

To follow, a piece written by icon photographer Edward Levinson for a special Japanese book-magazine ("mook"), *John Lennon; His Life And Music*, Kawade Publishing, 2010:

"Imagine All The People Meeting John Lennon" (John is still here)

By Edward Levinson

I was spending a few days in New York one winter photographing spiritual icons for a personal project using a special pinhole camera. The John Lennon "Imagine" Memorial in Central Park was at the top of the list of subjects. It was a sunny day but frigid morning as I entered Central Park at 59th street and began my pilgrimage, quietly walking amongst the trees toward 72nd Street. The big, naked deciduous trees looked like people with outstretched arms. They all radiated power. The phrase "Imagine all the people" kept running through my head.

Most of the photos in this icon series had some kind of statue or figure in the image. But in Central Park there is no head of Lennon, just one word sitting on the ground waiting for people to "pick it up" and do something with it. I had been there several times before and I wondered how I would feel when I got there this time. What kind of photo could I make using the one word, "Imagine"? It is an idea so simple that anyone can say it and believe it. But it was John Lennon who took it to another level and made it something to strive for. I walked on with "imagine all the people" as my mantra.

I approached the Imagine Memorial and surprisingly found a big crowd. It was the end of the Christmas Holiday week and about 60 people, mostly tourists, were gathered round offering flowers, hugging, humming, and talking in a mix of languages. The different small groups with people of all ages, including children, seemed to easily blend into one family. The scene fit the photo idea I had been imagining: John's message in the center, surrounded by the power of the people.

But that day even better synchronicity occurred for my desired shot. John Lennon was there in the flesh. A near-perfect John lookalike dressed in long black coat and round spectacles was milling about chatting with "his" fans. It didn't matter to anyone that "John" was Timothy Biancalana, an actor, musician, and poet. He perfectly embodied the mood and manner of John as a tribute to the man who has always inspired him. Tim does "John Lennon Shows", videos,

music, and writing in a way that some reviewers see as the channeling of John himself. Tim sees it as one way to keep John's message alive, while including his own Lennon-influenced songs and poetry in his repertoire.

Tim and I connected easily and he happily posed for me. Better than I imagined, I got the photo I wanted. The essence and heart of the word Imagine combined with the reincarnation of John to remind me not to give up but to "Imagine all the people living life in peace".

See Tim as John at www.TributeToJohnlennon.com





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