

John Lennon & Company Give a Benefit Concert

By PATRICIA O'HAIRE

John Lennon and Yoko Ono performed yesterday afternoon in the first of the One-to-One concerts at Madison Square Garden in a benefit for the retarded children of Willowbrook. That show, however, was so plagued by delays that it easily could have been subtitled the Concert of Pauses.

Despite the delays and long intermissions, the audience, there to see John and Yoko perform together onstage at the Garden — a first for them — remained enthusiastic, though somewhat restless, to the last.

Imitation of Elvis

And the last was really something. Would you believe John Lennon doing an imitation of Elvis Presley performing his famous "Hound Dog"?

The show was set to start at 2 p.m., and the lineup of talent was impressive: Besides John and Yoko, there were Sha-Na-Na, Stevie Wonder, Elephants Memory, the Plastic Ono band and others, and they all made it. But the performance ran so long—four hours—that it looked for a while as if the people at the afternoon session would still be in their seats when the audience for the evening's concert arrived.

The early show actually was an added starter, penciled in when the SRO sign went up for the evening affair. It had been arranged hastily, and so for a while it did seem as if the glue holding it together was coming unstuck. It was 25 minutes late getting under way, and there were two intermissions of 45 minutes each while equipment was changed and set up. But no one seemed to mind much; when

the music was on, it was instant Karma.

Sound Was Dreadful

Despite the long letup period, the sound was dreadful, full of feedbacks, a constant mike hum and much distortion.

John and Yoko worked with the Elephants Memory and the Plastic Ono bands, performing for more than an hour, doing a lot of vigorous rock 'n' roll type numbers plus John's "Imagine," "Mother" and "Come Together." Frequently, it was difficult to understand what they were singing because of the sound.

The first act was Sha-Na-Na, an 11-man group whose shtick seems to be imitating the so-called greaser types of the late '50s.

As a group they are very energetic, but a little of them tends to go a long way . . . especially their repetitious posturing.

Stevie Wonder is another matter. He's an unusual talent, and his group blends soul with heavy rock sounds and some jazz overtones. He was at the Garden most recently with the Rolling Stones, and he was all but overlooked. This time he's not the star, either, but he has more of a chance to show off his considerable skill at the organ and as a leader, keeping every element of his group tightly in control.