

Paul McCartney, From Beatles to Wings



Family Way Soundtrack

London M-76007 or MS-82007 Jun. 12, 1967

Paul's first musical effort after the Beatles' rise to fame was one of composition. He wrote the score for the soundtrack to an obscure Hayley Mills ("The Parent Trap") film, called *The Family Way*. His tracks were collectively known as "Love in the Open Air," and in England a single was pressed, but nowhere did the record sell. Although issued in all known formats at the time (reel tape, four track, eight track, cassette, and LP), and though Paul's name was featured prominently on the cover, the instrumental album failed to sell well enough to crack the charts. In all formats, the album is scarce.



McCartney

Apple STAO-3363

Apr. 17, 1970

Paul's first "real" solo album was a **true** solo effort, since he plays all of the instruments. The album was recorded in Paul's basement in Scotland, which by this time had been converted into a studio (resembling Abbey Road's studio #2). The album was released just one week after Paul's announcement that he was leaving the Beatles, a fact that did not go unnoticed by the fans who drove the album to the #1 chart position. Two songs were notable at the time, "Every Night" and "Maybe, I'm Amazed," the latter of which received heavy airplay. "Teddy Boy" had been intended for the Beatles' *Get Back* project, but since the group wound up leaving it off of *Let It Be*, Paul chose to include his own version here.

First issues of the album list the address of Capitol Records (in Hollywood, CA) on the back cover. More common are the copies listing Apple's New York address. Later in the Apple pressing run, the phrase "an ABKCO managed company" was added to the back cover, which supposedly upset Paul, since he was not fond of manager Allen Klein--a fact that contributed to the breakup of the group.



"Another Day"

Apple 1829

Feb. 28, 1971

Paul had chosen not to issue any singles from his first LP, and this single--coming a good ten months later--would not be found on his second. "Another Day" was a ballad about a businesswoman who was not unlike Eleanor Rigby. The song would prompt John to write, "Since you've gone, you're just another day" in his song, "How Do You Sleep," released on John's *Imagine* album later that year. Chartwise, the song pushed as high as #5, never quite getting enough edge to push it to the top spot. Stereo records were being issued exclusively by record companies in 1971, but many AM radio stations clamored for mono copies. Consequently, some record companies produced special albums and singles in mono especially for these stations. Both sides of the single wound up on a mono promo record.



Ram

Apple SMAS-3375

May 17, 1971

Paul's second solo album, shown as by "Paul and Linda McCartney," features a set of songs showing Paul's versatility as a performer. "Ram On" and "The Back Seat of My Car," among others, have received note by McCartney fans, but at the time, people were more interested in McCartney ballads. Paul waited for feedback from the radio stations before issuing a single. This album just missed the top spot on the charts, winding up stuck behind Carole King's *Tapestry* at Number Two. A special mono promotional copy of this album was sent out to AM radio stations; it is very rare. Some copies, pressed in Los Angeles, have an unsliced apple on the side two label.



"Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey"

Apple 1837

Aug. 9, 1971

Of all the songs from *Ram*, the infectious "Uncle Albert/Admiral Halsey" received the most airplay. The "hands across the water/heads across the sky chorus" was both memorable and fun to sing. Paul's somewhat silly lyrics made him once again (after "Another Day") the butt of jokes and the wrath of reviewers, but the song sped to #1 on the charts -- Paul's first without the Beatles. Some copies of the single have an unsliced apple on the b-side label. These copies are harder to find.



Wild Life

Apple SW-3386

Dec. 8, 1971

Following his chart success with his wife, Paul gathered a group together and recorded an album. *Wild Life* appears to have been recorded hastily--it was finished in a week. There were no singles issued to promote the album, although Wings' version of "Love is Strange" stands out. With but eight songs on the record, the album still managed to reach as high as #6 on the charts.

Paul's problems with the other ex-Beatles were also making him averse to all things related to Apple. When *Ram* was released, the Apple logo had been placed almost inconspicuously on the inside cover. In fact, the eight tracks and cassettes omitted it altogether. With this album, the label no longer sported the usual green apple, but instead a custom label, a practice Paul would keep up for over a year.



"Give Ireland Back to the Irish"

Apple 1847

Feb. 28, 1972

Some critics referred to this song as "Paul trying to be John," but Paul took his political statement about the sour relations between England and Ireland very seriously. The song was a solid rocker, but the political statement was a turnoff to most US listeners, who apparently did not relate to what was going on across the Atlantic. The song only reached #21 on the charts. Wings' first single was released almost quietly.

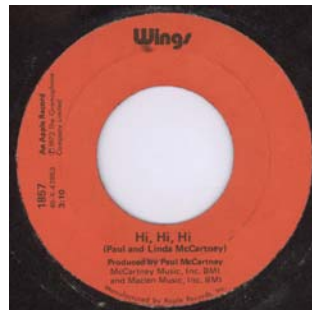


"Mary Had a Little Lamb"

Apple 1851

May 29, 1972

Wings' next single release was even less noteworthy, and indeed, many people thought he was joking. Although promoted with a video, "Mary Had a Little Lamb" was not to the public's liking. Radio stations began playing the flipside, "Little Woman Love," and later picture sleeves were sent out promoting both sides of the record. White label promotional copies of this record show the artist as "Paul McCartney," apparently hoping that people simply hadn't caught on that Paul was with Wings. None of this helped much, and the single stalled out at #28 on the charts.



"Hi Hi Hi"

Apple 1857

Dec. 4, 1972

The custom red label to the latest Wings single certainly attracted the eye. Paul's latest Christmas offering consisted of a solid rock song (the a-side) backed with what seemed a send-up of the hippie scene ("C Moon"). Radio stations in some countries refused to play the a-side, with its references to sex and drugs too overt for many, but the United States had little problem with it, raising the single to the #6 spot. Paul had written the song before Wings' summer tour, and the song proved popular enough to become a hit. The b-side title, "C Moon" is a slang term

for "hip," being the opposite of "L Seven" (square), an expression popularized by Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs in "Wooly Bully."



"My Love"

Apple 1861

Apr. 9, 1973

"And when I go away..." I come back with top billing. With the group listed as "Paul McCartney and Wings" now, Paul cranked out a chart-busting ballad in the style that people had come to expect from Paul. The song had been on Paul's playlist for almost a year, but until it became the leadoff single for Wings' latest album, it had not been released on record. Wings was becoming popular enough now that Wings fan clubs were popping up, and McCartney apart from the Beatles was being recognized as an artist in his own right. The song shot straight to #1, heralding a high point in Paul's career. A white label promotional copy was also issued.

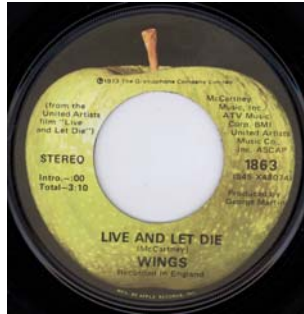


Red Rose Speedway

Apple SMAL-3409

Apr. 22, 1973

This album was actually an interesting one for Paul. First of all, it was the first to feature a photo of Paul prominently on the front cover (the photo on *McCartney* is on the back). Next, it featured a short insert, an unusual photographic montage. Also, the back cover contained a Braille message, "We love ya, baby," for Stevie Wonder. Finally, cuts like the single "My Love" and "Big Barn Bed" juxtaposed against one another sketched out an image of Paul's versatility... again...and perhaps a new direction for Wings. According to Wallgren, the album was supposed to contain a disk of live material as well. While that didn't happen, the public smiled on Paul, granting him an easy #1.



"Live and Let Die"

Apple 1863

Jun. 18, 1973

Paul had been tapped for a prestigious honor: writing and performing a theme song to one of the James Bond films--this one being "Live and Let Die." Paul proved that his style of writing could fit right in with Agent 007--the single was a smash. Former Beatles producer George Martin produced this single and composed the score for the subsequent United Artists soundtrack album (UA-LA-100G). The film, too, was noteworthy, featuring a memorable opening ski sequence and the debut of Roger Moore as Bond. Paul's label style returned to the traditional Apple at this time, too.



"Helen Wheels"

Apple 1869

Nov. 5, 1973

Wings' next release was another good rocker. Almost a "Ballad of Paul and Linda (and Wings)," the song was fun to both play and sing, and earned Paul another trip to the Top Ten, maxing out at #4. The song was popular enough that Capitol Records added it to Wings' next album. In addition to the usual a-side promo, the b-side, "Country Dreamer," was treated to a promotional single release. There was also, strangely, a promotional single for both sides (in stereo), P-1869.



Band on the Run

Apple SO-3415

Dec. 5, 1973

The Wings lineup had been whittled down to just Denny Laine and the McCartneys, but this by no means slowed them down. Almost every song from the album gained radio play, and each song has its noteworthy merits. While a few critics referred to it as "Bland on the Run," most

agreed that this was Paul's highest benchmark so far. More would be expected from him from this point on. The album had been recorded in Lagos, Nigeria, and featured an inner sleeve and photo insert of Wings' latest exploits. On eight-track, this marked Paul's first venture into Quadraphonic sound.



"Jet" Apple 1871 Jan. 28, 1974

The first single culled from *Band on the Run* was this song, named after Paul's Labrador puppy. Some of the lyrics surely have Jet in mind. The song was and is popular in concerts, reaching #5 as a studio single. This single is noteworthy as having two b-sides. Originally, "Mamunia" was the scheduled b-side, but Capitol replaced it with "Let Me Roll It," which was the flip side in the rest of the known world. The a-side time was accidentally shown as 2:49 on some copies.



"Band on the Run" Apple 1873 Apr. 8, 1974

Finally, the title song from the album was released as a single. Edited promotional copies were sent out, but the song needed virtually no promotion. Throughout most of early to mid-1974, the song enjoyed great popularity, making it to #1 in the process.



"Junior's Farm" and "Sally G" Apple 1875 Nov. 11, 1974

Wings' Christmas offering was another fun McCartney rocker--or, more correctly, a pair of great songs. Both songs received good airplay, and the single could be called a double a-side. There

was even a promotional single issued for the b-side. Paul recorded several songs in Nashville, releasing these two under the Wings moniker. The single peaked at #3.



"Walking in the Park With Eloise"

EMI 3977

Dec. 2, 1974

Two more of the Nashville songs were instrumentals--the a-side having been written by Paul's father, James. The single was more of a tribute to Paul's dad than a serious release, and the artist was shown as "The Country Hams" on the record and sleeve, with no indication that McCartney had anything to do with it. The single failed to chart. This was Paul's first single away from Apple, and he would never issue a solo single on Apple again.



"Listen to What the Man Said"

Capitol 4091

May 19, 1975

Apple was on the fast track to crashing and burning, but Paul's career was not. He had signed a new five-year contract with Capitol, and this was Wings' first single for his "new" label. It went right to #1, preceding the release of their new hit album by a week. "Listen to What the Man Said" was added to the already long list of classic McCartney ballads. "The wonder of it all, baby!"



Venus and Mars

Capitol SMAS-11419

May 27, 1975

Paul collected most of the songs Wings had been playing "live" into his first Capitol album, an album that was also available as a quadraphonic eight track. *Venus and Mars* is a fine collection at that, and the album was filled with goodies: 2 posters, stickers, and a custom inner sleeve. The album spawned three singles, including the hit, "Listen to What the Man Said." The

powerhouse medley, "Venus and Mars/Rock Show" would be part of Paul's live show from this point on. The album was an obvious #1, and deservedly so.



"Letting Go"

Capitol 4145

Sept. 22, 1975

The a-side of this *Venus and Mars* single was remixed, making it less laid-back and more of a rocker. Paul favored "Letting Go," including it often in his live show. But the public's favor was not as kind; the single only reached #39--barely Top Forty. Still, a fine record.



"Venus and Mars/Rock Show"

Capitol 4175

Nov. 3, 1975

After the relative failure of "Letting Go," Capitol released the title song, along with one of the most-played numbers from the *Venus and Mars* LP: the show-stopping "Rock Show." The crowds loved this song, especially at the sites mentioned in it, and so it seemed an obvious single. Airplay was dropping by this time, however, and the single stalled out at #12.



Wings at the Speed of Sound

Capitol SW-11525

Mar. 23, 1976

Wings recorded this new album as a prelude to their "America" tour which began shortly after the album's release. The songs receiving the most attention wound up being issued as singles. As the group toured, album sales took off (at the speed of sound), and the record went to #1.



"Silly Love Songs"

Capitol 4256

Apr. 12, 1976

The a-side was hated by critics. Paul directly attacked their criticism that he wrote a bunch of "silly love songs." The song was so commercial that it hit #1 during the Wings tour, meaning that it was being played everywhere, a slap in the face to Paul's detractors. The b-side, "Cook of the House" was interesting in and of itself, featuring an electronically altered Linda McCartney vocal. Linda too was publically criticized, and now she sang lead on a single.

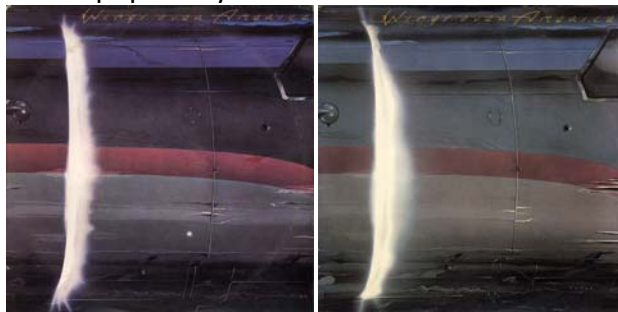


"Let 'Em In"

Capitol 4293

Jun. 28, 1976

Like the song itself, the popularity of "Let 'Em In" grew gradually. The song was slow and long, but by midsummer, fans decided that they genuinely liked it, granting it chart-topping status. The Beatles also had an album out at the time (*Rock and Roll Music*), and the two efforts appear to have boosted one another's popularity.



Wings Over America

Capitol SWCO-11593

Dec. 10, 1976

Just making the Christmas rush, *Wings Over America* chronicled the American portion of their 1976 tour. Paul had surprised fans by including Beatles songs among his live set for the first time since the group broke up. Naturally, the Wings versions of "Yesterday," "Long and Winding Road," and the like made their way onto the album.

This three record set was chocked with a couple of goodies two, and, oddly enough, there were two covers. One cover, called the "five lights version" showed five lights in the lower right corner of the front cover; the other had four. The paintings are basically entirely different, and

numerous distinctions between the two can be noted (light over or under runway, for example). Even the printing is different, although its content is the same. No reason was ever given for the differences, which appear at all of Capitol's factories. The album reached #1.



"Maybe I'm Amazed"

Capitol 4385

Feb. 7, 1977

Released on the 13th anniversary of the Beatles arrival in America, the "single that never was" from *McCartney* became the single from *Wings Over America*. The song had proven popular live, but by this time, the album had been out for almost two months. Still, the single peaked at #10, not bad for a song that was nearly seven years old.

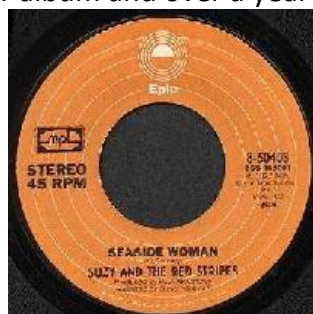


Thrillington

Capitol ST-11642

May 17, 1977

The legend claims that Percy "Thrills" Thrillington arranged and conducted this album, an instrumental version of Paul's and Linda's *Ram* LP. However, rumors flew – correctly -- that Percy Thrillington was in reality Paul McCartney. The album didn't sell and is now a rarity in all formats. Some have claimed that Paul was attempting to fulfill his contractual obligation to Capitol, but Wings recorded another album and over a year went by before he left the label.



"Seaside Woman"

Epic 8-50403

May 31,
1977

This was another one of Paul's efforts to see Linda honored as a recording artist. Shown as by "Suzy and the Red Stripes," this McCartney effort from 1971 was finally released in '77. 12"

promos and colored vinyl singles made this a more attractive effort. Still, the public did not favor Linda's voice or the song, and its peak position was #58.



"Mull of Kintyre"

Capitol 4504

Nov. 14, 1977

Written about Paul's home locale in Scotland, this song was a monster hit in the United Kingdom. The American public, however, actually favored the b-side, "Girls School," and it was charted as the a-side, reaching #33. 1977 was dominated by disco singles and films, and for a time, it seemed that there was no room for older rockers like Paul McCartney.



"With a Little Luck"

Capitol 4559

Mar. 20, 1978

The leadoff single from Wings' newest release was another slow-gainer. By late Spring, it topped the charts, making Paul's position as a top-selling artist more secure. The song was long, 5:45, but radio stations were for the most part content to play the unedited single, even though edited promos were sent out. The song carried a very positive message and was a refreshing change from what else was on the charts.



London Town

Capitol SW-11777

Mar. 31, 1978

Paul, Linda, and Denny Laine finished off this album that had been started by the larger Wings lineup. But, as with *Band on the Run* (when the three were all that remained), the new album, *London Town* was a hot seller, reaching #2 and spawning three singles. Part of the album was recorded aboard a yacht chartered by Wings and taken to a secluded spot in the Caribbean just for that purpose. A critical failure, the album was nevertheless a public success.



"I've Had Enough"

Capitol 4594

Jun. 12, 1978

Another steady rock single from Paul and Wings. The song was culled out as a single because of the airplay it had been receiving, but the public wasn't buying. The single peaked at #25. In the US, the single was released without a picture sleeve, but in England it came out with a surreal shot of Paul eating spaghetti, surrounded by flying eyes! The sleeve is shown here.



"London Town"

Capitol 4625

Aug. 21, 1978

Finally, the title track from *London Town* was released as a single. Both radio stations and the buying public basically ignored it. Still, it cracked the Top Forty, struggling to #39. This was Paul's last single for Capitol Records before returning in 1985.



***Band on the Run* (Picture Disk)**

Capitol SEAX-11901

Nov. 1978

Following the success of colored vinyl releases of *The Beatles*, 1962-1966, and 1967-1970, and the picture disk release of *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, Capitol issued two more Beatles related picture disks, among them Paul's now-famous *Band on the Run* album. Pressings were limited, and the album became somewhat scarce.



Wings Greatest

Capitol SOO-11905

Nov. 22, 1978

Since Paul was leaving Capitol and going on his merry way to Columbia Records in North America, Capitol decided to issue a "greatest hits" collection on Paul's behalf. Although it came with a poster, and although it featured four songs not found on any of Paul's albums, **and** although Paul had been a chart-topping success only recently, the album failed to make the Top Twenty, stopping at #21. Like John, George, and Ringo before him, Paul had to scratch his head and wonder why his "greatest hits" collection did not sell.



"Goodnight Tonight"

Columbia 3-10939 or 23-10940 (12") Mar. 15, 1979

Plugged as a "disco single" from Wings, Paul's first offering for Columbia was a successful one, reaching the #4 spot on the charts. Airplay was slow, due to the fact that disco stations didn't exactly favor McCartney, and rock stations were beginning to proclaim that "disco sucks." The sleeve for the 12" single showed Wings' new lineup, and a new top ten album was in the works.



Back to the Egg

Columbia FC-36057

May 24, 1979

A fascinating new rock album from Wings. Several of the songs wound up being permanently entrenched in Paul's live show. But, oddly, the album was not a success by Paul's high standards, only reaching the number seven spot. Maybe "Goodnight Tonight" had made the public and critics unsure of him. An interesting point of note is that one song on *Back to the Egg* features the Black Dyke Mills Band, who released a single for Apple Records (#1800) back in 1968.



"Getting Closer"

Columbia 3-11020

Jun. 5, 1979

By all accounts, this single should have been hot-hot-hot. This was a great song to perform live, featuring a screaming vocal from Paul, and the radio played it, but the public didn't buy in as expected. The song stopped at #20.



"Arrow Through Me"

Columbia 1-11070

Aug. 14, 1979

If a rocker doesn't work, try a ballad. After all, everyone loves Paul's ballads, and "Arrow Through Me" seemed to fit the bill. But again, people weren't buying. The song hit #27, then dropped into oblivion.



"Wonderful Christmastime"

Columbia 1-11162

Nov. 20, 1979

Although this novelty never charted, it proved immensely popular at Christmas. Every year, the song appears on the radio, in much the fashion as many of the classic Christmas songs. This was Paul's first Christmas single, a classic on its own, even if a critical failure.



"Coming Up"

Columbia 1-11263

Apr. 15, 1980

This was Paul's first single of the 80's, and the last Wings record...sort of. Paul had dropped his wings and was preparing another solo album. The leadoff single from that album was to be "Coming Up." But, wisely, the live Wings version of the song had been included as a bonus track. It was this live version, and not the odd studio release (with sped-up vocals) which grabbed the #1 spot in late Spring.

[On to Paul's later career, 1980 - 1999](#)

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