

CLASSIC POP PRESENTS

MCCARTNEY

SPECIAL EDITION

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COLLECTORS
ISSUE

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A POP GENIUS

BEYOND THE BEATLES... HITS, HARMONY AND HEARTBREAK

ANTHEM



CLASSIC POP
PRESENTS
McCartney
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McCARTNEY WELCOME

OF THE COPIOUS COLUMN INCHES DEDICATED TO THE BEATLES, LITTLE OR NOTHING HAS BEEN LEFT TO FALL THROUGH THE CRACKS UNEXAMINED. BUT, REGARDLESS OF THAT OFTEN EXCESSIVE SCRUTINY, THERE REMAINS A NAGGING FEELING THAT SOMETHING'S MISSING...

WE KNOW THE BAND INSIDE OUT, BUT DO WE REALLY KNOW THE SUM OF ITS PARTS? A KIND OF MARTYRDOM WAS IMPOSED UPON JOHN LENNON, BUT MCCARTNEY'S REPUTATION IS MORE COMPLEX. WHO IS THE MAN BEHIND THOSE AFFABLE, HAPPY-GO-LUCKY "TWO THUMBS ALOFT" GESTURES?

06



In fact, simply as Paul McCartney, here's a man who's accomplished a great deal more than most, even with the head-start. The breadth of his work alone is worthy of admiration. Who else has as bold a catalogue as Paul? One that spreads out eloquently across pop, rock, folk, electronic and classical music? One that includes something as forward-looking as *Temporary Secretary*, as joyous as *Maybe I'm Amazed* or *Band On The Run*, as exploratory as *The Fireman*? What's more, a cursory listen to *New*, his latest LP, turns up sturdy pop gems like *Queenie Eye*.

When The Beatles split, McCartney was understandably in pretty bad shape. To the world at large it was the end of a glorious knees-up, but to the Liverpoolian 20-something it was "breaking from your lifelong friends"; the guys with whom he'd realised his dreams. That sort of bond builds relationships that are hard to break, but this was no ordinary clique... "It was difficult to know what to do after the Beatles. How do you follow that?" he said to BBC4's John Wilson. Surely the understatement of the century.

Although the lives of both Lennon and Harrison were tragically cut short, Paul was still without doubt the most prolific, the most experimental, and arguably the most daring of all of the band post-Beatles. When he chose to shave the beard and put the whisky back in the cabinet, with Linda's help, his mojo returned stronger than ever. He formed Wings and from there produced some of his finest material, Beatles or no Beatles. Since then, he's never stopped. Yes, there have been plenty of misfires, and his personal life has been punctuated with tragedy and a prying, stressful divorce, but he's succeeded in putting that past to bed as best he can and has continued to make great records, dignity intact.

In 2016 McCartney was named the UK's most successful albums act of all time. In short, he really is one of architects of British pop and continues to keep the youngsters on their toes. Enjoy the issue...

Rik Flynn Editor

THE CONTRIBUTORS



Mark Lindores grew up during the golden age of pop mags, devouring *Smash Hits* and

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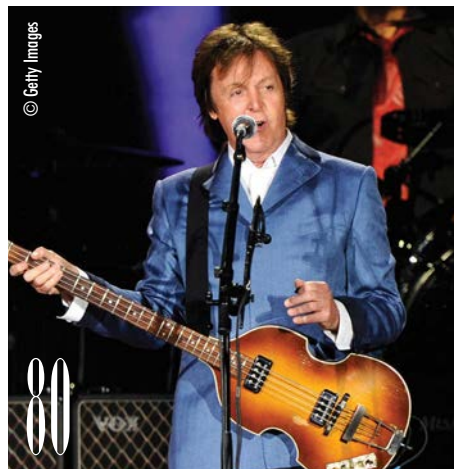
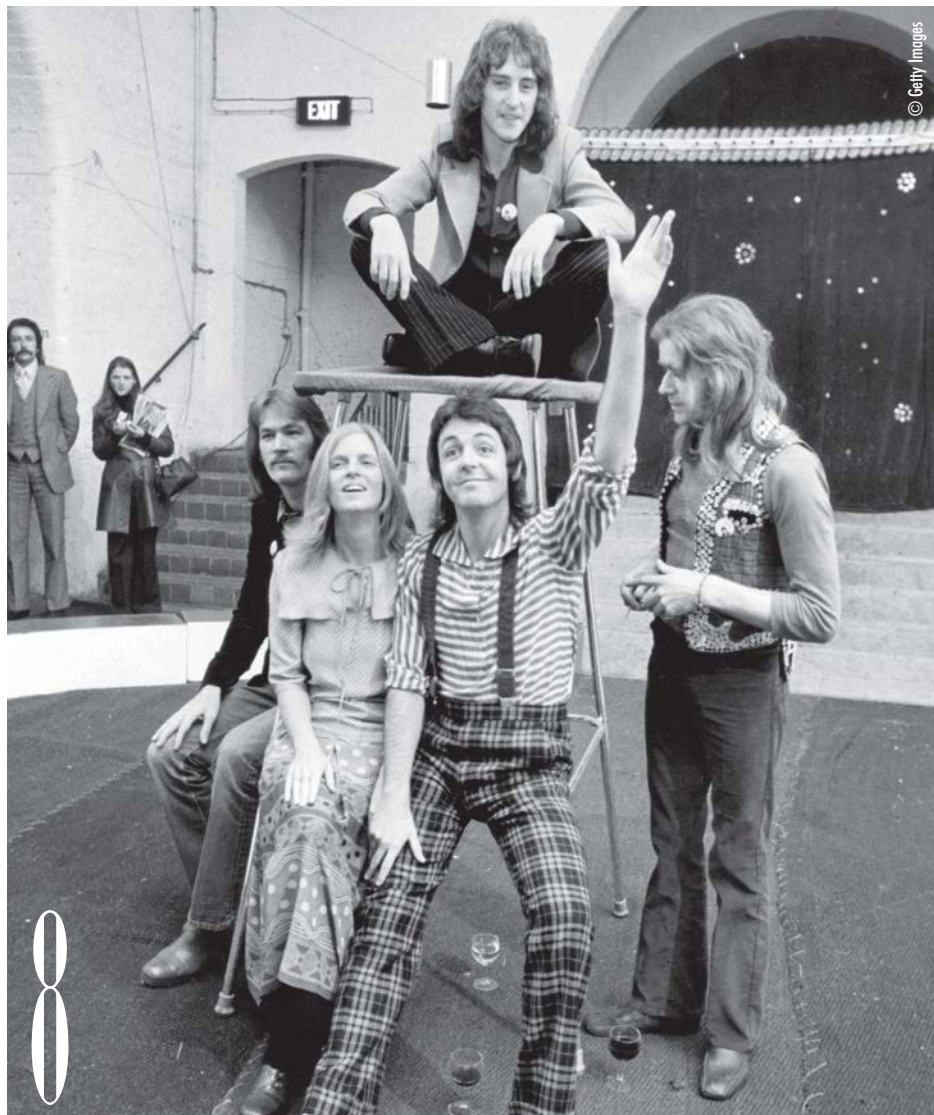
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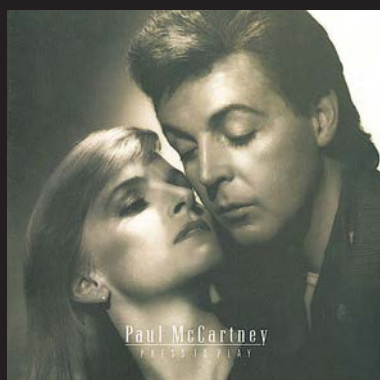
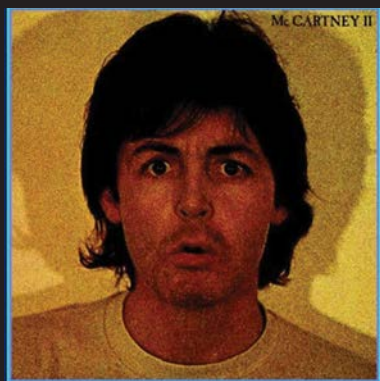
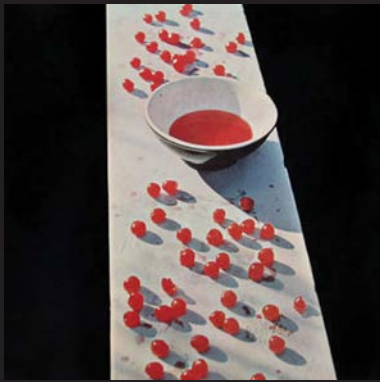
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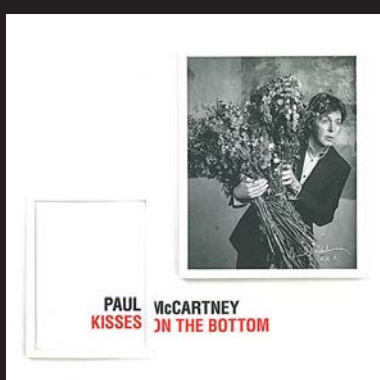
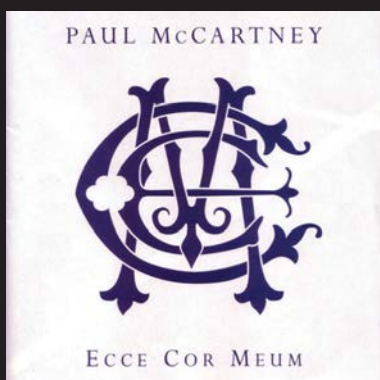
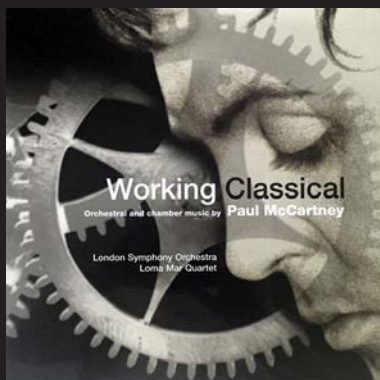
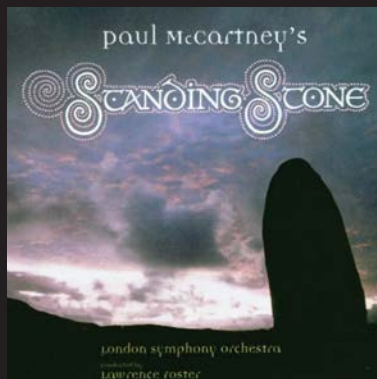
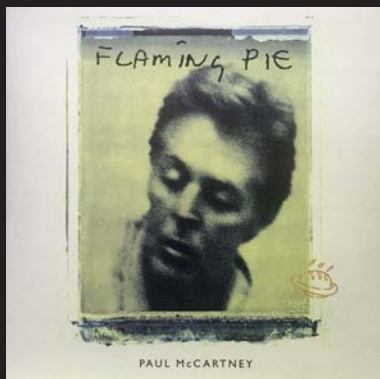
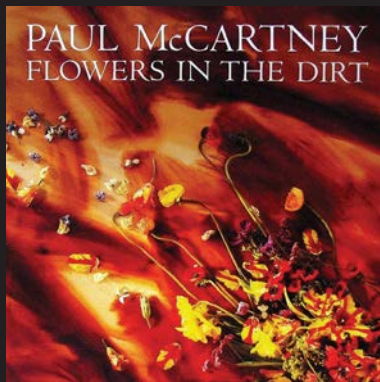
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McCartney's career has produced some evocative sleeve art, from his surrealist Seventies debut *McCartney* through to the neon pop art of 2016's *New*

1970s

Riding In The Sky

OF ALL THE BEATLES,
PAUL MCCARTNEY WAS
REGARDED AS THE ONE
WITH THE COMMERCIAL
POTENTIAL. HE WAS,
THEREFORE, ALSO
ARGUABLY THE ONE
UNDER MOST PRESSURE
TO SUCCEED IN THE
SEVENTIES. BUT DID
HE? WELL, HE DID
AND HE DIDN'T...

PAUL LESTER







Paul speaking to the press in 1970, surely fielding endless Beatles questions

© Getty Images

The First

year of the Seventies saw all four ex-Beatles keeping busy. George Harrison found

himself at No. 1 across the universe with his triple album *All Things Must Pass* (not bad for "the quiet one"), Ringo Starr found himself at No. 7 and No. 22 in the UK and US with his solo debut *Sentimental Journey* (not bad for an album without a single to promote it) and John Lennon recording, with Starr on drums, the excoriating avant-garde confessional *John Lennon/*

Plastic Ono Band, which reached the Top 10 of most of the world's charts (not bad for an excoriating avant-garde confessional).

As for Paul McCartney, he wasted no time in putting his stamp on the new decade. In fact, he began working on his first solo release in the last month of the previous decade, on a Studer four-track tape machine. It comprised material he'd variously written in India, during the *Let It Be* sessions, on his High Park farm in Campbelltown, Scotland and at home on Cavendish Avenue in St John's Wood in London. Recording and mixing took place at Morgan Studios and Abbey Road, but if the latter legendary studio led longterm Beatles-watchers to expect a feast of overdubs and multilayered symphonic delights, they would have been disappointed with the finished product.

McCartney, issued in April 1970 – a month before the "posthumous" 12th and final Beatles album, *Let It Be* – eschewed musical sophistication for a more homespun feel, with a ragged and raw lo-fi charm that anticipated the alternative/indie ethos of the Nineties and beyond, with McCartney the prototype for legions of bearded DIY hipsters. A mixture of worked-up demos, doodles and fully-formed songs, the album was an entirely self-performed affair, McCartney handling all vocal and

instrumental duties (acoustic and electric guitars, bass, drums, piano, organ, percussion, Mellotron, toy xylophone, even a bow and arrow and

1970'S SELF-PERFORMED MCCARTNEY ALBUM ESCHEWED SOPHISTICATION FOR A MORE HOMESPUN FEEL, WITH A RAGGED AND RAW LO-FI CHARM

wine glasses), with assistance only from his new wife, Linda, on harmony and backing vocals. It appeared to usher in a new era of self-sufficiency (or solipsist studiomania, depending on your view), with Stevie Wonder and Todd Rundgren (and, later, Prince) soon venturing forth as do-it-all singer-player-producers (indeed, cult California artist Emitt Rhodes, virtually simultaneously, was singing, playing and producing every note of his own self-titled album in 1970).

For McCartney, this was therapy. And the results were like listening to a man picking up the pieces of his life from the wreckage of a tumultuous crash. Staggered, dazed and metaphorically bleeding from the death throes of The Beatles, *McCartney*

POP UP McCartney, having previously played drums on The Beatles' *Back In The U.S.S.R.* and *Dear Prudence* (because Ringo had briefly quit the band), played all the drum parts on *Band On The Run*

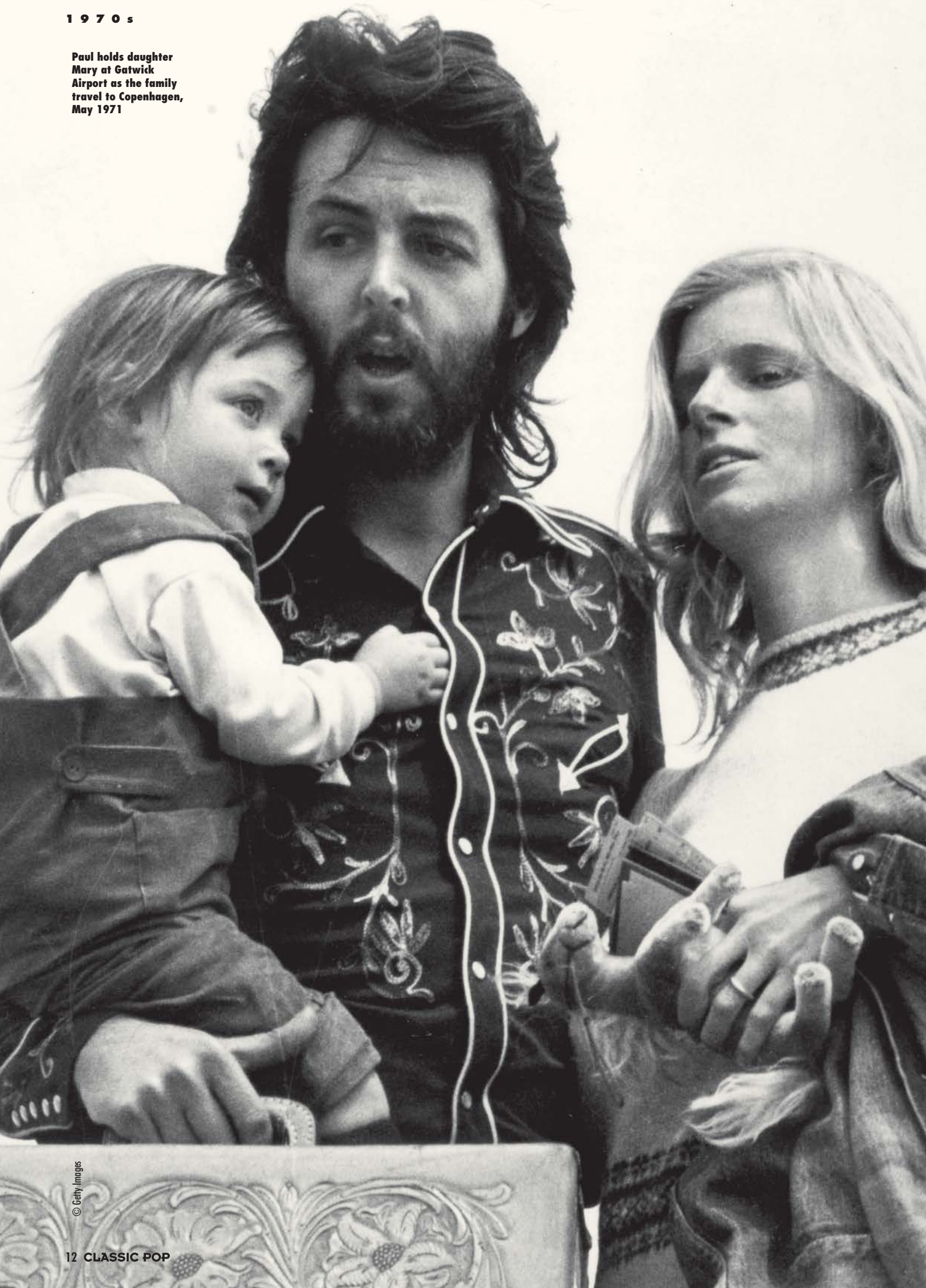


1970s



1970s

Paul holds daughter
Mary at Gatwick
Airport as the family
travel to Copenhagen,
May 1971



saw the musician seeking solace in pure sound. "It was a release, a freedom thing for me, an escape," he reflected in 2010. "I wanted to get back to basics." On *McCartney* he rediscovered the rough-hewn atmosphere he had originally envisaged for *Let It Be*, before Phil Spector added his magniloquent flourishes. "I like its bare bones," McCartney said of his debut solo foray, which in its own eccentric way was every bit as personal and cathartic an exercise as his erstwhile partner's *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*. "Talk about honest. You couldn't get more honest."

The album opened with *The Lovely Linda*, his shortest ever composition, 42 seconds of gentle whimsy that set the lo-fi, noodley tone. The simple, down-home acoustica of *That Would Be Something* furthered the sense of a rock musician getting his proverbial head together in the country, Macca's Scouse brogue slipping easily into bluesy vocalese. *Valentine Day*, a sketchy instrumental, was followed by the deceptively tuneful *Every Night*, a paean to the missus that credited Linda with saving him from the fallout of The Beatles' final days, with their concomitant tendency towards self-destructiveness and depression. "Every night I just wanna go out/ And get out of my head," he sang. "Every day I don't wanna get up/ Get out of my bed... But tonight I just want to stay in and be with you."

Hot As Sun/Glasses was an instrumental medley, the second half of which featured wine glasses being played at random then overdubbed, as well as a brief music hall coda. *Junk*, penned in 1968 when The Beatles were in India at the Maharishi's holiday camp, was a nice, pretty strumalong with melodic intimations of *Mull Of Kintyre* and, in the chorus, of *Mamunia* from 1973's *Band On The Run*.

Man We Was Lonely essayed a new paradigm: jaunty despair. Finding Paul channelling his inner Johnny Cash, it was the first song that Paul and Linda wrote and sang together as a duet (making it, in a way, a precursor to *Wings*), and one of the last that they recorded for the album. It explored their feelings for each other, having respectively divorced Melville See Jr and broken up with actress Jane Asher. *Oo You* showed that McCartney could do Yer Blues-ish rasp'n'roll, *Kreen-Akrore* was based on a TV film about the Kreen-Akrore Indians in the Brazilian jungle, *Momma Miss America* pivoted on moody bass and keyboard chords, and *Teddy Boy* was another track originally written with The Beatles during the *Let It Be* sessions. The latter seemed more fully-realised than most of the other semi-songs on the album, with the famous notable exception of *Maybe I'm Amazed*, which even critics of the album (who included George Harrison) had to admit was an excellent late addition to the McCartney canon. Written in 1969, as The Beatles were careening to a halt, and an expression of gratitude to Linda for helping him through it all, McCartney described it in 2009 as "the song he would like to be remembered for in the future", although it wasn't issued as a single (until a live version came out in 1977).

Life might not have quite been a bowl of cherries as he faced the twin struggles of new fatherhood and an uncertain post-Beatles future; nevertheless, the front cover image for *McCartney* featured said fruit, while the rear showed the smiling young dad, in a photo taken by Linda in Scotland, with their baby daughter Mary tucked inside his fur-lined



"EVEN THOUGH IT HAD BEEN A VERY HEAVY, DIFFICULT PERIOD, MEETING LINDA AND STARTING A FAMILY, I COULD SEE THAT THERE WAS LIFE OUT THERE"

leather jacket. Meanwhile, on the gatefold's inner spread, were numerous family snapshots featuring Paul, Linda, seven-year-old Heather (Linda's daughter by her first marriage), Mary, and the McCartneys' sheepdog, Martha.

Also accompanying the album was a Q&A for the British press, in which the musician, newly reclusive, outlined his reasons for making the album and answered questions he presumed he would be asked by journalists, were he to have granted interviews at the time – due to his sensitivity at being constantly probed about the former Fab Four, he chose not to. Instead, in what can be seen as a postmodern, "meta" gesture, he took this opportunity to describe the LP's overall theme as "Home, Family, Love", the music that influenced it as "light and loose", while the enquiry as to whether he was planning a new album or single with The Beatles was met with a brusque negative.

On the whole, though, he was feeling positive, even if Lennon dismissed his old songwriting partner's efforts, during a lengthy interview with *Rolling Stone*, as "rubbish". In the UK, *McCartney* debuted at No. 2, where it remained for three weeks; by May, it had sold over 1 million copies in the US and begun a three-week stint at pole position, eventually going double-platinum.

"Even though it had been a very heavy, difficult period, meeting Linda and starting a family, I could see that there was life out there," McCartney later said of this turbulent time. He'd worked hard with The Beatles but he couldn't see any way out. Suddenly, he caught a glint of a happy future, "and I grabbed it".

POP UP Live And Let Die – which was nearly sung by Shirley Bassey – was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Original Song in 1973, but the gong went to *The Way We Were*, sung by Barbra Streisand



POP UP Wings were almost called, well, a series of other names. Among the contenders: The Dazzlers and, for some unknown reason, Turpentine. Luckily, as Linda was giving birth to their daughter, the image of "wings" came to mind



"I didn't know it was going to be an album – just making music for the sake of it," he modestly said of the quietly revolutionary album that started the second phase of his career. "But then alongside the instrumentals I started putting songs... and soon it acquired a little bit of validity as a collection."

The idea of the ex-Beatle, who with his former outfit captured the thrill of modern life at its most electric and urban, now playing the bucolic hermit, was furthered by his next album, 1971's *Ram*, whose sleeve showed him holding a male sheep by the horns. "I was in the middle of this horrendous Beatles break-up, and it was like being in quicksand, and the lightbulb went off one day when we realised we could just run away and go up to Scotland where we knew we loved it, just go and hang

out," he said of his pastoral existence. "So I might be mowing a field or shearing sheep, just to keep myself amused. Or I

would sit around and make stuff up on the guitar."

Actually, the album title had two meanings, referring not only to the ruminant mammal, but also to the notion of slowly pressing – or "ramming" – forward. The material gathered on *Ram* was a similarly schizoid blend of the rustic and the electric. It might have been informed by the McCartneys' sojourn in Scotland, but it was recorded at Columbia and A&R studios in New York and mixed at Sound Recorders in LA, using musicians accrued from a series of auditions in New York.

"We just got some lousy little warehouse basement space and set up the kit there and asked people to come in," McCartney explained. "I thought that might be the way to go: to see what forms out of the bare events, instead of thinking about, after The

Beatles, 'It's got to be super-important and super-musicians...' I thought, 'Let's just find ourselves.'"

The album showcased the new recruits – whizkid David Spinozza and Hugh McCracken on guitar, and Denny Seiwell on drums, as well as the New York Philharmonic on two tracks, *Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey* and *The Back Seat of My Car* – making it effectively if not nominally the tentative first flight by Wings.

Released in May 1971, *Ram* was actually credited to Paul and Linda McCartney, the only album attributed to the couple: "the veteran and the novice", as he acknowledged of their extremes of experience. Nice voice, though. "What I liked about her singing was the tone of her voice," he noted. "I'd never sung with a woman before, only

with males. I liked the idea of her range."

He must have also rated her compositional skills, because of the 12 songs on *Ram*, six were co-written by his

"WHAT I LIKED ABOUT LINDA'S SINGING WAS THE TONE OF HER VOICE. I'D NEVER SUNG WITH A WOMAN BEFORE, ONLY WITH MALES"

wife. *Too Many People* was an acoustic, bluesy strummed ditty aimed at least partly at Lennon ("Too many people preaching practices"), then in his proselytising phase. "It was really a message to John across the airwaves," McCartney stated. "I did feel like he was preaching a little bit about whatever everyone should do and how we should live our lives. I felt it was a little bit hypocritical. So there was a little spate of song-wars that went on," he added of this bitter period that also saw Lennon's riposte from September '71, the vitriolic *How Do You Sleep?* from the *Imagine* album. Fortunately, the feud – exacerbated by concurrent financial problems that were the inevitable corollary of the winding up of The Beatles Corps – soon settled down and the pair, admitted McCartney, "were able to talk

Key Recordings (Singles)



ANOTHER DAY (1971)

Released in February 1971, *Another Day* was McCartney's first solo single, although it was actually written and previewed during the sessions for The Beatles' *Let It Be* and recorded in New York in 1970 during the sessions for *Ram*. Like the beloved *Eleanor Rigby*, it was a story-song, recounting the tedium of a woman's lonely existence. Still, there was nothing humdrum about its chart performance: it reached No. 5 in the US and No. 2 in the UK. John Lennon was impressed: he referenced it, albeit tartly, in *How Do You Sleep?*



MY LOVE (1973)

Everyone from Andy Williams to Harry Connick Jr has covered this, the most successful song from *Red Rose Speedway*. But it's far from MOR pabulum, with a strength that is hard to detect but impossible to avoid. It was recorded live with an orchestra at Abbey Road, which gives it symphonic heft, and features a guitar solo, which affords it rock grit. But ultimately it's all in the structure – the way it opens with the chorus, at the peak, then winds it back, the repeats for extra emotional power – and the heart-rending chord sequence. Masterful.

1970s

Back to the soil:
Linda, Paul and
his Old English
sheepdog Martha,
the real subject of
the Beatles song



© Getty Images

1970s

Paul attended the 1971 Grammys, picking up an award for Best Original Score for a Movie or TV Special for the Beatles' *Let It Be*



to each other like human beings and friends. We'd been through too much to let business arguments blow up our relationship."

Many assumed *Dear Boy* was also directed at Lennon, but it actually concerned Linda's first husband. "It was my attempt at an autobiography about myself and how lucky I was to have Linda," McCartney reasoned. "I never realised how lucky I was to have her until I began writing the song."

As for *Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey*, this two-parter/medley comprised paeans to, respectively, a favourite uncle of McCartney's and an American admiral. The first section was sheer aural nectar, with sound effects of rain and thunder offsetting the exquisite chord changes, harp and harmonies, the arrangement suggesting a beatific blend of Brian Wilson and

Burt Bacharach (hardly surprisingly, it won a Grammy award for Best Arrangement Accompanying Vocalists). The "hands across

the water" oompah section, meanwhile, made you nostalgic for The Beatles at their music hall-jaunty best. Issued as a single, it became McCartney's first No. 1 hit in America.

Heart Of The Country celebrated Paul and Linda the erstwhile city dwellers' move to the sticks, and *Ram On* was a sweetly melodic guitar-picker that bore a resemblance to Labi Siffre's hit *It Must Be Love* from the same year. Then there was the bluesy *3 Legs*, and hard rocker *Smile Away*, both tame next to contemporary efforts by the Stones and the Stooges; they even paled beside the glam apocalypse of the Sweet and Slade. Far better was pop rocker *Monkberry Moon Delight*, all melodic twists and turns, and backing vocals courtesy of Heather McCartney, and *Eat At Home*, which had

the momentum of *Drive My Car*. Talking of which... The album closed on a complex melodic high: *The Back Seat Of My Car*, which shifted gears between gorgeous orchestral pop and upbeat rock.

How was he sleeping? "Quite well, thank you," McCartney confirmed. Indeed, *Ram* marked the start of a happier time for Paul. "I have some great memories of sitting around in the summer, with a guitar, the kids running around and playing," he looked back in languor many years later. "It's full of golden memories."

It was a creative and commercially successful time (*Ram* reached No 1 in the UK and No 2 in the US), too, even if critically he was still overshadowed by his earlier work. "I assumed a lot of the stuff I did then was no good," he said of a period that saw

him derided, either because The Beatles set standards that even he struggled to match or because journalists blamed him

"I ASSUMED A LOT OF THE STUFF I DID THEN WAS NO GOOD. NOW, GOING BACK TO RAM, I THINK 'AH... I REMEMBER WHY I DID THAT'"

for calling time on pop's golden age. Hindsight, however, has proven these early solo efforts to be among his finest achievements. "Now going back to [*Ram*] I think, 'Ah... I remember why I did that.' It wasn't just some flippant off-my-head gesture. Like a lot of things in retrospect, it looks better than it looked to me then."

That said, even his fiercest devotees these days fail to find too much worth defending in *Wild Life*. Then again, it was the third album of new material from McCartney since the breakup of The Beatles – there was, perhaps, a sense of a writer being stretched thin (there were only eight tracks, one of those a cover). *Wild Life*, released in December 1971, was also the first album by Wings, or at least the first iteration of that band: McCartney

POP UP McCartney didn't quite give up the city life and all its attendant luxuries to live in the country after The Beatles; he would regularly have pizzas flown over from New York via Concorde



LIVE AND LET DIE (1973)

The main theme song of the James Bond movie of the same name, *Live And Let Die* was commissioned specially for the film (it didn't appear on *Red Rose Speedway*, released the month before) and saw McCartney reunited with George Martin. The latter gave the song an epic, dramatic feel, superbly arranging its multiple parts: the ballad intro, the grandiloquent segue into the thrusting main section, the bit with the by turns staccato and sweeping strings, the reggae interlude, the orchestral-rock blowout, and the poignant instrumental coda.



JET (1974)

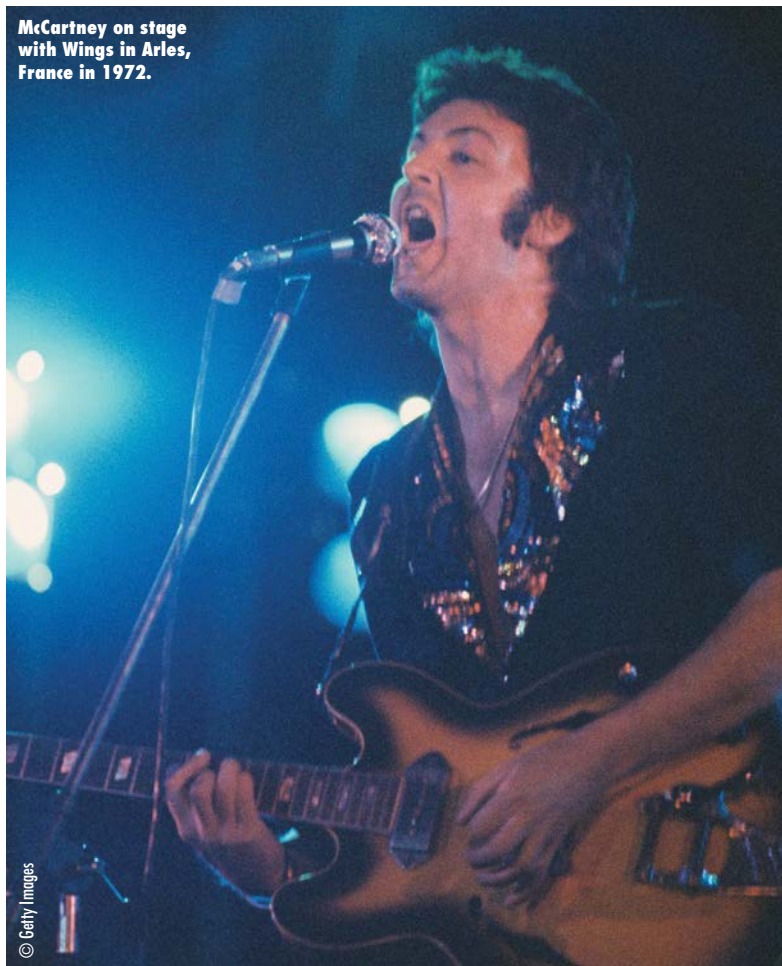
Whether it was about a dog, a pony, or radical activist females of the early 20th century, *Jet* was a mini-masterpiece of power pop propulsion: symphonic in scope, rocky in terms of attack. Episodic, too, as per the title track of *Band On The Run* and *Live And Let Die*: it had sections, interludes, it sped up and slowed down, it was affirmation of McCartney's talents as one of the supreme melodists of his generation. No wonder critic Dave Marsh decided *Jet* marked the only time he approached the "drive and density" of his stint with The Beatles.



LISTEN TO WHAT THE MAN SAID (1975)

Just as punk was about to stick it to The Man, an off-trend McCartney urged us to listen to said all-knowing quasi-deity. Still, this was an irresistible pop confection that reached No. 1 Stateside. It takes genius to open a song with the lyric "Any time, any day/ You can hear the people say/ That love is blind/ Well, I don't know but I say love is kind" and not make it sentimental mush. But the way it skips out the traps, propelled by Tom Scott's soprano sax, raises it to the status of rapturous art.

McCartney on stage with Wings in Arles, France in 1972.



© Getty Images

1973 WAS WINGS' YEAR OF THE ALBUM, WITH TWO RELEASED WITHIN NINE MONTHS OF EACH OTHER: *RED ROSE SPEEDWAY* AND *BAND ON THE RUN*

on vocals, bass, guitar, piano, keyboards and percussion; Linda on keyboards, piano, percussion and vocals; new recruit Denny Laine, formerly of The Moody Blues, on guitar, bass, percussion, keyboards and vocals; and Denny Seiwell on drums and percussion. The aim was to achieve a loose, live, spontaneous feel from their performances – five of the eight songs on the album were first takes by the band. But there's loose and there's half-finished and ill-structured, and some critics felt *Wild Life* sounded rushed and incomplete.

Mumbo was an organ-fuelled jam with some blues-wailing over the top. *Bip Bop* (even the titles said "throwaway" and "no filter") was an instrumental doodle aside from some extemporised scatting. *Love Is Strange* was a cover of the Mickey & Sylvia song that suggested McCartney's future probably didn't lie in reggae. The title track ("There's animals everywhere!") was an early sign of McCartney's penchant for simplicity verging on banality. *Some People Never Know* was a groove in search of a tune that rambled on for several minutes too long. *I Am Your Singer* was slightly more fully-formed, but it veered a little too close to kindergarten singalong for comfort, a feeling enhanced by the recorder part. *Tomorrow* was the kind of melody McCartney could toss off in his

sleep. Better was *Dear Friend*, a stark piano ballad ostensibly addressed to Lennon.

So much for Wings' debut album. In a bid, perhaps, to improve his critical standing, for Wings' debut single release McCartney chose to issue a song, *Give Ireland Back To The Irish*, responding to the events of Bloody Sunday in Northern Ireland on January 30, 1972. Recorded on February 1, 1972, at Abbey Road, it unveiled a new politicised direction, as well as a new guitarist in Henry McCullough. It also earned a ban by the BBC and other UK media outlets (it still reached No. 16 in the UK), which probably helped increase McCartney's cool quotient at a time when John Lennon was widely regarded as the credible ex-Beatle.

However, if people thought of McCartney as the whimsical or mawkish former Fab, this impression was enhanced by his next single, which couldn't have been more different to its predecessor. *Mary Had A Little Lamb* was Wings' take on the traditional nursery rhyme, and although it charted in the Top 10, it seemed to confirm his artistic redundancy for the hipper sectors of the rock media and made them question whether he'd lost his marbles, let alone his muse. Still, he managed to rescue his reputation somewhat with Wings' third single of 1972, *Hi Hi Hi*, which ended one of the oddest three-single runs in rock history. Backed with the reggae-ish lilt of *C Moon*, *Hi Hi Hi* was apparently designed to wind up the censors with its narcotic ("We're gonna get hi hi hi") and sexual allusions ("I want you to lie on the bed/ Get you ready for my polygon"), in which case, job done: it, too, received a BBC ban, although that didn't stop it reaching the Top 5.

If 1972 was all about singles, 1973 was the year of the album – Wings released two within nine months of each other: *Red Rose Speedway* and *Band On The Run*, both credited to Paul McCartney and Wings. The former initially saw an outside producer employed for the first time in McCartney's post-Beatles' career – Glyn Johns, famed for his work with The Rolling Stones, The Who and Led Zeppelin – but the pair soon bumped heads and Johns left. It was originally intended to be a double album, but even as a single, with eight tracks (and one four-song medley *a la* side two of Abbey Road), *Red Rose Speedway* was a little thin in terms of inspiration, especially compared to *Band On The Run*. As with *Wild Life*, the songs didn't seem fully-realised, more like sketches. *Big Barn Bed* was a predictable rocker, *Get On The Right Thing* a dry run for 1976 Wings hit *Let 'Em In, Only One More Kiss* melodically slight, *Single Pigeon* more jaunty whimsy. *When The Night* rhymed "beautiful and mellow" with "happy fellow" – the music, even the language, seemed passé for an era that gave us the audaciously modernist likes of David Bowie, Lou Reed, Iggy Pop, Todd Rundgren. Even the medley (*Hold Me Tight/Lazy Dynamite/Hands Of Love/Power Cut*) felt like a strained attempt to revive former glories. Still, the album merited perseverance, because as with Brian Wilson, his closest competitor in the melodic invention stakes, he couldn't help throwing in an irresistible bit. And in *My Love* – which reached No. 1 in the US – he created a latterday MOR classic, the strings balanced out by a sweetly stinging guitar solo.

Even the fragmented, patchwork *Red Rose Speedway* managed to reach the top of the

POP UP Wings' first album *Wild Life* got a lukewarm reception at the box office (No. 11 UK; No. 10 US), and a mauling by the critics: Rolling Stone even suggested that McCartney was "being deliberately second-rate"



Wings in December
1972. L-R: Denny
Seiwell, Linda, Paul,
Henry McCullough.
Top: Denny Laine



1970s

Paul and Linda join Rod Stewart to sing Paul's song *Mine For Me* at the Lewisham Odeon, December 1974





Wings MkII, circa 1976:
Joe English, Linda,
Paul, Denny Laine and
Jimmy McCulloch

US charts, but really it was – and remains – totally overshadowed by the record that succeeded it, *Band On The Run* – which we'll examine in full in a separate feature.

Having produced *Band On The Run* in Lagos, it was decided to record the follow-up in New Orleans, although three tracks were recorded at Abbey Road. *Venus And Mars*, released in May 1975, is often overlooked because of its illustrious predecessor, but it is a strong collection that captures Wings in their mid-Seventies pomp, even if it was less adventurous than other records from that year that arguably

wouldn't have existed without The Beatles, notably *The Original Soundtrack* by 10cc (ELO's *Face The Music* offered a more direct homage). Made with three new additions to the Wings mix – Jimmy McCulloch, Joe English and Geoff Britton – the album opened with the folky title track, which segued (as did all of the tracks, giving the album a coherent, even vaguely conceptual, feel) into *Rock Show*, with its shades of Bowie circa *Watch That Man*. *Love In Song* was an airy ballad, *You Gave Me The Answer* a music hall spoof, *Magneto And Titanium Man* an irresistible comic-book ditty, *Letting Go* a louche rocker. *Spirits Of Ancient Egypt* and *Medicine Jar* featured lead vocal turns from, respectively, Denny Laine and McCulloch.

Call Me Back Again was the only song on the album infused with actual old New Orleans essence, and *Listen To What The Man Said* was its one moment of effortless pop brilliance, not to mention a future No. 1 single Stateside, matching the position reached by the album on both sides of the Atlantic. Finally, there was *Treat Her Gently – Lonely Old People*, and a slightly rocked-up version of the theme tune from the then-popular TV soap *Crossroads*.

Venus And Mars cemented Wings' status as

one of the biggest bands of the period, and ushered in Wingsmania – a second burst of worldwide celebrity for the ex-Beatle that almost rivalled

VENUS AND MARS USHERED IN A SECOND BURST OF WORLDWIDE CELEBRITY THAT ALMOST RIVALLED THE PANDEMONIUM ENDURED BY THE FABS

the pandemonium enjoyed (or rather, endured) by the Fabs. It hadn't seemed plausible that they would become so big, even as recently as three years earlier, when Wings undertook their first concert tour of universities, making their debut in front of an audience of 700 at the University of Nottingham. They played 10 further student gigs, travelling Britain in a van and staying in budget accommodation, just as any other new band would do. McCartney's rationale for the modest and tentative foray was that he wanted to avoid too much press and public scrutiny, for fear that he might be found wanting compared to the mighty achievements of his previous band. "That university tour," he said, "made me less nervous. By

POP UP The band spent a week rehearsing for the "University Tour" at London's ICA. The sessions were filmed, and a short clip showed up on the TV documentary *Wings Over The World*



POP UP The brightly-painted 1953 Bristol open-topped double-decker bus used for Wings Over Europe – see opposite page – still exists, in a dilapidated state, hidden away in a holiday park on Tenerife



the end of it I felt ready for something else, so we went into Europe." The Wings Over Europe Tour saw McCartney – his family in tow – travel across the continent like a real-life Partridge Family, in a brightly-coloured double-decker bus, even if David Cassidy and company might have balked at the arrest, in Sweden, for possession of marijuana.

The Wings Over The World Tour of 1975 and 1976, taking in Australia, Europe, the US and Canada (a tour of Japan was planned, but was cancelled due to the Swedish drug bust) was anything but low profile. The dates were mainly in arenas and stadiums, and around a million people attended the 66 shows, with over 600,000 alone attending the 31 American and Canadian concerts, demanding that the band fly in a specially charted jet airliner.

That tour was immortalised by 1976's triple live album *Wings Over America*, which peaked at pole position and sold four

million copies in the States alone. It was a good year for Wings – it saw the release, in March, of *Wings At The Speed Of Sound*, the follow-up to *Venus And Mars*, and one of the dominant recordings of pre-punk Britain and America, vying for soft rock dominance around that time with other excellent examples of smoothly persuasive commercial artistry, mainly by Americans, such as The Steve Miller Band's *Fly Like An Eagle*, Steely Dan's *The Royal Scam*, Boz Scaggs' *Silk Degrees*, Spirit's *Farther Along* and Todd Rundgren's *Faithful*. WATSONS' attendant singles – *Silly Love Songs* and *Let 'Em In* – could only increase Wings' ubiquity during the long hot summer of '76.

Not that punk, or any other musical movement, could derail Paul McCartney or Wings. Indeed, by the following year, they were in the charts with

ONLY MCCARTNEY COULD, AT THE HEIGHT OF PUNK, SLAY THE NATION WITH A FOLK DITTY, A PAEAN TO HIS BACK GARDEN IN SCOTLAND

the first ever single to sell over two million copies: *Mull Of Kintyre*, which still ranks as the UK's fourth biggest selling single and the largest selling non-charity single. Only McCartney could, at the height of punk, slay the nation with this folk ditty, this paean to his back garden in Scotland. Once again evincing his supremacy when it came to simplicity, he turned this bagpipe-laden ode to his beloved peninsula ("Mull of Kintyre/ Oh mist rolling in from the sea/ My desire/ Is always to be here/ Oh Mull of Kintyre") into the anthem of the Christmas season, during which it spent nine weeks at No 1.

With Wings, it was like punk never happened. "No Elvis, Beatles, or The Rolling Stones/ In 1977," promised The Clash in their song 1977, but they couldn't have been more wrong. In 1978, Wings

returned with another album, *London Town*, and although it got a mixed reception from the critics, it fared reasonably well at the box office, reaching No. 4 in the UK

and No. 2 in the US where it sold over one million copies and went platinum. It might not have been as strong a set as *Band On The Run*, but there was enough mellifluous melodicism to warrant inspection, from the gentle melancholy of the title track to the high-energy pop-rock of *Cafe On The Left Bank*. *I'm Carrying* was forlornly Beatlesesque, *Backwards Traveller* a two-minute rocker, *Cuff Link* a Moog instrumental that predated some of the synthpop sounds of the early Eighties. Of especial interest was *Girlfriend*, as covered to colossally popular effect by Michael Jackson on the following year's *Off The Wall* masterpiece, although it is strange to hear it today in its denuded, un-Quincy Jones-ified form. *I've Had Enough* sounded like a snarling riposte to his future songwriting partner Elvis Costello, suggesting Macca still had fire in his

On February 8, 1972,

Paul McCartney, one-time joint-leader of the biggest rock band the world has ever known and doubtless will ever know, embarked with his wife and a few unknown musicians on an impromptu tour of Britain's universities, during which they played to audiences that numbered in the few hundreds. Yes, the same Paul McCartney who famously withdrew from touring because the giant stadium crowds his previous outfit performed to screamed so loud he couldn't hear himself play.

For McCartney, it was a back-to-basics affair, a way of rediscovering the joys of up-close-and-personal gigging, and the easiest route to gaining a new generation of fans. "That tour of '72, just some kids who were there, haven't particularly been into The Beatles, just became Linda fans. That's where all that started," he said later.

That first low-key student show was at the University of Nottingham, and there were 700 present, even if many of them couldn't quite believe their eyes: yup, that was Macca standing before them. The cost for tickets was just 40p,

with proceeds split between all the band members – all democratic, like. It was a lunchtime show, no less, something McCartney hadn't undertaken since his Cavern days.

Wings played a further 10 gigs as they motored cheaply across Blighty in a van, with three dogs, two roadies, a truck and a caravan in tow, arriving in towns unannounced and without fanfare, staying in modest accommodation, living on fish and chips, and receiving financial recompense that was laughable given the enormity of their frontman's celebrity.

"We went off on our little university tour, which was great," McCartney recalled. "It was very ballsy to do, really, I couldn't think of anything else. It didn't feel ballsy at the time, it just felt like, well, what else do I do? We literally took off in a van up the M1, got to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, liked that name, 'Great! Turn off here'. But there wasn't a gig, there was just a little village and nothing else there. It was a signpost. Anyway we kept going until we got to Nottingham University, and then it suddenly hit, 'Ah, that's it – let's do universities.'"

Happy times; the band, with kids in tow, on their painted tour bus for 1972's *Wings Over Europe* tour



December 1979
and Paul and Linda
are back at the
Lewisham Odeon,
this time with Wings



© Getty Images

POP UP *Rockestra Theme* from *Back To The Egg* featured a cavalcade of old-guard stars: David Gilmour, Hank Marvin, John Bonham, John Paul Jones, and Ronnie Lane. It won the first Grammy for Best Rock Instrumental Performance



belly, while *Deliver Your Children* had an almost playground-simple tune and *Name And Address* was a rocker so Fifties in execution you could smell the Brylcreem. The album ended on an intriguing note with *Morse Moose And The Grey Goose*, which over six minutes managed to incorporate elements of glam, disco, folk and, via its avant-garde bleepy mid-section, prog.

Still, for all its mixed successes, one couldn't help shaking the feeling that McCartney didn't quite

mean as much as he did, that he had been supplanted by legions of younger, hungrier musicians. By 1979, there were groups –

particularly Elvis Costello & The Attractions, XTC and Squeeze – who appeared to have picked up the Beatles baton and run with it, who had made their innovations relevant for a new generation.

Suddenly, McCartney had something to prove. And so, on his final album of the decade, there was a sense of someone coming out fighting, even if there was a concomitant impression of an artist responding to trends rather than setting them. For 1979's *Back To The Egg*, producer Chris Thomas, fresh from working with The Sex Pistols and The Pretenders, was drafted in, while new Wings members Laurence Juber (guitars, guitar synth) and Steve Holley (drums, percussion) were evidently encouraged to give it some welly.

SUDDENLY MCCARTNEY HAD SOMETHING TO PROVE, AND BACK TO THE EGG HAD A SENSE OF SOMEONE COMING OUT FIGHTING

Side 1 (named "Sunny Side Up" on the original vinyl) opened with the Ian Dury-ish liquid funk of *Reception* (the album was a loosely conceptual diary of a working band), but it was during the compact melody fury of *Getting Closer* and the two-minute hurtle *Spin It On* that McCartney sounded more energised than he had for years. *We're Open Tonight* was soft but not mawkish, a tightrope he was able to walk well at times. *Again And Again And Again* evinced the influence of Chris Difford

and Glenn Tilbrook, whose kitchen-sink vignettes were earning them the mantle "the South London Lennon and McCartney". *Arrow Through Me* was blue-

eyed funk lite while on *Old Siam, Sir*, Macca tried to reclaim his rocker credentials. The "Over Easy" side was notable mainly for the jazzy ballad *Baby's Request* and the lavish *Rockestra Theme*. Of greater note was the non-album single *Goodnight Tonight*, a disco-style number that charted at No. 5 in Britain and America, higher than any *Back To The Egg* singles; indeed, the album itself felt like an underperformer, and by early in the next decade the band was no more. McCartney ended the 1970s with the release, in November 1979, of Yuletide perennial *Wonderful Christmastime*. Within a month, he would be arrested in Japan for possession of cannabis. It was the end of one decade of schizoid action, and the start of another. ■

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Stevie Wonder:
"He's a really
swinging guy, the
only Beatle I've
ever met"



McCartNEY WITH... STEVIE WONDER

THEIR PARTNERSHIP IS DEFINED BY THEIR POLARISING DUET *EBONY AND IVORY*, BUT PAUL AND STEVIE WONDER'S KINSHIP EXTENDS FAR BEYOND THEIR UBIQUITOUS HIT SINGLE

MARK LINDORES

It was in February 1966 when the bright young things of Merseybeat and Motown met for the first time when Paul attended Little Stevie Wonder's show at London's Scotch of St James Club. Having been raised to be a fan by his Beatles-obsessed mother, Wonder was still only 15 years of age and travelling with a chaperone when he arrived in the city. As McCartney headed backstage to introduce himself after the show, a starstruck Stevie told reporters that he would be waxing lyrical about the meeting as part of his homework. "When I'm on tour I have to write essays about the places I visit," Stevie told the *NME*. "In the essay I'll be writing when I get back I'll certainly include my meeting with Paul McCartney. I met him in the Scotch Of St James club. He's a really swinging guy, the only Beatle I've met."

McCartney was also suitably impressed by Stevie on both a personal level as well as by his talent and, as both acts enjoyed a meteoric rise to fame during the remainder of the decade, they stayed in each other's orbits, bumping into each other at concerts and award shows, while McCartney even included a message to Stevie in Braille on the back cover of his 1973 album *Red Rose Speedway*: "We love ya, baby." Eight years later, they would find themselves in a recording studio together for the first time.

Whilst recording his *Fullfillingness' First Finale* album in Burbank Studios in Los Angeles, Stevie was invited to the studio next door where John Lennon was producing Harry Nilsson's *Pussy Cats* album. Wonder found himself party to a legendary night which has gone down in music infamy as the only time John and Paul were in a studio together, post-Beatles.

Taking place during Lennon's "lost weekend", the 18-month period in which he split from Yoko Ono and dated their former personal assistant May Pang, the drink-and-drug-fuelled debauchery was fairly typical of Lennon's lifestyle at the time, and Nilsson was one of his most frequent drinking partners.

Despite the animosity that had spelled the end of The Beatles four years earlier, Paul and Linda were among the guests in the studio when Stevie arrived for the impromptu jam session. "I was in Studio B and they were in Studio A, at Record Plant, and they were jamming, putting stuff down, laying different tracks, trying to come up with something, really just having fun," Wonder told *V* magazine. "And I think we did *Stand By Me* together, just being crazy. It was funny. I think Phil Spector was there, too. I can't remember where we were, but I was in the restroom or something like that and I was singing and he said, 'Shut the f*** up!' and I was like, 'F*** you!'"

As captured on the infamous bootleg *A Toot And A Snore* in '74, the results themselves were far from extraordinary, with snatches of old rock'n'roll tracks such as *Lucille*, *Take This Hammer* and *Cupid* battling for supremacy with rambling dialogue and Lennon offering Stevie cocaine in between complaining about the microphones and headphones in the studio.

While nothing substantial emerged from this session (except for countless Beatles reunion rumours), McCartney still harboured a desire to record with Stevie. In 1981, while working on his *Tug Of War* album he had come up with, in his eyes, the perfect song on which to do it. Having originally planned *Ebony And Ivory* as a solo effort, he realised how much more of an impact the song would make as a duet with a black artist.

"When I began working on *Tug Of War*, my approach was to take each song individually and cast the musicians in the same way I would a film," Paul said. "I had a song called *Ebony And Ivory* that I'd written, and I wanted to sing it with a black guy. And my first thought was Stevie."

The subject of racial harmony and prejudice was something Paul had long stood up against (during the Sixties, The Beatles refused to play segregated venues and frequently spoke out against racism) and *Ebony And Ivory* personified his feelings. The song used the analogy of a piano to illustrate black and white working together in harmony, and it was inspired by a Spike Milligan sketch in which he attempted to play a segregated piano – the implication being that you could play a tune using only the white keys and likewise the black keys, but in order to create something really special, you had to use both.

Stevie was impressed with the analogy and didn't hesitate to accept. "I listened to the song, and I liked it very much," he told Dick Clark. "I felt it was positive for everybody. I won't say it demanded of people to reflect upon it, but it politely asks people to reflect upon life in using the terms of music, this melting pot of many different people."

They recorded the song at AIR Studios in Montserrat in the West Indies with George Martin producing. The *Tug Of War* sessions proved productive, with the pair cutting *Ebony And Ivory* (once in the studio, Stevie added the song's instrumental break) and another track, *What's That You're Doing?*, which was co-written with Stevie.

Released as *Tug Of War*'s lead single in March 1982, the song became an instant hit around the world. As well as reaching No. 1 in the UK (Wonder's first UK No. 1 single) and in the US, where it stayed at the top spot for seven weeks, *Ebony And Ivory*'s impressive stats include the fact that it is Stevie's biggest-ever hit and Paul's longest-running solo No. 1 single (second only to *Hey Jude* as his longest-running No. 1 single overall).

As the recording sessions had been the only time that Paul and Stevie could synchronise their schedules, studio trickery was called into play when it came to shooting a video. For all the "side by side on my piano keyboard" lyrics, the scenes in the video of Paul and Stevie sitting alongside each other had to be shot separately and then superimposed next to each other.

It was 28 years before the world saw them perform the song live together for the first time. In 2010, Paul was presented with the Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song by

President Obama in a ceremony at the White House. After guests had each performed one of Paul's songs, he took to the stage himself and was joined by Stevie to perform their hit duet, the lyrics to which were as relevant as they were when the song was written in 1982. "One of the highs was *Ebony And Ivory* with Stevie because we'd never done it live together, so that was great," Paul said. "To sing it live together for the first time with the first black president, it gave a great significance to the song. To sing it with Stevie in front of President Obama was very emotional."

While Paul and Stevie had remained friends and maintained their professional partnership (Paul had played guitar on Stevie's *A Time To Love* in 2005), the performance was the catalyst for further collaboration. Paul was beginning work on his next album, *Kisses On The Bottom*, an album originally envisioned as being solely Paul's interpretations of standards, and he decided to write some new, old-styled songs. When deliberating over a solo for one track, Paul's old friend – and his harmonica – proved to be the missing ingredient. "We had this song, *Only Our Hearts*, which was very Thirties to Forties genre, that I'd written on purpose to be in that style," Paul said. "I knew the song needed a solo of some kind but we couldn't decide what it should be. Anyway, the producer [Tommy LiPuma] said, 'What about Stevie?' and I was like 'Wow'. It was a bit leftfield."

As in the past, Wonder was only too willing. "Stevie came along to the studio in LA and he listened to the track for about 10 minutes and he totally got it," Paul recalled. "He just went to the mic and within 20 minutes had nailed this dynamite solo. When you listen you just think, 'How do you come up with that?' But it's just because he is a genius, that's why." ■

LITTLE WONDER

HITTING THE WRONG KEY

Despite being one of Paul and Stevie's biggest hits, *Ebony And Ivory* has faced a barrage of criticism over the years. As well as being lambasted on *Saturday Night Live* shortly after release (sample lyric: "You are black and I am white/ You are blind as a bat and I have sight"), the song has been slammed for being too saccharine, named the Worst Duet Ever by BBC 6 Music listeners and has appeared in Worst Song Ever lists.

"The critics definitely didn't like *Ebony And Ivory*," Paul said. "I can see what they're talking about, but I think it was good. A black sax player, Ernie Watts, who plays for the Stones, thanked me in LA: 'Hey Paul, that song? I've got a white girlfriend, it really helped.' Now, why am I gonna listen to some critics after that? I don't care if they don't like it, it sold OK. I got to sing with Stevie. It was number one, for Christ's sake. It did something. You find yourself justifying your successes. It's a funny state of affairs."

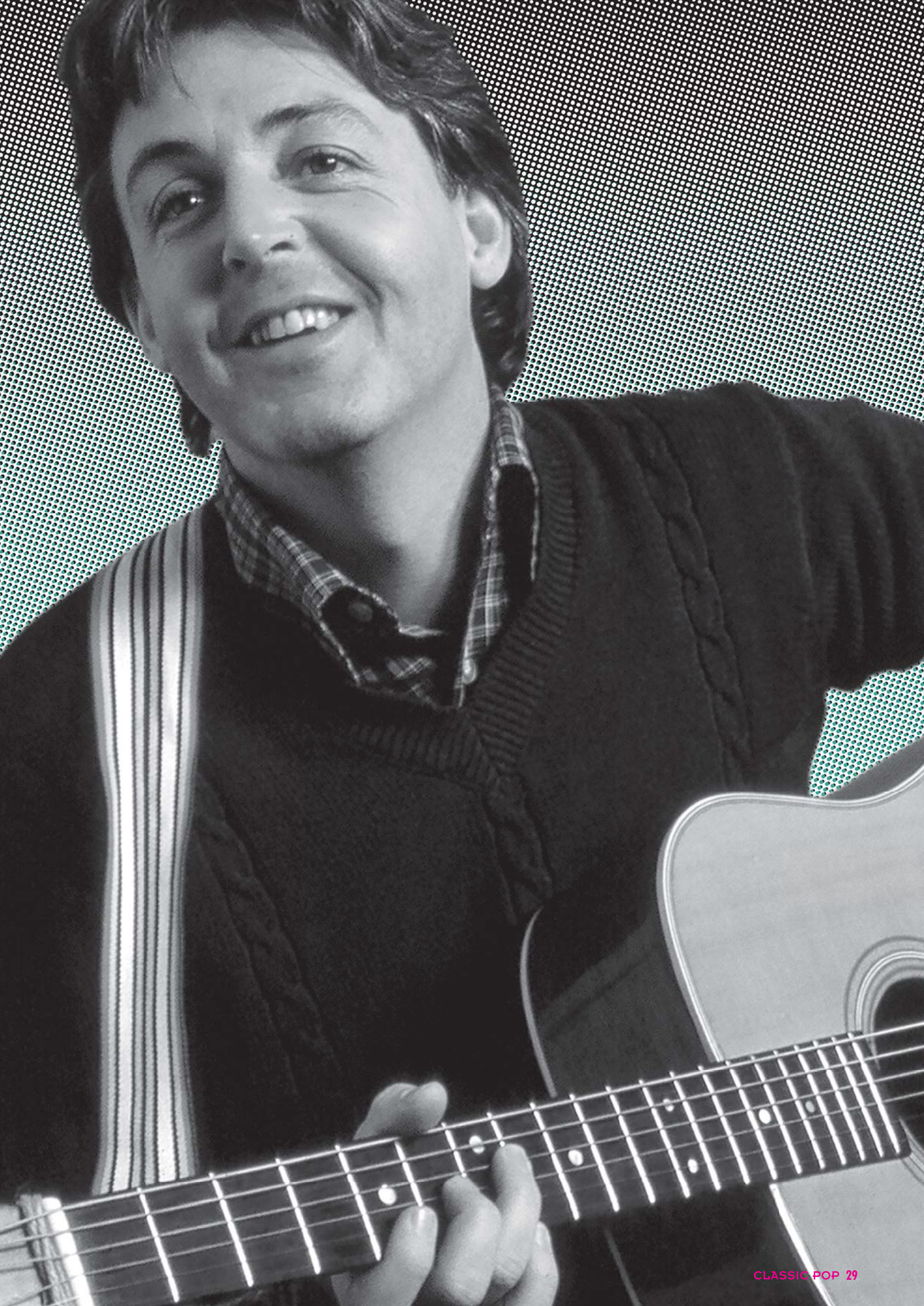
Stevie and Paul reconnect at the Grammy Awards in 2014



COMING UP AGAIN

HE MADE HISTORY IN THE SIXTIES AND FORMED ONE OF THE BIGGEST BANDS OF THE SEVENTIES. WHAT DID PAUL MCCARTNEY DO FOR AN ENCORE IN THE EIGHTIES? WELL, HE HAD TO ENDURE THE LOSS OF A FELLOW BEATLE AND COPE WITH DRUG BUSTS AND CRITICAL DISDAIN – AND THAT’S JUST FOR STARTERS...

PAUL LESTER



In Cannes, 1980, where Oscar Grillo's *Seaside Woman*, based on Linda's song, won Best Short Film



© Gally Images

PAUL

McCartney began the Eighties just as he had the Seventies: making a record completely alone, and following the demise of a band. Whereas his 1970 solo debut, *McCartney*, was made in the wake of The Beatles' split, *McCartney II* – his 10th release since quitting the Fabs – was recorded as Wings were winding down. Like its predecessor, it was a feat of studio solipsism: he recorded, engineered and played everything himself on his farm in Scotland.

It couldn't have been more different from Wings, a band whose output he was already beginning to disown. "I was never very happy with the whole thing," he declared in 1986. *McCartney II* sounds like the work of a musician keen to move on. Whereas *McCartney* was a loose, lo-fi amalgam of strums, jams and doodles, *McCartney II* – in keeping with recent technological advances – was a more electronic affair. It was in the vein of the future-facing sound of synthpop, daft funk and DIY post-punk nu-disco: the likes of Talking Heads, Flying Lizards, Sparks Mk2 (i.e. produced by Giorgio Moroder), M, Gary Numan, Buggles, Yellow Magic Orchestra and Kraftwerk. These were the artists pulling down the curtain on the guitar-driven Seventies and ushering us into a new, electronic Eighties.

Suddenly, the chap who wrote *Yesterday* had more in common with bedroom-bound, tomorrow's-world sonic explorers such as The Normal and Thomas Leer with his synthesisers, drum machines and spangly new fad gadgetry. But then, this was also the avant-gardist who penned *Tomorrow Never Knows* and would later operate as one half of The Fireman, so it made a sort of sense.

The album opened strikingly with the wonky-funky novelty *Coming Up* – also issued as a single in

April 1980 – which sounded as though McCartney was singing through a megaphone, Thirties crooner Rudy Vallee-style (the vocals were sped up and

MCCARTNEY II WAS IN THE VEIN OF THE FUTURE-FACING SOUND OF SYNTHPOP, THOSE ARTISTS USHERING US INTO A NEW, ELECTRONIC EIGHTIES

then put through an echo machine, with harmonies provided by wife Linda), over an insistent beat and a squiggly guitar motif reminiscent of David Byrne and his New York brainiac-funk crew. It was an impressive start to McCartney's second solo opus. Indeed, John Lennon was so impressed, it was later credited as the song that drove the other former Beatle out of retirement to resume recording, which he did later that year with *Double Fantasy*.

In the States, *Coming Up* was a No. 1 hit (one place higher than the UK) and sold a million copies, proof that going out on a limb can prove commercially viable. The accompanying video must have helped, featuring as it did Paul assuming

POP UP Paul McCartney playing several musicians for the *Coming Up* video predates other "one person plays the whole band" videos such as Phil Collins' 'You Can't Hurry Love' and Two Heart's and OutKast's 'Hey Ya!'



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Back home in
Sussex after that
unfortunate little
incident in Japan,
January 28, 1980





© Getty Images

John Lennon and Yoko Ono obligingly pose for fans outside a New York recording studio, September 1980

various pop guises (including Hank Marvin of The Shadows, Ron Mael of Sparks, and even a moptop version of himself).

The second track *Temporary Secretary* was another startling number, all sequenced pulse and nasal android vocal, like a robot with sinus trouble. *On The Way* was something completely different, a traditional blues chug, followed by *Waterfalls*, a ballad that reached No. 9 in the UK when issued as a single. With McCartney accompanied by Rhodes electric piano and synth, it bore some resemblance to the debut single, *Waterfall*, that Seventies hitmakers 10cc recorded back in 1972 for The Beatles' Apple imprint, presumably coincidentally. Meanwhile, McCartney many years later would acknowledge that R&B trio TLC's own song, *Waterfalls*, carried trace elements of his recording.

Nobody Knows was country'n'techno, with a hoedown guitar and yee-haw vocal, and a nagging, machinic insistence. *Front Parlour* was an instrumental, its tinny drum machine pitter-patter and sunny keyboard melody making it sound like lo-fi blog synthpop a good two decades ahead of schedule – no wonder Hot Chip, to name just one 21st century exponent of the electronic pop form, have cited *McCartney II* as a major influence. *Summer's Day Song* was pretty and sparse, featuring just McCartney and some keyboards, *Frozen Jap* had a techno-Oriental feel, *Bogey Music* was reverb-laden rockabilly, *Darkroom* was a loping affair concealing a tongue-in-cheek horror seduction scene, and *One Of These Days* was a plaintive, lonesome acoustic ballad.

Other tracks recorded during this period that have subsequently appeared on reissues of the album further emphasise the deeply strange nature of the music McCartney was making at the time. These include the gorgeous orchestral swing-pop of *Blue Sway*, which is like Glenn Miller meets Talking Heads; the bonkers banjo-techno of *Check My Machine*; the 10 minutes of Steve Reich-ish systems music that is *Secret Friend*; and *Mr H Atom/You Know I'll Get You Baby*, a male-female chant-ditty on which McCartney muses on the number of atomic particles that separate males from females (for the record: one). The latter segues into mad sci-fi disco with cowboy vocals, functioning as a deranged companion piece to Lipps Inc's contemporaneous *Funkytown*. *McCartney II* (No. 1 UK, No. 3 US) seems today more like an odd, off-kilter cult art-rock experiment than the latest release by a mainstream, establishment rocker. It certainly bears intriguing comparison with Lennon's *Double Fantasy*, released six months later and rubbished widely at the time for its mawkishness and conservatism – two criticisms often levelled at McCartney.

"I really just was fascinated with these things called synthesisers which had appeared on the scene – particularly with sequencers, I loved them," McCartney told Stephen Dalton in an interview with *The Quietus* in 2011. "It was new technology and I just wanted to see what it was all about, and have a go, and see what I could do with it. I'm still experimenting, you know?"

As McCartney reminded Dalton, he had been pushing the sonic envelope ever since the tape loop forays of *Revolver*-era Beatles. And, he recalled, he once visited the Queen of stereophonic wizardry, Delia Derbyshire, during the heyday of the BBC



Firmly gripped by Japanese officials, McCartney runs the gauntlet of the press

IN JANUARY 1980 PAUL WAS ARRESTED IN JAPAN FOR POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA. IN FACT, THE YEAR WAS BOOKENDED BY EVENTS BOTH TURBULENT AND TRAGIC

Radiophonic Workshop. But, for all his adventurism, he admitted that he could still pen a melancholy ballad, as *Waterfalls* evinced. Signs, perhaps, of a schizoid character?

"I don't know what it is, maybe being Gemini, but I definitely have different sides to my character," he pondered. "So I can love Nat King Cole singing a ballad, and I can want to do that kind of thing myself, and then the next day I can wake up and I want to do *Check My Machine*. I'm not a one pocket guy, I have loads of interests – and that does get you in trouble."

The first year of the decade had seen McCartney in real trouble: in January 1980, he was arrested in Japan for possession of marijuana. In fact, the year was bookended by events both turbulent and tragic. Because on the morning of December 9, while he was about to go back in the studio to continue working on his next album, *Tug Of War*, with Beatles producer George Martin (at the controls on a Fab Four-related project for the first time since Wings' *Live And Let Die*, unless you count the 1978 soundtrack to much-maligned "jukebox musical" *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*), news

POP UP As *Mull Of Kintyre* was a Wings song and *Ebony* And *Ivory* was credited to both Paul and Stevie Wonder, *Pipes Of Peace* was McCartney's first genuine solo UK No. 1



came through that John Lennon had been murdered outside his Dakota apartment block the night before in New York City.

"I was at home, and I got a phone call," McCartney told TV talk-show host Jonathan Ross decades later. "It was early in the morning... I think it was like that for everyone. It was just so horrific that you couldn't take it in – I couldn't take it in. Just for days, you just couldn't think that he was gone. So, yeah, it was just a huge shock and then I had to tell Linda and the kids. It was very difficult. It was really difficult for everyone. That was like a really big shock, I think, in most people's lives. A bit like Kennedy [the 1963 assassination], there were certain moments like that.

"It was just so sad that I wasn't going to see him again, and we weren't going to hang out," McCartney continued.

Then he turned to the subject of Lennon's murderer Mark Chapman. "For

me, the biggest thing was that the guy who took his life, the phrase kept coming to my head, 'Jerk of all jerks'. It was just like, 'This is just a jerk'. This is not even a guy politically motivated. It's just some total random thing, some guy going, 'Hey,' bop."

By the 21st century, of course, journalists had long been soliciting McCartney for his impressions of his old Beatle partner. But in the wake of Lennon's death, McCartney's utter shock and horror meant that he didn't always say the "right" thing. He was unprepared, dazed, and feeling mixed emotions: sadness at any unfinished business, perhaps, bruised by their fallings-out in the Seventies, frustrated that they never truly reconciled before he died, angry that he bore the brunt of critical opprobrium while Lennon was largely let off the

hook, and plain devastated at the loss. How to compress all of this into one neat, pat soundbite? Unable to correctly express his rage and grief, he drawled, "It's a dra-a-ag." This is what McCartney said when doorstepped for his response, on December 9, 1980, to Lennon's death. Frankly, he didn't know how to react, and who can blame him? But that's what came out, those three little, seemingly lethargically enunciated words. Overnight he went from being decried as "the one who broke up The Beatles" to achieving even greater infamy as "the one who was nonchalant on hearing of the saintly Lennon's death".

"If I could've I might've just lengthened that word 'drag' for about a thousand years, to get the full meaning," he tortured himself later, comparing his subsequent trial-by-media to the press hysteria that resulted from Lennon's infamous "more popular than Jesus" remark 14 years earlier. Some 35

years later, McCartney was still smarting from the aftermath to Lennon's murder, and still riddled with mixed feelings about it all. He missed his old sparring partner, of course, but he also resented Lennon's ascension to martyrdom while he remained the wacky, amiable Scouser.

"When John got shot, aside from the pure horror of it, the lingering thing was, 'Okay, well, now John's a martyr. A JFK,'" he admitted. "I started to get frustrated because people started to say, well, he was The Beatles.

"Now the fact that he's now martyred has elevated him to a James Dean, and beyond. Whilst I didn't mind that – I agreed with it – I understood that now there was going to be revisionism. It was going to be: John was the one."

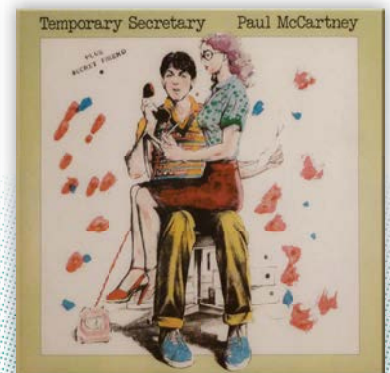
"IT WAS JUST SO HORRIFIC THAT YOU COULDN'T TAKE IT IN. FOR DAYS, YOU JUST COULDN'T THINK THAT HE WAS GONE. IT WAS A HUGE SHOCK"

KEY RECORDINGS



COMING UP (1980)

It is astonishing to think that the same man wrote this song and *Mull Of Kintyre*, and only a couple of years apart. *Coming Up* found McCartney starting the Eighties in modernist fashion, making a record attuned to the synth-futurist leanings of a generation reared on The Beatles but eager to displace them. He cut the song on his farm in Scotland, beginning with a drum track then adding guitars and bass, and he let his inner nutty professor assume control. "You get so into yourself it's weird, crazy," he said of the process. "But I liked it."



TEMPORARY SECRETARY (1980)

As with *Coming Up*, there was a weird mismatch here between the almost pre-rock 'n' roll-sounding vocal and the forward-facing music. That squiggly sequenced synth appears to have wandered in from the acid house future. *Temporary Secretary* was released as a single, but in 12-inch form only, which suited its avant-garde sound. "By far the most challenging music Paul McCartney made between leaving The Beatles and his much-later work as The Fireman," wrote Taylor Parkes in *The Quietus*.

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Disbelief: Paul
in London on
December 9 1980,
the day after John
Lennon's shooting



© Getty Images



**Stevie Wonder
and Paul getting
down to some
cabasa action on
Montserrat**

Back in 1980-81, there was no time for worrying about posterity and public opinion; all he could do was keep going, keep working to the best of his ability. And instead of a small coterie of amateurs and professionals – that is, Wings (although long-serving Wings wingman Denny Laine was involved) – this time Paul surrounded himself with some of the best musicians of the day. For the resumed *Tug Of War* sessions in February 1981, there were recordings laid down at AIR studios in Montserrat, with Stevie Wonder, bassmeister Stanley Clarke, session drum supremo Steve Gadd, rock'n'roll legend Carl Perkins, Laine, and Ringo Starr. The Caribbean sessions ended with *Ebony And Ivory* and *What's That You're Doing?*, two songs featuring Wonder. 10cc guitarist and singer Eric Stewart also became

a frequent collaborator of McCartney's during this period. There were further sessions during summer 1981 at George Martin's

AIR studios on Oxford Street in central London, with the former Beatles producer at the controls. McCartney was evidently on a roll because the sessions produced enough material for not one but two albums – it has been alleged that *Tug Of War* was going to be a double. Instead, some of the songs formed the basis of the next album but one: 1983's *Pipes Of Peace*.

As for *Tug Of War*, it was released in April 1982 to a largely positive response. There was a sense of a return to commercial enormity because it coincided with *Ebony And Ivory*, a duet with Wonder from the album that, issued as a single, dominated the charts all over the world that spring and early summer, reaching No. 1 in 10 countries, including Britain and America – in fact, it was

McCartney's 28th single to land at pole position on the Billboard 100. (It was a good period for McCartney collaborations, because later in the year he would also do well with the Michael Jackson team-up, *The Girl Is Mine*). Notwithstanding its success on the charts, the single was widely reviled for its lachrymose exploration of racial difference, but the album itself was hailed as one of McCartney's best. In a glowing review for *Rolling Stone*, Stephen Holden declared it "the masterpiece everyone has always known Paul McCartney could make," adding that "McCartney has teamed up with producer George Martin to create a record with a sumptuous aural scope that recalls *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*." Holden didn't just compare it favourably with The Beatles' 1967

pop landmark, he decided it was a "veritable encyclopaedia of contemporary studio pop in the deluxe, high-tech tradition of Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours*,

Michael Jackson's *Off The Wall* and Stevie Wonder's *Songs In The Key Of Life*."

This may have been overrating it somewhat; nevertheless, *Tug Of War* contained some very fine music. The stately, elegantly orchestrated title track opened the album in authoritative style, with a grandeur suggesting that an opus was about to unfurl. *Take It Away* (the second single, issued in June '82) was a horn-charged affair with a coda so exquisite it almost singlehandedly justified the price of the album. *What's That You're Doing?* was the other track featuring Wonder: it had the synth-soul sizzle and prog-funk attack of his finest work. *Here Today* was an affectionate eulogy to the fallen Beatle, allowing McCartney to say in song what he was unable to tell Lennon in person, while he

TUG OF WAR CONTAINED SOME FINE MUSIC, AND WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE DOING? HAD THE SYNTH-SOUL SIZZLE OF STEVE WONDER'S FINEST WORK

POP UP David Gilmour of Pink Floyd played electric guitar on *No More Lonely Nights* from *Give My Regards To Broad Street*. He requested that his session fee be given to a charity of McCartney's choice



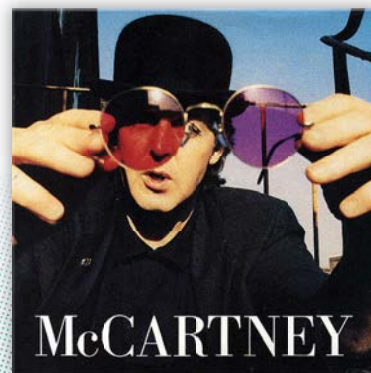
TAKE IT AWAY (1982)

This is one of those McCartney songs, like *Jet, Band On The Run* or *Listen To What The Man Said*, that employs conventional pop-rock mores, but is so expertly crafted you don't care about its fashionable credentials. Released as a single in June 1982, it reached No. 15 in the UK at the height of synthpop, white funk mania and new romantic and it admirably held its own in the charts with the likes of ABC, Associates, Japan and New Order, the final horn-parping and harmony-drenched coda as sublime a 60 seconds as any in pop that year.



PRETTY LITTLE HEAD (1986)

Co-written by 10cc's Eric Stewart and produced by Hugh Padgham (The Police, Peter Gabriel), *Pretty Little Head* was a single lifted off McCartney's *Press To Play* album. It could just as easily have been a track from Peter Gabriel's *So*: it had a similar state-of-the-art hi-tech, spacey, computer-laden, booming-drum sound as the former Genesis leader's commercial breakthrough LP. What it was about ("Hillmen bring garments, spices, Carrying trinkets, silk and precious stones") was anyone's guess, but the dreamily abstract sonics were quite captivating.



MY BRAVE FACE (1989)

This was a single lifted off of *Flowers In The Dirt*, the album that saw McCartney collaborate with Elvis Costello. It peaked at No. 18 in the UK and No. 25 in the US – it was McCartney's last Top 40 hit there until his 2014 collaboration with Kanye West, *Only One*, and as of 2017 remains the last Billboard Top 40 entry with any former Beatle in the lead credit. Musically, it was of a piece with Costello's own work from that period, specifically his 1989 LP *Spike*: play it back to back with *Veronica*, also co-written with McCartney, and spot the joins.

Ringo, Linda, Eric Stewart and Paul gather to shoot a video for *Pipes Of Peace* B-side *So Bad*



© Getty Images

was still alive. *Ballroom Dancing* was classic Macca oompah-music hall pop while *Dress Me Up As A Robber* was as intricate and intelligent as, well, 10cc. Propelled by the success of *Ebony And Ivory* and the warm critical reaction to the album, *Tug Of War* sold over a million copies in the States and catapulted McCartney back to the top of the charts on both sides of the Atlantic.

Much of the material for *Pipes Of Peace* had been recorded during the 1981 sessions for *Tug Of War* (with the other tracks recorded during September-October '82), and like its predecessor it featured George Martin at the helm. As with *TOW*, there were two collaborations on *POP*, this time with Michael Jackson, in the shape of *Say Say Say* and *The Man* (see separate feature on page 46). It also saw him still working with Ringo Starr, plus 10cc's brilliant guitarist, sometime frontman and engineer Eric Stewart, as well as Denny Laine. As a result, the two albums have a similar sound and feel, and they can today almost be enjoyed as a piece.

Pipes Of Peace opened, as did *Tug Of War*, with the title track, a mawkish heal-the-world affair that some posited as McCartney's own *Imagine*. Issued as a single in December 1983, it reached No. 1, his last song ever to achieve such a feat. It

was followed by *Say Say Say* and the funk-lite of *The Other Me*, the latter prompting NME reviewer Penny Reel to sum up the album as "a dull, tired and empty collection of quasi-funk and gooey rock arrangements", which was somewhat harsh. *Keep Under Cover* began as a ballad before speeding up to capture the sombre jollity of ska-pop chart regulars Madness. *Hey Hey* sounded like a White Album off-cut with an appealing slow-funk second

half. *So Bad* was a quiet soul stormer in hock to one of McCartney's heroes, Smokey Robinson. *The Man* was either scintillating or schmaltzy,

depending on your view, while album closer *Tug Of Peace* – a mashup, in modern parlance, of the title tracks from the two albums – either confirmed McCartney's cutting-edge credentials or sounded like the work of a former vanguardist frantically trying to keep pace with the latest trends. *Pipes Of Peace* didn't quite match the commercial performance of *Tug Of War*, reaching No. 4 in the UK and No. 15 in the States, while critically it was afforded a more lukewarm reception than its predecessor.

Still, it fared better critically than McCartney's next venture, 1984's *Give My Regards To Broad Street*, even if said album was positively adored next to the movie of the same name, for which it provided the soundtrack. A musical written and produced

LIKE TUG OF WAR, PIPES OF PEACE SAW MCCARTNEY WORKING WITH GEORGE MARTIN, RINGO STARR, 10CC'S ERIC STEWART AND DENNY LAINE

POP UP As well as featuring two Beatles and their wives, *Give My Regards To Broad Street* employed Tracey Ullman (then riding high in the pop charts) and Sir Ralph Richardson in one of his last roles





McCartney with Michael Jackson at the Brits, 1983, where he won three awards

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Bono, Linda, Paul
and Freddie Mercury
on stage after the
Live Aid finale at
Wembley Stadium,
13 July 1985



by McCartney, it was a caper about some missing music tapes that also saw him acting alongside Starr, and was roundly panned: *Variety* described it as “characterless, bloodless, and pointless” while *Chicago Sun-Times* critic Roger Ebert awarded it one star and urged, “You can safely skip the movie and proceed directly to the soundtrack”.

That soundtrack was a curious affair, comprising reinterpretations of classic Beatles tracks (*Good Day Sunshine*, *Yesterday*, *Here, There And Everywhere*, *Eleanor Rigby*), Wings tunes (*Silly Love Songs*) and more recent solo McCartney material (*Ballroom Dancing* and *Wanderlust* from *Tug Of War*; *So Bad* from *Pipes Of Peace*). The only new songs were rockers *Not Such A Bad Boy* and *No Values*, a symphonic extension of *Eleanor Rigby* entitled *Eleanor’s Dream*, and *No More Lonely Nights*, a midtempo number bearing a David Gilmour guitar solo that reached No. 2 in the UK (one place lower than the album) and the US Top 10 in October ’84.

As though to emphasise the discrepancy between his commercial fortune and the critical disdain with which he was increasingly regarded, within two months McCartney was back riding high in the charts with *We All Stand Together* (sometimes referred to as the Frog Song or the Frog Chorus), taken from *Rupert And The Frog Song*, an animated film based on the comic strip character Rupert Bear, which McCartney wrote and produced. For many, it was a chirpy, cloying, kiddie-friendly step too far, and it is the song usually proffered as proof that, by this point in his career, his avant-garde tendencies had deserted him completely.

McCartney’s appearance at Live Aid in July 1985 did little to enhance his reputation, although he was originally chosen to perform at the charity music concert because it was felt that it needed someone of the ex-Beatle’s stature to afford it the legitimacy it required. Unfortunately, his piano rendition of *Let It Be* was marred by technical hitches as his microphone failed to work for the first two verses, leaving thousands in Wembley Stadium baffled as squeals of feedback filled the air (his vocal was re-recorded for the DVD). To show their support, organiser Bob Geldof, Pete Townshend, Alison Moyet and David Bowie came out onstage to join him for the final chorus, to rapturous cheers.

“I felt very strange,” McCartney later said of the historic event. “It was very loosely organised and I turned up not knowing quite what was expected of me, other than that I had to do *Let It Be*. I thought, hello, we have problems. The worst moment was watching it on telly later.

“The event itself was so great, but it wasn’t for my ego,” he added. “It was for people who are dying and it raised over £50 million, and so it was like having been at the battle of Agincourt. It’s something you’ll tell your grandchildren about. I very nearly didn’t do it; Bob [Geldof] just badgered me into it.”

McCartney looked lonely up there onstage at Live Aid, at least until he was rescued by Bowie and company. In a way, the story of McCartney in the wake of The Beatles’ split is one of a lost soul searching for a collaborator to match John Lennon. It is also a tale of action and reaction: every time he took a step, his next would be in the opposite direction. And so his next album, 1986’s *Press To Play*, saw McCartney join forces with a new partner, with whom he would pursue a different route.



THE SOUNDTRACK FOR GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROAD STREET COMPRISED CLASSIC BEATLES TRACKS, WINGS TUNES AND MORE RECENT SOLO MATERIAL

That partner was Eric Stewart, who had appeared on *Tug Of War* and *Pipes Of Peace*. *Press To Play* saw the former 10cc whizz promoted to co-writer of half the music on the album. “10cc were, in a way, carrying on from The Beatles,” Eric Stewart noted to this writer in 2017. “Paul had been a good, personal friend of mine. He’d loved the 10cc stuff – he even sent me a lovely postcard after he heard [10cc’s 1974 album] *Sheet Music*.”

It has been suggested that, after *Tug Of War*, *Pipes Of Peace* and *Give My Regards To Broad Street*, all of which George Martin produced, it would be best for McCartney to find a new producer for his next album. Apparently, Martin himself told Stewart this during a dinner for Buddy Holly Week in September 1984. So when McCartney approached Stewart – who was effectively 10cc’s very own built-in George Martin, producing their groundbreaking singles and albums throughout the Seventies – to collaborate with him on *Press To Play*, he assumed he would be handling both writing and production duties.

However, when sessions began in April 1985, it transpired that Hugh Padgham had been

POP UP After the technical debacle at Live Aid in front of a billion people, Paul joked that he was thinking of changing the words of his song to “There will be some feedback, let it be”.



10cc's Eric Stewart played a major part in *Tug Of War*, *Pipes Of Peace* and half of *Press To Play*



POP_UP Youtube shows Eric Stewart was with Paul to debut *Only Love Remains* for the Royal Variety Command Performance in November, but when the song was performed on *The Tube* in December, he was gone



brought in to produce. Padgham had been responsible for shaping the synths and machine beat-heavy sound of the Eighties with his work for Phil Collins, Genesis, The Human League, Sting and The Police. Perhaps acknowledging the necessity for McCartney to achieve a more contemporary sound, Stewart was disappointed, but stayed on. The sessions lasted until May when Padgham had to leave to produce Genesis. In October, recording recommenced until early December.

It was during these latter sessions that things took a tense turn. Reports indicate there was a disagreement between McCartney and

Stewart, during which Stewart appeared to criticise McCartney, causing the latter to bitchily enquire, "When did you last write a No. 1?" (For the record, it was eight years earlier: 10cc's *Dreadlock Holiday*). By November the 10cc man was gone, and McCartney had to finish the album without him.

In 2017, Stewart chose not to discuss the matter, but he did reveal, "I left the album halfway through". He also admitted that he enjoyed what McCartney and Padgham had done with the album, all the "terrific backings, the incredible reverbs and echoes and drum parts – they did a lovely job". He especially liked the tracks *Angry* (which featured Pete Townshend on guitar and Phil Collins

on drums) and *Stranglehold*, which were "brilliant rock'n'roll". He related how McCartney was even moved, after hearing the finished *Angry*, to ring him at home, whereupon Stewart's wife Gloria answered the phone and the ex-Beatle told her, "That man of yours, he's a f***ing genius!" Stewart is magnanimous today about the album. Perhaps acknowledging his limitations, he even pointedly recalls an extract in George Martin's autobiography in which the producer recounted the occasion

McCartney confided to him: "Eric's good, but he's not John. He can't say to me, 'That's not good enough'... but John could."

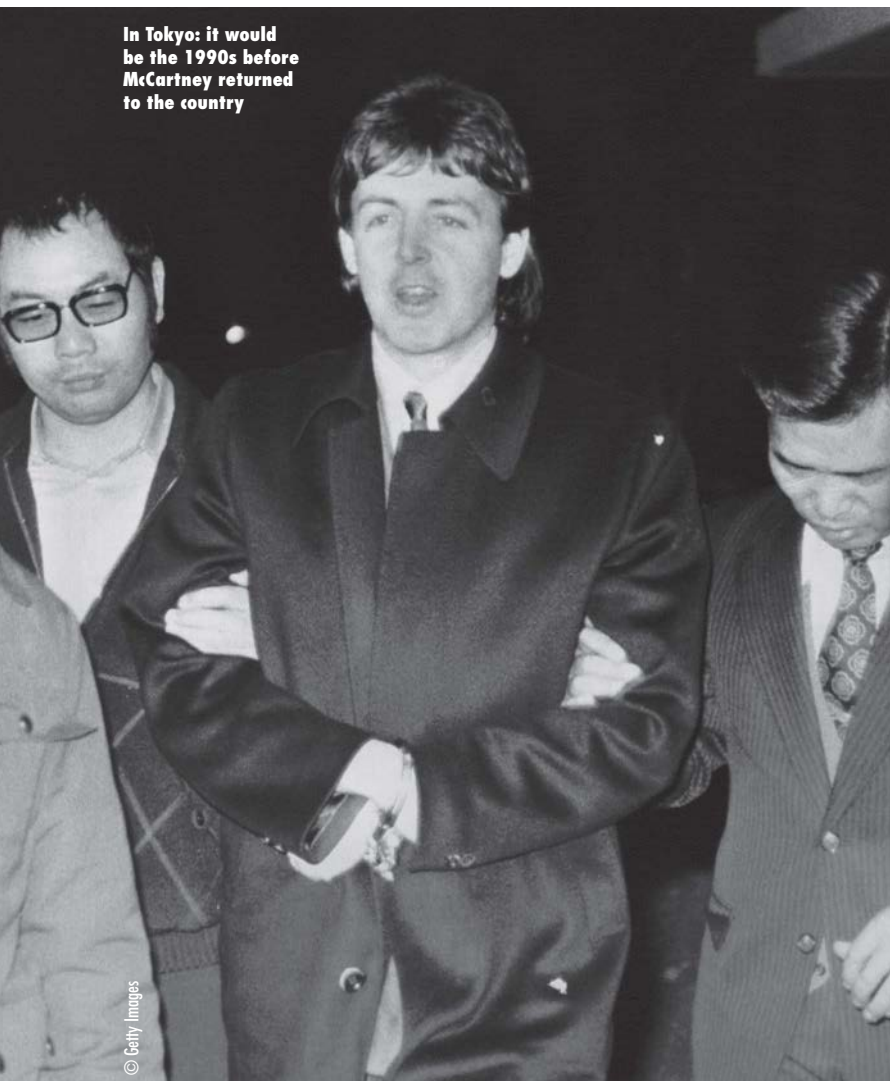
Perhaps Stewart was more like

Lennon than he dared admit. In an illuminating televised interview given at the time of *Press To Play*'s release, Stewart appeared to step over the red line and offer too critical a judgement of his paymaster's previous work when he said: "The main aims [with *Press To Play*] were to produce something a lot hotter and earthier than the previous two albums, *Pipes Of Peace* and *Tug Of War*, which Paul felt there were great tracks on but there were some softish areas." He added that McCartney had relished being back with a steady band, which allowed them to capture the rawness and spontaneity of The Beatles. "There's an adrenaline feel on a lot of those [Beatles] tracks – we

REPORTS INDICATE A DISAGREEMENT, DURING THE *PRESS TO PLAY* SESSIONS, WITH MCCARTNEY ENQUIRING "WHEN DID YOU LAST WRITE A NO. 1?"



In Tokyo: it would be the 1990s before McCartney returned to the country



© Getty Images

HIS BRAVE FACE

THAT DRUGS BUST IN JAPAN

Paul McCartney's arrival at Tokyo's Narita International Airport on January 16, 1980, marked his first visit to Japan since The Beatles' tour of 1966. He was there for a planned 11-city concert tour by Wings; instead, he spent nine days in the Tokyo Narcotics Detention Centre after customs officials found roughly eight ounces (200g) of cannabis in his luggage. He would later insist to Japanese authorities that it was intended solely for his personal use, but the quantity was large enough to warrant a smuggling charge and a possible seven-year prison sentence.

He'd already had previous when it came to marijuana — he'd been busted in Stockholm in 1972 and fined a year later for growing cannabis on his farm in Scotland — and historically he'd had visa issues getting into Japan because of this. So what possessed him to, well, possess drugs on this trip?

"It happened because we got some good grass in America and no one could face putting it down the toilet," he said later. "It was an absolutely crazy move. We knew we weren't going to get any in Japan. Anybody else would have given it to their roadies, but I didn't want them to take the rap. It was lying on top of the bloody suitcase. I'll never forget the guy's face as he pulled it out. He almost put it back. He just did not want the embarrassment."

McCartney endured "nine days of turmoil" as a result, during which he barely slept, and when he did, he had nightmares. But after a couple of days his natural Scouse wit and determination to knuckle under and get on with it enabled him to survive.

During his stay in Japanese stir, he had to do as the regular prisoners did: clean his cell with a reed brush every morning and fold up his bedding and blanket before being allowed to wash and brush his teeth. The highlight of his day was a fog break when he was allowed to speak to other prisoners. It was during these breaks that he befriended a Marxist student who was there for "social unrest" and a murderous gangster with a giant tattoo on his back. He started, as he put it, to "become one of the lads".

Fortunately, the authorities saw sense and realised that having one of the most famous men on earth within their walls was probably more trouble than it was worth, and so he was deported after a week and a half, without charge. When he got home, his wife Linda told him that he'd "become institutionalised". He'd also seen the light: instead of keeping the band going, he would instead pursue a solo career. It was the final flight for Wings.

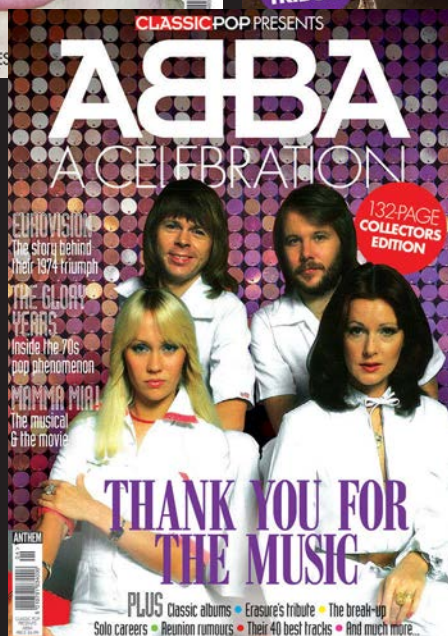
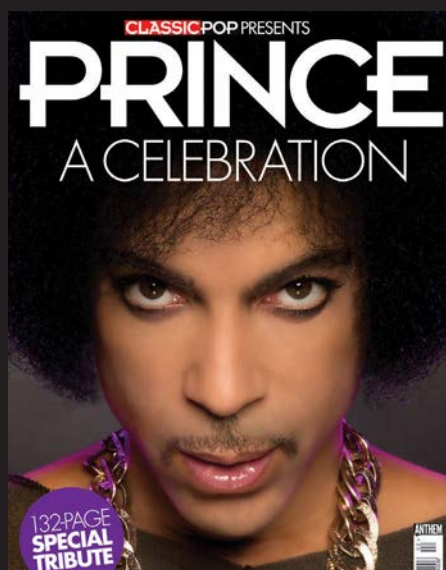
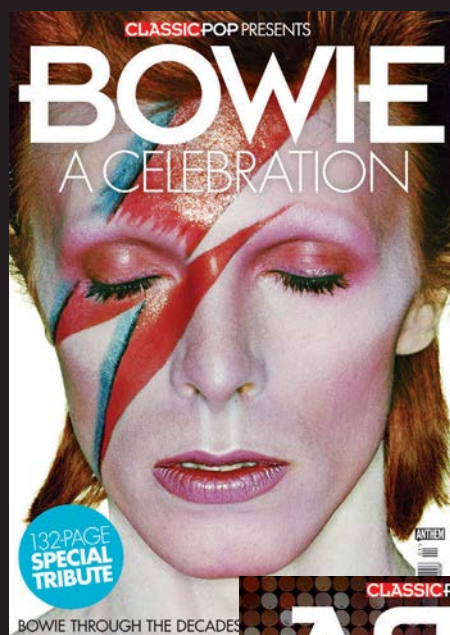
wanted to recreate that feel," Stewart said. "So we sat down in the studio with myself on acoustic or electric, Paul on acoustic or bass, Jerry Marotta on the kit, and we just played the backing tracks through, the three of us. There's a lovely spontaneity you can get that way. I think Paul enjoyed working with a band again. I think it was George Martin who said he didn't want to produce an album with Paul, he wanted him to go back to a group situation. I think it worked."

Whatever the various frictions and dramas behind the scenes, the finished product was fine mid-Eighties pop-rock of the sort that the likes of Collins and Gabriel, those dozens of gated reverb, were making at the time. Opener *Stranglehold* was rockabilly-ish, drenched in reverb and echo. *Good Times Coming/Feel The Sun* was Police-y white reggae. *Talk More Talk* evinced the influence of Talking Heads. *Footprints* was atmospheric. *Only Love Remains* was a gentle but not mawkish ballad that built to a powerful crescendo. *Press* was sprightly and deserving of single release, even if it did perform weakly, peaking at No. 25 in the UK, despite an effervescent video showing McCartney riding the tube and interacting with delighted passengers. *Pretty Little Head*, another failed single, was adult oriented tribal rock pop with treated voices and strange lyrics ("Hillmen come down from the lava/ Forging across the mighty river flow"). *Move Over Busker* featured Carlos Alomar overdubbed on electric guitar, perhaps why the track evokes Eighties David Bowie. *Angry* was a fiery dart aimed at the music press, while closer *However Absurd* was a Beatlesque anthemic ballad with a metallic coda. These days, *Press To Play* — which fared less well than its predecessors in the charts — has its fans, some regarding it as a triumph of adventurous studio-play, while detractors dismiss it as a nadir of Eighties production excess.

Reeling from the poor commercial performance of, and largely hostile critical reaction to, *Press To Play*, McCartney proceeded to spend the next three years searching for another collaborator and working on the follow-up album: 1989's *Flowers In The Dirt*. It featured the input of several producers — including Mitchell Froom, Steve Lipson, Chris Hughes and Trevor Horn — and saw him team up with another acerbic Scouser, Elvis Costello (see page 62). Apart from that, there was *Choba B CCCP* (literally *Back In The USSR*), originally released in 1988 only in the Soviet Union, which contained 18 covers, mainly of rock'n'roll oldies, recorded over the course of two days. In 1989, he joined forces with fellow Merseysiders Gerry Marsden (of Gerry & The Pacemakers) and Holly Johnson, formerly of Frankie Goes To Hollywood, to record an updated version of *Ferry Cross The Mersey* for the Hillsborough disaster appeal fund. That same year, in September, he launched The Paul McCartney World Tour, his first live foray in over a decade, since Wings' UK Tour 1979 and his first appearances in North America in 13 years, since the Wings Over America Tour. The 1990 triple album, *Tripping The Live Fantastic*, contained select performances from the tour, and included a lot of material from his Beatles days. The implication was that McCartney was finally ready to embrace his past while always, of course, having one eye firmly on the future. ■

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A photograph of Michael Jackson performing on stage. He is wearing a white, sequined shirt and a white skirt, holding a microphone in his right hand and gesturing with his left. The background is dark with colorful stage lights in shades of pink, green, and blue.

Michael Jackson: "It was lots of throwing stuff at each other, and making jokes"

© Getty Images

MCCARTNEY WITH...

MICHAEL JACKSON

OF ALL PAUL MCCARTNEY'S COLLABORATIONS, THE ONE FOR WHICH HE'LL BE BEST REMEMBERED IS WITH JOHN LENNON – BUT HE DIDN'T DO TOO BADLY WITH MICHAEL JACKSON

PAUL LESTER

It made sense for Paul McCartney to work with Michael Jackson: one of the members of the biggest rock band in history joining forces with the most famous entertainer on the planet. They first met at a party in 1975 to mark the completion of Wings' album *Venus And Mars*, aboard a retired ocean liner in Hollywood. As Tom Doyle recounts in his excellent book, *Man On the Run: Paul McCartney In The 1970s*, the cream of the music and movie worlds was there, including Bob Dylan, Marvin Gaye, Cher, Led Zeppelin, Dean Martin and Tony Curtis. McCartney was excited to meet the former child star. Shaking hands, the ex-Beatle told him, "You know, I've written a song for you." That song was *Girlfriend*, which McCartney proceeded to sing to Jackson in front of the assembled revellers.

Jackson didn't take the gift straight away. What happened instead was that McCartney recorded *Girlfriend* himself, for Wings' 1978 album, *London Town*. A year later, however, this mellifluous number was mooted by producer Quincy Jones for possible inclusion on Jackson's 1979 album *Off The Wall*. And so it became a track on side two of Jackson's breakthrough LP, as well as its fifth hit when, minus its original middle-eight, it was issued as a UK-only single release in 1980.

The following year, Jackson phoned McCartney out of the blue at his Sussex farm. "It was Christmas and I was at home, and my phone rang, and a little voice talked to me," McCartney related. "And I said, [suspiciously] 'Who's this?' [Tiny little squeaky voice] 'It's Michael.' 'Michael who?' Anyway, he said, 'Do you want to make some hits?' So I said, 'Yeah, sure.' You know, being of the hit-making variety... so we did and it was really nice. He came to my house, he got to know the family... we had a really good time, made a couple of records together..."

The first of those records was *Say Say Say*. Recording took place in two studios, over the course of a year: AIR in London in 1981 and Cherokee in Hollywood in 1982. At the time, McCartney was recording *Tug Of War*, although *Say Say Say* – and a further track, *The Man* – both wound up on his next album, 1983's *Pipes Of Peace*. For *Say Say Say*, Jackson provided many of the lyrics while McCartney handled the lion's share of the instrumental duties, and production was courtesy of George Martin. The latter spoke highly of Jackson's contributions, even if they were hard to quantify, talking in glowing terms about his "aura" and his "firm ideas".

Say Say Say was a song about a lovelorn fellow and a coolly detached female, and although it didn't

automatically seem designed for the duet format, Macca and Jacko's verses did posit them respectively as the reasonable one ("Don't play games with my affection") and the desperate one ("Standing here, baptised in all my tears").

Still, for all its structural flimsiness, it worked, possibly because at that moment Jackson was riding the crest of a phenomenal wave as a result of the stratospheric success of *Thriller*. *Say Say Say* reached No. 1 in the States in December 1983, giving the once and future King of Pop seven Top 10 singles that year, including three No. 1s: *Say Say Say*, *Billie Jean* and *Beat It*. It stayed at pole position for six weeks, keeping another "Say" song – *Say It Isn't So* by Hall & Oates – off the top spot. It also gave George Martin his 22nd US No. 1 hit as a producer, his previous chart-topper being another team-up: 1982's *Ebony And Ivory*. The video, directed by Bob Giraldi (who worked on Jackson's *Beat It* and, later, Lionel Richie's *Hello*), was a fun affair set in the 1800s in which the two stars played a pair of conmen fleecing passers-by to part with their cash for a bottle of wonder potion. Linda McCartney and LaToya Jackson both appeared in the video, and McCartney and Jackson were both required to act. It had a happy moralistic ending, with the protagonists turning out to be Robin Hood types, stealing money to give to an orphanage where they also entertained the kids.

McCartney and Jackson's next collaboration from this time was *The Girl Is Mine*. This one was a proper duet, in which our two heroes duked it out for the right to win the heart of the titular female. The closing breakdown saw them going at it, ribbing each other, to mildly humorous effect: "Michael, we're not going to fight about this, okay." "Paul, I think I told you, I'm a lover not a fighter." "I've heard it all before, Michael, she told me that I'm her forever lover", and so forth. Meanwhile, the music was recorded by Jackson and McCartney at Westlake Studios, LA, in April 1982, while apparently Jackson completed the lyrics as he watched cartoons with McCartney.

It was Quincy Jones who urged Michael to write a song about two men arguing over a girl. "I sang exactly what I heard in my head, starting with the melody and the keyboard and the strings and everything," said Jackson, who described it as "one of my favourite songs to record of all of my recordings as a solo artist" and emphasised the fun he and McCartney had. "It was like lots of kibitzing and playing, and throwing stuff at each other, and making jokes," he said.

Many critics, however, didn't think *The Girl Is Mine* was much fun at all. In fact, they thought it was saccharine MOR pabulum, and accused McCartney of rendering Jackson's vibrant R&B mawkish. The presence of four members of Toto – David Paich (piano), Steve Lukather (guitar), Jeff Porcaro (drums) and Steve Porcaro (synthesiser programming) – on the track confirmed its worrying easy-listening credentials. The press – and, to be fair, longtime fans of Jackson – assumed that, given the bland nature of the first single from *Thriller*, the album wouldn't sell as well as its predecessor *Off The Wall*.

Actually, in its very safeness, *The Girl Is Mine* was a highly prudent first choice as single, lulling mainstream America into a false sense of aural security in a way that the more rhythmically startling *Billie Jean* or sonically abrasive *Beat It*

wouldn't have done. Issued in October 1982, with a cover photograph taken by Linda McCartney, *The Girl Is Mine* reached No. 8 in the UK, No. 2 in the US and No. 1 in the US R&B chart, making McCartney the only Beatle ever to top said chart.

If Jackson was on a commercial roll, McCartney was on a creative one, penning some of his best post-Beatles material for *Tug Of War* and *Pipes Of Peace*. It was for the latter that Jackson and McCartney produced their third and final collaborative work: *The Man*, a sprightly pop-rocker with a pretty melody, a lavish arrangement including pizzicato strings, disco handclaps, a chorus to die for and a sizzling guitar solo worthy of early Seventies Isley Brothers.

Sadly, the McCartney-Jackson relationship "fell apart", in the former's words, after Jackson asked the ex-Beatle for "business advice" during the recording of *Say Say Say*. As he told chat-show king David Letterman, the first piece of advice McCartney gave him was to get into music publishing. Jackson's eyes lit up. "He looked at me," said McCartney, "and went [smiling mischievously], 'I'm gonna get yours!'" McCartney presumed he was joking, but it turned out to be true: Michael Jackson soon owned the rights to The Beatles' lucrative catalogue, buying a 50 percent stake in Northern Songs from ATV Publishing.

McCartney was stung by what he regarded as a betrayal, saying, "I think it's dodgy to do something like that, to be someone's friend and then buy the rug they're standing on." In the wake of Jackson's death, however, he generously allowed: "He was a lovely man, massively talented, and we miss him. I feel privileged to have hung out and worked with him. His music will be remembered forever and my memories of our time together will be happy ones." ■

LITTLE WONDER

PAIR-SHAPED

According to industry bible *Billboard*, of the 40 biggest duets of all time, three feature Paul McCartney. First, there is his team-up with Michael Jackson, *The Girl Is Mine*, at No. 32. Then at No. 4 is *Ebony And Ivory*, his collaboration with Stevie Wonder, which spent seven weeks at the top of the Hot 100, making it the longest-running solo No. 1 for either McCartney or Wonder; for all the critical brickbats hurled in its direction, this lachrymose paean to racial harmony resonates in this Brexit/Trump age. Meanwhile, at No. 2 in the *Billboard* Biggest Duets rundown – sandwiched between Brandy & Monica's nu-R&B classic *The Boy Is Mine* and Diana Ross & Lionel Richie's gloopy ballad *Endless Love* – is *Say Say Say*, whose six weeks at the top suggested a union made in heaven. Sadly, the row over ownership of the majority of The Beatles' catalogue meant that this perfect partnership was forever tarnished, even if McCartney was conciliatory about Jackson after his death.

McCartney and Jackson in the studio, early Eighties



© Getty Images

Love and Liverpool

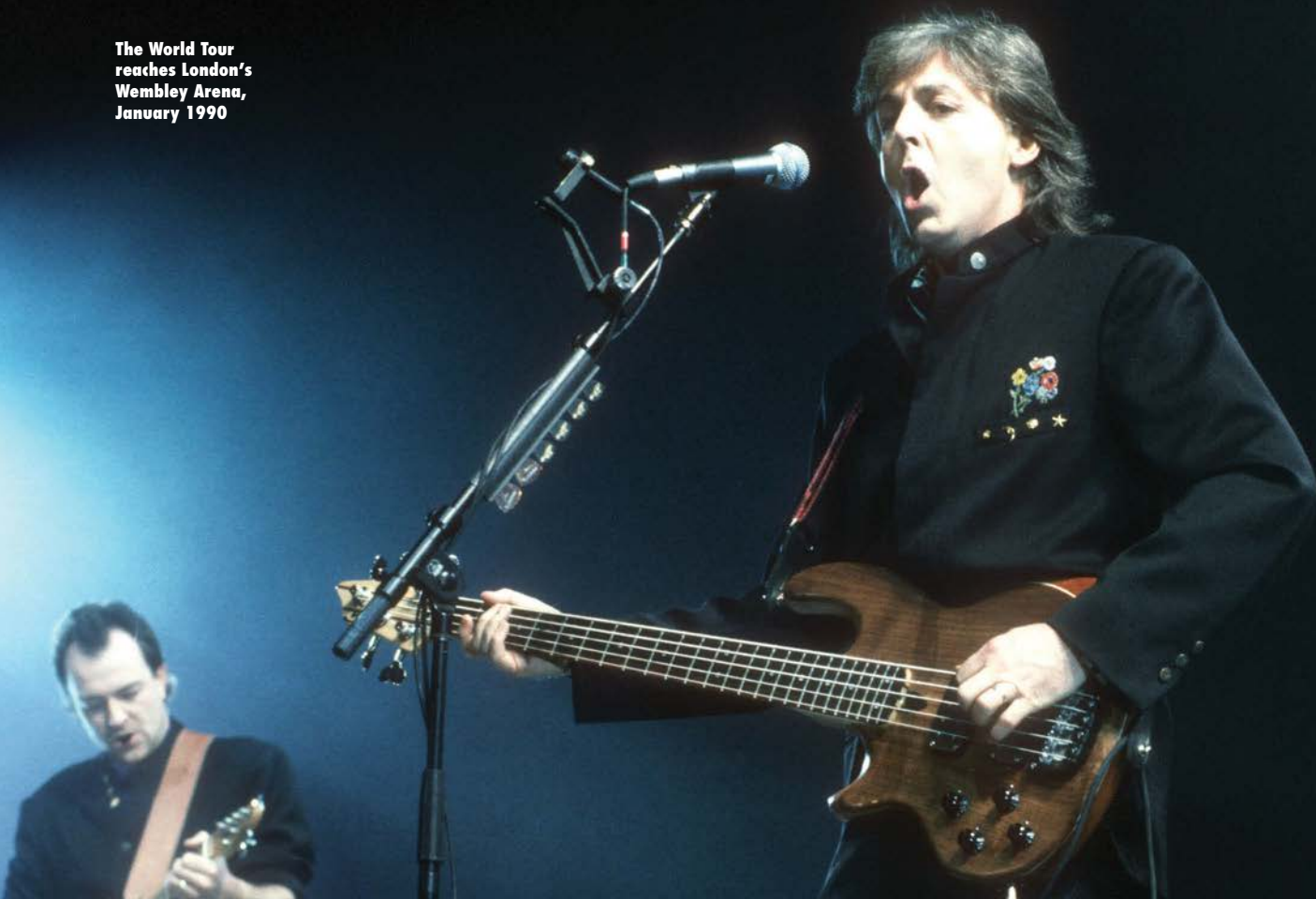
THE NINETIES WOULD
BE THE DECADE OF
PAUL MCCARTNEY'S
VINDICATION.
ARMED WITH A
NEWFOUND SENSE OF
EXPERIMENTALISM, HE
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MOST INTERESTING AND
ECLECTIC WORK – THOUGH
TRAGEDY LAY AHEAD...

MARK LINDORES

With his Hofner violin bass symbolically back in favour, the Nineties would find McCartney more at ease with his Beatles past



The World Tour
reaches London's
Wembley Arena,
January 1990



© Getty Images

Having embarked on his first major tour in a decade, Paul McCartney began the Nineties with a rapturous reception to his homecoming when the Paul McCartney World Tour arrived in the UK for multiple dates in Birmingham and London in January 1990. Although it was envisioned to promote his 1989 *Flowers In The Dirt* album, the tour boasted an abundance of Beatles classics, an indication that Paul was beginning to reclaim his musical legacy after a decade in which his contribution to many of those songs

had been diminished by many in the elevation to "martyrdom" of John Lennon following his tragic death.

As well as realising how much the Beatles catalogue meant to him, McCartney was unexpectedly overwhelmed by the reaction of the audiences, many of whom, of course, were experiencing the songs live for the first time. "Of course the songs are personal and I know what and who they're about, but I don't think about that when I'm performing them," he told MTV. "When I play them live I look out and I see people in the audience and see what the songs mean to them, the way they look at each other and interact with each other... it is very moving."

Performing for almost three million fans at 108 shows and breaking records for the biggest paying audience ever (over 184,000 people in Rio de Janeiro), the Paul McCartney World Tour (also

dubbed the "Get Back Tour") was a resounding success – not only on a commercial level but also personally, since it helped to reignite his passion for live performance.

The tour was documented on the *Tripping The Light Fantastic* live album and on VHS as *Get Back*, a concert film directed by longtime Beatles associate Richard Lester. *From Rio To Liverpool*, a documentary of Paul's Liverpool show, was also filmed, and then screened on Channel 4. The concert took place

before 50,000 fans at Liverpool's King's Dock, and McCartney described the show as "one of the greatest moments of my career."

Having toured the world's grandest and biggest venues, Paul next went back to basics when he agreed to perform a set for MTV Unplugged in January 1991. At this point it was a fledgling show that gave coverage largely to unknown and up-and-coming acts, so McCartney's appearance helped popularise the format and set it on the path to becoming the phenomenon it was destined to be, with career-defining sets from the likes of Nirvana, Mariah Carey, Eric Clapton and R.E.M.

It was a complete polar opposite of his mammoth world tour, but McCartney embodied the essence of Unplugged. He chose a set consisting of rarely-heard songs from his formative years (*I Lost My Little Girl*), covers that had been influential in shaping

"WHEN I PLAY LIVE I LOOK OUT AND
SEE PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE AND SEE
WHAT THE SONGS MEAN TO THEM...
IT'S VERY MOVING"

POP UP The 1989-1990 World Tour provided a wealth of memories for Beatles fans. The encores even concluded with the perfect Abbey Road coda of *Golden Slumbers*, *Carry That Weight* and *The End*



1990s

Paul and Linda's partnership was, wrote biographer Philip Norman, "the happiest and most durable in pop"



© Getty Images



Paul arrives for the performance of the Liverpool Oratorio at Carnegie Hall, New York, November 1991

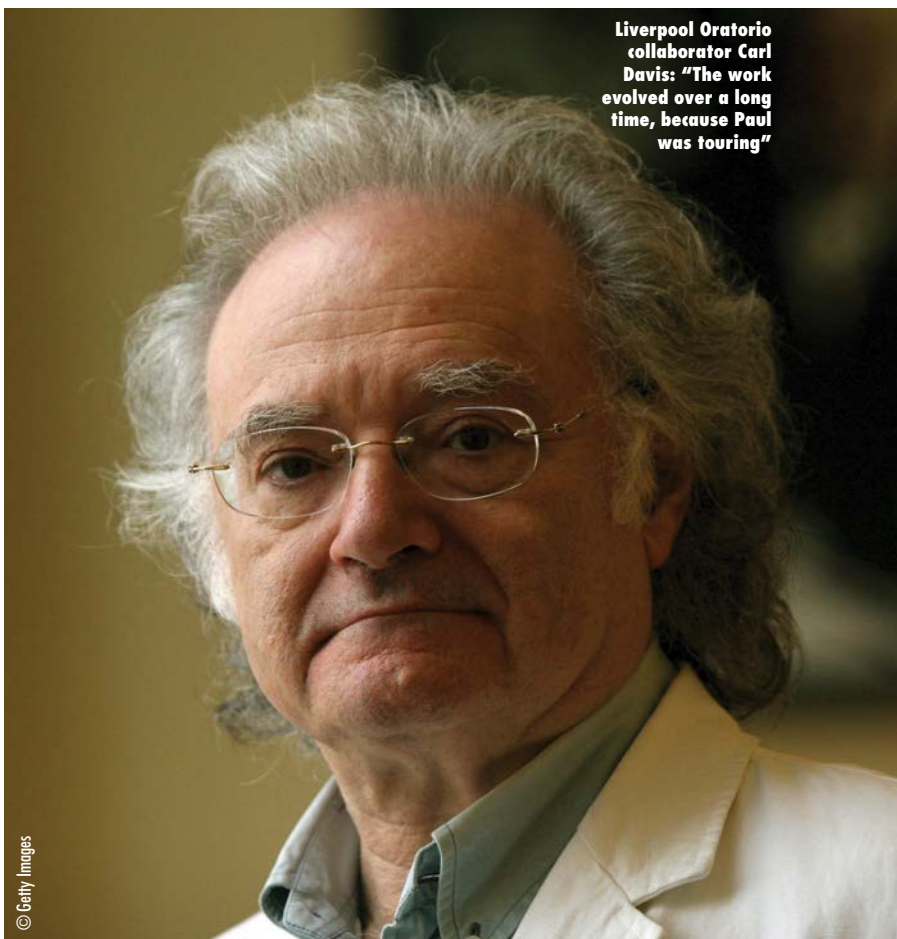
his musical identity (Gene Vincent's *Be-Bop-A-Lula*, Jesse Fuller's *San Francisco Blues*) and a crowd-pleasing smattering of stripped-back versions of fan favourites (*Here, There And Everywhere*, *We Can Work It Out*). He became one of the first artists to capitalise on an MTV Unplugged performance when the set was released as an album, *Unplugged: The Official Bootleg* the following May, promoted by six secret gigs in tiny venues. The album reached No. 7 in the UK and became his biggest-selling US album since *Tug Of War* in 1982.

With the reaction to his Liverpool concert one of his abiding memories of the tour, Paul used his hometown as the backdrop to his next venture, which was a complete departure from anything he'd attempted previously. Almost three decades after The Beatles changed the musical landscape by integrating strings and classical music into pop music, he was thrilled to be asked to contribute to the 150th anniversary celebrations of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and enlisted his friend, composer/conductor Carl Davis to collaborate on it with him, feeling worried that it was too ambitious a project to take on by himself.

As work began on the project, Paul and Carl were so inspired that the merging of their musical influences lead to the piece becoming a much bigger entity than they had originally envisioned. "They only asked us for something for their 150th anniversary of the orchestra, you know. We could have just given them a little string quartet, three minutes... thank you very much and happy birthday," McCartney said in the documentary filmed during its creation. "It's only just beginning to dawn on me that we've bitten off something fairly big here: one and a half hours, eight movements with the full kitchen sink."

The Liverpool Oratorio was unveiled in two performances at Liverpool Anglican Cathedral in June 1991, to mark the orchestra's anniversary. The story of a Liverpool native, Shanty, born in 1942 (the same year as McCartney), the piece follows Shanty's life, examining his relationships and his roles as a son, husband and father. Featuring classical singers Kiri Te Kanawa, Sally Burgess, Jerry Hadley and Willard White, the piece became a commercial success, with the accompanying album topping the classical charts and the Liverpool Oratorio going on to be performed around the world. The critical reception, however, was brutal, with most of the reviews unanimously agreeing that Paul should "stick to the day job". Unbeknownst to them, he was already hard at work on his next album, demoing songs on his Sony Walkman.

Keen to get back out on the road, McCartney began working in earnest on his next studio album later that year. While *Flowers In The Dirt* had been a revitalising experience due to the collaboration with Elvis Costello and the fresh perspective of a variety of producers, the decision to co-produce the entirety of *Off The Ground* with Julian Mendelsohn and rehearse each track before cutting it in one take with his touring band proved ill-judged, with many of the songs sounding half-baked rather than capturing the raw energy they were aiming for. "They're all good players, so we can make a good little noise just with the six of us. That was the idea: a simple little band album rather than anything very produced or complicated," Paul said.



Liverpool Oratorio collaborator Carl Davis: "The work evolved over a long time, because Paul was touring"

"IT'S BEGINNING TO DAWN ON ME THAT WE'VE BITTEN OFF SOMETHING FAIRLY BIG HERE – ONE AND A HALF HOURS, EIGHT MOVEMENTS, THE FULL KITCHEN SINK"

Tellingly, two of the album's highlights, *Mistress And Maid* and *The Lovers That Never Were*, were Costello co-writes left over from the *Flowers In The Dirt* sessions. The album's political leanings and strong social commentary proved off-putting for many. The McCartneys had become increasingly vocal about their stance on environmental issues, animal welfare and vegetarianism (Linda had launched her range of vegetarian foods in 1991), and this infiltrated Paul's music more than ever before on this album, with *Looking For Changes*, *Hope Of Deliverance* and *C'Mon People* (as well as singles B-sides *Long Leather Coat* and *Big Boys Bickering*) all tackling social issues.

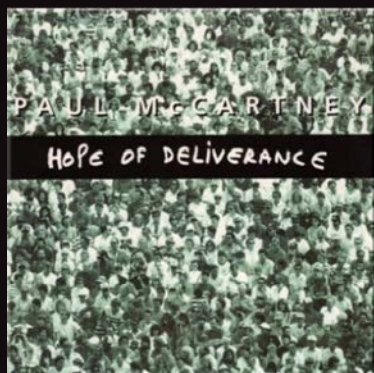
Those themes remained prevalent when Paul hit the road in support of *Off The Ground* on his New World Tour on 18th February 1993, just two weeks after the album's release. Fans were given "Go veggie" leaflets as they entered the concerts and graphic footage of vivisection and animal cruelty was played on video screens prior to the shows.

Despite the lacklustre sales of the album and its failure to produce a big hit single – *Hope Of Deliverance* and *C'Mon People* were only minor hits – the tour spanned the remainder of 1993 and was a huge success, affirming McCartney's continuing draw as a live act. As with his previous tour, Paul delved back into the Beatles catalogue for the setlist

POP UP The world premiere of the Oratorio got off to the worst possible start when Carl Davis lifted his baton – and every light in Liverpool Cathedral immediately blew. "I was horrified!" said Davis



Key Recordings



HOPE OF DELIVERANCE

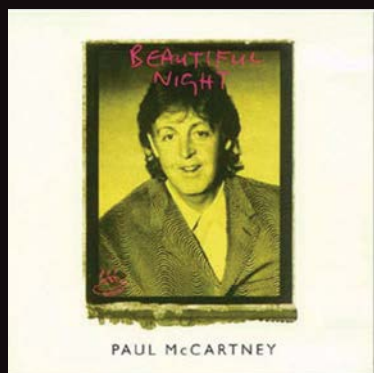
Hope Of Deliverance was released in December 1992 as the lead single from the album, which followed in February 1993. Although the song pre-empted *Off The Ground*'s social theme, it does so in a very subtle way; in fact it ultimately comes off as an uplifting track, thanks not only to its shuffling Latin rhythm but also its refrain of "We live in hope of deliverance from the darkness that surrounds us", making it a highlight of the New World Tour in 1993 (it was reintroduced on 2012's Out There Tour).

The song peaked at No. 18 in the UK, making it McCartney's highest-charting solo single of the Nineties. It was also a big hit throughout Europe and South America but flopped in the US, where it peaked at No. 83. The single's B-sides, *Long Leather Coat* and *Big Boys Bickering*, are among his most aggressive and politically-charged songs.



FREE AS A BIRD

Deciding to include new music in the Beatles *Anthology* project, Paul, George and Ringo stuck to their pledge that they would only ever release Beatles music featuring all four members. George Harrison and the former Beatles road manager Neil Aspinall contacted Yoko Ono to ask for unreleased Lennon songs, and when Paul McCartney inducted John Lennon into the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame in New York she gave him a cassette containing four tunes. Deciding *Free As A Bird* was the strongest of the four, Paul, George, Ringo and Jeff Lynne took the demo and wrote and recorded new lyrics to complete the first Beatles single in 25 years. It was released to promote the first *Anthology* album in December 1995, selling over 120,000 copies in its first week, though it was prevented from hitting the top spot by Michael Jackson's *Earth Song*.



BEAUTIFUL NIGHT

After immersing himself in all things Beatles to work on compiling the *Anthology* project, the influence was all over 1997's *Flaming Pie* album, McCartney's strongest in years, with *Beautiful Night* one of the standouts. It was released as the third and final single from the album in December 1997 and reached No. 25 in the UK. A rough version of the song had been written a decade earlier in 1986 and had been featured on McCartney's *Oobu Joobu* radio show. When it came to working on *Flaming Pie*, he revisited the track and had Ringo Starr play drums before heading to Abbey Road to add a George Martin string arrangement. The beauty of the song and its lyric was captured in a stunning video by director Julien Temple. As well as Paul, Ringo and the band Spud, the video was the last to feature Linda; it was shot just months before her death.



NO OTHER BABY

Throughout his career, McCartney had always harboured a desire to release a back-to-basics album of rock'n'roll covers as a tribute to the artists that had inspired him in his formative years. Having never got round to it in Linda's lifetime, he promised her that he would record it shortly before her death in 1998. It is in this context which makes his rendition of The Vipers' *No Other Baby* so utterly heart-wrenching, with the absolute desolation and loneliness of the song evident in Paul's vocal delivery. As if the song itself didn't capture Paul's despair, the sombre black and white video in which he is cast adrift at sea in a rowing boat hammers home his melancholic state at the time. Released in October 1999, *No Other Baby* was the only single to be released from the *Run Devil Run* album and reached No. 42 in the UK singles chart.

alongside songs from *Off The Ground* and a liberal helping of Wings and solo classics.

As with the Paul McCartney World Tour, the New World Tour was released as a live album, no doubt intended as a Christmas stocking filler, in November 1993. Notable mainly for its *Abbey Road*-referencing cover art and its allusions to the "Paul McCartney is dead" conspiracy theories, *Paul Is Live* failed to set the charts alight, peaking at No. 34 in the UK. As his third live album in as many years, the limited success of *Paul Is Live* indicated that fans wanted something a bit different from him. However, few could have predicted that an ambient dance album was next on the agenda.

With a huge world tour under his belt, Paul returned to work on a project that had emerged from the *Off The Ground* sessions. He had originally contacted producer Youth to remix some songs from the album for a series of 12" singles, but Youth had other ideas. "I didn't think it appropriate to remix any of the *Off The Ground* tracks the way I'd been briefed," Youth said. "I thought it would be better to do a more conceptual thing – that is, rather than remix a track, I thought we should deconstruct the album into samples and then construct a new mix from those. And Paul liked the idea. He was into it, so I went for it."

After hearing what Youth had produced, Paul loved the results and went into the studio to record new music and add some vocals, expanding the project into a full-length album. Released under the alias of The Fireman, *Strawberries Oceans Ships Forest* was universally praised by critics, who lauded Paul's willingness to experiment musically and embrace an avant-garde sensibility which rivalled anything John Lennon had produced.

By 1994, those persistent Beatles reunion rumours were weighing heavily and their influence on the musical landscape was more pronounced than ever in artists such as Oasis, Crowded House, George Michael, Primal Scream and R.E.M. Even Take That, Britain's biggest boyband since The Beatles themselves performed a Beatles medley, a long-time staple of their live show, at the 1994 Brit Awards.

In 1995, it was announced that Paul, George and Ringo, together with George Martin and Yoko Ono, were reuniting, but only to work together on The Beatles *Anthology* – the definitive documentary about the group which would also spawn a book and three double albums of rarities spanning their career. Airing in November 1995, the documentary proved hugely successful due to its inclusion of new, first person accounts from the surviving members of the group alongside precious, previously unseen footage of the band.

Immediately following the broadcast, *Anthology 1* was released, selling over 840,000 copies in its first week of release worldwide. However, it peaked at No. 2 in the UK, behind Robson & Jerome's eponymous debut album. The album was preceded by *Free As A Bird*, the first Beatles single in 25 years, which was crafted by Paul, George and Ringo with Jeff Lynne taking on the technically challenging role of producer from a demo recorded by John Lennon in 1977. Released in December 1995, the single peaked at No. 2 in the UK.

The Beatles *Anthology* campaign was played out over the next 18 months, with *Anthology 2* released the following in March 1996 (together with

1 9 9 0 s

The New World
Tour, Earls Court,
September 1993 – a
gig that opened with
Drive My Car and
closed with *Hey Jude*



© Getty Images

1990s

Daughter Stella
adds her pointed
comment to Paul's
Rock and Roll Hall of
Fame induction



© Getty Images



Take That at the Brit Awards 1994, where they performed a Beatles medley

another completed Lennon demo, *Real Love* as a single) and the third and final instalment in October 1996. Paul also included further demos and rarities extending into his solo career and Wings material on *Oobu Joobu*, a radio show he created.

While Beatlemania was enjoying a resurgence, Paul was experiencing great highs and lows in his personal life. In 1995, he was left devastated when wife Linda was diagnosed with breast cancer, and used his time out of the spotlight to support her as she underwent treatment.

Meanwhile, he was relishing his role as proud father as daughter Stella graduated Central Saint Martins to

emerge as a hugely successful fashion designer, landing the feted job of designer at fashion house Chloe before launching her own label. On March 11th 1997, Stella and her siblings accompanied Paul to Buckingham Palace to see their father receive his knighthood as Linda was too ill to attend. While the term "rock royalty" had long been applied to him, he was now officially Sir Paul.

Having been immersed in a Beatles bubble while compiling the Beatles Anthology and instructed not to release a new album during the Anthology campaign, Paul had been steadily gathering new songs over a number of years. With no definite deadline, he took a much more relaxed approach to making music, enjoying the time and creative

freedom to experiment with song ideas and allowing them to grow. The nostalgic *The World Tonight* and *The Song We Were Singing*, the bluesy *Used To Be Bad* and gloriously melodic *Heaven On A Sunday* were just some of the standouts on *Flaming Pie*, his strongest album in years.

With contributions from Sir George Martin and Ringo Starr and with Jeff Lynne helming much of the production, it was also his most Beatles-sounding album so far. "After The Beatles broke up we all

went off and tried to sound as unlike The Beatles as we could," Paul told MTV. "But as time went on we came to understand that that was our sound and if we don't use

it, someone else will. I have a nostalgia for those records – I like the sound and the simplicity of them and I'm not frightened to make a Paul McCartney record that sounds like a Beatles record anymore."

Released on 5th May 1997, *Flaming Pie* was warmly received by fans and critics alike, with the album receiving glowing reviews and strong sales, held off the top spot in the UK and the US only by the Spice Girls. Due to Linda's illness, Paul didn't tour the album, instead promoting it with the *In The World Tonight* documentary and participating in an online chat, setting a Guinness World Record for the most people in an online chatroom at one time.

While previous albums had been followed by mammoth global treks to promote them, Paul

"WE ALL TRIED TO SOUND AS UNLIKE THE BEATLES AS WE COULD, BUT AS TIME WENT ON WE CAME TO UNDERSTAND THAT WAS OUR SOUND"

POP UP The 1997 album's title came from a Lennon quote. "A man appeared in a flaming pie and said unto them, 'From this day on, you are Beatles with an A'. 'Thank you Mister Man,' they said, thanking him"



Sir Paul McCartney
emerges from
Buckingham Palace,
November 3, 1997

© Getty Images



spent that time being as prolific as ever in the studio working on both new classical music and a second album with Youth as The Fireman.

Released in October 1997, *Standing Stone* was very different from its predecessor. In the same way that the Liverpool Oratorio had been a collaboration with Carl Davis, someone else was again heavily involved; this time Paul composed the music on the piano, and his pieces were then transcribed and expanded into full orchestral and choral arrangements

by jazz musician Steve Lodder. With a narrative loosely based on the creation of the humankind, *Standing*

Stone was launched at London's Royal Albert Hall in October 1997, a performance attended by Paul with Linda, making her first public appearance since her battle with breast cancer. Appearing in good spirits, happily posing for photographs, the pair then travelled to Paris to attend Stella's debut fashion show for Chloe. The appearances would be among the last of Paul and Linda together in public; the tragic news of Linda's death was announced on April 17th 1998, leaving Paul bereft.

As McCartney struggled to come to terms with the loss of his soulmate (they had spent only one night apart in their 29-year marriage), he threw himself into projects in memoriam of Linda. *Rushes*, a second Fireman album he had recorded prior

to her death, was released without any fanfare or promotion in October 1998, while the same month saw the appearance of *Wide Prairie*, a compilation of solo Linda songs recorded between 1972 and 1998. Paul and Linda had been working on the album, dusting off demos and recording new material, but hadn't managed to complete it before her death. In honour of his wife, Paul finished the album as he grieved for her and released it posthumously on its originally-planned release date.

Paul made his first public appearance since Linda's death on 10th April 1999 at the Royal Albert Hall, which was playing host to A Concert For Linda, a benefit

show organised by Linda's close friends Carla Lane and Chrissie Hynde to benefit the animal welfare charities she had supported throughout her life. The line-up included George Michael, Elvis Costello, Sinéad O'Connor and Neil Finn, and Paul took to the stage in an unannounced appearance and delivered an emotionally-charged performance of The Beatles' *All My Loving* and *Let It Be* as well as Ricky Nelson's *Lonesome Town*, which had been one of the couple's favourite songs.

A studio version of *Lonesome Town* was included on *Run Devil Run*, Paul's 1999 album which consisted of 12 covers of Fifties rock'n'roll tracks popularised by Gene Vincent, Elvis Presley, Ricky Nelson, Carl Perkins, Chuck Berry and Little

PAUL THREW HIMSELF INTO PROJECTS IN MEMORIAM OF LINDA, INCLUDING *WIDE PRAIRIE*, A COMPILATION OF HER SOLO SONGS FROM 1972-1998

POP UP McCartney was undecided about accepting a knighthood. "But Bobby Charlton's attitude was 'I'm proud to be British', " he told *Esquire*. "And I thought, 'Yeah, that's the one'"





1 9 9 0 s

Chrissie Hynde joins
Paul during the
Here, There And
Everywhere tribute
concert for Linda,
April 1999



© Getty Images



McCartney back at the Cavern Club with his *Run Devil Run* rock'n'roll band

© Getty Images

Richard alongside three McCartney originals written in that style (*Try Not To Cry*, *What It Is* and *Run Devil Run*). Arriving after his intense mourning period, the sheer vibrancy of this unashamed rock record made for a strong statement; in fact, the album bristles with a raw energy unheard from McCartney since the early days of The Beatles.

Run Devil Run was recorded with a brief to thrash out the songs with as much spontaneity as possible. To this end, Paul and producer Chris Thomas assembled a band including Pink Floyd's David Gilmour. Also recruited were legendary Pirates guitarist Mick Green, keyboardists Pete Wingfield and Geraint Watkins, and Deep Purple's Ian Paice and Fairport Convention's Dave Mattacks on drums. Holed up in Abbey Road, the band ran through the songs a couple of times before recording them in a single take, with no post-production allowed. Paul's intention to get back to his roots was authenticated on 14th December 1999 when he went back to Liverpool to perform the album live at the Cavern Club.

As the world readied itself with a degree of optimism for the calendar to change, the end of the Nineties found Paul in reflective mode. As well as *Run Devil Run*, he released *Working Classical*, an album of interpretations of solo and Wings tracks plus a handful of new compositions. It had been a decade that had seen him fully embrace his musical past as well as explore new genres such as orchestral and ambient electronica, but the trauma of the past two years had seemingly taken its toll and saw him retreat to his hometown, back to where it all began, before contemplating the fresh start that the new millennium promised. ■

Rebel With A Cause

While Paul and Linda McCartney had long been staunch supporters of animal rights organisations and advocates of a vegetarian lifestyle, they promoted their beliefs on a much bigger scale in the Nineties, and when Linda launched her hugely successful range of vegetarian foods, she had her husband's full support. The pair had been vegetarian since the early Seventies when they retreated to their farm in Kintyre, Scotland following the break-up of The Beatles. As they raised horses and sheep on the farm, Paul claimed that he had an epiphany one day whilst seeing his animals roam freely as he tucked into a roast dinner.

Making the decision to give up meat, Paul and Linda worked to create a way to make vegetarianism more accessible, with Linda realising her dream in 1991 with the launch of Linda McCartney Foods. The range has remained one of the most popular ethical food ranges ever since, with Paul maintaining a strong involvement in the company following Linda's death.

"Over the years, because I had the luxury of Linda taking the front role on animal issues, some people would occasionally make out that I wasn't really committed and that I was a secret meat-eater in the background," he told *Animal Times* magazine. "I want people to be reassured that we're going to keep this torch burning."

As well as the food range, McCartney adopted a much more upfront approach in including his feelings about animal welfare in his work, beginning with *Looking For Changes* from 1993's *Off The Ground* album. "I thought, I'm coming up to 50, not much point in trying to be cutesy. So what do I really think about, what do I do, what do I spend my time on? Well, Friends Of The Earth, Peta, vegetarianism – how the world would be a much better place and be able to feed itself a lot better if we stopped eating meat," he said at the time.

When McCartney hit the road in support of that album on the New World Tour, anti-vivisection and animal cruelty leaflets were handed out and graphic footage was played on the video screens. Since then, Paul has campaigned against foxhunting and the fur trade and has remained a staunch supporter of Peta, appearing in ads for them, voicing their "If slaughterhouses had glass walls" documentary and introducing the "Meat Free Monday" concept. He also worked closely with the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection on the campaign to outlaw cosmetic testing on animals. As well as that, daughter Stella has succeeded in running a hugely successful fashion range which eschews animal products such as fur and leather, sourcing instead animal-free alternatives.

Elvis Costello: "I've seen quite eminent people completely lose their mind in his company"

© Getty Images

McCartney WITH...

ELVIS COSTELLO

THE ONE-TIME ATTRACTION WAS DETERMINED NOT TO BE STAR-STRUCK BY THE ONE-TIME BEATLE, AND THIS LIVERPUDLIAN PAIRING EXPOSED A RICH SEAM OF NEW SONGS...

IAN WADE

Paul McCartney was enjoying a very mixed Eighties. He was still capable of topping the charts with *Pipes of Peace* and *Ebony & Ivory* with Stevie Wonder, he'd worked with Michael Jackson on what was becoming one of the biggest albums of all time... but there were also the slight mis-steps of *The Frog Chorus* and *Give My Regards To Broad Street*, which long-time fans feared were muddying his legacy.

So in a bid to regain his mojo, in 1986, Paul McCartney invited Elvis Costello to work with him on a few numbers. The two met at McCartney's Hog Hill Mill Studio in East Sussex and worked on a handful of songs that emerged on each of their next albums. With Paul contributing to Costello's 1987 album *Spike* (on the tracks *Veronica* and *Pads, Paws And Claws*), and Elvis contributing to 1989's *Flowers In The Dirt* (*My Brave Face*, *You Want Her Too*, *Don't Be Careless Love* and *That Day Is Done*) as well as 1993's *Off The Ground* (*Mistress And Maid* and *The Lovers That Never Were*).

Various bootleg collections, and now MP3s, have been floating about ever since; the unofficial *McCartney/McManus Collection* was "released" in 1998, and featured covers of *Step Inside Love* and *You've Got To Hide Your Love Away*. Officially,

Flowers In The Dirt's 2017 CD-DVD deluxe reissue comes with a disc of the demos for *The Lovers That Never Were*, *Tommy's Coming Home*, *Twenty Fine Fingers*, *So Like Candy*, *You Want Her Too*, *That Day Is Done*, *Don't Be Careless Love*, *My Brave Face* and *Playboy To A Man*.

Although Costello was a lifelong fan of The Beatles – the first single he bought was *Please Please Me* – he kept his cool, as he told the *Washington Post*: "I've seen people, quite eminent people, completely lose their mind in his company. I didn't want to turn up and be kind of bothersome in that way. I wanted to get something good done. Something that justified the invitation." As for McCartney, "I do get a bit of that in life generally, but I've adapted, I've developed a way of trying to put people at ease that kind of eliminates the vast majority of this syndrome. With Elvis, I didn't need to do it. He's sensible enough to know that. We'd sit around and talk and have a cup of tea. By the time we got down to songwriting, we knew the deal." While there were references to how they worked together compared to Paul's previous collaborators, there was no danger, as Paul says, "You know, the bottom line is I've never had a better collaborator than John and I don't expect to. Because we were pretty hot."

Costello recalled the invitation to *Mojo* in 2011. "It was his manager of the time who suggested it. I took a train down to his studio near Rye and we just went to work. We brought bits and pieces of songs we had been working on that weren't quite complete."

During the sessions, Costello even convinced Paul to dig out his Hofner bass for the first time in years (it still had a Beatles set-list stuck on it). "I had sort of parked it," admitted Paul. "I had thought I'd outgrown it. I started playing it again and never really looked back. It's great that Elvis encouraged me to take it out."

Paul spoke to *Rolling Stone* about their writing relationship. "We would write in the same method that me and John used to write... I figured, in a way, he was being John. And for me, that was good and bad. He was a great foil to bounce off, but here's me, trying to avoid doing something too Beatle-y!"

"We wrote 12 songs in total, which is incredible to me. We wrote one called *Tommy's Coming Home Again*, which is a good song, and *So Like Candy* is pretty good. And I love *You Want Her Too* – a dialogue song. He said, 'You get all the snarky lines and I get all the nice lines!'"

Costello: "The real lost gem from that batch of songs – one of these days one of us should cut it – is *The Lovers That Never Were*. It was like something Dusty Springfield or Jackie DeShannon would have recorded. Paul straightened it out in the studio [for 1993's *Off The Ground* album] and wanted it to go a different way, but the demo is, I'd say, one of the great vocal performances of his solo career."

Now with the official release, you can hear how *The Lovers That Never Were* differs from the final version. "That was the one where I was aware it was good while we were doing it," recalls McCartney. "You'd have to go some way to beat that performance." In his 2015 autobiography *Unfaithful Music & Disappearing Ink*, Costello described *That Day Is Done* as "the unhappy sequel to *Veronica*".

When Costello and McCartney returned to the studio in 1988, it was under the proviso that Costello would produce – although with McCartney around, there was always going to be the occasional battle. When McCartney suggested a Human League-style backing to *That Day Is Done* rather than the New Orleans brass that Elvis had recommended, Costello had to go outside and calm himself down. Costello: "We'd sort of had a bit of a disagreement about another song and he said, 'Let's leave it for a minute and I'll just do some singing.' He went in, put the headphones on and sang that. I was like, 'Oh... I'll just shut up about what I think the other song should be like.' I can't compete with that."

Though the pair's collaboration fizzled out, they joined forces for their only live performance as a duo at a Royal College Of Music benefit in 1995; in the presence of Prince Charles, they played *Mistress And Maid* alongside *One After 909*. They would also cross paths again when McCartney was awarded the Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song in 2010 at the White House, and Costello performed *Penny Lane* to a star-studded crowd with luminaries such as the Obamas sitting next to Paul in the front row.

McCartney had wanted an album that he could head out on his first non-Wings tour with; "You're always thinking, 'Let's get some new songs and take them on tour' and you hope your new songs are going to work. Something like *My Brave Face*

would be a song that nobody knew at the start of the tour and then everybody knew it at the end, and it was a real high spot." When *Flowers In The Dirt* was released in June 1989, it was greeted enthusiastically as a return to form, and saw a vast improvement in star ratings. Elvis also enjoyed one of his biggest hits in the US with *Veronica*, peaking at No. 19 in their Hot 100, and *Spike* enjoyed a Top Five UK placing.

Looking back, McCartney believes the reason they parted ways was that he "didn't want to make an Elvis Costello album". Certainly, he wanted to try a couple of other producers (Mitchell Froom, Trevor Horn and Stephen Lipson) as well as work with different collaborators such as Pink Floyd guitarist David Gilmour and arranger Clare Fischer.

"It moved me forward, and it moved him forward," is McCartney's summary of the Scouse song summit. "That's the best you could hope for. I don't think either of us thought we were gonna become Lennon-McCartney Part Two." And what of those officially-released demos? "The energy and the performances on the demos were better, in some cases. That's really why we wanted to release them: for all the people who don't buy bootlegs."

However, it may not be the end; the pair are regularly in touch, and another collaboration isn't out of the question. "We got together not so long ago, in the last six, seven years, and said, 'We should do something with these,'" Costello revealed to *Mojo* in 2011. "We had half an idea to write a few more or tidy them up in some way. Both of us were working on other records, but somewhere there's a piece of paper with it all written out, a plan. He wrote it out twice. He handed me a copy, put a copy in a book and put it back on a shelf, like a contract." ■

LITTLE WONDER

ELVIS LOVES MACCA

Costello's adoration of McCartney and The Beatles is no secret. When Elvis first went on tour in the US and Europe without the Attractions in 1984, he would play *Baby's In Black* from *Beatles For Sale* regularly in the set. Lennon/McCartney's *Step Inside Love* was originally a hit for Cilla Black in 1968, and Elvis' version appeared on the CD single of his 1994 single *You Tripped At Every Step*, while his take of *You've Got To Hide Your Love Away* turned up on the seven-inch B-side (these days you can find them on his album *The Kojak Variety*). In 1985 he opened his slot at the London leg of Live Aid with *All You Need Is Love*, urging the crowd to sing along with "an old English folk song". Costello performed *All My Loving* with Paul at the Concert For Linda, held in 1999, and recalled that there was something incredibly poignant about the song's opening lyrics: "Close your eyes and I'll kiss you/ Tomorrow I'll miss you/ Remember I'll always be true".



Concert For Linda
at the Royal Albert
Hall, 1999

© Getty Images





BACK IN THE SUN

AFTER THE DEVASTATION OF LOSING LINDA AT THE END OF THE NINETIES, THE NEW MILLENNIUM HERALDED A DECADE OF CHANGES FOR PAUL MCCARTNEY, BOTH PERSONALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY – AND THERE WERE A FEW COSTLY MISTAKES LURKING AMIDST THE CHAOS AND THE CREATION...

MARK LINDORES



AS THE

Nineties had concluded with the worst 18 months of Paul's life following the death of Linda, he began the new millennium with a determined sense of optimism. Having enjoyed the musical shapeshifting he had been part of with his classical ventures, forays into dance and electronica and his own solo work, Paul was keen to further explore that avenue – and that optimism extended into his personal life with him confirming that he was dating former model and charity worker Heather Mills at her 32nd birthday party on 2 January 2000.

The pair had first met a year previously at the Pride Of Britain Awards, where Paul was presenting an award named after Linda for services to animal welfare. The pair had begun talking and collaborating on charitable ventures such as Heather's charity single, *Vo'ce*, which featured backing vocals from Paul. His contribution, however, was fairly minimal, and the first proper taste of Millennial McCartney came with *Liverpool Sound Collage*, by far his most daring and experimental work to date.

The piece came about after famed Beatles sleeve designer Peter Blake approached Paul to create the soundtrack to the About Collage exhibition, due to be held at Liverpool's Tate Gallery in 2000, with

a brief to create something musical, contemporary and which embodied the Liverpool spirit in order to complement Blake's current work. Inspired by the idea and relishing the challenge, McCartney approached the project in the same vein as the art it was to accompany, slightly avant-garde and encompassing a variety of styles and textures.

Enlisting the help of Youth, who he had worked successfully with on The Fireman records, and Super Furry Animals, Paul created five songs which incorporated digital beats, sound samples and

dialogue from The Beatles' studio days as well as soundbites from Liverpool residents about their feelings on Liverpool and The Beatles and excerpts from

THE SOUNDTRACK FOR THE ABOUT COLLAGE EXHIBITION EARNED A GRAMMY NOMINATION IN 2001 FOR BEST ALTERNATIVE RECORDING

Paul's classical piece, *Liverpool Oratorio*. Released on 21st August 2000, *Liverpool Sound Collage* was a major triumph for all involved and earned a nomination for Best Alternative Recording at the 2001 Grammys (it lost to Radiohead's *Kid A*).

As 2000 drew to a close, Paul took time out from writing for his next album to help promote 1, a new Beatles compilation. Released on 13 November 2000 to mark the 30th anniversary of the break-up of the band, it was their first single disc hits compilation and featured digitally remastered versions of all of their UK and US No. 1 singles. ►

POP UP As the decade got underway, McCartney contributed the choral piece *Nova* to the *A Garland For Linda* album, a tribute to his late wife made up entirely of a classical and choral music



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With Sir Peter Blake,
the artist best known
for creating the sleeve
for Sgt Pepper's Lonely
Hearts Club Band



© Getty Images



Paul's Concert For New York City was captured in the 2011 TV movie *The Love You Make*



© Getty Images

The success of *1* surpassed all expectations, topping the charts in 35 countries in its first week with sales of over one million copies. In the UK it became the biggest-selling album of the year and the decade, proving interest in the group remained as strong as ever. Six months later, Paul released another best-selling collection when he compiled *Wingspan: Hits And History*, a double album combining Wings material and some of his solo hits.

On September 11th 2001, Paul witnessed the 9/11 New York attacks first-hand from a plane

on the tarmac of New York's JFK Airport and organised A Concert For New York City to benefit the families of people who had died. With a

line-up including the Stones, David Bowie, The Who, Elton John, Billy Joel and Jay-Z, the concert, which took place in Madison Square Garden on October 20, was a huge success, raising \$35 million. He also penned the song *Freedom*; it was too late to be listed in the completed artwork of his next album, *Driving Rain*, but it was included as a hidden track.

Released on 12th November 2001, *Driving Rain* saw Paul once again adopt his favoured approach of selecting the songs for the album, then recording them in quick succession, in this case finishing the entire album in four weeks.

IN THE UK THE BEATLES' *1* BECAME THE BIGGEST-SELLING ALBUM OF THE YEAR AND THE DECADE, PROVING INTEREST REMAINED AS STRONG AS EVER

"There's always the risk with music to get a perfectly good song and then you think you'll put some strings on it and you totally mess it up," he said. "Over-producing a song is a well-known way of over-complicating it, so I've tried to underdo it. There's been one or two tracks on which we've added a little something, but generally we just recorded it live, quick and simple."

This was Paul's first full collection of original material since Linda's death, and the subjects of finding love again with Heather and the

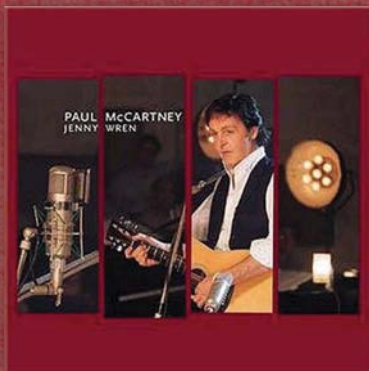
complexities of relationships loom large in the album's lyrics, with the psychedelic *She's Given Up Talking*, the ballsy *About You* and the

bluesy *Back In The Sunshine Again* emerging as the strongest. However, Paul's bare-bones approach to recording was beginning to wear thin with critics, who cited the production as one of the album's weak spots, and muttered that the lyrics about his new relationship bordered on saccharine. Commercially, the album fared even worse. Peaking at No. 45 in the UK, *Driving Rain* was his lowest charting album to date. Paul's disappointment with the performance of the album paled into insignificance, however, on 29th November 2001 with the announcement of George Harrison's death from cancer.

POP_UP Some critics liked *Driving Rain*: Ian McDonald in *Uncut* said "the results are almost ferocious, coming as close to a McCartney-esque Tin Machine as one could possibly imagine"

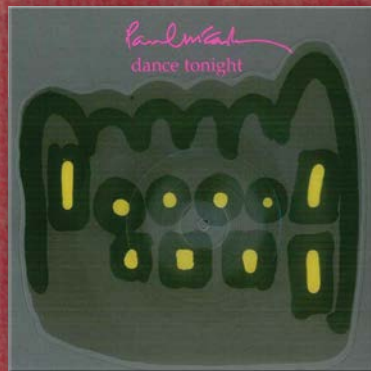


KEY RECORDINGS



JENNY WREN

Released as the second single from the *Chaos And Creation In The Backyard* album, *Jenny Wren* reached No. 22 in December 2005. The song was written by Paul the previous year while spending time at his US home with Heather and their new daughter Beatrice. It was written on a summer day in a canyon in California about, McCartney said, a fictional, magical girl that reminded him spirit-wise of a wren. Having already released a song named *Blackbird* (which this reminded him of), he instead named it after the character in Charles Dickens' novel *Our Mutual Friend*, of which he was a big fan. Although it was written on an acoustic guitar, the released version of the song was played on a duduk, an Armenian woodwind instrument—a first for a mainstream pop song. The song earned Paul a nomination for Best Male Pop/Rock performance at the 2007 Grammy Awards.



DANCE TONIGHT

Having completed work on his album, Paul's impulse to buy of a left-handed mandolin led to him coming up with *Dance Tonight* accidentally. In fact, the whole song emerged spontaneously from him experimenting with the new instrument.

"It took me back to when I was a teenager being presented with an instrument," Paul told the *Daily Mail*. "I had to figure out how to play it. I found one chord, then another, and then a really strange chord. I started stomping around the kitchen, playing this little instrument, just enjoying myself. I sang, 'Everybody gonna dance tonight' and my little girl came running in and started dancing, so I fell in love with the song. In fact, I liked it so much I ran into the studio to record it, and stuck it on the album." *Dance Tonight* was released as the first UK single from *Memory Almost Full* on 18th June 2007... Paul's 65th birthday.



HOUSE OF WAX

The standout track from *Memory Almost Full*, *House Of Wax* revealed a very different side to Paul. From the very dark, twisted imagery of the lyrics ("Lightning hits the house of wax/ Woman scream and run around/ To dance upon the battleground/ Like wild demented horses"), Paul's uncharacteristically aggressive vocal delivery and early Seventies pomposity of the instrumentation, the song is underpinned by anger.

Although the lyrics were regarded by many as being a biting observation of the celebrity culture McCartney had unwittingly been dragged into thanks to his rumoured marriage troubles, he claimed it wasn't deliberate. "I think what happens with me is that I just write something and people read into it. Often you do things in a subliminal way," he said. "I might think a statement is quite simple, but somebody might say, 'Yeah, but it means this...'"



SING THE CHANGES (AS THE FIREMAN)

With Paul fully embracing his work as The Fireman with 2008's *Electric Arguments* album, the uplifting *Sing The Changes* is the closest The Fireman material came to being an official McCartney release, with Paul shooting a video for the song as well as performing it on the *David Letterman Show* and on his Summer Live '09 tour (thus earning it a place on the subsequent *Good Evening New York City* live album). He told *Rolling Stone* that the song was written on the spot "with absolutely no concept of what the melody or lyrics would be about," adding: "You've just got to think of the idea there and then instead of spending the next two hours moulding it, I would just step up to the mic and go [singing] 'Ooohhhawowahasingthechanges,' like throwing paint at the wall, and then you stand back and take a look at it and see whether some of it looks good."

With sales of the album even worse in the US, Paul announced the Driving World Tour, his first tour since 1993. The dates sold out almost instantly, indicating that diminishing record sales had no impact whatsoever on McCartney's draw as a live performer. As the tour itinerary was announced as two US legs kicking off in April with a three-month break in the middle, European fans awaiting concert announcements were left disappointed as it was revealed that the reason for the break was in fact to accommodate Paul's wedding.

Taking place at Castle Leslie in the village of Glaslough in County Monaghan, Ireland on 11 June 2002, Paul and Heather's wedding was a typically lavish affair with 300 guests packed into the luxurious setting. Following the ceremony, the couple enjoyed an extended honeymoon on a private island in the Seychelles, during which Paul celebrated his 60th birthday.

Having completed his tour of the US, Mexico and Japan, British fans got to witness Paul live again on 29th November 2002 at the Concert For George, a George Harrison benefit concert on the first anniversary of his death at the Royal Albert Hall. After performances from Eric Clapton, Tom Petty and Jeff Lynne, Paul took to the stage to play *For You Blue*, *Something* and *All Things Must Pass*.

Following the birth of his daughter Beatrice Milly McCartney on 28th October 2003, Paul announced his first European tour in a decade for the following summer. Kicking off in Spain on 24th May 2004, the stadium tour took Paul through Germany, France, Portugal, Switzerland and Russia before climaxing with a career-defining headline performance at the 2004 Glastonbury Festival, during which he performed a Beatles-heavy set to one of the biggest crowds in the festival's history.

While breaking records was nothing new to Paul (he had been a Beatle, after all), the fact he was able to command such high-profile gigs after four decades in the music business was testament to his legend. He followed Glastonbury by playing to a global audience of 145 million viewers at the Super Bowl halftime show on 6th February 2005.

During his tour, Paul had been supported by DJ Hellraiser (remixer/producer Roy Kerr), who had achieved infamy with his unexpected mash-ups where he paired polar opposite acts with each other with surprisingly brilliant results (most notably *A Stroke Of Luck*, his mash-up of Christina Aguilera's *Genie In A Bottle* and The Strokes' *Hard To Explain*). Each night, Hellraiser thrilled the crowds with his imaginative use of Paul's music, moulding it into a variety of styles and soundscapes rather than remixes, revealing new facets to Paul's back catalogue. As the mixes had gone down so well, Paul and Hellraiser released a double vinyl set (it was also available as a download) of the tracks under the name *Twin Freaks* on 12th June 2005.

Three weeks after the release of *Twin Freaks*, Paul delivered one of the standout performances at the star-studded Live 8 concert on 2nd July 2005. As one of music's original and most vocal campaigners, particularly of the subject of environmental issues, it was imperative that he participated. While fans were eager for a taster of his new material, Paul stuck to Beatles material for his set, during which U2 and George Michael joined him onstage for duets.

SEPTEMBER 24, 2003
CONCERT FOR GEORGE

20005

Celebrating George:
Ringo, Barbara Bach,
Dhani and Olivia Harrison,
and Heather and Paul

© Getty Images

Following his triumphant performance, Paul set about putting the finishing touches to his long overdue next album. Having originally completed eight songs for an album in 2003 with producer David Kahne and his touring band, Paul halted the sessions to work on an entirely different album with Nigel Godrich. Starting the project from scratch and with a new producer at the helm, Paul found the experience equal parts inspiring and frustrating, having established a shorthand with the musicians he had been working with for a long time. However, this sense of comfort had allowed a stagnancy to infiltrate some of his latest material and the collaboration with Godrich was intended to shake things up and rejuvenate his sound.

"The first week, I came in with my live band, thinking that might be the way we'd go. But Nigel started to intimate toward the end of the week that he wanted, as he put it, to take me out of my safety zone, to do something different," Paul told *Billboard*.

Once he had got over his initial nerves over the daunting prospect of working with a music icon, Nigel decided that for their union to work he would have to treat Paul as he would any other artist and that meant establish a clear vision for the album and adhere to it. He wanted a more concise, simpler

album and encouraged Paul to play the instruments himself, rather than recording the songs as live with his band as he had been doing.

"There were some tense moments during the making of the album," Paul said. "Nigel wasn't sycophantic; he said from the off, 'I warn you, I know what I like.' There was some heated discussion. There's a song called *Riding To Vanity Fair* where we got down to [snarls] 'I like it!', 'I don't like it!', 'Well I like it!' But then I realised there's no point in charging him down like that; I should listen.

We actually moved on to why he didn't like it – 'The first line's good, but after that...' 'Oh, how about this then?' He refused to allow me to sing songs

that he didn't like, which was very cheeky of him."

While the tension in the studio created an uncomfortable working environment at times, it prompted Paul to challenge himself and he produced some of his most forthright songs in years. "Maybe he was expressing the concept of having to better what he was doing because someone was going to look at him and say, 'Not sure,' rather than just blindly taking everything that he proffered," Nigel Godrich said.

Released on 13th September 2005, *Chaos And Creation In The Backyard* was met with a

THE TENSION IN THE STUDIO PROMPTED PAUL TO CHALLENGE HIMSELF, AND HE PRODUCED SOME OF HIS MOST FORTHRIGHT SONGS IN YEARS

POP UP Paul is credited with playing 25 instruments on *Chaos And Creation* including various guitars, organ, piano, spinet, toy glockenspiel, guiro, tubular bells, flugelhorn and autoharp



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Paul performed twice at Live 8 – once with U2, and once with his own band, doing five Beatles songs



Accepting a coveted
Classical Brit Award
for *Ecce Cor Meum*
at the Royal Albert
Hall, May 2007



© Getty Images

warm critical reception, with many praising the reflection and intimacy that had been largely absent from Paul's recent work. Songs such as *At The Mercy, Too Much Rain, English Tea* and *Anyway* were among his best, as were standouts *Fine Line* and *Jenny Wren*, both of which were released as singles. The album was a sizeable hit in the US, where it reached No. 6, but Paul was disappointed by its performance in the UK, where it entered the chart at No. 10 before dropping out of the chart just three weeks later, possibly due to the fact that he had focused on promoting the album *Stateside*, embarking on a three-month US tour in the week of the album's release, limiting the UK to just one promo gig at Abbey Road.

While Paul's music hadn't been receiving the press attention it warranted back home, he was dismayed to find his personal life was now tabloid fodder, with persistent rumours that his marriage was in trouble. Following months of speculation the reports were confirmed with the announcement of Paul and Heather's separation on 17 May 2006.

With his private life in turmoil, work proved to be a welcome distraction and Paul set to completing two unfinished projects. First was *Ecce Cor Meum* (*Behold My Heart*), his next classical album. The

RELEASED IN 2006, *ECCE COR MEUM* WAS PAUL'S MOST SUCCESSFUL CLASSICAL RELEASE TO DATE, EARNING HIM A BEST ALBUM AWARD

piece had been almost a decade in the making, having been commissioned during a 1997 visit to Oxford with Linda to compose an oratorio for the University's Magdalen College Chapel. After beginning work on the piece, he was forced to postpone it. "It went right on the back burner after Linda passed away," Paul said. "Consequently I lost all momentum that I had gained in that first year and had to slowly start putting it back together. One of the ways that I did this was to just sort of write my sadness out. There is a lament in the middle

called *Interlude (Lament)* which was very specifically grieving over Linda."

Paul had completed and premiered the work in Oxford

on 10 November 2001, but hadn't returned to it until 2006, when he revisited it and amended the arrangement for recording. Released on September 25 2006, *Ecce Cor Meum* was Paul's most successful classical release to date, topping the classical charts and earning him the Best Album Award at the classical Brits.

Ecce Cor Meum also marked the end of another significant relationship in Paul's life, that of his record deal with the EMI Music group, through whom he had released his entire musical output (with the exception of a brief stint at Columbia in

POP UP The words "*Ecce Cor Meum*" appear on the McCartney coat of arms, awarded in 2001. It also depicts a left-facing knight's helmet and Liver bird holding a guitar in its claw



Performing at the
39th Super Bowl in
Jacksonville, Florida
in 2005



© Getty Images

the early Eighties). Returning to work on the album he had put on hold to make *Chaos And Creation In The Backyard*, Paul listened to the work-in-progress with a fresh perspective and adjusted the songs to flow alongside his new material for his first album on Starbucks' Hear Music imprint.

While the album had a total gestation period of four years by the time it was released on 4 June 2007, *Memory Almost Full* was a unique insight into the life (and loves) of Paul McCartney during that time, featuring songs that dealt with the loss of Linda (*You Tell Me*) and his relationship with Heather (*See Your Sunshine*, *Mr Bellamy*, *Gratitude*). "A lot of the album was done before, during and after our separation," Paul said. "I didn't go back and take out any songs to do with her."

Memory Almost Full also touched on Paul's role as a father, a friend and a musical collaborator, with reminiscences about his formative years in Liverpool and his time with The Beatles. "It's a very personal record and a lot of it is retrospective, drawing from memory, like memories from being a kid, from Liverpool and from summers gone," he said. "The album is evocative, emotional, rocking, but I can't really sum it up in one sentence. The medley of five songs towards the end was purposefully

retrospective [a nod to the medley on the *Abbey Road* album]. I thought this might be because I'm at this point in my life, but then I think about the times I was writing with John and a lot of that was also looking back."

Paul's increasingly personal lyrics saw the album garner rave reviews upon its release and the positive feedback helped it reach the Top 10 on both sides of the Atlantic. He was also heavily involved in doing promo, mounting an aggressive media campaign across the mainstream press and

TV, as well as performances at the iTunes Festival, a one-off gig at London's Electric Ballroom (which was filmed and later included on a DVD

MEMORY ALMOST FULL WAS A UNIQUE INSIGHT INTO MCCARTNEY'S LIFE, WITH REMINISCENCES ABOUT LIVERPOOL AND HIS TIME WITH THE BEATLES

packaged with the Deluxe Edition of the album) and a US session at Amoeba Music, Hollywood, highlights of which were later released as the *Amoeba's Secret* EP (the full set was later given away on a CD with *The Mail On Sunday* in 2010).

Just as he had returned home to his birthplace of Liverpool after Linda's death, Paul's first performance following his messy divorce from Heather took place on 1st June 2008 when he performed a concert at Anfield to celebrate Liverpool being named European Capital City Of Culture. The gig, which was attended by Paul's daughter Stella as well

POP UP The fun video for *Dance Tonight* featured Mackenzie Crook as a mandolin-delivering postman and Natalie Portman as the leader of a pack of mischievous dancing ghosts



Still standing: Paul and Ringo in chirpy mood at the opening of *Love*, the Cirque du Soleil Beatles show in Las Vegas



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Homecoming king:
Paul at the Liverpool
Sound concert at
Anfield in 2008



© Getty Images

With Billy Joel in 2009
at Citi Field, Queens,
New York, the site
of the Beatles' final
show in 1965



as Yoko Ono and Olivia Harrison, is regarded as one of Paul's greatest-ever concerts and featured tributes to both John and George in the form of moving renditions of *Give Peace A Chance* and *Something*, both of which were highlights of the career-spanning set.

The confessionals on *Chaos And Creation In The Backyard* and *Memory Almost Full* bore testament to Paul's desire to be more upfront and honest in his work, and this new philosophy carried over to his work on The Fireman project. While his involvement had been almost secretive, on 2008's *Electric Arguments* he fully embraced the work, with his voice prominent in the music and his name displayed on the album artwork for the first time.

Having delivered his final new musical statement of the decade, McCartney concluded it back doing what he does best – performing live. His Summer Live '09 dates saw him play some of the biggest shows of his career not to mention paying homage to some of his most iconic musical landmarks.

An appearance on *The David Letterman Show* in New York saw McCartney revisit the Ed Sullivan Theatre, the launchpad of The Beatles' US success, while in July 2009 he performed three shows to officially open Citi Field, the New York Mets stadium that had been opened on the site of Shea Stadium, the venue of The Beatles' seminal US concert. The shows were recorded and released as *Good Evening New York City*, a live album which revealed that in a decade that had carried Paul here, there and everywhere in musical terms, he had come full circle and ended on a high. ■

NEW ORDER?

When Paul released his *Back In The U.S.* live album in 2002, he found himself subject to a major backlash after reversing the songwriting credits for 19 Beatles tracks on the album sleeve to "Paul McCartney and John Lennon" instead of the famed "Lennon & McCartney". Having already attempted to change the credit on The Beatles Anthology project in 1995, Paul was prevented from doing so by George, Ringo and Yoko. Ringo deemed the move "underhanded" and Yoko threatened Paul with legal action.

"There was a backlash from people who didn't see where I was coming from," Paul later explained to *Esquire* magazine. "'Dancing on a dead man's grave' was one of the phrases that came up. 'What a bighead!' 'Why does he want his name in front of John's?' But it was nothing to do with bighead. It's just to do with identifying who wrote what. I thought that was perfectly reasonable and I still do, by the way."

Having established "Lennon & McCartney" as their branding when they began The Beatles, Paul's reasoning was that the record company had decided to deviate away from that logo with the Anthology campaign, choosing to credit the songs with John and Paul's full names rather than the infamous

moniker. "What happened was the Anthology came out," Paul explains. "And I said, OK, what they're now saying is, 'Song by John Lennon and Paul McCartney'. I said, if you're doing that, it's not Lennon and McCartney, it's not the logo any more. So, in cases like *Yesterday*, which John actually had nothing to do with, none of the other Beatles had anything to do with – I wrote it on my own, sang it on my own, they're not on the record, nobody is even involved with it, and they didn't mind that and I didn't mind, nobody minded, but that's very much mine – so I said, 'Could we have "By Paul McCartney and John Lennon", wouldn't that be a good idea? And then on *Strawberry Fields* we'll have, "By John Lennon and Paul McCartney". *Nowhere Man*, "John Lennon and Paul McCartney". *Penny Lane*, "Paul McCartney and John Lennon". Seeing as we're breaking it up, can we do that? And at first Yoko said yeah. And then she rang back a few days later and she said she'd decided it wasn't a good idea and no, no, no, no. And it became a bit of an issue for me. Particularly on that particular song, because the original artwork had *Yesterday* by John Lennon and Paul McCartney and a photo of John above it. And I went, 'Argh! Come on, lads! Anyway, they wouldn't do it.'



Kanye West: "People say he's eccentric, which you'd have to agree with," said McCartney

© Getty Images

McCartney With...

KANYE WEST

WHEN MACCA MET YEEZY: DESPITE THE INEVITABLE SCEPTICISM, THE RESULTS OF PAUL MCCARTNEY AND KANYE WEST'S BRIEF GET-TOGETHER WERE NONE TOO SHABBY...

RIK FLYNN

When unconfirmed reports filtered through that Paul McCartney had engaged in a collaboration with a certain headline-grabbing, self-aggrandising rapper, many checked their calendars to check it wasn't some kind of prank. Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder, Elvis Costello had all seemed like a natural fit; even the spontaneous rock McCartney had cut with the two remaining Nirvana members (and a Foo Fighter) sounded strangely appropriate. But Kanye West and the 73-year old icon? It didn't seem quite possible.

Out of those initial whispers, one enigmatic sonic snippet surfaced online: a short video clip leaked on Instagram, with a voice that sounded suspiciously like Kanye's heard repeating the churlish words "Piss on your grave" over some distinctly Kanye-style beats. Suddenly, it seemed the unthinkable was indeed fact. Was this coarsely-titled oddity really their first work together? Or – more likely – was it nothing more than the cogs churning out the usual West-ian hype? *Page Six* reported that "West's wife Kim Kardashian has been heard telling friends she was a little surprised they chose such a provocative name". It was clearly on, but Kim needn't have worried; that rather crass lyric thankfully turned out to be a red herring.

Veiled in secrecy, the initial meeting was tentative, to say the least. When McCartney appeared on BBC Four's *Mastertapes* series, he discussed the participants' feelings surrounding the collaboration. "If it doesn't work, we just won't tell anyone – that was the agreement," he said, to an outbreak of chuckles from the audience. From the start, it was not your typical working relationship. "A lot of what we did was just telling each other stories," Paul continued, explaining that their collaboration was essentially discussions around a table with a guitar, while an iPhone silently recorded the proceedings. "You just work with him and you leave him for a little while and let it marinate and hope he gets back to you," he went on. And marinate it did.

Released on New Year's Eve 2014, *Only One* was the first evidence of the pair's get-together. With minimal McCartney contributions, this almost sketch-like creation was heavy on West's favoured auto-tune effect, while simple Rhodes piano chords and some gentle harmonies supplied the only backing. It was the first thing heard by West's fans since the release of his sixth LP *Yeezus*, but it was unrecognisable as the old Kanye. Some critics felt underwhelmed: "It hits at the two-minute mark, the realisation that *Only One* isn't headed into that glorious West-ian stratosphere that

we've come to expect," wrote *The Los Angeles Times*. "At the three-minute mark, all hope is lost... it sounds like an offhanded Stevie Wonder sketch tossed into the trash for obvious reasons."

The press release took things into a new realm altogether. Having been unable to recall singing the initial demo with McCartney, West purportedly "realised that perhaps the words had never really come from him... he understood in that moment that his late mother, Dr. Donda West, who was also his mentor, confidante, and best friend, had spoken through him that day... a message had been passed down through generations." Whether Kanye was a conduit for the dead or just a forgetful rapper, that "message" was filtered through songwriter Kirby Lauryen, engineer Noah Goldstein, and hip hop producer Mike Dean. It managed a modest No. 35 in the chart – West chose not to include it on his 2016 album *The Life Of Pablo*.

Artist-producer Ty Dolla \$ign mentioned in an interview with *Billboard* in January 2015 that he was working on a "crazy" song with Rihanna, West and McCartney. The laid-back 24-hour session with Ty had taken place in September the previous year in a mansion in Mexico, and included some nine songs (including *Only One*, which also featured Ty's vocals). "The back of the house had no walls and no doors; it was just open [facing] the ocean, and it came out perfect. That inspired me to record like that at the crib," he reported.

This unlikely alliance of megastars forged the next tune to surface from the Ty Dolla sessions – and, for many, it was the best of the lot. Released as a single for Rhianna, *FourFiveSeconds* marked a shift away from her usual dancefloor routines. It's a stirring, yet unfussy acoustic track backed by three-part, gospel-influenced harmonies, with McCartney's guitar driving the whole affair and Kanye offering up a second verse. When McCartney heard the end product, he reportedly asked, "Where am I?" The reply came that they had sped up his guitar part (taken direct from the demo recorded on that iPhone) in the studio after he left. As a result, the high-pitched voice heard mid-track is in fact McCartney's, chipmunk-style. McCartney saw the funny side, and clearly loved the track.

FourFiveSeconds was released as a single on 24 January 2015, accompanied by a tweet from Rihanna that simply read, "First Glimpse at My New Music" together with a link to her website, where the track was being streamed. Though it was touted as the first single from her upcoming (eighth) studio album, when the record, entitled *Anti*, did appear in 2016, the track wasn't on it. Still, this one-off production peaked at No. 4 on the Billboard Hot 100 and gave Rihanna her 26th Top 10 hit.

McCartney, on the other hand, made the record books with it. It had been 29 years since his last Top 10 single, the longest-ever break between Top 10 singles on the Billboard chart. It was his first Top Five hit in 31 years too, the last being *Say Say Say*, his 1983 pair-up with Michael Jackson, and it reached the summit in Australia, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, New Zealand and Sweden, and went top-three in Canada, France and the United Kingdom. Not a bad result.

"The thing that made me fall in love with it is the juxtaposition of the music and the lyrics," Rihanna told *V*. "When you read the lyrics it's a completely different song than what you are hearing. The

music is easygoing, but the lyrical content is very loud and in your face. In performing this, the key was to make sure the aggression wasn't lost."

In March 2015 Kanye dropped the standalone single *All Day*. With rappers Theophilus London and Allan Kingdom in attendance, the main hook was adapted from a McCartney riff, again first aired around that table. According to Paul, the tune was initiated when he'd whistled a melody, one he'd written in 1969, artfully transposed from the two-finger chord he'd seen in a Picasso painting entitled *The Old Guitarist*. Kanye, being Kanye, took the riff and repositioned it somewhere else entirely, turned up the beat, and upped the epic.

The end product – produced by newbie Velous – featured McCartney's acoustic guitar, whistling and singing in the last verse, but was worlds away from the original dulcet melody. "I get this track back... he's taken my melody and made it seriously urban, and the lyrics use the N-word – a lot!" he joked to the *Masterclass* audience. "It's a great record," he continued, "but quite a few people said, 'You can't be connected with this. There's, like, 40 N-words. I said, 'Yeah, but it's Kanye and he's talking about an urban generation who uses that word in a completely different way,' so I was actually pleased with it." *All Day* was nominated for Best Rap Song and Best Rap Performance at the 58th Grammy Awards.

The McCartney vs. West match-up produced three tracks, all very, very different from one another, but all with Kanye most definitely in the driving seat. "I love Kanye," said McCartney. "People say he's eccentric, which you'd have to agree with, but he's a monster, yeah. He's a crazy guy that comes up with great stuff. So he inspires me." ■

LITTLE WONDER

THREE RING CIRCUS

McCartney, Kanye and Rihanna first aired *FourFiveSeconds* live on February 2015 at the 57th Grammy Awards, at the Staples Center in LA, and for many it was the standout performance in a night well-stocked with downtempo ballads and love songs. The threesome's slot echoed the simplicity of the black-and-white video that accompanied the track on release. Clad head-to-toe in black and with only a whiteout backdrop and a small band for company, the trio harmonise beautifully. Alongside McCartney's strummed acoustic came two faultless live vocals without an autotune in sight – no biggie for Rihanna, but something Kanye is often heavily criticised for over-using. McCartney did a decent version with his own band on his *Out There Tour* later that year, but the same cannot be said for One Direction, whose BBC Radio 1 Live Lounge performance in November that year – replete with totally unnecessary string section – sounded pallid and lifeless.



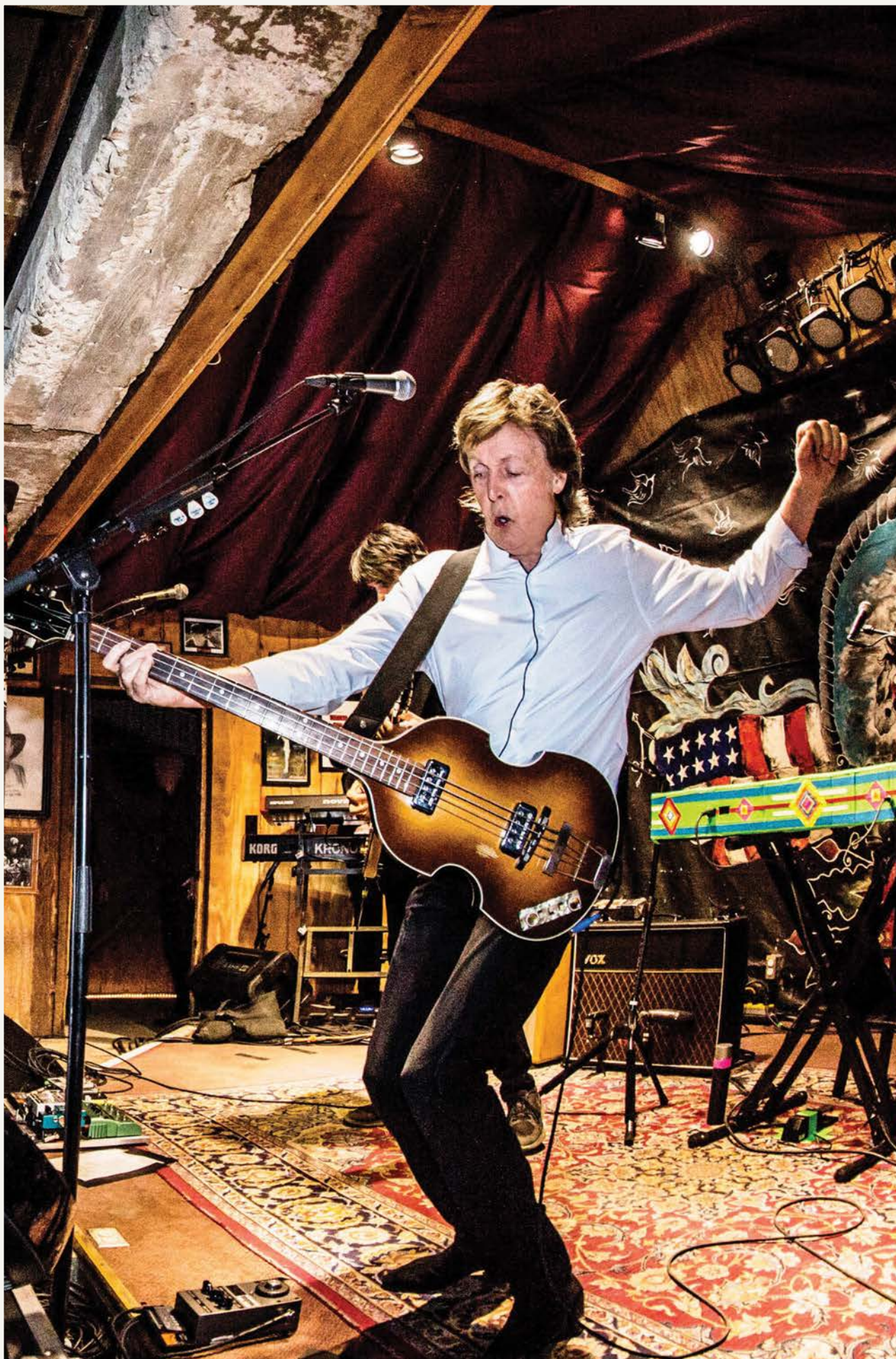
The unlikelyst threesome: Paul, Kanye and Rihanna

NOTHING TO LOSE



HE'S BEEN ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS MUSICIANS FOR OVER 50 YEARS, AND THE GONGS AND AWARDS HAVE INCREASED TO NEAR-LANDSLIDE LEVELS – YET PAUL MCCARTNEY HAS GRABBED EVERY CHANCE TO PROVE HE CAN STILL ROCK THOSE CLASSIC SONGS LIKE A TEENAGER...

IAN WADE





At the Hollywood Bowl, March 2010, delivering a set of three dozen songs spread over nearly three hours

© Getty Images

What do you do when you've been famous for half a century? Paul McCartney's answer would be: don't stop. Though for anyone of his stature a certain amount of backwards reflection is going to be unavoidable, and anniversaries, awards and celebrations are surely going to be aimed his way, he's kept on touring and, even more crucially, continued to strive to remain relevant with new work.

The Up And Coming tour ran from March 28th 2010 to the end of the year, seeing Paul play two legs of both

South and North America – including two nights at the legendary Hollywood Bowl, the first time he'd been back there

since The Beatles played in August 1965 – as well as across Europe, which saw him headline the Isle of Wight and Hard Rock Calling festivals in the UK. The tour then reconvened in May 2011 for a further four dates in America.

These dates also saw him play a benefit for The Old Vic theatre, plus Cardiff's Millennium Stadium's 10th anniversary, supported by Manic Street Preachers. He also found time to surprise Ringo on his 70th birthday when he popped in to perform *Birthday* with Ringo's All Starr Band at New York's iconic Radio City Music Hall. Even Barack Obama had him over to award McCartney the prestigious Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song, joining the ranks of previous honourees Stevie

Wonder and Paul Simon. Paul then performed a short set of *Let It Be*, *Eleanor Rigby*, *Michelle* (in tribute to the First Lady) and was joined by Stevie Wonder to deliver *Ebony And Ivory*, before rounding proceedings off with *Hey Jude*. Obama was also on hand when McCartney was awarded the Kennedy Center Honors, which are handed out to those who've made a lasting impact on American culture. McCartney had originally been selected for the prize in 2002, but couldn't make it then as he

was attending his cousin's wedding. The Kennedy Center did plan to postpone it for a year, but decided against it for 2003. At last, in 2011, Gwen Stefani with her

old band No Doubt, Steven Tyler from Aerosmith and Dave Grohl, duetting with Norah Jones, performed tributes to Sir Paul in a show that also celebrated fellow celebs including Oprah Winfrey and Merle Haggard.

To coincide with the first of McCartney's reissue program – *Band On The Run* – Paul performed a host of songs from it on *Later... With Jools Holland*, and also made a documentary for ITV – wherein Paul discussed recording the album in Lagos, how he was mugged and the original demo tapes lost, and also the story behind the cover art – which aired the night before the re-release.

The Beatles finally went digital in November, with their albums becoming available on iTunes for

THE TOUR SAW PAUL PLAY THE LEGENDARY HOLLYWOOD BOWL, THE FIRST TIME HE'D BEEN BACK THERE SINCE THE BEATLES PLAYED IN 1965

POP UP A McCartney tour is no lightweight affair; the Up And Coming trip used 31 trucks to carry 57 tonnes of equipment, while catering served 450 veggie meals each day to the 150-strong crew



Onstage at the 2010
Isle of Wight Festival
alongside Brian Ray,
Paul's guitarist/
bassist for 15 years



The On The Run tour reaches Yankee Stadium, where Paul performs the Beatles song *The Night Before* for the first time ever



the first time. Their full catalogue as well as the Past Masters and iconic "Red" and "Blue" collections were also made available to download as either full albums or individual tunes. In the first seven days, albums had sold 450,000 "copies" and individual tracks had been downloaded over two million times. Despite the industry's expectations of a full chart takeover, however, only one song, *Hey Jude*, managed to make it back into the UK Top 40. There was also the release of *The McCartney Years*, a DVD box that compiled music videos and career-spanning live performances along with a personal commentary by Paul himself.

By July 2011, McCartney was off on another world tour, entitled *On The Run*, which saw him play 37 shows across Europe and America, visiting such prestigious venues as the Yankee Stadium and the Royal Albert Hall, as well as a one-off date at the Yas Arena in Abu Dhabi as part of the season finale of *Yasalam*, the largest city-wide entertainment program ever seen by any F1 Grand Prix host city. The tour also saw him bring out some songs that his current live band hadn't performed before, such as the Latin-tinged 1993 Top 18 hit *Hope Of Deliverance*, which was played in South America.

When asked by *Times* journalist Caitlin Moran as to what he got out of playing live, he replied "I like displaying the stuff – I want to give people a good night out. If I go to see Prince – I mean, I love his guitar playing, but I want him to play *Purple Rain*. I'm probably going to be disappointed if he doesn't do it. If I went to see the Stones, I'd want them to do *Ruby Tuesday*, *Honky Tonk Women* and *Satisfaction*. So I'm basically talking hits. Why are hits hits? It's because we like them. They're the best ones."

In October, Sir Paul released his fifth classical album, *Ocean's Kingdom*, which peaked at No. 2 in the Classical Chart. In November, this was followed by the film *The Love We Make*; directed by Albert Maysles, who had helmed The Rolling Stones' *Gimme Shelter*, and Bradley Kaplan, it followed Paul as he wandered through the streets of New York in the aftermath of the destruction of the World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001. It also chronicled the planning and performance of The Concert For New York City benefit that took place less than six months after the attacks, and included cameos from everyone from David Bowie to Bill Clinton, Leonardo DiCaprio, Harrison Ford, Mick Jagger, Jay Z, Billy Joel and Elton John.

Just before Christmas, as he was playing his final dates of the year in Liverpool and Manchester, Paul announced details of a new then-untitled album – his 15th as a solo turn – due for release in February 2012. A collection of "the songs which inspired the songs", it featured a selection of covers of childhood favourites and standards, along with two brand-new compositions, *My Valentine* and *Only Our Hearts*. The album – its title eventually announced as *Kisses On The Bottom*, meaning those you'd find added to a card or a letter, rather than anything unsavoury – was released in February just ahead of Valentine's Day. *Kisses On The Bottom* peaked at No. 3 in the UK, and No. 5 in the US, where it also topped the jazz album chart.

A week later, Paul performed at the 54th Grammy Awards ceremony, where he also bagged a Grammy – his 15th overall – for Best Historical Album for the reissue of *Band On The Run*.

KEY RECORDINGS



CUT ME SOME SLACK

At the 12-12-12 concert for Sandy Relief, a fundraising response to Hurricane Sandy held at Madison Square Garden in New York, Paul and his band performed a run of Beatles and Wings numbers. He also collaborated with the surviving members of Nirvana, Krist Novoselic and Dave Grohl, as well as Nirvana/Foo Fighters guitarist Pat Smear, to perform a track called *Cut Me Some Slack*, which had originally been recorded for Grohl's *Sound City* documentary. Described by Paul as "a Nirvana reunion", it was released on iTunes a couple of days later, and would feature in Paul's live set when he played Seattle in 2013.



MY VALENTINE

One of two new songs written for *Kisses On The Bottom*, *My Valentine* was the song that McCartney had written about his new wife Nancy Shevell, and which he performed on their wedding day. The self-directed video caused a slight kerfuffle; Johnny Depp and Natalie Portman signed the song for deaf viewers, but Depp signs the word "enemy" while attempting "valentine", and later both he and Portman seem to be signing the word "tampon" instead of the word "appear". This was down to the slight differences between British and American sign language; still, McCartney was commended by the British Deaf Association for highlighting its use.



FOURFIVESECONDS

Kanye West made a surprise appearance at the iHeartMedia Music Summit in early 2015, where he spoke for 45 minutes, then played a few songs, concluding with a collaboration with Rihanna that featured, the *Hollywood Reporter* whispered, "acoustic guitar and a big, soaring chorus and melody with a massive hook". He then slammed his laptop shut and walked off the stage to a standing ovation. *FourFiveSeconds*, released three days later, hit the world's charts like a bullet; reaching No. 3, it became Rihanna's 26th Top 10 UK single and Paul's first Billboard Top Five hit in 31 years, surpassing the record set by Santana with the longest gap between Top 10 hits.



With Dave Grohl, Bruce Springsteen and Joe Walsh at the 2012 Grammy Awards

© Getty Images



He popped up during the ceremony to perform *My Valentine* with Diana Krall and Joe Walsh, and then closed the show with the *Abbey Road* medley of *Golden Slumbers/Carry That Weight/The End*, aided by Bruce Springsteen and Dave Grohl. He certainly made the most of his visit to Los Angeles: a few days later he was also finally awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

In his position of elder statesman of rock, and all-round good egg, Paul continued to voice his support for a variety of causes. He played a concert at the Royal Albert Hall for the Teenage Cancer Trust, spoke up for War Child about Syrian refugees, and gave his support to Russian punks Pussy Riot, who'd been locked up for a term of two years for wearing some balaclavas for a performance critical of Russian President Vladimir Putin in a church.

In June, Sir Paul closed proceedings at the Gary Barlow-curated Diamond Jubilee Concert at Buckingham Palace in front of her Majesty herself. The Queen and fellow royals rattled their jewels along to *Magical Mystery Tour*, *All My Loving*, *Let It Be* and *Live And Let Die*, and the show closed with *Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da* as the entire line-up – including Madness, Kylie, Shirley Bassey, Elton John, Stevie Wonder and Grace Jones – joined him onstage.

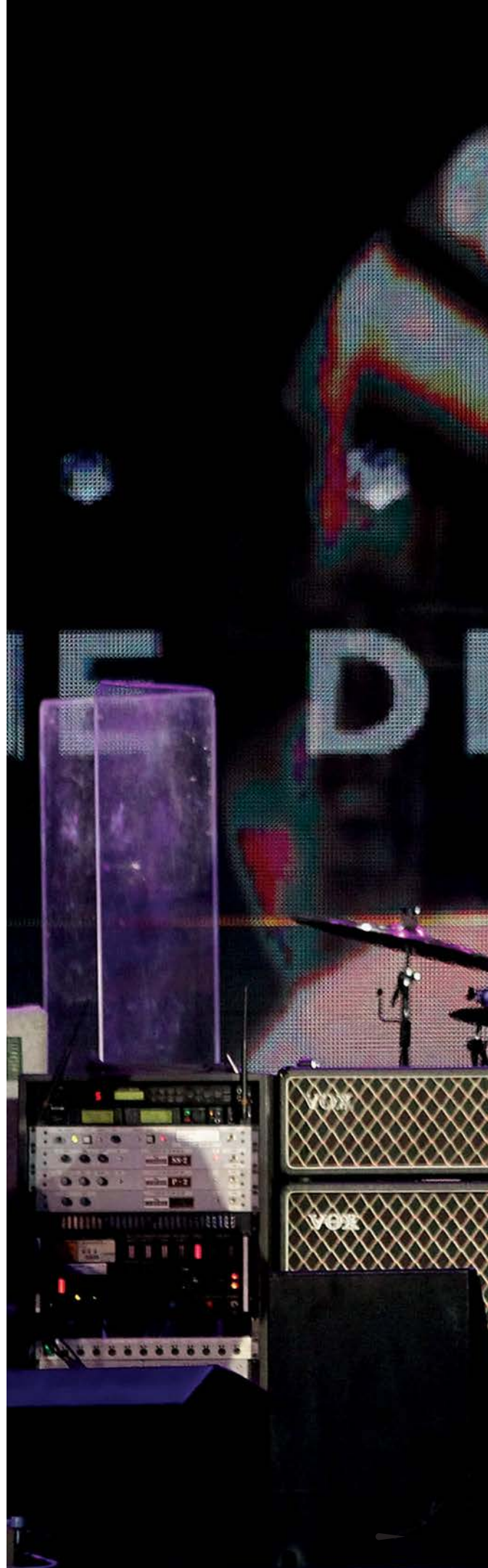
A couple of months later, Sir Paul was back in London to close the Olympic opening ceremony as part of the Danny Boyle-directed show, performing

**“WITH SOMETHING LIKE THE JUBILEE
OR THE OLYMPICS, THERE’S NO
WARM-UP, YOU JUST COME IN COLD
AND HAVE TO GET UP TO SPEED”**

The End and *Hey Jude* to a full stadium and a UK television audience of 27 million.

To some it may have seemed like he'd become the official closer of huge events, but hey, he's Paul McCartney; who could possibly follow him? Still, as he explained to *Shortlist* magazine, such gigs are by no means easy; “When you do these things, like a command performance or the Jubilee or Olympics, it's a completely different beast. It's not your crowd and, normally, by the time I do the big crowd numbers, it's at the end of my set. With something like the Olympics, there's no warm-up, you just come in cold and you've got to get up to speed.”

As is the case with an artist with 50 years of catalogue to look back on, there'd also been reissues throughout the year. *Ram*, the 1971 album recorded with his wife Linda, was repackaged, *Yellow Submarine* and *Magical Mystery Tour* were reissued on DVD, and seemingly every other day would see another anniversary, be it 40 years since *Wings Over America*, or 50 years since *Love Me Do*. He would also be part of the Christmas No. 1, an all-star ensemble called The Justice Collective featuring Robbie Williams, Gerry Marsden, The Farm, Mel C and Holly Johnson on a cover of The Hollies' hit *He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother*. The song clocked up Sir Paul's 99th week at No. 1 in the UK singles chart, a statistic which also showed him to have been involved in the biggest-selling singles of the Sixties (*She Loves You*), the Seventies



Closing the show at
the Queen's Diamond
Jubilee Concert
outside Buckingham
Palace, 2012



2010s

Paul and Ringo close
2014's Grammy
Salute To The
Beatles by singing
*With A Little Help
From My Friends*
and *Hey Jude*



At Lollapalooza in Chicago in 2015 alongside Brittany Howard of The Alabama Shakes



© Getty Images

(*Mull Of Kintyre*) and the Eighties (as part of Band Aid's *Do They Know It's Christmas*). Unfortunately, not being Elton John deprived him of the accolade in the Nineties, but he took part in the re-recording of *Do They Know It's Christmas* in 2004, which did become the sixth-biggest single of the 2000s.

As 2013 creaked into action there was the matter of yet another Grammy win, this time for *Kisses On The Bottom* in the Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album category. He performed the track *My Valentine* at the ceremony, which also marked 50 years since his first Grammy, when The Beatles scooped Best New Act and Best Performance By A Vocal Group in 1964.

Showing no sign of slowing down on the road, having just celebrated 40 years as a solo touring turn, McCartney announced another world tour, *Out There*, which would eventually run from March 2013 to October 2015. The 91 dates netted him \$275 million and saw him visit places he'd never been before, such as three cities in Brazil – Belo Horizonte, Goiânia and Fortaleza – that had started a petition to demand he played there. He also treated those fans to Beatles hits such as *Eight Days A Week*, *Your Mother Should Know*, *All Together Now*, *Being For The Benefit Of Mr. Kite!* and *Lovely Rita*, which he'd not played live solo. He would also

headline the annual Lollapalooza festival in Chicago alongside Metallica and Florence & The Machine, as well as make an historic debut in South Korea's Seoul Olympic Stadium.

In October, McCartney released his 16th solo album and his first collection of fresh songs in six years, *New*. Working with producers Paul Epworth (Adele), Mark Ronson (Amy Winehouse), Ethan Johns (Kings Of Leon) and Giles Martin (George's

son), McCartney tackled various recent events in his life as well as harking back to his pre-fame days. The album charted at No. 3 on both sides of the Atlantic,

and was very well received by critics, with many commenting on it being his best for years.

2014 kicked off with another round of Grammy nominations, as well as a televised salute to The Beatles, marking 50 years since their appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, with guests such as Dhani Harrison, Pharrell Williams, Dave Grohl, Alicia Keys, Stevie Wonder, John Legend, Maroon 5, Katy Perry, John Mayer, Keith Urban, Ed Sheeran, Eurythmics, Brad Paisley, Joe Walsh, Jeff Lynne, Imagine Dragons and Gary Clark Jr. This year's career-best haul included Best Rock Song for *Cut Me Some Slack*, Best Boxed or Special Limited Edition Package for last year's *Wings Over America* reissue, Best Surround Sound Album for *Live*

NEW, PAUL'S 16TH SOLO ALBUM AND HIS FIRST COLLECTION OF FRESH SONGS IN SIX YEARS, CHARTED AT NO. 3 ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC

POP_UP One song on *New*, *On My Way To Work*, recalled Paul's temporary job of Christmas 1960: jumping on and off a lorry with parcels for a company called Speedy Prompt Delivery



Receiving the NME Songwriter's Songwriter Award, 2014: "We don't know how we do it so we can't talk about it," he joked



© Getty Images

Kisses, and Best Music Film for *Live Kisses*. He also turned up to perform *Queenie Eye* at the ceremony with Ringo. It being award season, the accolades were flying around willy-nilly; Paul was also named the Songwriter's Songwriter at the NME Awards.

As the Out There tour trundled across the planet, Paul was keeping busy with star-studded video shoots for the single *Early Days*, where Johnny Depp played his character again, and there was also the matter of reissues, with *Venus And Mars* and *At The Speed Of Sound* getting the deluxe treatment this time around.

2015 began quite literally with the reveal of McCartney's collaboration with Kanye West, which had been released on iTunes on New Year's Eve. The track was one of a handful of songs West had recorded for his long-delayed album *The Life Of Pablo* (then entitled *SWISH*), and one of two that featured McCartney, the other being the charmingly-titled *Piss On Your Grave*. The track saw McCartney back in the Top 40 after 12 months, and was swiftly followed by the release of another Kanye collaboration, but this time with Rihanna involved. The track *FourFiveSeconds* became a global smash, giving McCartney his biggest hit in years.

May saw McCartney clock up another couple of achievements: he celebrated the 50th anniversary of writing *Yesterday*, and played his 50th solo show

in London since he first appeared at Live Aid in 1985, at the O2. "I'm often never aware of these anniversaries until someone points it out," said Paul. "For me it's a happy coincidence that the O2 show falls at this time. It's great that people all over the world reacted so well to the song, it's all you can hope for!" He also received a PRS Award for *Yesterday* to celebrate its half century.

The now annual routine of reissues of his back catalogue continued with the release of expanded

versions of his Eighties albums *Tug Of War* and *Pipes Of Peace*. There was an expanded version of The Beatles' 1 collection, this time on DVD featuring the most

THE KANYE/RIHANNA COLLABORATION FOURFIVESECONDS BECAME A GLOBAL SMASH, GIVING MCCARTNEY HIS BIGGEST HIT IN YEARS

extensive collection of promo films of the band's hits yet, where you witness the early signs of the pop video being born. To celebrate its release, ITV screened *The Nation's Favourite Beatles Number 1*, (the public opted for *Hey Jude*). Another one for that year's Christmas list was *Conversations With McCartney*, a collection of interviews and insights by Paul du Noyer – the nearest to an autobiography McCartney had got to... so far.

McCartney also shared news of a collaboration with Lady Gaga on the soundtrack to *High In The Clouds*, an animated film that has been in the works for a few years based on the 2005 children's book of the same name, written by Paul in collaboration with Philip Ardagh.

POP UP In most polls, *Hey Jude* seems to have grabbed its place as the world's fave Beatles song. Other McCartney tunes in the Top 10 lists usually include *Yesterday*, *Let It Be* and *Eleanor Rigby*



With Kanye
West performing
FourFiveSeconds at
the 57th Grammy
Awards, 2015





"If anyone earned the title of fifth Beatles..." Paul in 2006 with the band's legendary producer Sir George Martin

2016 was, by anyone's standards, a bleak year. Increasingly, McCartney would be paying tribute to a seeming avalanche of on-time stars and associates, from David Bowie and George Michael to Scotty Moore and Muhammad Ali, and he performed *Let's Go Crazy* in honour of Prince when his tour hit Minneapolis. Some losses, however, were much nearer to home: close friends such as playwright Carla Lane, his Wings bandmate Henry McCullough, and Sir George Martin, who passed away in March. "I have so many wonderful memories of this great man that will be with me forever," said McCartney. "He was a gentleman and like a second father to me. He guided the career of The Beatles with such skill and good humour that he became a true friend to me and my family. If anyone earned the title of the fifth Beatle, it was George."

McCartney was nominated for – but didn't win – a pair of Grammys for his Kanye collaboration. The night wasn't without incident, as Paul – along with Beck and Foo Fighter Taylor Hawkins – were turned away from rapper Tyga's aftershow party. Footage of the incident emerged with him saying "How VIP do we gotta get? We need another hit" to the door staff. Tyga, for his part, claimed he had no idea that Paul had tried to get in.

He began a new tour – One On One – in April, which would take him around North and South America, then into Europe, and finishing in Asia in April 2017. The jaunt would see him performing at Pinkpop Festival and Rock Werchter festivals, then mopping up any areas he may've missed in the previous tours, such as Dusseldorf (where he'd not played since 1972), and new places such as Fresno, North Little Rock and Sioux Falls, all clocking up \$110 million in ticket sales across 44 shows. He'd also be headlining the inaugural Desert Trip festival in California that October, on a bill with Neil Young, The Who, Bob Dylan and The Rolling Stones.

Across the year, Paul kept busy with reissues – this time compiling a solo career retrospective called *Pure McCartney*, in 39-track (2CD), 41 (4 vinyl) or 67 (4CD) variants, showcasing the tracks such as *Temporary Secretary* and his work as The Fireman, alongside some of the biggest hits of all time. It hit No. 3 in the UK album charts. Paul also contributed a new song, *In The Blink Of An Eye*, to the soundtrack of the animated feature *Ethel & Ernest*.

Speaking of the album charts, the Official Charts Company awarded Paul the Official Chart Record Breaker Award to recognise his astonishing 191 weeks spent at No. 1, with 15 albums with The Beatles and seven as Wings and solo projects. All this looking back found him re-signing to Capitol Records, where he first started in the US in 1963. The worldwide deal covers all his solo work, and future projects such as the reissue of *Flowers In The Dirt* and his next solo album due later in 2017.

As 2016 ended, Paul was nominated for the 2016 Grammy Awards with nods for *Tug Of War* for Best Boxed Or Special Limited Edition Package and Best Remixed Recording for Timo Mass and James Teej's reworking of *Nineteen Hundred And Eighty Five*. He sort-of walked home with just the one in the end, for *The Beatles: Eight Days A Week – The Touring Years* in the Best Music Film category. Keep moving indeed: Paul McCartney is now one of the most awarded musicians not just in Grammy terms, but in history, full stop. ■

MACCA IN THE SOCIAL AGE

The 21st century has seen artists who first came of age and found success in the Sixties and Seventies struggle to come to grips with the ever-changing landscape of music, with new technologies and the altering tastes of the public either driven by severe radio playlisting or the lack of a physical object, or even hit. Where once the likes of McCartney, Rod Stewart or Elton John could launch an album with a big hit single, they had now moved into a period of 'brand management', interspersing rare new albums with constant touring and the revisiting of back-catalogues.

Fortunately, Paul McCartney – being Paul McCartney – had long broadened his spectrum of talents across the pop, classical and painting worlds, as well as being a keen supporter of animal rights, and the 2010s proved he still had a few tricks up his sleeve...

2010

In 2010 Paul contributed an exclusive essay called Meat Free Monday for an iPhone app alongside other authors such as Hilary Mantel, Alexander McCall-Smith, Hanif Kureishi and Lionel Shriver; the MFM campaign is still going strong today. McCartney also got in on the gaming action of Rock Band, adding a three-pack of songs from his latest live album to the Rock Band Music Store and Lego Rock Band Music Store.

2013

The *New* album was launched via its title track and across various social media channels in a move which saw McCartney join Instagram, becoming one of the most followed musicians on the photo-sharing app. There were also "drive-in" listening events held at car dealerships a week ahead of *New*'s release, while Paul popped up with his band to perform a surprise concert in Times Square – a gig they'd only announced on Twitter an hour beforehand.

2015

McCartney partnered with Skype to launch a new range of animated love-themed Mojis for Valentine's Day, creating music for each one.

2011

Paul's activities on the vegetarian front, and his contributions towards the rights of animals was celebrated with a set of PETA stamps that honoured vegetarian icons through the ages, including such famous meat-freers as Ellen DeGeneres, Leo Tolstoy, Pythagoras, Chrissie Hynde and Pamela Anderson. Paul has a long association with PETA and had been the host of their exposé inside the meat industry, called *Glass Walls*, after his well-known quote "If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be a vegetarian".

2014

McCartney created music – the song *Hope For The Future* – for the video game *Destiny*... a canny move, as video games have long since overtaken album sales to become the biggest entertainment market. *Destiny* was created by the people behind *Call Of Duty* and *Halo*, which has seen sales over around 30 million worldwide per volume since 2011. Paul even created his own "Guardian" character for the game, a female avatar, affiliated with the risk-taking 'Hunter' class, and part of the 'Awoken' race, descendants of Humans. Of course.



David Bowie, Stella McCartney and proud father Paul

© Getty Images

Paul with the
remaining members
of Nirvana in 2012
for Sandy Relief at
Madison Square Garden



© Getty Images

MCCARTNEY WITH... OTHER ARTISTS

ASIDE FROM MCCARTNEY'S CLASSIC DUETS THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHER FLIRTATIONS WORTHY OF MENTION, NOT LEAST HIS WORK WITH NITIN SAWHNEY – AND, ODDLY, A CELERY HABIT...

RIK FLYNN

Other than those eternally playlisted musical communions undertaken by Sir Paul that reached the upper echelons of the various global hit parades, there's plenty else in his catalogue of duets that provokes interest. A few of these lesser-visited partnerships throw up some real surprises, too, whether it's something unexpectedly engaging, entirely throwaway, or just plain box-of-frogs bonkers.

One of Macca's earliest collaborations of note was with a childhood hero, "King Of Rockabilly" Carl Perkins. The first of their musical sessions came about shortly after the tragic loss of John Lennon. McCartney shared the story with *Guitar Player* magazine: "We were recording at Montserrat, and a musician friend invited us to his boat. There was this British naval crew piping us aboard this spotless yacht... [Carl] came over to me and said, 'Paul, where I come from they call this shittin' in high cotton.' It's one of my favourite expressions. After that, we recorded *Get It*. At the end of the song, you can hear both of us laughing at that joke."

Recorded at AIR Studios in Montserrat in 1981, this perky ditty ended up on McCartney's 1982 LP, *Tug Of War* – and while unlikely to make the "Best Of" lists, it's a decent lighthearted duet between friends.

But it didn't end there; inspired to thank the McCartneys for their Montserrat hospitality, Carl sang a new song, *My Old Friend*, to his hosts, and Paul immediately left the room in tears. One of Carl's lyrics – "My old friend, won't you think about me every now and then" – was allegedly almost exactly what Lennon had said to Paul in their last conversation together. Unaware of that exchange, Carl concluded that the song must have been Lennon communicating through him from beyond the grave. "It was a touching moment and it was kind of a little frightful moment for me," he said. Whether beamed in from the afterlife or not, it's a moving addition. Perkins included the track on his 1996 album *Go Cat Go*.

The Caribbean seems to be a breeding ground for McCartney collaborations, and seven years later he would meet with another Fifties icon. Both McCartney and Johnny Cash shared a love of Jamaica; Cash owned a home there, and when he invited Paul and Linda over for dinner it wasn't long before the guitars came out. That evening Cash penned a sleepy country duet named *New Moon Over Jamaica*, later cut at McCartney's UK studio. Paul played bass and shared the singing with Johnny, while extra vocals came from Linda and country star Tom T Hall. It appeared on Cash's *Water From The Wells Of Home* album.

Aside from McCartney's contribution to the *Help!* LP for Warchild (a version of *Come Together* with a supergroup billed as Smokin' Mojo Filters) and the insufferable horror-show that was *Yeah!*, a collaboration with Eddie Murphy, the Nineties threw up two collaborations of note. The first was with celebrated beat poet Allen Ginsberg, his final project before his death. *The Ballad Of The Skeletons* was a socio-political verse written and read by Ginsberg and put to music by McCartney – on guitar, drums, Hammond organ and maracas – together with Phillip Glass, who later added arpeggios on piano. McCartney accompanied Ginsberg for a performance of the poem at the Royal Albert Hall in 1995. Ginsberg said of the track, "It's the closest I'm ever going to come to being in the Beatles."

On to 1999, when McCartney (perhaps ill-advisedly) chose to co-author a dance track with his then-wife Heather Mills. Credited to "Heather Mills feat. Paul McCartney", *VoIce* featured a spoken-word narrative from Mills about living life with a disability. Honourable intentions aside, it was a sub-Orb calamity best left well alone – musically, in any case.

The Noughties was another productive – if not wholly successful – decade for duets, with McCartney offering backing vocals for teenager Lindsay Pagano's cover of his track *So Bad*, as well as a pairing with Lulu entitled *Inside Thing (Let 'Em In)* for her *Together* album that included melodic themes from the classic Wings tune (its only saving grace). There was also a soul-stirring cut with Brian Wilson (*A Friend Like You*), a fine joint venture by George Michael (written intentionally in the style of Paul) called *Heal The Pain* for his *Twenty Five* LP, a starry-eyed version of *The Very Thought Of You* with crooner Tony Bennett – and a good-time but forgettable soul attempt, *Bring It On Home To Me*, with George Benson and Al Jarreau.

The finest moment of the decade came when Sir Paul teamed up with British-Asian musical mastermind Nitin Sawhney for the stunning *My Soul*, from Sawhney's 2008 *London Underground* album. This elegant example of acoustic ambrosia offered a simplistic lyrical theme and a pastoral quality, while an exhilarating tempo shift had many hearts a-flutter. In vast contrast was *The Rain Came Down*, a surreal endeavour supposedly recorded with the oaky-voiced comic genius and star of *The IT Crowd*, Matt Berry. Many fell for the ruse, and while McCartney is credited on this brain-frazzled funk-lite oddity, it isn't Paul – it's a Peter Serafinowicz impression.

In 2012 came one of McCartney's more prosperous projects when he joined the remaining members of Nirvana, Dave Grohl and Krist Novoselic (and Pat Smear), to write and record the straight-up rocker *Cut Me Some Slack*, with the session being enshrined in Grohl's *Sound City* documentary. Grohl, Novoselic and producer Butch Vig do a fine job in recreating Nirvana's tough-edged rhythm sound, while McCartney strums a cigar box guitar, a gift from Johnny Depp. "It was magic playing with these guys," said McCartney. "Dave said 'I have a couple of friends coming along'. And during the session I hear them talking: 'Wow, we haven't played since Nirvana.' So I found myself in the middle of a Nirvana reunion." The track was first aired live at the Hurricane Sandy benefit 12-12-12: The Concert for Sandy Relief and was released in December 2012. It won Best Rock Song at the 56th Grammys.

Many of McCartney's greatest works stem from dipping a toe into unfamiliar territory. When he entered the ring with one-man Italian electro spectacle The Bloody Beetroots and old sparring partner Youth, the result was an electro-punk beast called *Out Of Sight* – Pink Floyd-ian in scale with an anarchic thump from Beetroots mastermind 'Sir Bob Cornelius Rifo', all anchored with a typically impassioned Paul vocal. If not the greatest EDM track in existence, it was a provocative off-piste sojourn for McCartney.

On paper, the Hollywood Vampires supergroup with Alice Cooper, Joe Perry and Johnny Depp sounded like the stuff of celebrity-induced soft rock nightmares, but with McCartney guesting at the helm it turned out okay. The Vampires chose *Come And Get It* for their 2015 album and Paul delivered lead vocal, piano and bass. The track was originally intended for the Beatles; Paul recorded a demo during the *Abbey Road* sessions in the late Sixties, but it was given away to Apple band Badfinger for their 1969 single. Alternate versions aside, the song is best heard in its original demo form, a slightly slower incarnation found on 1996 Beatles compilation *Anthology 3*.

Finally, rumours of another project surfaced in February 2017. Dave Longstreth from alt-electronic group Dirty Projectors revealed to *The New York Times* that he had recorded a track with McCartney, Kanye West and Vampire Weekend frontman Ezra Koenig. Longstreth had been involved in the writing of the Rihanna/West/McCartney song *FourFiveSeconds* and spoke of another track that supposedly featured West with McCartney on Wurlitzer that he and Koenig had turned into a full song. "Kanye didn't wind up using it," said Longstreth, "but it was good. Maybe something will come of it down the line." ■

LITTLE WONDER

CRUNCH TIME

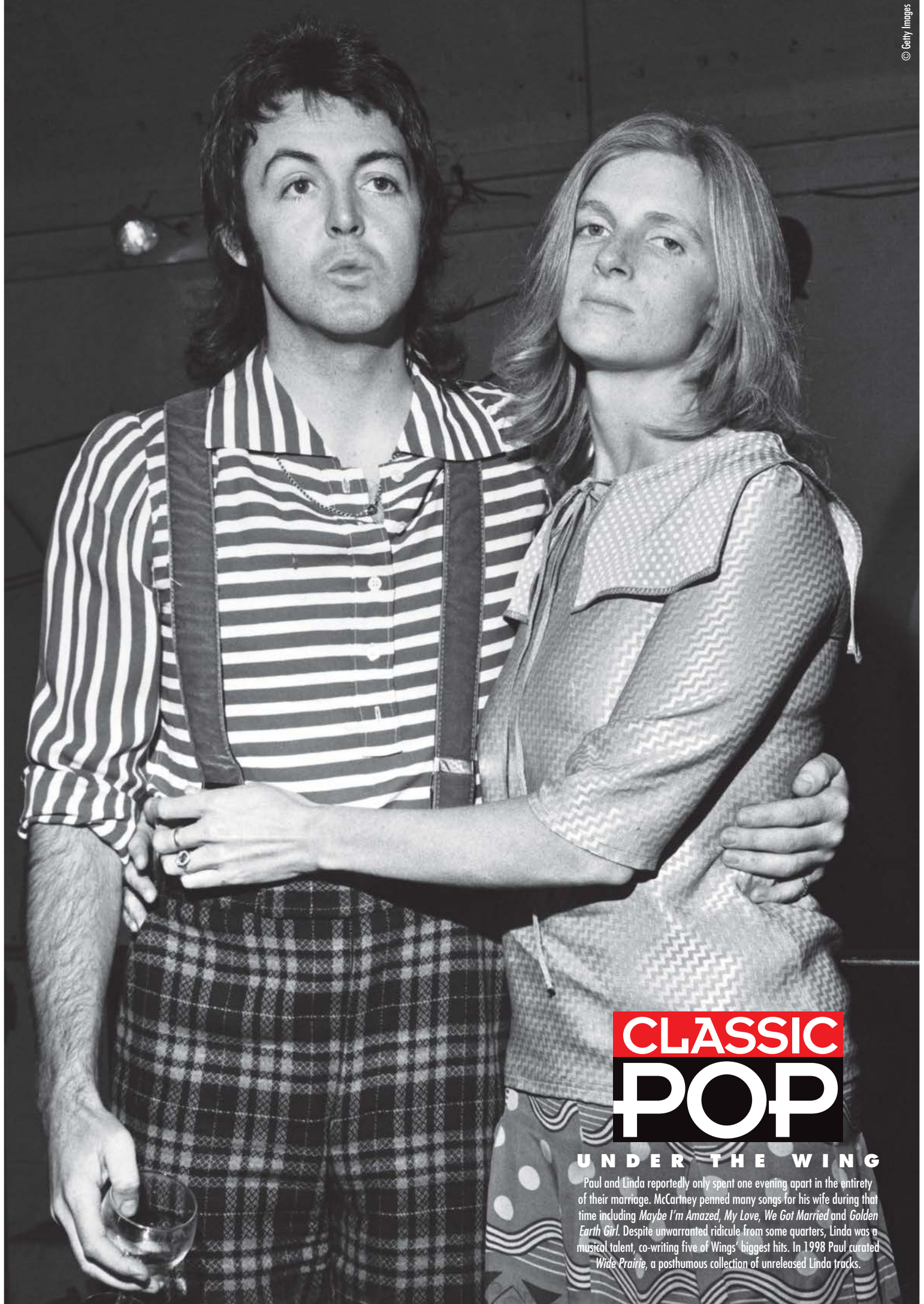
Regular instruments are one thing, but McCartney has twice contributed an entirely different service altogether – the mastication of vegetables. The first example came in 1967 when he arrived to sit in on one of The Beach Boys' recording sessions for their *Smile* album. The band were recording a song called *Vegetables* (or *Vega-Tables*) and asked Paul if he'd be willing to crunch raw celery as novel percussion in the background, which he happily agreed to do. The track ended up on *Smiley Smile*.

In a fitting tribute, Super Furry Animals invited him to do the very same thing – albeit recorded over the phone – on their excellently-entitled song *Receptacle For The Respectable*, featured on the 2001 album *Rings Around The World*. "He took it with good nature," said guitarist Huw Bunford. "We already had a bass and singers, so we really didn't need any more musicians. So we figured he could crunch vegetables."

All smiles: Paul with Beach Boy Brian Wilson



© Getty Images



CLASSIC POP

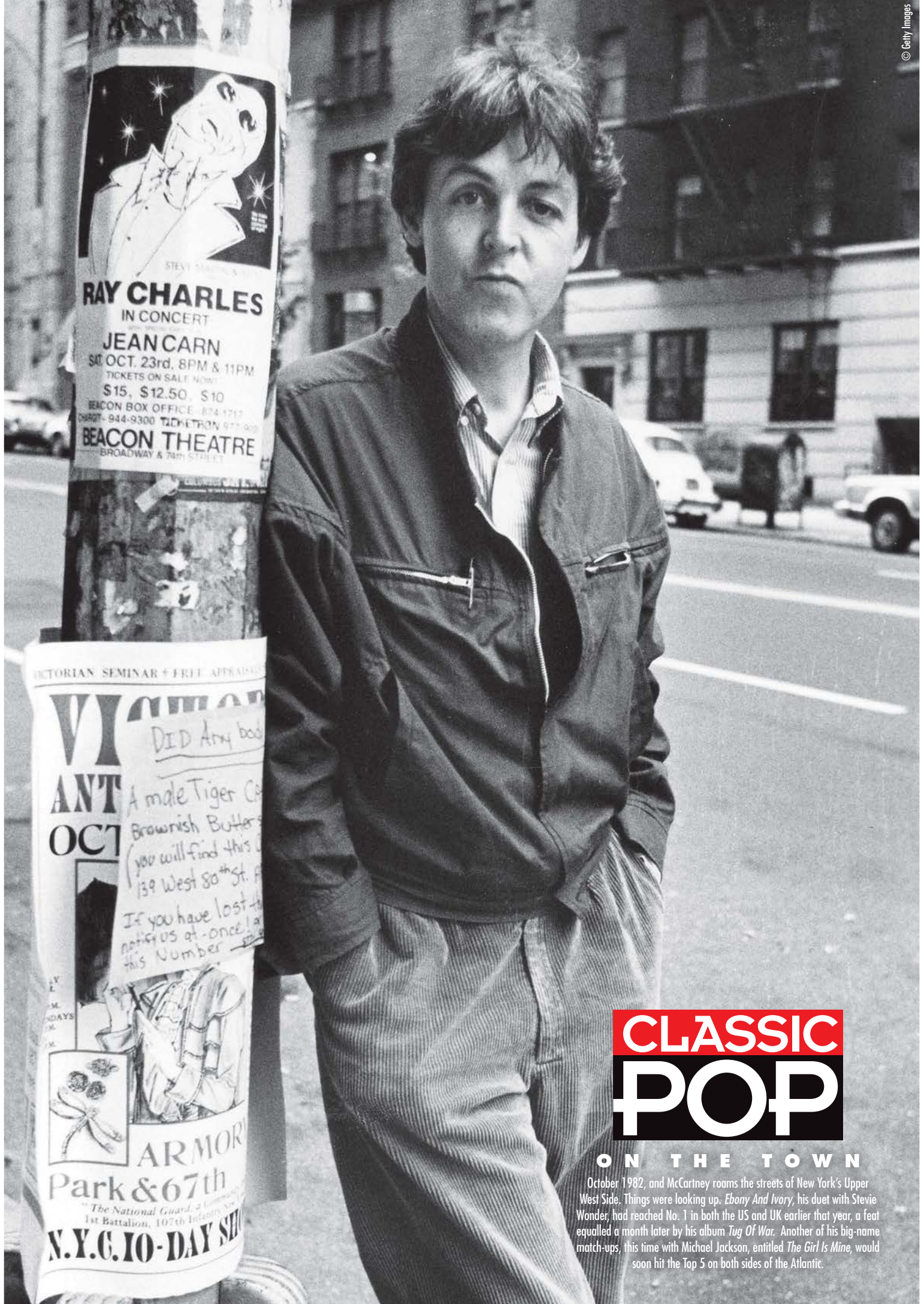
UNDER THE WING

Paul and Linda reportedly only spent one evening apart in the entirety of their marriage. McCartney penned many songs for his wife during that time including *Maybe I'm Amazed*, *My Love*, *We Got Married* and *Golden Earth Girl*. Despite unwarranted ridicule from some quarters, Linda was a musical talent, co-writing five of Wings' biggest hits. In 1998 Paul curated *Wide Prairie*, a posthumous collection of unreleased Linda tracks.

CLASSIC POP

L A Y I N G L O W

Paul poses for the cameras in leather jacket on his farm near Rye, East Sussex, in January 1980. The Peasemarch village farm has expanded since McCartney bought the property in 1975 and now sits on a 1000-acre plus estate. Paul himself designed modifications to the house and it was described by one friend as "like a glorified council house". Linda and Paul spent much of their time at this rural idyll away from the spotlight.



CLASSIC POP

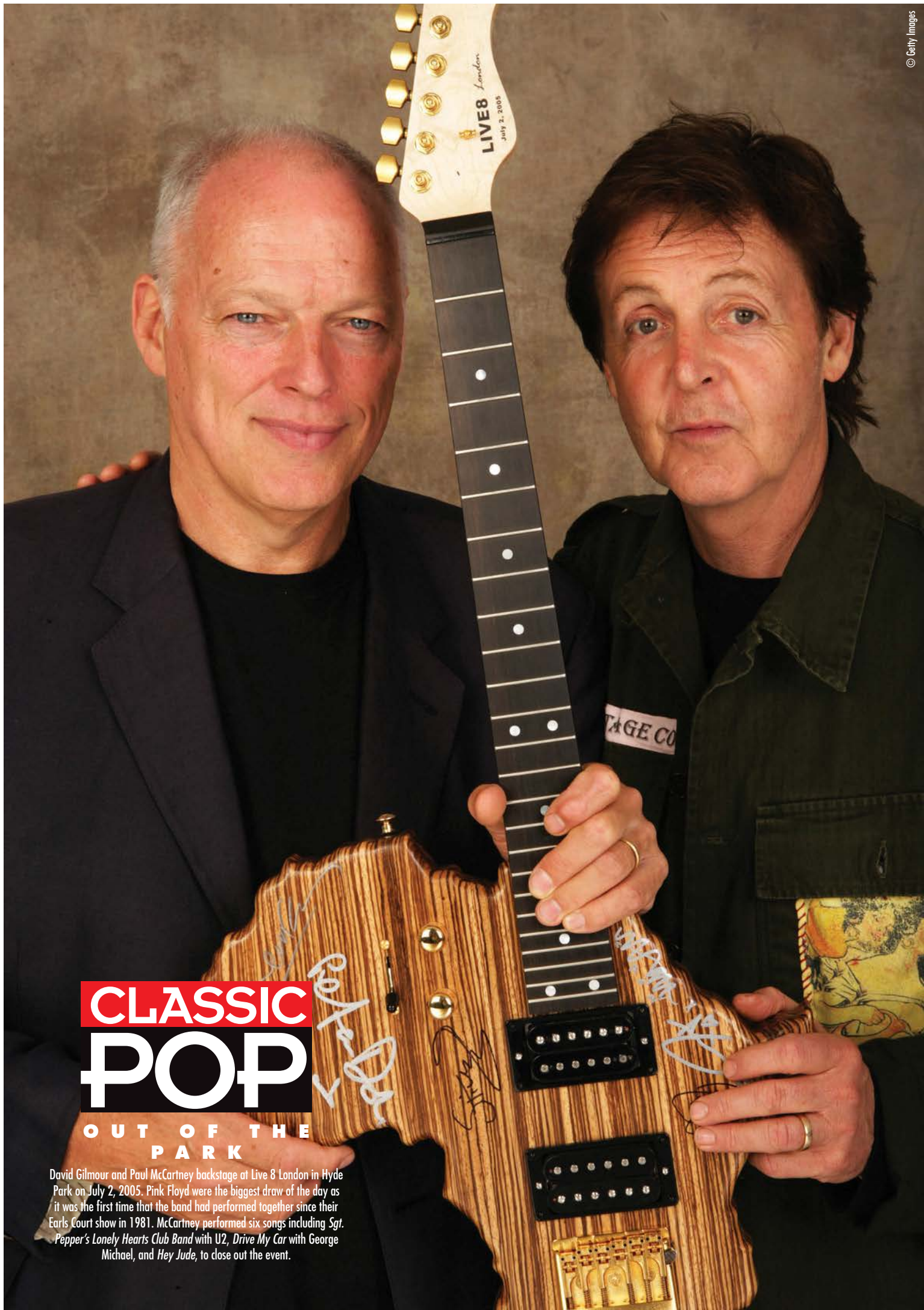
ON THE TOWN

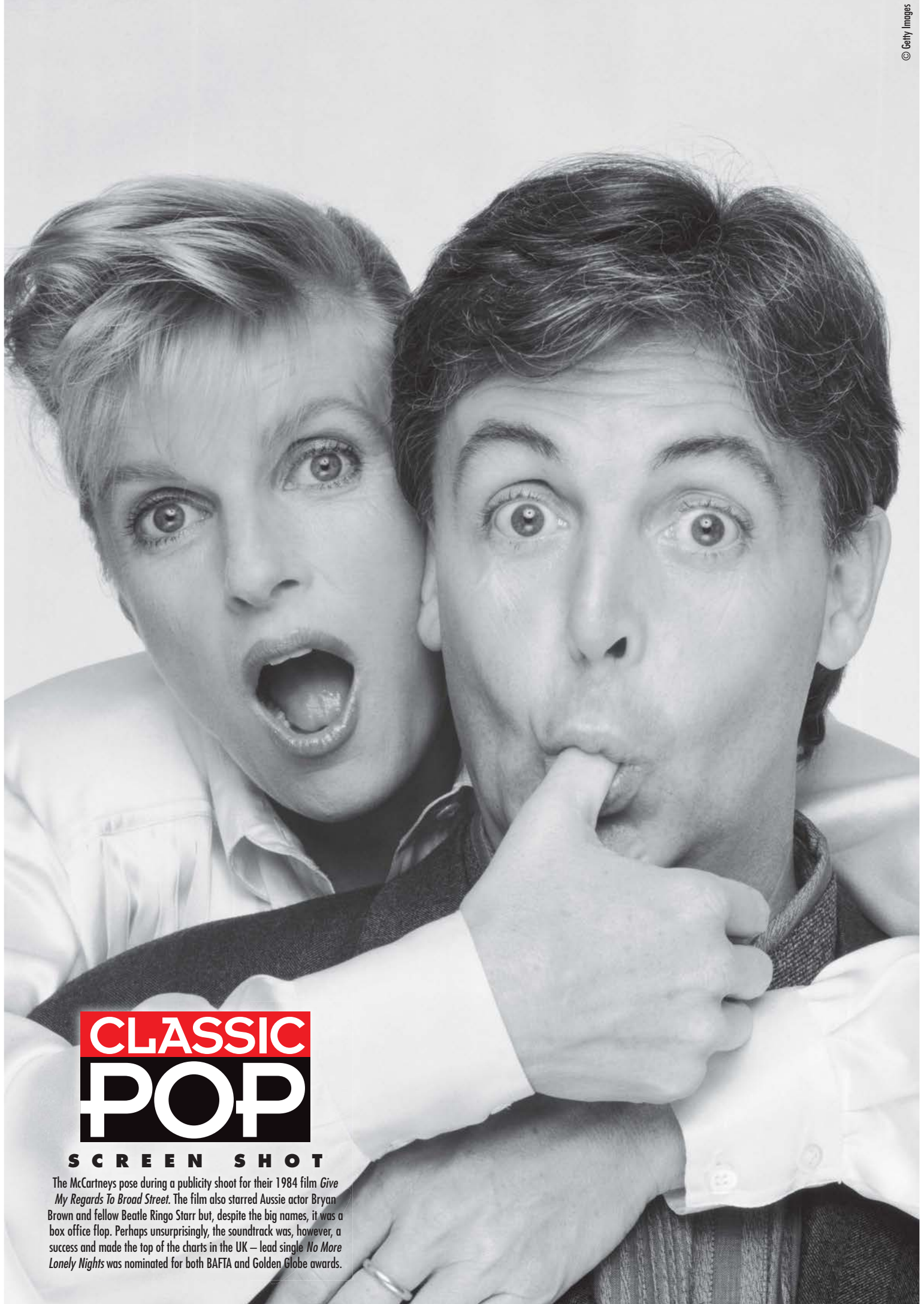
October 1982, and McCartney roams the streets of New York's Upper West Side. Things were looking up. *Ebony And Ivory*, his duet with Stevie Wonder, had reached No. 1 in both the US and UK earlier that year, a feat equalled a month later by his album *Tug Of War*. Another of his big-name match-ups, this time with Michael Jackson, entitled *The Girl Is Mine*, would soon hit the Top 5 on both sides of the Atlantic.

CLASSIC POP

OUT OF THE PARK

David Gilmour and Paul McCartney backstage at Live 8 London in Hyde Park on July 2, 2005. Pink Floyd were the biggest draw of the day as it was the first time that the band had performed together since their Earls Court show in 1981. McCartney performed six songs including *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* with U2, *Drive My Car* with George Michael, and *Hey Jude*, to close out the event.





CLASSIC POP

SCREEN SHOT

The McCartneys pose during a publicity shoot for their 1984 film *Give My Regards To Broad Street*. The film also starred Aussie actor Bryan Brown and fellow Beatle Ringo Starr but, despite the big names, it was a box office flop. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the soundtrack was, however, a success and made the top of the charts in the UK – lead single *No More Lonely Nights* was nominated for both BAFTA and Golden Globe awards.

CLASSIC POP

DUTCH TREAT

In soft focus, McCartney gives the peace sign to the camera in the back of a car at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam on May 22nd 1989. Paul and his new band had just returned from the Con Cordia TV Studios in Bussum, where they had recorded a slot for music TV series *Countdown*, the most successful music show in Europe at the time. Shortly afterwards, McCartney's eighth studio album *Flowers In The Dirt* was released.

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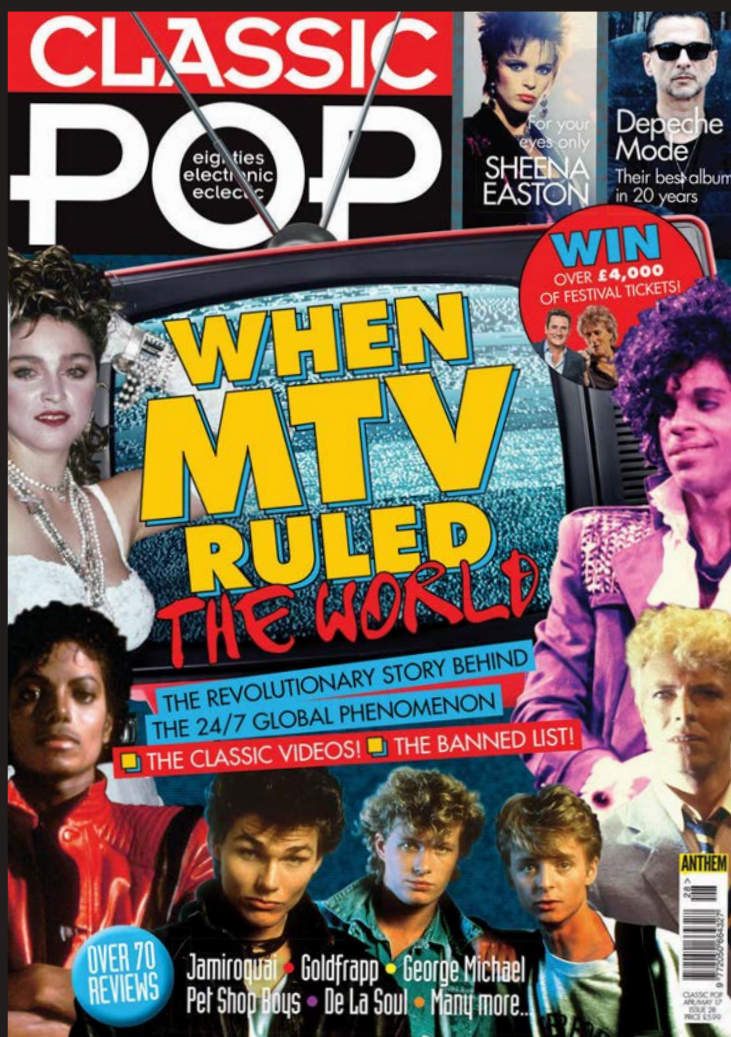
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AND IN THE END . . .

BRICKS THROUGH
WINDOWS! NOT BEING
ABLE TO GET OUT OF
BED! REACHING FOR
THE WHISKY! WRITS!
HITS! TIRESOME FORMER
BANDMATES! ALL THESE,
AND MORE, MADE UP A
TYPICAL DAY IN THE LIFE
OF PAUL MCCARTNEY
AFTER THE BEATLES SPLIT...

IAN RAVENDALE



Unbeknownst to the band, this photo session at Lennon's home on August 22 1969 would be the Beatles' last

PAUL MCCARTNEY,

one of the four most famous pop musicians

in the world, was close to a nervous breakdown. "I suppose the hurt of it all and the disappointment and the sorrow of losing this great band, these great friends. I was going crazy," he told daughter Mary as part of the 2001 documentary *Wingspan* that she co-produced, continuing; "I wouldn't get up in the morning and when I did get up I wouldn't shave or bother with anything, and reach for the whisky."

After months of messing round with (and then temporarily shelving) the *Let It Be* album and film, the Beatles reunited for what became their final album. *Abbey Road* saw the band do their best to put differences behind them and make one final great record. John Lennon wanted all his songs on one side and all of Paul's on the other, but was eventually talked out of it. Knowing the album was probably going to be their swansong, The Beatles were determined to go out on a high. *Abbey Road* was released on 26 September 1969 to universal acclaim.

Following the disintegration of the Fab Four in early 1970, the usually very sure McCartney was at a loss as to what to do next, as he subsequently related to the Canadian *Music Express* magazine: "The nearest I came ever to feeling unemployed was when the Beatles split up and it became like a deep kind of emptiness in my soul. It really made me very frightened. I thought, 'Oh God, it's gone, it's slipping from underneath me!' I felt like the bottom was falling out. And it did make me think, 'I bet this is the way it feels like to be unemployed.'"

Initially, the Beatles agreed amongst themselves not to announce the split for fear of damaging sales of the forthcoming *Let It Be* album. McCartney in particular became more and more guilty about denying that the band had broken up. He was releasing his first solo

album, the eponymous *McCartney*, and rather than submit to dozens of interviews he got Apple's Peter Brown to draft a series of questions and answers, print them on a pamphlet and include them with the press copies of the album.

The section that the press pounced on, of course, regarded the current state of play with The Beatles: "Did you miss the other Beatles and George Martin? Was there a moment when you thought, 'I wish Ringo were here for this break?'" "No," ran Paul's bare-bones reply. "Is your break with The Beatles temporary or permanent, due to personal differences or musical ones?" "Personal differences, business differences, musical differences, but most of all because I have a better time with my family," Paul wrote. "Temporary or permanent? I don't really know." "Do you foresee a time when Lennon-McCartney becomes an active songwriting partnership again?" McCartney: "No."

While Paul doesn't say that The Beatles have broken up, he doesn't say they haven't. The result? A "Paul Quits The Beatles" *Daily Mirror* front page. When pressed, he responded that he didn't leave The Beatles; The Beatles left The Beatles, but no one wanted to say that the party was over.

"I've been accused of walking out on them but I never did," he added. "It's something I'd never do. One day John left, and that was the last straw. It was the signal for the others to leave. The Beatles were a blanket of security. When the job folded beneath me I suddenly didn't have a career anymore. I wasn't earning anything. All my money was in Apple. I couldn't get it because I'd signed it all away."

The *McCartney* album had its beginnings in an extended holiday that Paul, new wife Linda, their newborn baby Mary and Linda's daughter Heather took in Scotland in the summer of 1969. They escaped London to go and live on High Park, a farm

POP UP After the last photo shoot at Tittenhurst estate shown above – with Paul, symbolically perhaps, the only clean-shaven one – the four Fabbs would hardly meet outside of a few business meetings



that McCartney had bought on Scotland's Kintyre peninsula, close to the small village of Campbeltown. The idyllic and very isolated setting became the inspiration for several songs over the years, including *The Long And Winding Road* and, most famously, *Mull Of Kintyre*.

Seeing her normally cheerful husband buckle under waves of despair and knowing that, aside from his family, music was the most important thing in Paul's life, Linda encouraged him to start writing and recording again, but this time without the other Beatles. They returned to London just before Christmas 1969 and Paul had a four-track Studer tape machine installed in their St John's Wood home, with sessions also booked into Abbey Road and Morgan Studios in Willesden. To test his new piece of equipment Paul recorded a song snippet called *The Lovely Linda*, dedicated to his muse. The sessions for his first solo album had begun.

As he told *Mojo*'s David Hutcheon in 2011: "McCartney came off the back of a lot of misunderstandings, of a lot of trouble within The Beatles. I got burnt a little bit because I'm so enthusiastic and I can take over in the studio. So there was a point where the guys sort of turned on me and said, "F***ing hell, man, you really are bossing us around", and it was like they'd turned a mirror on me. Making a solo album meant I could just have some ideas for myself. It was nice for me to do. It was a lifeline. You've got to have something in your future that you're looking forward to, something to do rather than just sit around and fall apart."

The McCartney album was scheduled for release on 17 April 1970. John and George dispatched Ringo round to McCartney's London house with a letter saying that because the *Let It Be* album was due for release on 24 April, they'd asked EMI to delay shipping the bass player's solo album until 4 June. A furious Paul told Ringo to get out, and that his album would be issued as scheduled. McCartney got his way and *Let It Be* was pushed back to 8 May.

McCartney wasn't an obvious solo debut for a worldwide superstar. With Paul playing all the instruments and Linda joining in on harmonies, it's the work of a creative and inventive musician making music because he wanted to, when and where he wanted. If parts of it sounded homemade, well... it's because they were.

The formation of Apple in 1967 – a company initially set up as a tax dodge to get round the punitive surtax the Beatles faced on record royalties that EMI had delayed paying while a new recording deal was being finalised – added another layer of complexity in the life of the foursome as, via Apple, they effectively opened their doors to just about anyone with anything resembling a good idea... and, as it turned out, many more with not-so good ideas including light-emitting paint and spaceships powered by car engines. Apple Records did better with some significant signings including James Taylor and Badfinger alongside The Beatles themselves.

After several years of Apple losing money at a staggering rate, the Beatles decided something needed to be done and Allen Klein was brought in. Klein, a hard-nosed American who had previously worked with (and subsequently been sued by) the Rolling Stones had taken over the financial management of George, John and Ringo; Paul, however, didn't like or trust Klein, and appointed

Police struggle with fans as The Beatles play their final full concert at Candlestick Park, August 1966



© Getty Images

BEGINNINGS OF THE BREAK-UP

The disintegration of The Beatles began when they stopped

touring. For many years it had been the quartet against the world, with not even George Martin nor Brian Epstein completely understanding how strong the bond was between them, what it was like to be in the eye of Hurricane Beatlemania, and how happy they were to leave it behind.

In 1987 George Harrison talked about The Beatles' last public appearance as a group in San Francisco on 29 August 1966. "There was a certain amount of relief after the Candlestick Park concert. Before one of the last numbers we set up this camera, Ringo came off the drums and we stood with our backs to the audience and posed for a photograph because we knew that was the last show.

"There was a sense of relief after that, getting home. Then we spent what seemed like 50 years going in and out of each other's houses, writing tunes and going into the studio for *Sgt Pepper* and the *White Album*. But I think for all of us it was just too much. The novelty had worn off. Everybody was growing up, getting married and leaving home. It was inevitable, really."



February 1971, and Paul and Linda emerge from the High Court of Justice

© Getty Images

his in-laws Lee and John Eastman to oversee his financial affairs. Klein wanted The Beatles, not just three of them, and began applying the pressure on McCartney, as Paul told Barry Miles, author of the *Many Years From Now* biography.

"I was going through a bad time. I remember lying awake at nights shaking, which has not happened to me since. One night I'd been asleep and awoke and couldn't lift my head off the pillow. My head was down in the pillow, I thought 'Jesus, if I don't do this, I'll suffocate.' I remember hardly having the energy to pull myself up but with a great struggle I pulled my head up and laid on my back and thought 'That was a bit near!' I just couldn't do anything. I had so much in me that I couldn't express and it was just very nervy times, very very difficult.

"So I eventually went and said, 'I want to leave. You can all get on with Klein and everything, just let me out.' And they said, 'No, we're not going to let you go.' Because Klein had said, 'Look, he produced [Mary Hopkin's Apple single] *Those Were The Days*' and stuff like that.

"I remember having one classic conversation with George Harrison. I said: 'Look, George, I want to get off the label,' and George ended the conversation, and as I say it now I feel like I'm lying with the devil's tongue, but I swear George said to me, 'You'll stay on the f***ing label. Hare Krishna.' That's how it was, that's how the times were."

McCartney wanted to extricate himself from Apple in general and Allen Klein in particular. But, as his lawyer (and brother-in-law) John Eastman pointed out, Klein was not party to any of the agreements within the four Beatles and hadn't been involved with the group when they were made.

The only way out, explained Eastman, was to sue John, George and Ringo. "I knew I had to do it. It was either that or letting Klein have the whole

thing, all the fortune we'd worked for all of our lives since we were children. But we did rescue the Beatles millions. They had taken us long enough to earn and we hadn't screwed anyone to earn them.

"The Beatles fortune was on the line," Paul concluded. "Not just mine, but theirs as well. Which is now how I can look back at it and think: 'Thank God I did that.' If I had not had the nerve to sue them, none of us would have anything now."

On 18 February 1971 Paul filed a writ in the Chancery Division of the High Court asking for the dissolution of The Beatles partnership along with accounts to be made available of the partnerships dealings and a receiver to be appointed to oversee their assets. On the 12 March 1971, Justice Stamp ruled in Paul's favour, stating that the appointment of Allen Klein and his ABKCO company without McCartney's consent was a breach of The Beatles' partnership agreement. Although there was no evidence that Klein had stolen from the band, he had received "excessive commission". That evening, John Lennon, with George and Ringo in tow, went round to Paul's house and threw bricks through his window. The Beatles really were over.

Justice Stamp appointed accountant James Spooner to manage The Beatles' affairs until the full hearing to dissolve the partnership, which Stamp expected McCartney to win. Spooner agreed that Paul was right to sue John, George and Ringo, saying: "They'd have been bust otherwise. They foolishly took on this crook called Klein as a manager, and Klein firstly ripped them off something shocking by taking a percentage off the gross rather than off the net after expenses." Spooner got on well with McCartney but, while acknowledging how talented John was, the accountant found Lennon "terribly tiresome".

Having spent literally all of his adult life as a musician, any doubts that Paul had about what he

POP UP Allan Klein's legacy was toxic. He lost the Stones the rights to their pre-1971 music, took 20% of the Beatles' total revenue and even grabbed George's *He's So Fine* copyright payment. McCartney had been right



should do next were soon dispelled. As he related to John Wilson on BBC Television's *Mastertapes* programme, it was Linda who convinced him to wipe the slate clean and form a new band.

"For some mad reason I wanted to go back to square one and do it as we'd done it in The Beatles. People said: 'Linda can't play keyboards!' And it was true, but John [Lennon] couldn't play guitar when we started — he was playing banjo chords... Looking back on it I'm really glad we did it. I could've just gone into a supergroup and rung up Eric [Clapton] and Jimmy Page, John Bonham, but I wanted to go back. We ended up playing universities and graduated to town halls, and it was funny because I'd been in Shea Stadium quite recently. You had to hold your nerve, but then you do in life."

Having made the *McCartney* album playing all the instruments, Paul cut most of the follow-up *Ram* in New York with session musicians that included guitarists David Spinozza and Hugh McCracken and future Wings drummer Denny Seiwell. Credited to Paul and Linda McCartney (to free some of the royalties the court case had frozen), the album took McCartney back to the top of the charts in the UK and Europe and to No. 2 in the US.

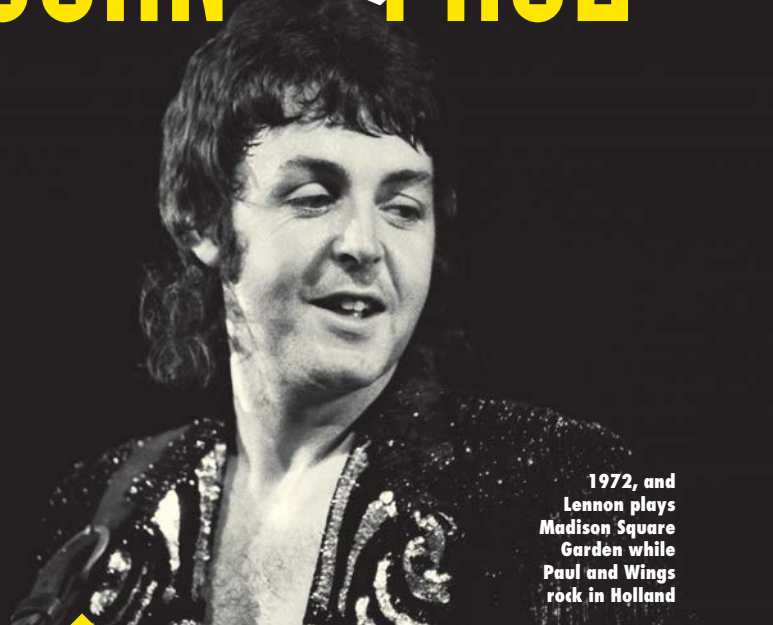
The chance to play live again that was beyond Paul's control within The Beatles was now a reality, and he set about putting a band together. With Seiwell on drums, McCartney's old friend the former Moody Blues lead singer Denny Laine was drafted in on guitar and vocals, while Linda kept the keyboards and backing vocals within the family. "The Dazzler" and "Turpentine" were rejected as band names in favour of "Wings", which was also not a great choice as there had already been a short lived folk-rock band of the same name that included Paul Simon's brother Eddie. The fledgling outfit cut *Wildlife*, a rushed-sounding debut album that promised better things to come. Former Joe Cocker guitarist Henry McCullough was quickly added to the lineup and the quintet set out on an impromptu tour, playing for door money at any university that would have them. Paul had suggested this idea to The Beatles, only to be met by derision from John. Phase Two in the Paul McCartney story had begun. ■

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JOHN VS PAUL



1972, and Lennon plays Madison Square Garden while Paul and Wings rock in Holland

HOW DO YOU SLEEP

How Do You Sleep was recorded by Lennon for his 1971 album *Imagine*, probably as a response to the lines "Too many people preaches practices" and "You took your lucky break and broke it in two" from *Too Many People* on Paul McCartney's *Ram* album. Here are some of the things they said...

PAUL (1994):

"When John did *How Do You Sleep* I didn't want to get into a slanging match. Part of it was cowardice... John was a great wit, and I didn't want to go fencing with the rapier champion of East Cheam. But it meant that I had to take shit. It meant that I had to take lines like 'All you ever did was *Yesterday*.' I always find myself wanting to excuse John's behaviour, just because I loved him."

JOHN (1974):

"It was like divorce pangs and, me being me, it was 'Blast this! F*** the past!' I've always had a bit of a mouth, and when a thing begins that way you have to live up to it."

PAUL (1984):

"He'd been doing a lot of preaching and it got up my nose a bit."

JOHN (1974):

"He lived through it. The only thing that matters is how he and I feel about these things and not what the writer or commentator thinks about it. Him and me are okay."

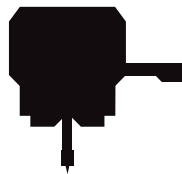
PAUL (1974):

"He said in interviews that he was shitting himself with laughter when he was doing it. He's alright, is John."

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John, holding a copy of *Power To The People*, chats to fans, March 1971



CLASSIC

ALBUM

BAND ON THE RUN

PAUL MCCARTNEY AND WINGS

BATTLING TO PROVE HE COULD MATCH HIS BEATLES-ERA CREATIVITY, PAUL GATHERED LINDA AND HIS ONE REMAINING BANDMATE, PUT THEM ON A PLANE, AND MANAGED TO MOULD A TRIUMPH OUT OF CHAOS...

PAUL LESTER



The former Beatles produced some outstanding work in the Seventies, and right at the top of that list of post-Fabs classics, alongside George Harrison's 1970 triple album *All Things Must Pass* and *John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band*, also from 1970, is *Band On The Run*, the third album by Paul McCartney and Wings and the fifth long-player from McCartney since the Beatles' Great Split.

It remains the high watermark of McCartney's solo work, and it was the one that reaffirmed his reputation as a premier pop-rock craftsman, not to mention commercial force, following a tentative start to his solo career. And yet it was the album that almost didn't happen, so beset was *Band On The Run* by difficulties.

Half the band left just as recording was about to commence in Lagos, Nigeria. When they got to the country in question, the studio wasn't finished. Paul and Linda got mugged and could easily have been killed while they were there. The demo tapes for the album were stolen – and McCartney keeled over and nearly died from a bronchial condition induced by the stress of it all. Oh, and they got threatened by musician Fela Kuti and his henchman because the Nigerian feared McCartney was "stealing" his music. Still, out of this chaos – indeed, arguably because of it – McCartney managed to make his Seventies masterpiece.

There were mixed feelings in the air in the run-up to *Band On The Run*'s release in December 1973. "I knew how to be in The Beatles. I just didn't know how to be in a band after The Beatles," McCartney said of that period in the early Seventies that found him playing the reclusive, bearded ex-rock star, married with a young family, including three children, and living on a remote Scottish farm. There had been those early University gigs that showed McCartney was willing



Paul overdubs backing vocals for *Band On The Run*, London, November 1973

©Getty Images

In November 1973: "I figured something's got to happen if we go to Lagos"



©Getty Images

to rebuild a performing unit of some merit, and the success of the *Red Rose Speedway* album and excellence of the attendant *My Love* single, suggested Wings might actually be in the ascendant.

And yet many were still waiting for him to match the quality of his output with The Beatles and rediscover his mojo. Elsewhere there was a sense of “whatever next?” following the recent run of singles that included the radically varied *Give Ireland Back To The Irish*, *Mary Had A Little Lamb* and *C Moon*. Others resigned themselves to the notion that *Band On The Run* would be yet more inferior product given the band’s paucity of experience, notably Linda, who McCartney himself admitted could sing a little and merely dabbled in piano. Meanwhile, drummer Denny Seiwell and guitarist Henry

have been to do it in London. But why did he choose Lagos in the first place?

“I was looking for something different and adventurous,” he explained. He had been perusing a list of studios owned by his label EMI around the world – there was one in China, another in Brazil – but it was the one in Nigeria that caught his attention. It was so off the beaten track, it appealed in a perverse way. “I figured something’s got to happen if we go to Lagos,” he said.

They almost didn’t arrive at all, as their problems started while he, Linda and the trusty Denny Laine, together with their three children Mary, Heather and Stella, plus sound engineer Geoff Emerick, were still in the air over the Nigerian city. Invited into the cockpit by the pilots, McCartney noted to his horror that it was all mist down

“I always put myself under pressure. I’m always thinking the next thing I’m going to be doing is the best thing ever, but I’m always disappointed with it. I’m like, if only I’d done this or that. A lot of artists are like that” **PAUL MCCARTNEY**

McCullough had grown tired of life in the band and, on the eve of their departure for Lagos, suddenly quit. To say the least, Paul McCartney was up against it.

“I was livid,” he said later. “I was like, ‘Screw you. I will make an album you will wish you were on.’” He admitted to feeling a certain pressure to get it right this time. “Well, maybe not pressure,” he mused, “but a certain desire to get it right.” He added: “I always put myself under pressure. I’m always thinking the next thing I’m going to be doing is the best thing ever, but I’m always disappointed with it. I’m like, if only I’d done this or that. A lot of artists are like that.”

McCartney had made a massive gamble on quitting The Beatles. Now here he was making another: choosing to record his new album far away from home in Lagos, when the sensible thing would

below, covering an area of jungle. Panic-stricken, he thought, “Oh my God, are we even going to land?”

Any feelings of relief he felt on arriving at Lagos were offset by the sinking first impressions of the studio designated for recording. “It was very under-developed,” observed McCartney, putting it mildly. It was a long way from the hi-tech facilities of Abbey Road. It was so rough and ready that even the sound booths weren’t built, and local workers were forced to construct makeshift ones out of wood and perspex.

And yet, instead of running scared, McCartney and company rose to the challenges. With only three musicians left, they were forced to multitask, with Paul taking on singing, acoustic and electric guitar, bass, piano, keyboards, even drums and percussion duties. There was an element of

BAND ON THE CHARTS

SLOW BURNER

Although its predecessors *Wild Life* (1971) and *Red Rose Speedway* (1973) hadn’t exactly tanked, *Band On The Run* was the album that put McCartney back on the map as a serious player on the international music scene. It was something of a gentle climber, however. At first it did modestly well, charting in the lower reaches of the UK and US Top 10s. But it was catapulted onto the next level by the success of the title track and *Jet* when released as singles. It would eventually become the best-selling album of 1974 in the UK (and Australia) and reach pole position on both sides of the Atlantic. In America, it reached the top on no fewer than three separate occasions and remained in the charts there for two and a half years. In the UK year-end listings, it was outsold only by the ubiquitous *Carpenters 1969-73*. It was nominated for a Grammy (for Album of the Year) and won one for Best Engineered Non-Classical Album (for Geoff Emerick). After *Band On The Run*, Wings would undertake a worldwide tour that would be seen by over a million people. Not bad for the bloke who wrote *C Moon*.



proving himself –not only to the musicians who had quit, but also to the world in general. Meanwhile, Denny Laine offered support on vocals, acoustic, electric and bass guitars, keyboards and percussion. As for Linda, Paul appreciated her skills when it came to vocals and harmonies (she had, after all, been singing with him since the sessions for *Let It Be*), but he had to teach her the rudiments of piano.

“We were in love and wanted to be together,” he justified her inclusion. “She played a bit of piano so I would show her basic stuff

– three or four chords. She would pick it up and had a good sense of rhythm.” What was it like teaching his wife? “No fun at all,” he replied.

Even less fun was their brush with some local villains one night as they were walking back to their apartment from the studio. A big black car pulled up and five men got out, one of whom was wielding a knife. At this point, Linda started screaming, and she and Paul proceeded to hand over their possessions, notably a camera and some demo tapes. The recordings they had made thus far for

Band On The Run were now stolen property. It could have been even worse: their studio manager informed them the next day that, had they been locals, they would likely have been murdered.

Now they would have to reconstruct all the songs. Fortunately, McCartney remembered virtually everything, and besides, he had lyric sheets to jog his memory. One of the songs that had to be reconstructed in the studio was Picasso's *Last Words (Drink To Me)*, which itself resulted from a far happier unexpected encounter. It had been written earlier in the year, in Jamaica, at a dinner party thrown by Paul and Linda at their rented house in Montego Bay. One of the guests was Dustin Hoffman, who had recently been filming *Papillon*. Following the meal, the actor wondered aloud whether the musician could write a song about anything, there and then. So he pulled out a magazine bearing an article on the recently-deceased painter Pablo Picasso, whose last words were apparently, "Drink to me, drink to my health, you know I can't drink anymore." McCartney picked up a guitar and began spontaneously conjuring a melody to match the words, and so the song was born – much to the delight of Hoffman and his wife.

Yet despite this fleeting pleasure, McCartney's sojourn in Lagos had been gruelling, and the various negative experiences – including a visit from famous Nigerian musician Fela Kuti, who confronted the ex-Beatle about his movements in Lagos, suspicious that he was simply there to appropriate the indigenous music – had begun to take their toll. Which is perhaps why, one day, McCartney suddenly found himself lying on the ground, struggling for breath. "I didn't realise what stress can do to you," he said later. "I fainted and a doctor said it was a breathing thing." It turned out to be a bronchial spasm, although it could have been much worse. For a brief

Paul and Linda mid-session: The album was completed at George Martin's AIR Studios in London



"It was an important album... it introduced Wings to a new generation of people who now talk about it as an iconic record. For these people, it's not *Sgt Pepper*, it's *Band On The Run*. Finally we made it" **PAUL MCCARTNEY**

moment, Linda believed her husband was dead.

Incredibly, given the circumstances and the numerous brushes with disaster, McCartney and Wings wound up with some stellar recordings, a fact that occurred as soon as they got back to Blighty and the safety of AIR Studios. Somehow, it seemed their various experiences and the edgy nature of the trip had worked their way into the music.

"When we got back to England, we realised we had something special," said McCartney. "The music had been made in a different environment and we'd been soaking up different influences, so the songs sounded different."

Now all they had to do was turn the raw material into a polished, professional product, via the modern miracles of overdubbing, with a little gloss from the

orchestrations, which in this case were provided by famed Bowie/Bolan producer Tony Visconti. The title track became a three-part mini-epic, with elements of country, rock and funk. Its structural daring didn't stop it becoming a massive crowd-pleaser and a US No. 1 single in 1974. McCartney felt the song captured the idea that was prevalent at the time, of bands as gangs – desperados, as per the Eagles album of that name – wanting to cut loose and be free. *Jet* was supercharged power pop; issued as a single, it became a huge worldwide smash and helped the album become an international hit. But what did the song mean? It has variously been said to have been about the McCartneys'

PAUL AND THE GANG

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

With *Band On The Run*, Paul McCartney didn't just create a great album, he came up with a memorable sleeve, one to match the iconic likes of *Revolver* and *Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. The front cover image was what made it so special. It was vaguely redolent of the famous-people artwork for the Beatles' masterpiece, only this time the celebrities – captured at Osterley Park, West London, by photographer Clive Arrowsmith as a pretend gang in the throes of fleeing from prison – were all living. Alongside the McCartneys and Denny Laine in this mocked-up escape scene were chatshow host and journalist Michael Parkinson; actor, comedian and singer Kenny Lynch; movie tough guy James Coburn; screen vampire Christopher Lee; politician and raconteur Clement Freud; and boxer John Conteh.

"Everyone in that group was talented in different ways," Paul explained. "Kenny had been a mate since The Beatles – he was the first black guy we got to know, and he'd toured with us; a nice guy. Christopher we'd known since the early Beatles days when he was making a vampire movie next door. We used to go and see John Conteh fight – we were fans." The feeling was mutual: "It was a great honour and privilege to be involved," said Conteh. As for Lynch, to this day the sleeve remains the thing he is most frequently asked about by fans. "Everybody asks me about *Band On The Run*," he said in 2010, "wherever I am in the world."



©Getty Images

dog and a pony, although that hardly explains the young lady in the lyrics enduring marital strife, or indeed the Sgt Major. Still, who cared about meaning when the melodies were this sublime. *Bluebird* was a beautiful lilting ballad, *Mrs Vandebilt* was supremely catchy, with an infectious "Ho, hey ho" chorus, while *Let Me Roll It* had a distinctive guitar riff and lashings of echo on the vocal that led many to describe it as Lennon-esque. Side two opened with *Mamunia*, which essayed a new genre: Afro-soul. No *Words* was an affecting brass construction with a lush string arrangement. *Picasso's Last Words (Drink To Me)* was an enhanced version of the song debuted before Dustin

Hoffman's ears. And LP closer *Nineteen Hundred And Eighty Five* was a thrilling rocker that ended with an excerpt from the title track, bringing the album to a close in circular fashion and giving it the feel of a song-suite if not an out-and-out concept: one about freedom and escape.

Now all they needed was a decent sleeve design for McCartney to end up with a hit to match his Beatles heyday. "It was an important album for me because it was the first time the band had a big hit," McCartney acknowledged. "It introduced Wings to a new generation of people who now talk about it as an iconic record. For these people, it's not *Sgt Pepper*, it's *Band On The Run*. Finally... we made it." ■



Chat show host Michael Parkinson was just one of the unlikely felons on the album's sleeve

©Getty Images





ELECTRO

CLASH

PAUL MCCARTNEY
GOES... DANCE?
YOU'D BETTER BELIEVE
IT. HAVING PROVED
HIMSELF ADEPT AT
TURNING HIS HAND
TO MANY STYLES
IN THE PAST, IT WAS
WITH THE FIREMAN
WHERE HE REALLY
WENT FOR IT – EVEN
IF HE DIDN'T ADMIT
TO IT FOR A WHILE...

IAN WADE



©Getty Images

Paul's 1993 LP *Off The Ground* was a live-band, one-take affair



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In the early Nineties, Paul McCartney was putting the finishing touches to his latest solo work, *Off The Ground*, when he felt the need to get a fresh pair of ears in to help out with mixing. He was also curious about the then-emergent remix culture, and it was recommended that he contact Youth. After getting in touch, Paul invited Youth down to his Hog Hill studio to remix a couple of tracks, and the pair instantly hit it off. As the two worked on the album, they started to stockpile material between them.

Youth – real name Martin Glover – had previous form in showbusiness. He was a founding member of Killing Joke, initially leaving the band in 1982 before returning properly in 2008. He'd also formed Brilliant with future KLF-er Jimmy Cauty, a band that shone vaguely brightly in the mid-Eighties and had released the quite amazing Top 83 hit album *Kiss The Lips Of Life*. He'd had a hand in co-forming the WAU/Mr Modo record label with Alex Patterson, which released some of The Orb's early work, as well as forming Blue Pearl, who had a Top Five hit in the summer of 1990 with *Naked In The Rain*. By the end of the Nineties Youth would have produced Crowded House's *Together Alone* and The Verve's multi-million selling *Urban Hymns*, as well as remixing U2, Edwyn Collins, Marilyn Manson and the Sugarcubes; since then he's produced albums by Embrace, The Futureheads, Dido, Shack and The Charlatans, to name just a few.

"HE SAID, 'DON'T BOTHER EDITING THEM, I LIKE THEM AS THEY ARE, I WANT TO PUT THEM OUT ANONYMOUSLY. WOULD YOU BE UP FOR IT?'"

In a recent interview with *DJ Mag*, Youth explained the initial meeting with McCartney. "So I went down there and he said, 'Look, these are all the multi-tracks of the tapes from the album, pick a track and get going.' I said, 'Rather than do a new track, I'd prefer to just source different sounds from the tapes and start constructing a new track out of the sounds,' and he said 'Oh, that's different, let's do that.' And then I said, 'What would be good is once I've done that, if I get you to overdub bits and add things,' and he was like 'Oh, that's interesting, okay.'"

As Youth began work, McCartney would sit up with him until six o'clock in the morning watching the producer work his magic. Youth would create separate tracks for each element of the songs, then use the best bits

of each to create a new whole. Through this method, McCartney heard all manner of new permutations. At one point, Youth was knocking out a heavy lengthy dub mix. Liking what he'd heard, McCartney made a suggestion: "He said, 'Don't bother editing them, I really like them as they are, and I want to put them all out anonymously as an album under the name The Fireman. Would you be up for it?' I was like 'Yeah, sure', and that became the first Fireman album."

The first album by The Fireman, *Strawberries Oceans Ships Forest*, was released in November 1993 to little fanfare. No names of the authors behind the project were to be found on the sleeve; to

POP UP Youth's name is an abbreviation of "Pig Youth", itself a nod of the head to DJ and reggae chanter Big Youth, whose first Jamaican No. 1 single was the motorbike-rewiring *S90 Skank*





Youth and Paul get painty fingers for the release of 2008's *Electric Arguments*

Future Fireman Youth, Killing Joke bassist, around the time of the band's first album in 1980



©Getty Images

most people, it looked like a fairly anonymous dance/dub affair by some then-vogueish trance type. With track lengths averaging out around eight minutes, it certainly didn't look McCartney-esque, and his involvement was initially denied by EMI.

The music business has seen a few "fake" releases over the years. When Stock Aitken Waterman's *Roadblock* came out, it had been trialled in rare groove clubs as some lost white label classic and not something knocked out between Rick Astley and Kylie Minogue duties. When Cliff Richard, irked that his records weren't getting on the radio, released *Can't Keep This Feeling In* in 2008, it was issued initially as by being by Black Knight. However, if McCartney feared any form of backlash to being seen as trying to be "down with the kids", he need not have worried; critics hailed *Strawberries Oceans Ships Forest* as a collaboration comparable with the experimental work Brian Eno had done in the Seventies.

The Fireman's album certainly tapped into McCartney's more experimental spirit. Though he had long been regarded as the "straight man" to John Lennon's oddity, it was in fact often Paul who had pushed The Beatles into more far-out avenues. He'd immersed himself into the London art scene, and was encouraged by his then-girlfriend Jane Asher's parents to engage with new ways of expression, be it experimenting with tape loops or listening to composers such as Stockhausen and John Cage. His key way-out Beatles moment was *Carnival Of Light*, a 14-minute sonic exploration recorded in 1967 (it's still unreleased, though Paul tried to include it on the second volume of the Anthology series).

McCartney himself said of his new project: "That's the whole point about The Fireman – it's very free. ➤

YOUTH ON THE FIREMAN

Did you and Paul swap ideas, albums or anything during the process of becoming The Fireman, or was he very switched on in general?

Paul was aware of what was happening on the scene, and we would spend mornings listening to reference music and discussing writers, poets and art.

Do you think it might have helped that both of you are essentially bassists, and so that you could operate on that more rhythmic/groove level?

Two bass players = double trouble. Paul is also an amazing drummer, so I would handle bass if he was playing drums, and only if I had to. Why would you want to hear anyone else other than Paul McCartney playing bass on his records? Well, maybe Bootsy Collins would be cool!

The first two albums slipped out almost unnoticed. Do you think Paul was a little worried about the reception of him "going dance" at the time?

I think it was fun for him to be out under a pseudonym, like it was to do *Sgt Pepper's* with The Beatles. In hindsight I think he was well ahead of the game with The Firemen... as he was with The Beatles.

Do you still keep in touch with Paul? Are you still swapping ideas? Any plans for more Fireman stuff at the moment?

We talk sporadically and occasionally meet, we still exchange ideas, letters, music and so on. I would hope there will be more Fireman action, who knows... he's a very busy person!



Paul met The Fireman's fans when he signed copies of *Electric Arguments* in HMV Oxford Street



POP UP Youth is credited with playing bass on Rushes' *Bison*: Paul's usual mad array included guitar, bass, synths, drums, bells, flute, sitar, harpsichord, mellotron and harmonium



And also it's an approach I'm interested in. The whole idea behind *Sgt Pepper's*... was to create a band, and we could pretend that we were that band and not The Beatles, so we made that record with that in mind... but it's very free – it's a very joyful way to record. Sometimes it can be pretty scary, but that's okay. And it's very quick. I enjoy the process because it's exhilarating."

The Fireman allowed McCartney to re-energise his approach to making music and over the next few years he and Youth worked on more tracks, but this time not stemming from remixes of McCartney songs, but rather some all-new material.

"We often did the recordings for the second album on solstices, equinoxes, things like that," Youth explained to *DJ Mag*. "We were tapping into all of that sort of thing. But by the second album Linda was seriously ill and was actually dying, although I didn't realise that at the time."

"There was a deep melancholy in the air at the time, which I can hear now listening back to the record. It's a lovely testament to her – it became a much more emotional and chilled record because of that. By that time I'd been getting more into field recordings and going out... not only on the equinoxes or the solstices or whatever. We'd go out to the fields, cliffs, I'd record him and Linda riding their horses, I'd mic up the ground where the hooves came down."

"WE OFTEN RECORDED ON SOLSTICES AND EQUINOXES... I'D RECORD HIM AND LINDA RIDING THEIR HORSES, MIC'ING UP WHERE THEIR HOOVES CAME DOWN"

We'd go out to the woods – we did a lot of outside recording, which was good.

"The great thing for me was that there were no songs, really, and there was no agenda as to what it should be, 'cos it was coming out as The Fireman, which was anonymous. This allowed him to just do anything, because there wasn't any expectation that it was going to be Paul McCartney."

Rushes was released in October 1998, and while the general public may have still been unaware of McCartney's dabbling, The Fireman project was in

some way a relief exercise. Neither Youth or McCartney did press or promotional work for it, nor did they even refer to it. The work was something that

allowed McCartney to express himself musically as he was caring for Linda, who'd died that April.

"He had a history of doing some anonymous weird things – it kinda created an excitement with his superfans," Youth says. "He was quite happy to provide them with little strange things. The Fireman itself: his dad was a fireman, and there's a fireman reference in *Penny Lane* – where the fireman rushes in, 'Ding ding', with a bell. All these things he'd play around with, like little clues of a whodunnit or something. I thought that was great – he was having fun with it."

"Paul plays pretty much everything on the album – piano, drums, bass, sitar, guitar," Youth continues. "The guitars on *Fluid* are great. That was quite



Youth and Paul, the upside-down partnership: "It was suddenly a band"

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influenced by John Cage, Pat Metheny, Steve Reich... the whole thing was kinda influenced by that, which I thought was really appropriate because Paul and The Beatles had been influenced by those guys in the Sixties doing their collage and cut-ups – there was a continuity there."

With its more conventional song structures, *Rushes* was well-received, and it came with a couple of bonus Nitin Sawhney remixes thrown to coincide with its release (the limited edition version is now a rare collector's item, and goes for big money).

The Fireman went into semi-retirement for the best part of a decade until surfacing again in 2008 with the release of *Electric Arguments* that November – the first Fireman album that McCartney publicly acknowledged. The recording of the album only took 13 days, though the process was spread over the best part of a year due to each member's commitments.

The title *Electric Arguments* was inspired by the Allen Ginsberg poem, *Kansas City To St. Louis*, and the beat poet/cut-up mood fed into the making of the album. Said McCartney at the time, "We had a ball making this album, and it was a great departure because it seemed more like improv theatre. In the improv spirit, there are William Burroughs-type cut-ups in the lyrics. I came to *Sing The Changes*, as well as all the other songs in the album, with absolutely no concept of what the melody or lyrics would be about. So it was like writing on the spot, which I think lent an electricity to the whole sound."

Youth expands: "I'd bring in all these poetry books and suggest that he randomly pick different words from different pages or lines, and we'd write them down on paper and throw them up in the air, cut them up, let them fall where they liked, then he'd rearrange

THE FIREMAN KEY RECORDINGS

FLUID

Released to coincide with the release of The Fireman's second album *Rushes*, *Fluid* came as a limited 12-inch with a variety of remixes by Nitin Sawhney. Only 3000 copies were pressed and they sold out pretty sharpish, despite McCartney still keeping his involvement as a secret. Another 12-inch, which featured a longer version of the album track *Bison*, is even rarer; it comes wrapped in a poster sleeve of a naked lady.



SING THE CHANGES

The only song from The Fireman's catalogue to be performed live by Paul and his band – since his 2009 tour onwards, McCartney played *Sing The Changes* during a seven-song set for David Letterman at the Ed Sullivan Theater, where The Beatles had made their US TV debut in 1964. The track from 2008's *Electric Arguments* also turned up on the *Pure McCartney* compilations.



LIGHT FROM YOUR LIGHTHOUSE

Based around the traditional gospel blues song *Let Your Light Shine On Me*, recorded in 1929 by Blind Willie Johnson, a number which has been adapted into a variety of recordings by the likes of Leadbelly, The Seekers, Acker Bilk and The Incredible String Band. The Fireman's version was still based on the original chorus, but comes with additional new verses.



them... that's how we started the lyrics and songs. We'd start recording, then I'd begin rearranging all the elements, lyrics, words, sections, and reconstruct it again... and that's how the songs came through.'

Perhaps now that it was all out in the open, and McCartney was no longer being sheepish about the whole project, *Electric Arguments* actually charted at No. 79 in the UK and No. 67 in the US, and got a very positive reception from the critics, with *Rolling Stone* citing it as "the ex-Beatle's headiest music in years" and Pete Paphides of *The Times* giving a four-star review, with only *The Guardian* spoiling everything with a slightly snotty one-star review.

Youth has nothing but praise for his collaborator. "I'm so lucky to have been given that opportunity to work with him," he told *DJ Mag*. "Because we turned it into an experimental project and it was suddenly a band, that's given us a 20-year relationship, and it has really informed what I do with other artists."

Although it's now been nine years since the release of *Electric Arguments*, there's been no sign of when – or even if – The Fireman will re-emerge. One *Electric Arguments* track, *Sing The Changes*, was included on the 2016 *Pure McCartney* collection, and its appearance there may pique the interest of more potential fans. With Paul McCartney, you can never second-guess his next move. ■

POP_UP Paul admitted *Electric Arguments* brought The Fireman closer to home: "This one started to have lyrics and vocals. It became a bit more like one of my albums. But it was a buzz to work so fast"





McCartney on the official
release day of his *Ecce Cor
Meum* album, September 2006

©Garry Images



WORKING CLASSICAL HERO

HAVING PIONEERED THE INTEGRATION
OF CLASSICAL AND POP UNDER THE
GUIDANCE OF GEORGE MARTIN,
IT WAS OVER 25 YEARS BEFORE
MCCARTNEY FELT ASSURED ENOUGH
TO FULLY IMMERSE HIMSELF IN THE
CLASSICAL WORLD...

MARK LINDORES

POP_UP Carl Davis's first meeting with Paul could have got off to a better start; asked which McCartney songs he liked, the flustered composer named a Lennon tune, *A Hard Day's Night*

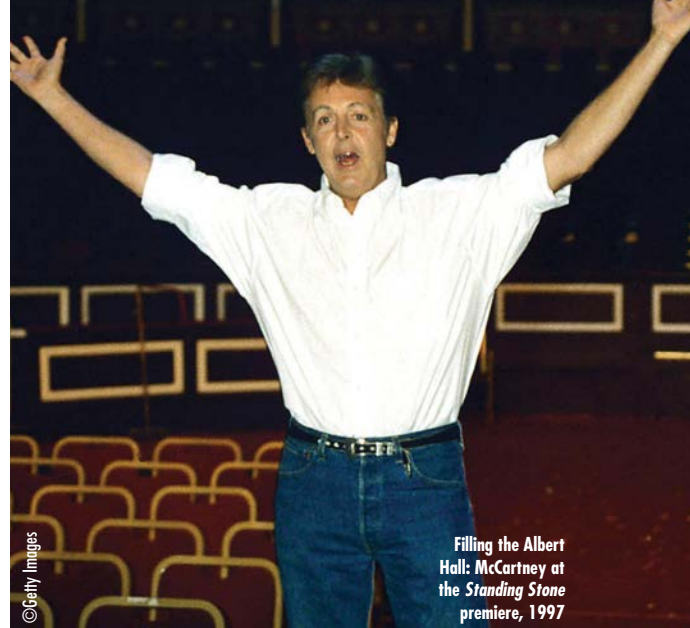


DESPITE

having established himself as something of a maestro in the art of classic pop, when it came to composing a true classical piece Paul McCartney was in many ways a novice. Therefore, what better subject to draw on for his debut than his hometown and his roots? In 1989, Paul was approached by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra with the suggestion that he should compose a piece to celebrate the orchestra's 150th anniversary. Delighted to be asked, McCartney described the offer as "the perfect excuse for me to expand my flirtatious excursions into the orchestral and choral world into a full-blown work".

"They rang up and asked me to do this for their 150th anniversary," he explained. "It was my hometown orchestra, it was to be performed in the cathedral, which is right next door to the school where I did all my schooling, and it was in an area of a million great memories for me. I always had the idea that I might do this one day so I just leapt at the offer and said, 'Okay, in two years' time we'll deliver. Carl Davis and myself will deliver something that you can celebrate your 150th anniversary with.'"

Conductor/composer Carl Davis and Paul had been friends ever since Paul and Linda guest-starred in Carla Lane's sitcom *Bread* in 1988, in which Carl's wife Jean Boht played Boswell matriarch Nellie. The two couples became firm friends, and when the orchestra approached Paul he called on Carl to work alongside him on the project. With Paul being inexperienced in the classical field and famously unable to read or write music, Carl proved to be a mentor to Paul during the creation of the piece.



©Getty Images

Filling the Albert Hall: McCartney at the *Standing Stone* premiere, 1997

"Carl would occasionally say: 'Let me give you a little lesson,' and, depending on what mood I was in, sometimes I would say, 'No, Carl, we won't do that,' because I felt too much like a student," Paul recalled. "But occasionally if I was in a receptive mood I'd say: 'Go on.' And he'd explain. If I was interested in it and thought it would be a good idea for us, then we would use it."

Divided into eight movements – War, School, Crypt, Father, Wedding, Work, Crises and Peace – the oratorio also featured a narrative which incorporated autobiographical elements from Paul's life. The child in the story was born in 1942, the same year as Paul; specific teachers and places are interwoven into the story, and Shanty, the main character, loses his father (Paul lost his mother at a young age).

Set against a backdrop which touched on important aspects of Liverpool history, *Paul McCartney's Liverpool Oratorio* premiered on June 28th 1991 at Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral before a crowd of 2,500 people. It was introduced by Paul and Carl, before 90 members of the Liverpool Philharmonic were joined by the 160-strong Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Choir, 40 choristers of the cathedral, and four solo singers: Dame Kiri Te Kanawa, Sally Burgess, Jerry Hadley and Willard White. After a further Liverpool performance, it was taken to London and New York before going on to play in other venues around the world.

Though critics were not enamoured by Paul's shift in musical genres, the *Liverpool Oratorio* was a commercial hit. The double album reached the top of the classical charts and a documentary about its making was released on video. It was also a personal triumph for McCartney, who found it an invaluable experience which ignited a passion within him which he would maintain from this point onwards.

Having grown in confidence and knowledge, Paul felt capable of composing his next classical venture solo, calling on arrangers and instrumentalists if and when needed, including classical musicians Richard Rodney Bennett, John Harle and David Matthews, as well as producer John Fraser and conductor Lawrence Foster. Jazz musician Steve Lodder, who transcribed Paul's compositions into classical pieces and arranger Richard Rodney Bennett were also key collaborators.

Based fundamentally on the story of the Creation, 1997's *Standing Stone* was divided into four movements and consisted of soundscapes, unlike *Liverpool Oratorio*, which was structured around



©Getty Images

Around the world: *Standing Stone* being performed in Orange County, California, 1998

specific parts for specific groups of instruments and voices. Commissioned by Richard Lyttleton, the President of EMI Classics, to celebrate EMI's centenary, *Standing Stone* immortalised the beginning of the universe and documented a voyage of life, love, good, evil and salvation before finding comfort in the natural world.

"With no soloists to propel the 'story' and to help keep me on track throughout the writing of about 75 minutes of music, I wrote a poem (reprinted in full in the booklet!) in which I try to describe the way Celtic man might have wondered about the origins of life and the mystery of human existence," Paul explained in the sleeve notes to the album. The poem was inspired by Paul's lifelong friend Ivan Vaughan, the man who had introduced him to Lennon, who had battled Parkinson's Disease and died in 1993. As with the *Liverpool Oratorio*, *Standing Stone* topped the classical chart, proving that McCartney's star power could be transferred into the classical world. Its premiere at the Royal Albert Hall on October 14th 1997 was released as a VHS and broadcast on TV as well as a documentary about its creation.

Alas, the Royal Albert Hall performance, which took place just months before Linda's death from breast cancer, was one of her final public appearances. However, though devastating for Paul, his wife's death provided the catalyst for his next classical release. Having sought solace in music to help cope with the tragedy, Paul decided that *Working Classical* would comprise of songs inspired by Linda.

"I made a list of songs I had written specifically with Linda in mind," he said at the time of the album's release in 1999. "My favourite arrangement is *Warm And Beautiful*. That always does my head in. It captures some of my innermost feelings for Linda. I'm not ashamed to be emotional. I used to be when I was younger, but I'm not anymore."

A host of Paul's collaborators from both *Liverpool Oratorio* and *Standing Stone* returned to help him bring the project to fruition. *Working Classical* featured reinterpretations of songs spanning Paul's entire career, from *Maybe I'm Amazed* and *She's My Baby* to *Somedays* from the *Flaming Pie* album, as well as three new compositions. The album was launched with an emotional performance at the Liverpool Philharmonic Hall on 16th October 1999, (the proceeds of which benefited the Forget Me Not charity) and peaked at No. 2 in the classical chart.

Though it was seven years later when Paul released his next classical album, *Ecce Cor Meum*, it had long been a work in progress. Beginning as a commission from Oxford University's Magdalen College to compose a piece for its new chapel in 1997, Paul began work on the oratorio immediately. However, the composition was derailed by Linda's death, with Paul losing all momentum. When he returned to work on it, he channelled his grief and used it as inspiration. "I basically wrote out my grief," he said.

Ecce Cor Meum (*Behold My Heart*) was premiered on 10th November 2001 at the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford. At that time an oratorio consisting of four movements entitled *Spiritus Spiritus*, *State Of Grace*, *Ecce Cor Meum* and *Musica*, Paul was aware of the piece's shortcomings and continued to work on it intermittently between other projects, not arriving at a version he was happy with until 2006.

His hesitancy paid off and, after releasing the album on 26th September 2006, he was overjoyed

THE ROAD TO LIVERPOOL ORATORIO

A long-time student of classical music, particularly the work of Arnold Schoenberg and Igor Stravinsky, McCartney was the Beatle most susceptible to George Martin's ideas of fusing classical elements into the Beatles' music, most notably the string quartet on *Yesterday*, *Eleanor Rigby*'s dramatic strings, the lush orchestration of *She's Leaving Home* and *Penny Lane*'s piccolo trumpet, a flirtation that Paul continued to embrace beyond The Beatles. Beginning with the score to 1967's *The Family Way*, which contained 28 minutes of music Paul had composed at George Martin's suggestion, he would continue to broaden his musical horizons on film scores such as *The Honorary Consul*, *Live And Let Die*, the TV series *Zoo Gang* and his own *Give My Regards To Broad Street*.

"For years I've been flirting with classical music," Paul said in 1991, when approached to compose the *Liverpool Oratorio* to mark the 150th anniversary of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. "On *Yesterday* I had a string quartet and on *Eleanor Rigby* we used string players, so I always enjoyed the experience. In the back of my mind, there was always this thought that if I ever get a great offer to do something big in the classical world, I'd leap at it." A sideline career was born.



The composer takes the applause at the premiere of *Ecce Cor Meum* in Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral

with the reception of the album, his most successful classical venture to date. As well as giving him another No. 1 on the classical album chart, *Ecce Cor Meum* was named Best Album at the Classical Brits the following year.

Having written oratorios as well as rearranging his pop music as classical pieces, Paul's latest orchestral endeavour – 2011's *Ocean's Kingdom*, a collaboration with the New York City Ballet's Peter Martins – saw him write a dance piece for the first time. Based around the idea of "the purity of the ocean", *Ocean's Kingdom* was a family affair with Paul's daughter Stella enlisted to design the dancers' costumes. "What was interesting was writing music that meant something expressively rather than just writing a song," Paul said. "Trying to write something that expressed an emotion – so you have fear, love, anger, sadness to play with, and I found that exciting and challenging."

With 30 years of classic pop under his belt, Paul McCartney's decision to embark on orchestral endeavours may have mystified fans and been greeted with cynicism from critics, but with his five successful albums and a Classical Brit to his name, he has proven that talent is talent, whatever the genre. ■

POP UP McCartney was amazed by the *Ocean's Kingdom* dancers. "The sheer athleticism is the astounding thing. It's like a meeting of the Olympic games and art"



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Q Sir Paul McCartney's debut album was called:

- A *Band On The Run*
- B *McCartney*
- C *Flaming Pie*

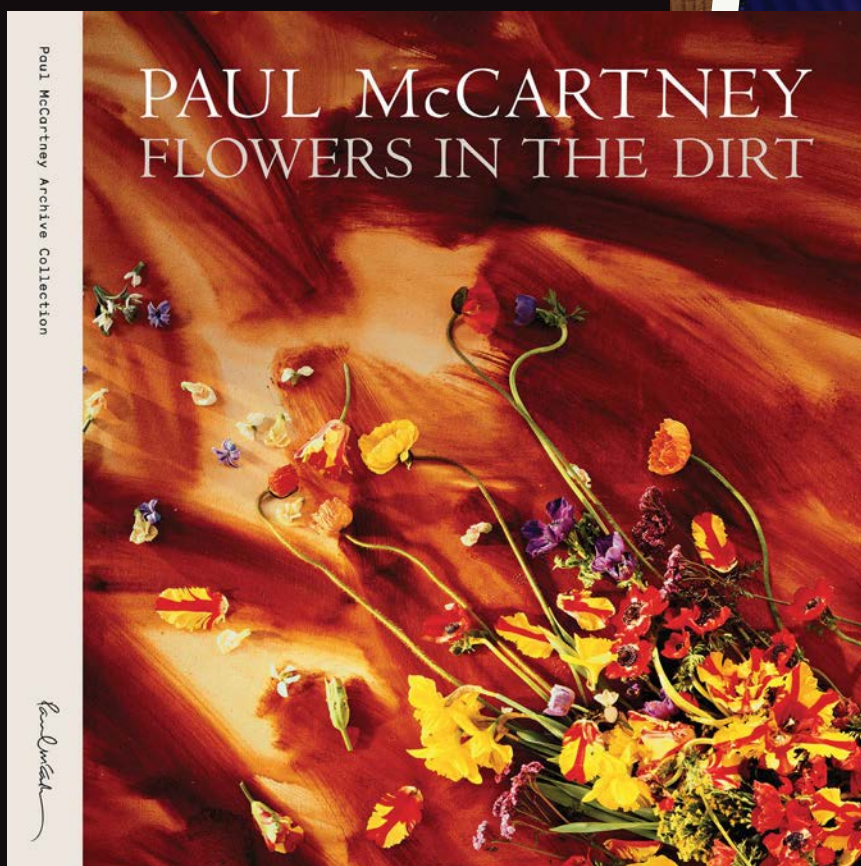




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PAUL MCCARTNEY

IN HIS OWN WORDS

WHETHER IT'S THE ART OF SONGWRITING, PHILOSOPHY, ANIMAL RIGHTS AND VEGETARIANISM, OR SIMPLY TO CONFIRM THAT HE'S STILL WITH US, PAUL MCCARTNEY HAS ALWAYS HAD A WAY WITH WORDS...

RIK FLYNN

"What I have to say is all in the music. If I want to say anything, I write a song."

ON MUSIC, LIFE, 1969

"To me, The Beatles were a great little band. Nothing more, nothing less."

ON THE BEATLES, THE BEATLES ANTHOLOGY, 1995

"The Beatles way of life was like a young kid entering the big world, entering it with friends and conquering it totally. And that was fantastic. An incredible experience. So when that idea really came that we should break up, I don't think any of us wanted to accept it. It was the end of the legend, even in our own minds."

ON THE BEATLES SPLIT, LIFE, 1971

"None of us wanted to be the bass player. It wasn't the number one job, we wanted to be up front. In our minds, it was the fat guy in the group who nearly always played the bass, and he stood at the back. None of us wanted that; we wanted to be upfront singing, looking good, to pull the birds."

ON BEING THE BASSIST, BASS PLAYER, 1995

"I don't think of myself as a legend. I just love what I do. I love playing with my band, I love going to beautiful places and give people good music. I love what I do, I'm very lucky man."

ON HIS STATUS

"I used to think anyone doing anything weird was weird. Now I know that it is the people that call others weird that are weird."

ON PEOPLE

"How did I feel? I can't remember. I can't express it. I can't believe it. It was crazy. It was anger. It was fear. It was madness. It was the world coming to an end. And it was, 'Will it happen to me next?' I just felt everything. I still can't put into words. Shocking. And I ended up saying, 'It's a drag,' and that doesn't really sum it up."

ON LENNON'S DEATH, MUSICAL EXPRESS, 1982

"If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be a vegetarian."

ON THE MEAT INDUSTRY,

GLASS WALLS DOCUMENTARY, 2009

"In the end, the love you take is equal to the love you make."

ON LOVE, THE END, 1969

"The rumours of my death have been greatly exaggerated."

ON THE 'PAUL IS DEAD' CONSPIRACY

"Sadness isn't sadness. It's happiness in a black jacket. Tears are not tears. They're balls of laughter dipped in salt. Death is not death. It's life that's jumped off a tall cliff." **FROM *BLACKBIRD SINGING*, 2002**

"I suppose the marriage has to be a prime contender for mistake of the decade. But I don't want to down anyone. These things happen you know? But I tend to look at the positive side, which is that I have another beautiful daughter out of it."

ON HIS MARRIAGE TO HEATHER MILLS,
Q MAGAZINE, 2009

"No matter how accomplished or how many awards you get, you're always still thinking there's somebody out there who's better than you."

ON BEING THE BEST

"It was Elvis who really got me hooked on beat music. When I heard 'Heartbreak Hotel' I thought, this is it. That's the guru we've been waiting for. The Messiah has arrived." **ON ELVIS**

"Why would I retire? Sit at home and watch TV? No thanks. I'd rather be out playing."

ON RETIREMENT, Q MAGAZINE, 2009

"There's nothing as glamorous to me as a record store."

ON RECORD STORE DAY

"If anyone wants to save the planet, all they have to do is just stop eating meat. That's the single most important thing you could do. It's staggering when you think about it. It takes care of so many things in one shot: ecology, famine, cruelty."

ON VEGETARIANISM

"One of my biggest thrills for me still is sitting down with a guitar or a piano and just out of nowhere trying to make a song happen."

ON SONGWRITING

"Life beats you down occasionally and when it does, you just have to not try. I am the eternal optimist. No matter how rough it gets, there's always light somewhere. The rest of the sky may be cloudy, but that little bit of blue draws me on."

ON HIS ATTITUDE TO LIFE, THE SUNDAY TIMES, 2006

"Somebody said to me, 'But the Beatles were anti-materialistic.' That's a huge myth. John and I literally used to sit down and say, 'Now, let's write a swimming pool.'"

ON MONEY

"I don't work at being ordinary."

ON HIMSELF, PLAYBOY, 1984

"Everybody at EMI had become part of the furniture. I'd be a couch; Coldplay are an armchair. Robbie Williams, I dread to think what he was..." **ON EMI,** 2007

"I now realize that taking drugs was like taking an aspirin without having a headache."

ON DRUGS, 1967

"Life is an energy field, a bunch of molecules. And these particular molecules formed to make these four guys, who then formed into this band called the Beatles and did all that work. I have to think that was something metaphysical. Something alchemic. Something that must be thought of as magic."

ON THE BEATLES, ROLLING STONE, 2007

"It's just too difficult. I feel that if I said anything about John, I would have to sit here for five days and say it all. Or I don't want to say anything."

ON JOHN LENNON, PLAYBOY, 1984

"I don't have any desire to learn. I feel it's like a voodoo, that it would spoil things if I actually learnt how things are done."

ON ARRANGEMENTS, THE BEATLES ANTHOLOGY, 2000

CLASSIC POP MOMENTS

A FINE REBOOT FOR LIVE 8

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His Classic Pop Moment should have been seated behind a piano for a simple yet triumphant performance of *Let It Be* at 1985's Live Aid, but technical issues put paid to that. Luckily for McCartney, he had the chance to repair the damage 20 years later for Live 8 in Hyde Park. Beginning the event with a rare performance of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* with Bono, Paul later returned for a five-song set of Beatles tracks that ended with the inevitable grand finale of *Hey Jude*, a singalong with most of the cast – and much of the world.

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