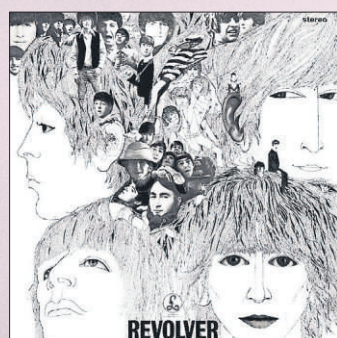




John Lennon and Yoko Ono, above, the cover to Revolver and below: Klaus Voormann



He would continue to work with Lennon in 1971 on the Imagine album. While the media and public had struggled with the blunt nature of Lennon's debut, they would be somewhat appeased with the more commercial-sounding Imagine.

"It had to be a hit. I knew this was going to be an important and successful song," says Voormann of the album's title track. "It's so direct. It was so simple and I loved the way he was able to use words and the way he was able to say so much. Every word helps and gives you hope."

While Lennon was happy to draw a line on his musical past, it didn't stop others trying to get his old band back together. Voormann remembers visiting Lennon in his New York apartment during a five-year break from the industry.

"I was with John in his apartment when Leonard Bernstein called, who also lived in the Dakota building. He wanted John to get The Beatles back together for a Unicef and United Nations concert.

"John told him off and really wasn't very nice about it. He said: 'I'm not getting The Beatles back together'. He was happy not to be in the limelight."

Voormann has remained in touch with Paul McCartney and Starr – both appeared on his solo debut in 2009, A Sideman's Journey.

He says: "Lately I visited Ringo and nothing has changed. He's the same person. He's had some hard times with cocaine and all that crap. I went out the picture during that, there was too much of this and that but he came back from it and doesn't drink now either. He eats well, the same as Paul.

"When we are together, it is great. When Paul plays a concert close by in Germany he looks after me and Ringo does the same."

John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band – The Ultimate Collection is out now

'Choir keeps my brain active'

ADRIENNE Girvan, who sings second alto, has been a teacher of business studies and economics, a University of Glasgow administrator, and a legal secretary in her working life. Music has been part of that life since school, and she took a Diploma in Music at the Open University. She is a long-time Doctor Who fan and joined Bearsden Choir four years ago.

How did you begin singing, and become involved in Bearsden Choir?

"At school we rehearsed a very varied repertoire to a very high standard, and I also learned to play piano and flute. Choral music has been a major part of my post-school life as a member of Strathclyde and Glasgow University Choral Societies. 'Come and Sing' charity events conducted by Christopher Bell, Bob Chilcott and John Rutter have all been enjoyable learning experiences.

"In March 2017, I signed up at a meticulously-organised recruitment drive for Bearsden's performance of the Verdi Requiem. I was given a very warm welcome from my fellow second altos and from the director Andrew Nunn, and a thorough two-and-a-half hour singing workout easily convinced me that I'd found a new choral home.

"Rehearsals are hardworking but great fun. Andrew's preparation is second-to-none, with his meticulous spreadsheets. He remembers quirky details about everyone with which he peppers rehearsals to hilarious (never cruel) effect. Each week concludes with the whole choir singing through an uplifting choice of chorus, sending us home with a spring in our steps. And that feeling has continued over the last 12 months, when rehearsals have been by Zoom."

What has being in the choir meant to you during the pandemic?

"Wednesday evenings are an absolute lifeline for our choir community – marking out the weeks, discreetly keeping an eye on people, and keeping the brain



active – so it was absolutely devastating when lockdown struck in March 2020. When rehearsals resumed via Zoom in April there was a palpable sense of relief.

"After a short summer break, rehearsals became more significant for me. I sustained a complicated right wrist fracture in mid-September, and struggled with day-to-day living, so participating from home was ideal for me, particularly in winter.

"However, recording the first of two Elijah tracks in late 2020 for our 'virtual choir' presented logistical challenges that I wasn't sure I could overcome. But the support and encouragement of our chairman John Wotton (after I called him to withdraw from the project) was the jolt I needed. I submitted my recording on time."

What has been your highlight of singing with Bearsden Choir?

"This session's aptly-named 'Inspire Sessions' have seen Andrew gently tease all sorts of nuggets of wisdom, experience and moments of sheer hilarity from the musicians he has interviewed. John Rutter was such a joy to listen to, entertaining and engaging, and very gracious in his response when we sang him 'Happy Birthday' (unmuted, and not very tunelessly!)"

"I've found recording Vivaldi during the lighter nights a real challenge, working around the sound of seagulls outside and nearby church bells. Despite our wonderful tutorials, I'm still apt to bump a music stand, press 'photo' instead of 'video' on my phone, or accidentally delete my best recording. I'm so looking forward to finally engaging again in real live music."

The Bearsden Choir's "virtual choir" performance of Vivaldi's Gloria will be free-to-view online at 4pm on Sunday May 30. www.bearsdenchoir.com

