

In Tune

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LENNON & McCARTNEY, "Composing Outside the Beatles" (MVD Visual) ★★☆☆

— Another in a long line of stellar music documentaries from the folks at MVD Visual, "Composing Outside the Beatles" is an

exhaustive look at the songwriting of John Lennon and Paul McCartney between 1973 and 1980. Through interviews with a panel of journalists and former bandmates, the 140-minute film provides

a pretty honest account of the famous tandem's post-Beatles output.

Much of the focus is on Wings, the band McCartney formed with wife Linda and Denny Laine. That group's revolving door of members is addressed, as are their albums of varying quality. The segments on "Band on the Run" and "Wings Over America" are especially fascinating, as is how their appeal as a live act took off when McCartney began incorporating Beatles songs into the set list each night.

Lennon's was nowhere near as prolific during this time. In fact, after 1975's tepidly received "Rock 'N' Roll," there wouldn't be another studio release until "Double Fantasy" hit a few weeks before his murder in 1980. The panel is divided on the quality of 1973's "Mind Games," universally admire 1974's "Walls and Bridges" and save their best insight for "Double Fantasy." Originally derided by critics when it released, the album wasn't fully embraced until after Mark David Chapman gunned Lennon down. The panel's ambivalence toward the record is both unexpected and fascinating. (JS)