documentation poses a problem to someone coming late to the Beatle biography game. Literally dozens of books and thousands of interviews have already been published. Even the most casual fan knows countless intimate details about the band's rise and rise.

But *Imagine* uses the new material — which Yoko released unconditionally — to come at its subject from yet another angle: that of the artist whose public antics were as much a part of his creative output as the music he recorded.

The film is structured around footage taken during the recording of the album *Imagine* — an extremely well-

documented period in John's life, even by the Beatle's standards — and skips around the many facets of his group and solo career.

It doesn't shy away from examining his drug and marriage problems, but the tone is certainly respectful. John is shown as occasionally arrogant and rude, but above all as a funny, intelligent person making the best of his strange circumstances.

This is not the definitive biography of Lennon. The printed page is better suited to that task and Albert Goldman's shoddy new release hardly fits the bill. Instead, it is an amusing and different look at the public life of a man who rarely had a private one.

By Michael Giltz



Poet, activist, composer, musician, husband and father . . . John Lennon