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### **Going Underground: Paul McCartney, the Beatles and the UK Counterculture**

Put the name of a Beatle on the cover of a DVD and you're sure to capture someone's attention. In this case, it's "the cute one" whose name provides the operative words in the title, "Going Underground: Paul McCartney, the Beatles and the UK Counterculture." Here, anyway, the device is legitimate, as even dyed-in-the-wool Beatlemaniaics will discover interesting new things about their fave. I won't pretend that most people under the age of, say, 40, are as interested in the 1960s as their Boomer parents, a handful of musicians and the few journalists whose memories stretch back that far. McCartney, though, is still alive and kicking out the jams. The MVD release explores a period of pop-cultural history that's been eclipsed by equivalent movements in the U.S. and the sheer volume of music, movies, hair styles and other trendy stuff that's found its way to these shores in the various British invasions. At approximately the same time as the Beatles and Rolling Stones were solidifying their hold on international audiences, less identifiable Brits were laying the foundation for a youthquake that could be measured on a Richter scale. This documentary argues that it can be traced to an underground publication, the *International Times*. The bi-weekly paper was produced in the basement of the Indica Bookshop, which had become a landmark destination for the "Swingin' London" crowd, along with the UFO Club. Similar things were beginning to happen in the United States, so coverage of the underground scene in London was not a priority for American journalists. It's possible, if not entirely probably that Jan Wenner was influenced by the *IT* while preparing the launch of *Rolling Stone* magazine. Most of the people interviewed in "Going Underground" are associated with the *IT*, Indica or UFO, in one way or another, and can still recall how things looked from a more radical point of view than could be found at a recording studio.

McCartney became an early backer of the Indica Bookshop and Indica Gallery. They were introduced to him by Peter Asher, the brother of his "bird," Jane Asher, who hadn't grown up in Liverpool and was more tuned in to the London cultural scene. Through other people there, Paul was invited to sample the library of audio effects and sonic experimentation at the BBC. McCartney and producer George Martin would incorporate things they heard there into the albums most fans interpreted as being solely inspired by LSD trips and Moroccan hashish. Meanwhile, at the UFO Club such then-underground

groups as Pink Floyd, Soft Machine, AMM, Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band, Crazy World of Arthur Brown, Procol Harum and the Move were sharing ideas and performing. In addition to the many first-person sources, "Going Underground" is informed by more than the usual number of music videos, movie clips and other archival material. Anyone who aspires to being a musicologist or is a diehard Beatles fans owes it to themselves to check out this DVD. – Gary Dretzka