



John and Yoko at the Grammys in 1975, flanked by David Bowie and Roberta Flack

American Graffiti to Showaddywaddy, the first 'revival' period-that of early rock'n'roll -had begun. Phil Spector would produce, while Dr John, Leon Russell, Steve Cropper and Jim Kelmer were among those along for the musical ride.

Unfortunately, the party carried on into the recording studio, with Courvoisier poured abundantly down the necks of the gathered musicians, as well as all over the control board in an incident that hastened the ejection of the Wrecking Crew from the studios by A&M. As the sessions moved on to LA's Record Plant, Lennon's behaviour improved but Spector's worsened- at one point, in a fit of tyrannical pique in the studio, he fired a gun into the air.

Eventually, the better part of Lennon, the pragmatic survivalist who'd always made sure he never got bogged down in his own excesses, reasserted itself.

absconded with the *Rock'n'Roll* tapes, but they were retrieved by Capitol and played back to Lennon, who was somewhat mortified when he soberly listened to the drunken nonsense that had been committed to tape. He was starting work on his next album, *Walls And Bridges*, but determined first to salvage something from the wreckage of the *Rock'N'Roll* sessions. He rescued a handful of tracks from the original LP and recorded the remainder in a matter of a few days, eventually releasing the *Rock'n'Roll* album in 1975.

BACK ON NEW YORK'S East Side, Lennon began work on the October '74 release, *WallsAnd Bridges*, an album he later disowned, perhaps depressed and embarrassed by the period in his life that inspired it. Yet it's among his better late

albums, an improvement at the very least on the plodding ennui of *Mind Games*. "Whatever Gets You Through The Night" is the album's standout, a duet with glam man of the moment Elton John. Vivacious and infectious, dominated by the unholy blast of Bobby Keyes' sax, it's been taken as a sort of golden pop memorial to his roistering days in LA. Lennon never had much enthusiasm for it. But it did have the effect of reuniting him with Yoko - not that they'd ever been completely estranged, and had been in constant telephone communication even

during the lowest dregs of his Lost Weekend. Lennon had agreed to perform with Elton on stage if "Whatever Gets You Through The Night" reached No 1 in America, assuming it had no chance of doing any such thing. To Lennon's surprise, it did, and he honoured his side of the bargain at what would be his last ever stage appearance, at Madison Square Garden on

November 28, 1974. Yoko was backstage and she finally agreed to take him back, assured that his

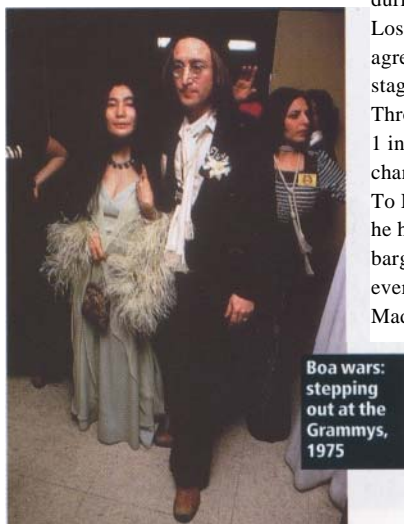
"Fame" constituted the final, leading-edge moment of his pop-rock career, a diamond-hard paean to the futility of celebrity

promises to behave himself would hold good.

"Our separation was a failure," Lennon announced to the world. The same year found Lennon collaborating with another rock superstar. Along with Carlos Alomar, around whose funky riff the track was built, Lennon was co-credited on David Bowie's "Fame"; also a US No 1. It constituted the final, leading-edge moment of Lennon's pop and rock career, a diamond-hard paean to the rewarding yet futile condition of celebrity. With the Supreme Court finally overturning Lennon's deportation order in October and, the same month, Yoko giving birth to Sean Taro Ono, Lennon's only child with Yoko, Lennon decided to walk away from fame and enter a period of ostensible domestic stability.

WHAT LENNON HIMSELF later caricatured as The "bread-baking" years should have been a time of immense joy and personal satisfaction. His battles were mostly behind him. The Beatles had been formally wound up in 1975. He had severed links with Allen Klein. He'd made his peace, albeit by telephone, with his errant father Freddie, shortly before the latter's death in 1976.

In July of that year, his application for a Green Card was approved, with celebrities like Norman Mailer acting as character witnesses at a hearing, »



Boa wars: stepping out at the Grammys, 1975