

OUR VIEW: All he was saying

By The Patriot Ledger
Dec. 8, 2006

For a guy who's been gone for 26 years now, former Beatle John Lennon remains a remarkably familiar presence.

A recently released movie recounts Lennon's outspokenness against the Vietnam War and his subsequent persecution by the Nixon administration. The film, "The U.S. vs. John Lennon," depicts Lennon's struggles against a paranoid and secretive administration in the early 1970s.

The modern-day parallels to the Iraq war and the in-denial Bush administration are obvious. So, too, with Lennon's ubiquitous holiday classic, "Happy Xmas (War Is Over)" - another example of Lennon's brand of sometimes naive but enduring optimism, and once again an anthem for wishful thinkers.

Lennon and his old band mates are back on the charts, thanks to a Cirque du Soleil music-meets-acrobatics performance and soundtrack that uses remixed versions and collages of Beatles songs. The album, "Love," debuted on the Billboard album charts two weeks ago at No. 4.

No wonder Lennon made the top 10 this year in Forbes magazine's somewhat macabre annual list of the top-earning dead celebrities.

Lennon's widow, meanwhile, is in the news calling for today's anniversary of his violent death to become a day of worldwide healing. Yoko Ono is urging Lennon's worldwide fans and admirers to mark the anniversary with a day of healing for those who have suffered because of violence and war.

"Know that the physical and mental abuse you have endured will have a lingering effect on our society," Ono wrote in an open letter printed in the New York Times. "Know that the burden is ours."

Lennon would have been the first to second that thought. Shot in the back by a deranged fan on a cold American night, Lennon didn't get to live past 40. But his work, and his message, sure did.

© 2006 by The Patriot Ledger. All Rights Reserved