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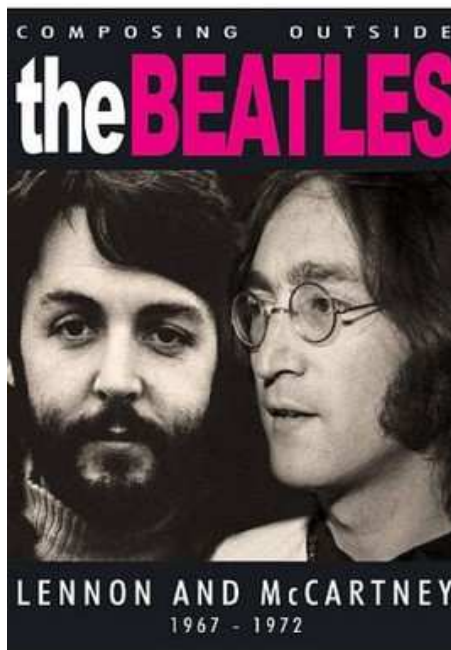
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Composing Outside The Beatles – Lennon & McCartney: 1967 – 1972 (Chrome Dreams/MVD DVD)

Picture: C+ Sound: C+ Extras: C Main Program: B

In one of the best documentaries made on The Beatles to date, **Composing Outside The Beatles – Lennon & McCartney: 1967 – 1972** is a long overdue and offers a much-needed look at the creative side of the break-up of the most successful Rock band of all time. After the success of **Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band** and loss of genius manager Brian Epstein, the band slowly started to unravel with McCartney taking over leadership of the band as Lennon became deeply involved with Yoko Ono.



In addition, the new couple recorded three albums on their own that ranged from experimental to abstract to primal to highly uncommercial. Doing what he could to get more Beatles work finished, McCartney stumbled somewhat with **Magical Mystery Tour**, but the band continued on its historic course as they were not done yet and in the end, McCartney even recorded his first solo album that was more commercial and only so successful.

Ironically, it was McCartney who had to break the band up after so much effort to hold it together when he refused to sign on with the infamous Alan Klein and The Beatles were finished, but none of the four members were finished having hits by a longshot. Lennon started to do solo albums that still heavily involved Ono, but were hits, having hits and established his deeply personal and artistic self outside of the band. McCartney was still reeling from the breakup and even the formation of Wings did not add up immediately.

And that is just the very basic idea of what this great installment of a series that began with the first two **Composing The Beatles** DVDs (reviewed elsewhere on this site) offer. My only problem with the program is that the experts underrate and underestimate McCartney's early work. Maybe because it is not political, but even I felt hits like *Admiral Halsey/Uncle Albert* were key songs that showed McCartney (now with wife Linda) carving out his own Pop/Rock territory and most who bought the record, enjoyed it, continued to request it through the years and enjoy it as much as most of his output would agree. The new comedy approach and solo energy that made his post-Beatles career starts there and the song never gets that credit.

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I also enjoyed hearing and seeing about Lennon's political work, which often worked and the makers have once again aggressively licensed all the key songs and got them. We also see a side of their conflict that deserves more consideration for as long as it lasted. No matter what you have seen or heard on The Beatles before, **Composing Outside The Beatles – Lennon & McCartney: 1967 – 1972** is a key must-see work that could not have gone on long enough for me. Can't wait for the follow-up.

The 1.33 X 1 image is good for a documentary with good new interview footage and much of the archival footage in good shape. The Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo sound is also just fine and as good as can be expected for that format. Extras include bios of the interviewees and extended interviews with them.

- Nicholas Sheffo



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