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The Beatles: Composing Outside The Beatles: Lennon & McCartney 1973-1980

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The Beatles

Composing Outside The Beatles: Lennon & McCartney 1973-1980 ([Pride DVD])

This fascinating documentary takes an in depth look at the albums and careers of John Lennon and Paul McCartney post Beatles. Album by album, every move they made outside of their original partnership is discussed and over the course of 139 minutes there's some rehashing of history, some new truths uncovered and a whole lot of opinion.

The title is a little off, as the story starts in 1970 with the breakup of The Beatles and the release of McCartney's first (and self-recorded) solo album and it goes from there.

Told mainly from the perspectives of music journalists and authors/experts on the pair/the Beatles, the presentation also includes present day interviews with various band mates Klaus Voorman, Denny Laine, Denny Seiwell and archival interviews with McCartney himself.

It's interesting to note that the presentation is framed from the standpoint of Lennon's immediate critical success and, on the flipside, McCartney's immediate decline into mediocrity. Long story short, despite sales indicating otherwise, critics backed Lennon and expected more from McCartney. However, it is in 1973 and the release of Wings' Band on the Run that marks the change. Lennon had one last great album in him (1974's Walls and Bridges before putting out an album of covers (Rock n' Roll) and disappearing for five years. McCartney continued on and his songwriting became stronger and he remained relevant. Most involved seem to agree that what became Lennon's swan song, 1980's Double Fantasy, was a half-baked work not worthy of the praise it received after his death and was indicative of a talent lost. Personally, I disagree with that position.

The DVD also does a fairly good job of documenting the career of McCartney's post-Beatles band Wings. Through interviews with McCartney, Laine and Seiwell, the numerous line-up changes are discussed and the history of the band is charted. That, in and of itself, could have been its own DVD.

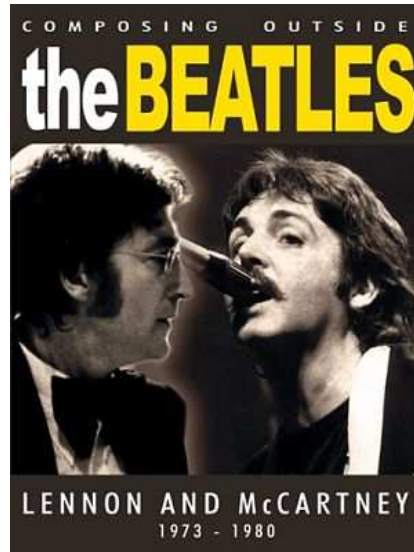
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