

McCartney II

Label 70

Columbia

FC-36511

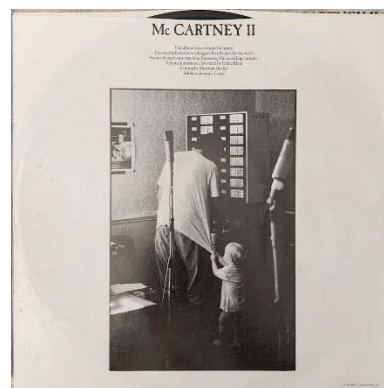
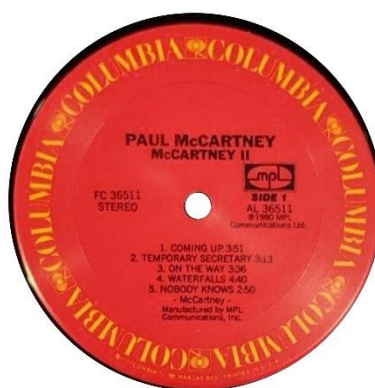
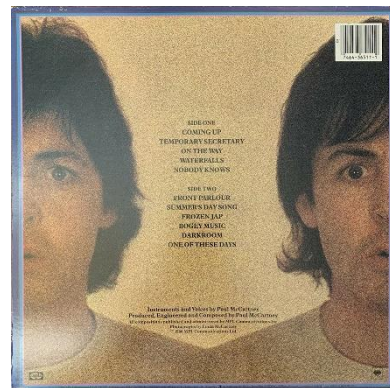
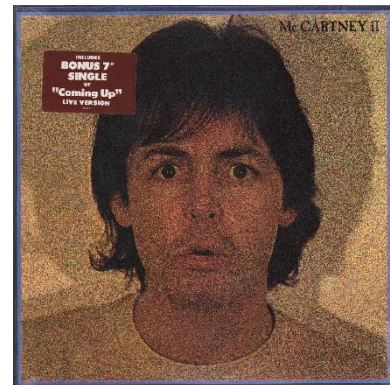
Red/orange Columbia label.

First appearance in trade magazines: May 31, 1980

Shortly after Paul's move to Columbia Records in North America, he found himself at home with time to experiment. He rented a sixteen-track Studer recording machine and started playing, one instrument after another at his estate in East Sussex. Continuing through a six-week period in June and July, 1979, Paul finished the album on his farm in Scotland. In such a short time, Paul completed twenty songs and put them on the proverbial shelf.

After the release of the "Wonderful Christmastime" single at the end of the year, McCartney and Wings toured the UK and were preparing to play in Japan. During that tour, at Glasgow, the band recorded a live version of one of Paul's new songs, "Coming Up." When Paul was arrested for smuggling marijuana into Japan, the other members of Wings returned to England. After spending ten days in jail, Paul was deported.

Paul felt that he and Wings were going in different directions, musically, and he decided to release the best cuts from his solo recordings as his next album. Over the next two years, Wings dissolved and fell apart. Meanwhile, the leadoff single from the new album, the solo recording of "Coming Up," was released in April and scored in Great Britain. By mid-May, in the United States, disc jockeys were playing the "live" version by Wings – a bonus track on the other side of the single. Columbia asked to place the live version on the album, but McCartney said no – since the album was supposed to be a set of songs that he recorded by himself. Columbia responded by issuing promotional twelve-inch singles for the live version, and they included the live version as a "bonus single" with early copies of the album.



Two label variations exist. The copies with MPL at the right appear copies that were pressed at the Santa Maria plant.

Label 70dj

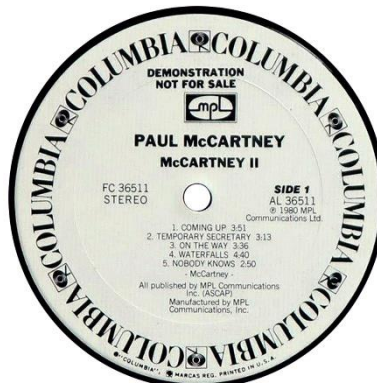
Columbia

FC-36511

White Columbia label with promotional print.



Pitman

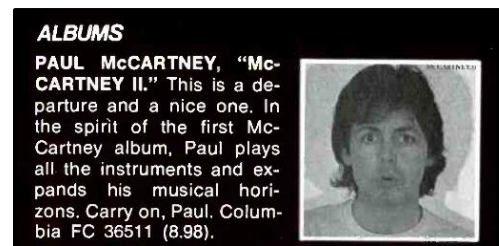
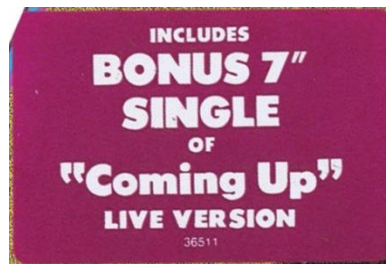


Terre Haute



Santa Maria

Early copies of the album sported a brown, or magenta sticker indicating the inclusion of the bonus single.



Label 70dj

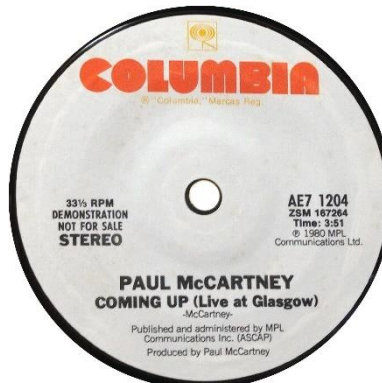
Columbia

AE7-1204

White Columbia label with promotional print.



Pitman



Terre Haute



Santa Maria

The seven-inch singles were one-sided. The label on the blank side reads "Special One-Sided Record" (Pitman, Terre Haute) or "This is a one sided record" (Santa Maria).

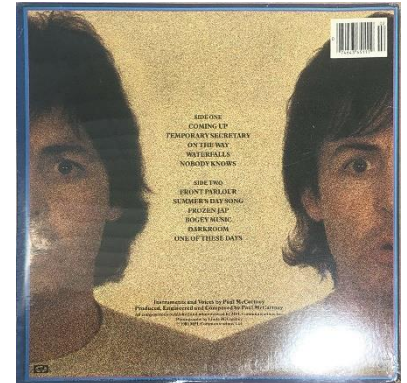
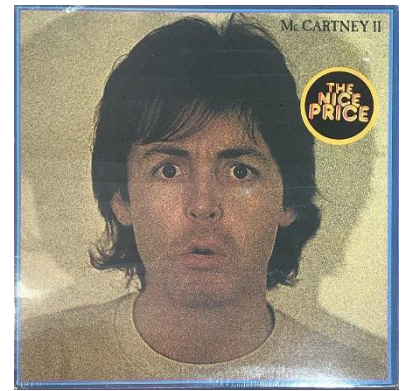
Label 70

Columbia

PC-36511

Red/orange Columbia label with MPL rim print.

In 1985, Columbia converted *McCartney II* to the midline series of budget albums. Copies with the new "PC-" cover have a new UPC printed on the back cover.

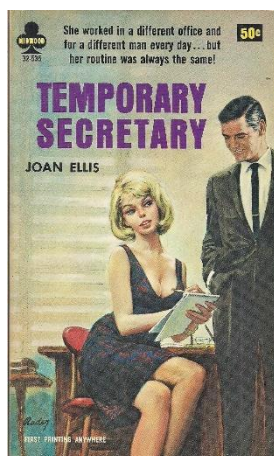


These copies came out after Columbia decided to reduce the price of most of Paul's back catalog to \$5.98.

"I just chatted, kept chatting, tried to tell them it wasn't that bad. I tried to tell them that ciggies were worse. They wouldn't listen, of course, because many of the police there chain-smoke." (Paul, *Record Mirror*, July 12, 1980)

The inspirations for *McCartney II* were quite varied. The sounds were critiqued as being a blend of traditional pop music and the emerging synth-pop sound. In 2011, Paul told *Quietus* about his inspirations for the album:

"Certainly Talking Heads. I love David Byrne's eccentricity, that's very appealing. And I like his not-mainstream attitude... I was also listening to things like John Cage, Luciano Berio, Cornelius Cardew. I went to their concerts in London because I had plenty of time on my hands so it was the kind of thing I would go and see. Again, just to see what it was about, not necessarily because I was a massive fan. It was more like: what is a prepared piano? Oh, that's what it is. You know, funky stuff like that."

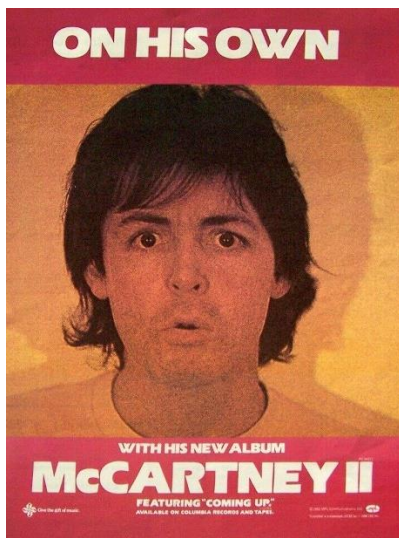


For one song, Paul had been thinking about the Alfred Marks Bureau – a leader in professional employment, which had provided temporary help to business people all over Britain. Paul was amused that Alfred Marks was also the name of a comedian, so he decided to make a comedic song about a man who was constantly looking for the right "temporary secretary." He liked the rhyme between the words, and the song emerged. Although it wasn't popular in America, Paul wound up releasing

McCartney II — Paul McCartney — Columbia FC 36511 — Producer: Paul McCartney — List: 8.98 — Bar Coded

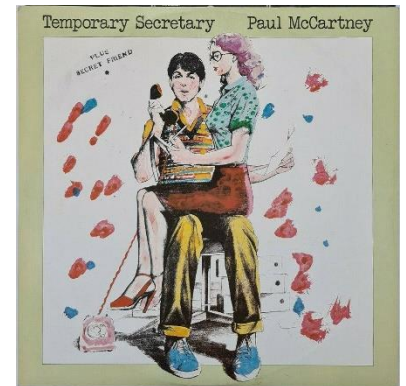
Paul really gets adventurous on his second solo album, which he recorded at home on a 16-track Studer Tape Machine. His sound is definitely crude and experimental, but it represents a bold step into the unknown for the ex-Beatle. It may take several listens to warm up to this strange and wonderful LP, but the rewards are great. Top tracks include the peppy "Coming Up," the quirky "Temporary Secretary," the lovely "One Of These Days" and the bebop-oriented "Boquey Man."





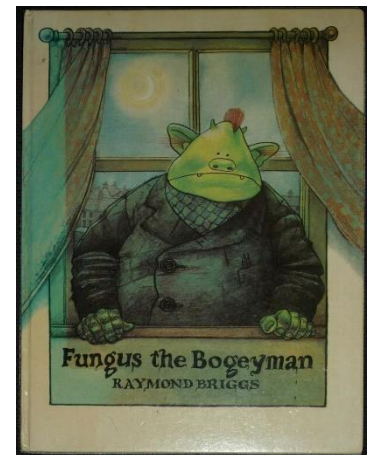
it as a single in Great Britain, backed with a non-album track from the same sessions, called "Secret Friend."

Paul wasn't *directly* influenced by anyone, but he had absorbed a lot of different sounds over the years that preceded *McCartney II*, and this record was one way that he could put out his new sounds without a traditional, touring backup band.



Another song that received some notice was "Bogey Music." Paul had seen the 1977 book, *Fungus the Bogeyman* by Raymond Briggs. It was tastefully done, with gorgeous images throughout, and Paul liked the idea of a society of under-worlders whose lives and values were both different from our own – and somehow similar.

For "Darkroom," he merged the idea of a darkroom where photographers develop pictures with that of a poorly-lit room where couples could make out. "One of These Days" was inspired by the peaceful attitude of a Krishna devotee who had visited him. Paul said, "The song seemed right as a very simple thing and it basically just says, 'One of these days I'll do what I've been meaning to do the rest of my life.'" And so it went.



The trade magazines agreed on their appreciation for *McCartney II*, all three of them raising it to the #3 position. The RIAA awarded the record a Gold Record Award on July 25, 1980, but to this date it has not earned a platinum award. This was, of course, Paul's second major solo project.

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PLAYBACK TIME—Paul McCartney greets British record retailers gathering at Birmingham's Opposite Lock club for a playback of his new solo album, "McCartney II." Pictured here with Paul and Linda McCartney is John Bush, newly appointed managing director of EMI Records U.K.

Spotlight

PAUL MCCARTNEY—*McCartney II*, Columbia FC36511. Produced by Paul McCartney, McCartney's first solo album since 1970's "McCartney" is another exercise in pop insignificance, similar to "Back To The Egg" and to a lesser degree "London Town." Again, the decline in McCartney's lyrics are evident, with most songs coming across as cute throwaways. Even the melodies don't seem to be as penetrating. The former Beatle includes three instrumentals, which sound a lot better than some of his lyrics. His high charting single, "Coming Up" might be enough to propel sales. The album was recorded "at home" with McCartney handling all instruments and vocals as well as producing, engineering and composing.
Best cuts: "Coming Up," "On The Way," "Waterfalls," "Nobody Knows."

