

HALF HOUR WITH...

# JULIAN LENNON

As a musician, photographer, documentary maker and “closet chef”, John’s boy reveals why he’s more than just the son of a Beatle

**With plenty of creative**

strings to his bow, Julian Lennon is keen to impress that, despite being the only child of Beatle John Lennon and his first wife Cynthia, he’s “more than a one-dimensional, son-of-John character”. The 48-year-old musician had a difficult relationship with his father, which included periods of estrangement before John was killed when Julian was 17. But as he points out: “There’s a lot more to my life and work than just Dad.”

Having just released *Everything Changes*, his first album in 13 years, Julian is a happy man. “It’s probably been the best response I’ve ever had,” he says. “I think people have seen a different side to me.”

**Your new album isn’t something you’ve rushed, is it?**

No, I started tinkling the ivories again about eight years ago – sometimes I don’t play or sing for years. This album is something that I’m proud of. It works for me, then if everybody else likes it, that’s a bonus. Half the tracks weren’t even written for it – they were just for songwriting’s sake.

**Is there a question that you always get asked by people?**

I guess the main one is the Beatles getting back together and me singing Dad’s stuff. I’ve always said no, because I’m not here to be a stand-in. If, down the road, I feel I’m well established and it was for something important – on the magnitude of Live Aid – then I’d consider doing it as a one-off.

**Do you watch talent shows like *The X Factor* and have you been asked to appear on a reality show?**

I watch them from time to time. Sometimes I get tired of them, but sometimes I see decent talent. They’ve tried asking me on shows, but I wouldn’t. Never say never, but right now, not a chance.

**Do you speak to your half-brother Sean much?**

Of course. He’s one of my best buddies. He’s been under my wing since day one but he’s flying well at the moment. He’s doing great.

**Do you ever Google yourself?**

I have Google alerts, so I’m aware of

everything posted about me. I want to keep up on who is saying what to a degree. If I have an insight that someone is going to say something bad, I just delete it rather than let outside influences bring me down.

**Do you have any vices?**

Food. I’m a closet chef. I live in Italy and I’m there partially because of my first stepfather [Cynthia’s late husband, hotelier Roberto Bassilini]. We’d visit Italy in the school holidays, so I absorbed the culture and its food from an early age.

**Who or what makes you happiest?**

Who? My mum. She always puts a smile on my face. I also love being at home in Italy and I’ve rediscovered a joy for going on the road and playing acoustically.

**Your mum recently renewed her wedding vows to her husband Noel Charles in the South of France...**

It was brilliant. It was so beautiful. I’ve never seen her so happy.

**Would you like to get married?**

Marriage in the non-religious sense, where one is committed, yes. I’m getting a little jealous of my mates and their children. I never felt that the time was right before, because I wanted to be older and wiser. But I’m certainly not going to rush into anything that’s not right.

**So you’re single?**

I am. I’ve been single for about five years. I’ve just been getting on with work and hoping that I bump into the right person one day.

**You took photos of Charlene Wittstock before her wedding to Prince Albert of Monaco...**

She’d seen my photo exhibition in New York and asked me to come in 20 minutes before her civil wedding to take shots while she was getting hair and make-up done. I got some great, great shots.

**You grew up surrounded by famous faces, but are you ever starstruck?**

Constantly. You know, major actors like John Hurt and Gary Oldman. I could give a list of people I’m in awe of – anyone that works hard, stays grounded and is kind to people. **■**

INTERVIEW: DAWN EMERY

*Julian Lennon’s new album, Everything Changes, is out now.*