

Fly
Yoko Ono

First appearance in trade magazines: September 18, 1971

Reviews: October 16, 1971

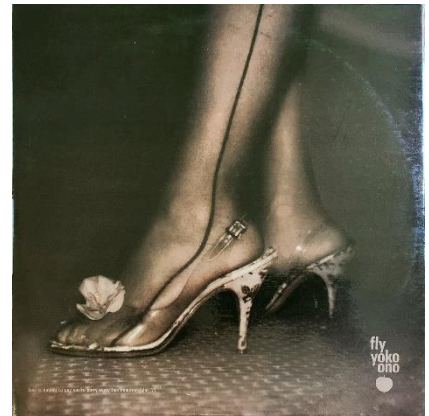
Label a71

Apple

SVBB-3380

Custom Apple label with Yoko's face

"Mfd. by Apple Records, Inc." appears on both sides.



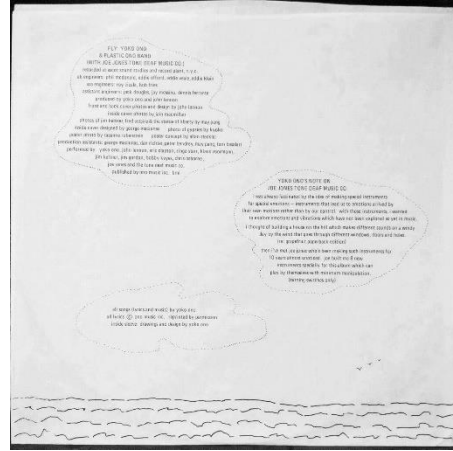
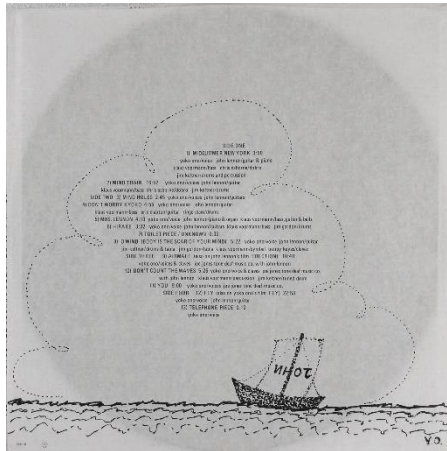
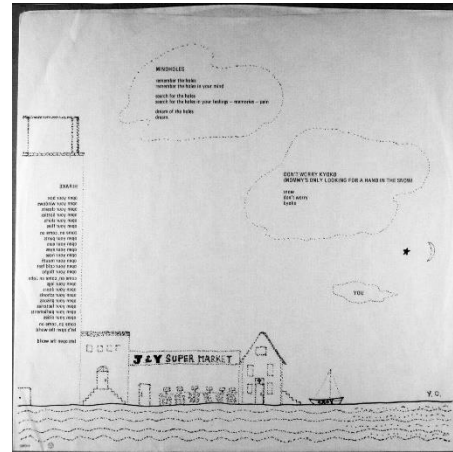
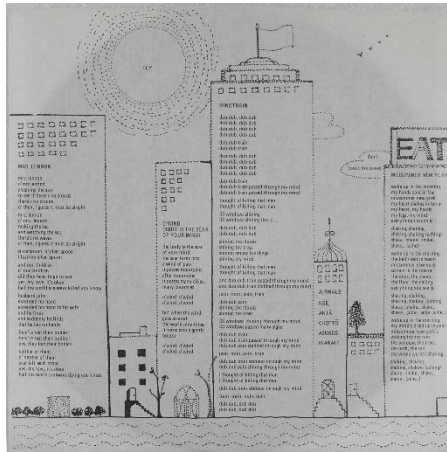
Factories: Los Angeles, Jacksonville, Winchester

The discs are paired so that side 1 is backed with side 2, and side 3 is backed with side 4.



Inner Sleeves:

Yoko drew the inner sleeves, which were decorated with poetry. Possibly due to its controversy, the poem corresponding to “Hirake” appears backwards.

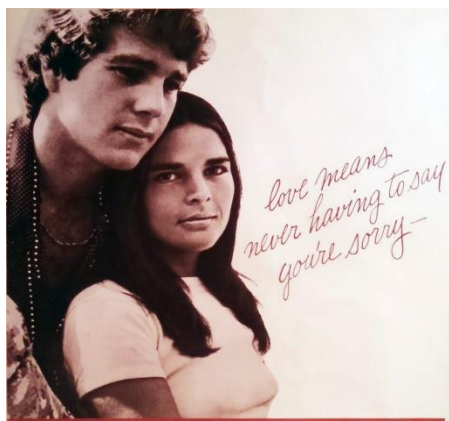


Cover:

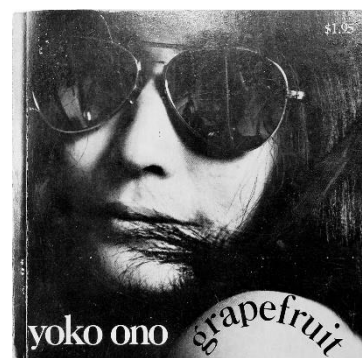
The outer cover is laminated. The front-cover shot of Yoko’s face partially obscured by glass divides the space in such a way that the focus naturally directs toward her face. For the back cover, Yoko dressed up in a very “feminine” outfit. Although there were several photos, for the back cover she selected a tight shot of her feet in high-heeled shoes.

The quote from John Lennon reads, “Love is having to say you’re sorry every five minutes.” This was a parody of the catch-phrase from the movie adaptation of *Love Story*, the Erich Segal novel.





By fall 1971, the saying was ubiquitous. John's parody makes *Fly* a part of John's and Yoko's (more realistic?) love story.



Poster:

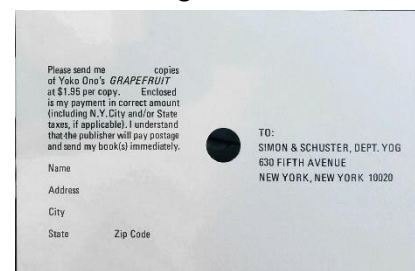
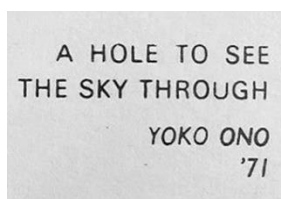
Raeanne Rubenstein's black-and-white photo of Yoko, adorned with other images in her sunglasses, is an alternate shot of the cover to the American paperback edition of Yoko's book, *Grapefruit*. It is clear that the alternate used for the poster shows us more of Yoko's face. Other shots from the session show us even more. The *Fly* photograph draws our attention more to the images on her sunglasses – as the artist intended. The cover to the outer box for the eight-track tape set uses a portion of this photograph, but it adds a fly to Yoko's face.



Note: On the poster that accompanies the British LP, the word "Photo" is closer to the author's name than it appears on the American poster.

Post Card:

Just as John's *Imagine* album came with a poster and a postcard, this album parallels those contents by coming with a postcard. This card serves a dual function. First, it serves as an ordering card for the paperback edition of *Grapefruit*. Additionally, the hole in the card allows for it to serve as an example of the sort of exploratory exercises that the potential reader would find in her book.



On the album itself are “Mrs. Lennon” and “Midsummer New York,” the two sides of the accompanying single. “Hirake” is accompanied by a somewhat different poem, focusing more on the concept of opening than on what is being opened. “Let’s open the world” (from the song and the notes) says it all. “Don’t Worry Kyoko” is the same sentiment from her side of the “Cold Turkey” single.

The title track is the theme to her film, which has the same name as this album. The movie famously depicts a fly walking across the nude body of model Virginia Lust. The model becomes the symbol of objectified womanhood – a woman lying on her back passively taking whatever happens to her. The film was a hit at the Cannes festival.

“Air Male” and “You” were theme songs to John’s art film, *Erection* – a time-lapse movie about the construction of the London International Hotel. He told Dick Cavett on September 11, 1971: “...you sort of notice if you go away and come back, suddenly there’s a big building there ... and I had this idea to show the whole [construction] of the film, growing.” Iain MacMillan’s photographic work took eighteen months to carry out. As he put it, “The hotel just grows up in front of you.”

“Telephone Piece” and “Toilet Piece/Unknown” are fun bits that one is unlikely to find on most records. On closer inspection, they depict aspects of everyday life that one is unlikely to find on a record.

HIRAKE

open your box
open your windows
open your closets
open your bottles
open your skirts
open your flies
come on, come on
open your pants
open your ears
open your eyes
open your nose
open your mouth
open your cold feet
open your thighs
come on, come on John
open your legs
open your doors
open your schools
open your prisons
open your factories
open your parliaments
open your cities
come on, come on
let’s open the world
lets open the world

Yoko Lennon’s latest film has a cast of 200—flies

Yoko Ono Lennon, wife of John the Beatle, is an artist, singer and film maker of some note. In the ‘60s she staged mixed-media “events,” hung blank canvases for gallery visitors to decorate and made underground films—among them *Bottoms*, a nude study in which the subjects turn their backs on the camera, and *Smile*, which is 90 minutes of John just smiling. Now she has finished *Fly*, a 19-minute film that traces the steps of a common housefly as it walks the length and breadth of a nude young woman. After a showing at the Cannes film festival this

year it drew a standing ovation.

Fly was filmed in a New York loft in two days, but from start to finish it was no easy matter. First, a cast had to be assembled. Yoko and codirector John realized they would need several flies to play the lead role, and a man was dispatched to find some, at 25¢ a head. He visited the kitchens of a local cafeteria chain and brought back 200. Next, auditions were held for the role of the body. Nineteen girls applied, but all, it turned out, were ticklish. Happily, the 20th applicant, a tall, pretty, auburn-haired girl named Virginia Lust, was un-

flinchingly serene. The role was hers.

But, quiet as she was, flies seemed to shun her. Most would touch down for only a second or two before flying off, perhaps made anxious by the bright lights and confusion. Yoko solved this by putting a few flies in a covered paper cup and filling the cup with carbon-dioxide gas. Thus drugged, a fly

could last on Miss Lust for as long as two minutes, while a telescopic lens followed his every footstep.

The film is actually a composite of the antics of dozens of different flies, almost all of which expired after their performances. *Fly*’s soundtrack consists of a persistent hum and a twanging noise, with Yoko providing the hum, a varied-pitched style she learned in Japan. The twang is provided by John’s strummings on a guitar, played backwards on a tape recorder.

Yoko says *Fly* is a female liberation story, perhaps even a tale of human liberation. “Everyone is that female,” she says, “just lying down, just taking it. We don’t live life, we just take it.”

ELSIE WASHINGTON



Yoko and John Lennon



FLY—Yoko Ono—Apple 3380

Double set represents Yoko Ono’s most serious effort to date of using the record medium to convey her unusual impressions. Obviously, this sort of thing isn’t going to be to everyone’s liking. Novices are advised to check out “Midsummer New York” and “Mrs. Lennon.” If you’re a confirmed Yokophile, try the twenty two minute tit’e piece on. Those willing to venture beyond the perimeters of the ordinary to splash in a sound bath will find their way to this album.

FLY

YOKO ONO/PLASTIC ONO BAND.—Apple SYBB 3380.

Some will say less is more; some won’t be buying that philosophy. Some will say she’s ahead of her time; some won’t go along. Some will find it a reflection of a life in pain; some will call it unintentional comedy. In other words, another controversial album for Mrs. Lennon.



The album was received well enough that it hovered under the Top 200 LPs for a few weeks before dropping off.

The trade ads in September depict the same modified poster image that appears on the eight-track tape. Furthermore, they advertise the impending appearance of this album as a quad eight-track tape. Although the album was never issued in quad, it would have been a parallel release to John's *Imagine* album, which was released in quad at the same time. It would be an interesting experience to hear *Fly* in quad.

On six previous albums, Yoko Ono's screeching, stammering, whispering, and moaning, either alone or in concert with her husband, have failed to win friends and influence people. Her albums consist of a series of improvised "vocal experiments," and these experiments undoubtedly make her the strangest phenomenon on the current pop scene. The self-declared, avant-garde artist has provided a clue to their purpose by stating that she is attempting to record the "music of her mind." The records are also meant to demonstrate how easy it is to make a recording of one's own private music, hopefully inspiring others to do the same. I don't know whether "Fly" will send you rushing off to the recording studio to make your first solo L.P., but it is Miss Ono's most successful and interesting performance to date.

Of course, in the name of art, phones still ring and toilets flush, but the album does contain some helpful guideposts. For example, some of the selections utilize almost conventional lyrics, and one of them. *Midsummer New York* is a truly harrowing evocation of the terrors of waking up in New York when your "mind's dried up with pain." Ono enthusiasts will also be delighted to know that the album contains the twenty-three-minute sound track of her film, *Fly*, in which Ono's voice becomes the magnified sound of a house fly methodically exploring the body of a nude woman. Included also are *Airmale*, a Varèse-like jam for eight mechanical instruments set in self-propelled musical motion by the flick of a switch, and the banned single, *Open Your Box*, now part of a larger piece, *O'Wind (Body Is the Scar of Your Mind)*.

The Ono-Lennon marriage brings together one of the most extraordinary representatives of popular culture in the history of the world, and one of the world's most vociferous advocates of a traditionally unpopular form of cultural expression. The results are sometimes puzzling and sometimes frustrating, but almost always provocative.

YOKO ONO: Fly. Yoko Ono, vocals; Plastic Ono Band (with Joe Jones Tone Deaf Music Co.), rhythm accompaniment. *Midsummer New York*; *Mind Train*; *Mind Holes*; *Don't Worry Kyoko*; *Mrs. Lennon*; eight more. Apple SVBB 3380, \$4.98. Tape: ● 8XFF, \$6.98; ●● 4XFF, \$6.98.

