

Composing Outside the Beatles:

Lennon & McCartney: 1967 - 1972

PGDVD126 (DVD)

Available from [MVD Entertainment Group](#).

A review written for the Folk & Acoustic Music Exchange
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A while back, I critiqued *Composing the Beatles Songbook: Lennon and McCartney 1966 - 1970*, a very compelling DVD making the case that Paul McCartney was much more responsible for many of the duo's successes than has been formerly credited. Even should one disagree with that historic supposition, *Songbook* was very difficult to argue with. Of the half dozen other critics I've loaned the disc to, all have remarked on the changes it wrought in their thinking. Now, *Composing: 1967 - 1972* performs a sort of sanction and claims that it was not only Paul and John who broke the Beatles up, but more Yoko, as has been folklorically assumed, though Paul is enigmatically cited as more contributive than John. Well, that's the initial case anyway, just as the film opens, later reversed deep into the flick (the true explanation of Paul's quitting being revealed). As this very interesting document proceeds, however, Lennon, McCartney, and Ono all come in for a bit of a drubbing...though Yoko fares worst of all.

Making the case is an assortment of critics, including Robert Christgau and Jon Pareles, as well as a few musicians (Klaus Voorman, Alan White, and Denny Seiwell) who were right there when everything was happening. The insights are first-person and well formulated—in the musicians' case, from experience and involvement. Voorman emerges as the most observant, but then his vantage point was unique, having been a friend to and artist for the band, not to mention a sessioneer. The photos and era footage accompanying the running narrative and anecdotes are prime reminders of what it was like to have been in the moment. Fragments of the David Frost interviews, the bed-in, the Plastic Ono Band in action, and sundry elements recreate the time.

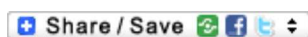
The tension between the Beatles style and excesses, and the return to roots and simplicity in solo ventures, is paradoxical in that both men simultaneously felt the same urge without saying a word to one another. Of the two, Paul came off the worse for the wear, his debut solo getting trounced in the critical press, and—as everything failed to come together—plunging into depression. Subsequently deciding to resume studio and ensemble exercises, following wife Linda Eastman's encouragement, he climbed back out. By the time this point is arrived at, the viewer realizes that the first part of the two hour presentation is an intense inspection of the decline and meltdown of the greatest pop group of all time and why it led to the transformations witnessed.

From there, I'll let the consumer discover his or her own further delights and engrossments, including the later feud between John and Paul. This DVD is going to speak differently to each audient but will strike all in the same manner: revelatory, disquieting, human, and ultimately encouraging. And that's the value of this sort of post-era journalism. It's a way of finally validating rock works as enduring art (or not) and as social provocation...not to mention prime motives and aesthetic goads to the ethos of the changing fortunes of the times: here, the 60s and 70s as those decades collapsed and bled into the future.

Included Songs:

- Give Peace A Chance
- Instant Karma
- Don't Worry Kyoko
- Momma Miss America
- Maybe I'm Amazed
- Mother
- God
- Ram On
- Uncle Albert
- Back Seat Of My Car
- Power To The People
- Imagine
- How Do You Sleep
- Mumbo
- John Sinclair
- Dear Friend
- Woman Is The Nigger Of The World
- Some People Never Know
- Luck Of The Irish

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