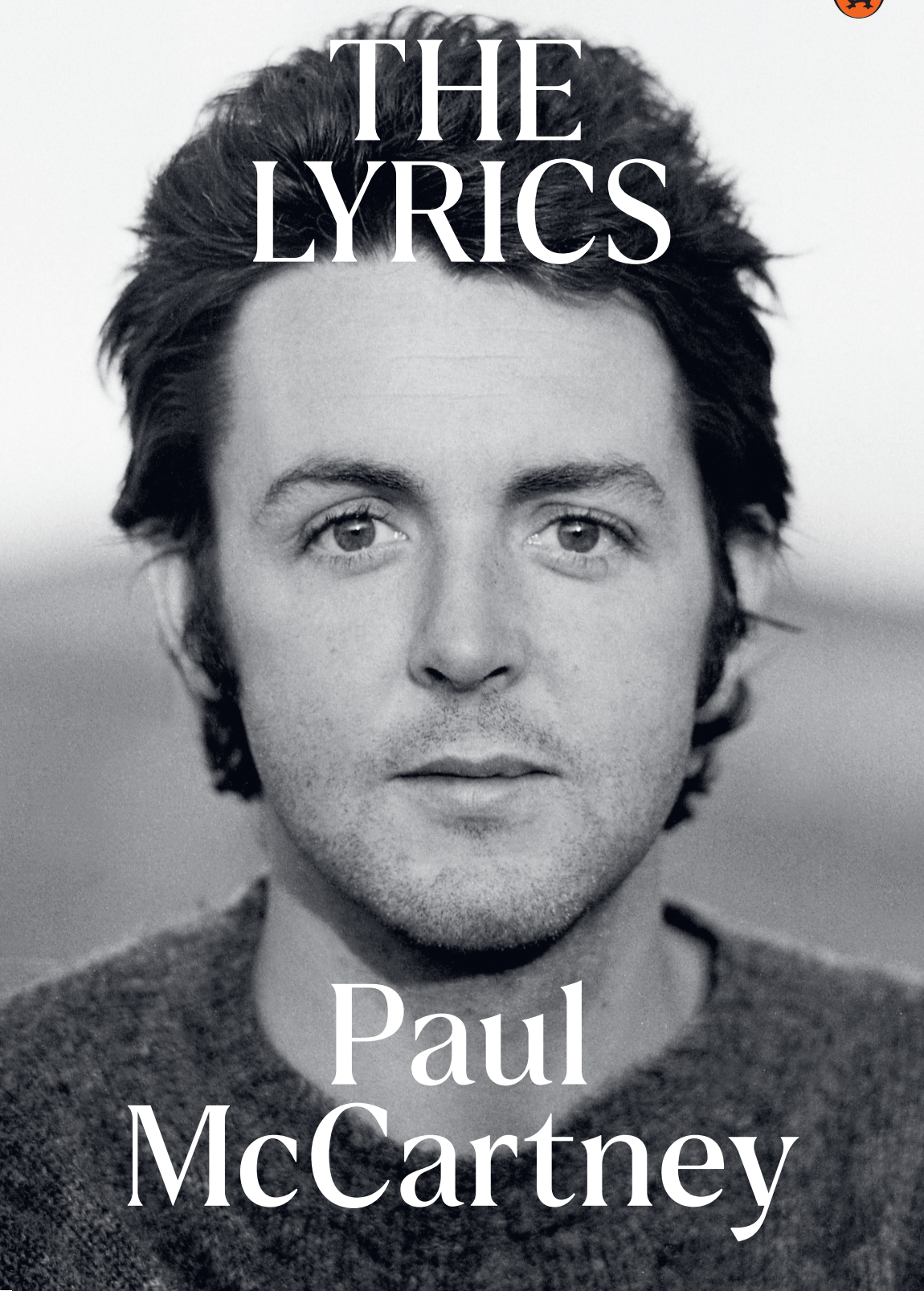
1956 TO THE PRESENT

Edited with an introduction by Paul Muldoon

THE LYRICS



Paul McCartney

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THE LYRICS

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Dedicated to my wife Nancy
and my mum and dad, Mary and Jim

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To thine own self be true.

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *Hamlet*, ACT I, SCENE 3

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Foreword by Paul McCartney

MORE TIMES THAN I CAN COUNT, I'VE BEEN ASKED TO write an autobiography, but the time has never been right. Usually I was raising a family or I was on tour, which has never been an ideal situation for long periods of concentration. But the one thing I've always managed to do, whether at home or on the road, is write new songs. Some people, when they get to a certain age, like to refer to a diary to recall day-to-day events from the past, but I have no such notebooks. What I do have is my songs - hundreds of them - which serve much the same purpose. And these songs span my entire life, because even at the age of fourteen, when I acquired my first guitar in our little house in Liverpool, my natural instinct was to start writing songs. Since then I've never stopped.

There's a whole process to learning songwriting, but it's different for different people. For me, the first thing was to copy other people, like Buddy Holly and Little Richard - and Elvis, who, I later heard, didn't even write his own songs. It meant memorising their songs, learning the standards of early rock and roll, but in my early to mid-teens it occurred to me to try writing my own. I'd start off with the very simplest idea, and I'd see what came out.

The earliest lyrics in this book are the words to 'I Lost My Little Girl'. I wrote them just after the death of my mother. She was only forty-seven; I was fourteen. Even as early as 1956, when I wrote the song, a musical direction was emerging: you can hear that the chord sequence descends, and the melody or the vocal ascends. I'm already playing with little musical things,

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very simple things, which fascinated me even though I did not know quite what they were. What's astonishing is that John Lennon, at the home of his Aunt Mimi, was doing something similar. So when we first came together and showed each other what we'd written, we quickly realised that we were both fascinated by songwriting and that by working together, we could take things a lot further.

In our early attempts you can tell we were kids. We weren't really conscious then of the act of songwriting. But when we started The Beatles, we realised we suddenly had an eager audience. So at first we were writing with this audience, mainly young girls, in mind. Early songs like 'Thank You Girl' or 'From Me to You' or 'Love Me Do' were aimed at our fans, though many were based on our personal stories. We knew that these songs might become hits, and we could have continued writing songs like those forever. But as we matured, we became aware that we could take songwriting in other directions, often to another level, which meant writing songs for ourselves.

Of course, we had to maintain a delicate balance between songs that interested us personally and those that played to the fans, but the more we experimented, the more it became apparent that we could go just about anywhere, which meant a more creative direction. We could get into a surrealist world, where the stories weren't exactly linear and where the songs didn't necessarily have to make sense. I had always been a big fan of Lewis Carroll, having read him early on and in school, so Carroll was a big inspiration as I got more into wordplay, where the lyrics are evolving into something more unexpected, as in 'Lady Madonna' or 'Penny Lane'. And this came to be an amazing revelation: we could be poetic without losing touch with our fans, or you might even say that the opposite occurred – that as we became more experimental and leaned more towards stream of consciousness, we actually gained fans.

Over time I came to see each song as a new puzzle. It would illuminate something that was important in my life at that moment, though the meanings are not always obvious on the surface. Fans or readers, or even critics, who really want to learn more about my life should read my lyrics, which might reveal more than any single book about The Beatles could do. Yet until my brother-in-law, friend and advisor, John Eastman, and my publisher, Bob Weil, provided the initial encouragement to do this book in 2015, I felt that the process of going over the hundreds of lyrics, some that I wrote in my teens, felt too cumbersome if not a bit too indulgent. It was a luxury of time I could not afford. I had always directed all my creative energies into the music. I would worry about the interior meanings, if I

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worried at all, only later. But once Paul Muldoon and I started discussing the origins and influences of all these songs, I became aware that delving into the lyrics of my songs could be a useful and revealing exploration.

For one, I knew Paul's was a receptive ear. He was not a biographer looking for gossip or secrets, hoping to learn more about some supposed feud between me and John or Yoko. Nor was he an over-the-top fan-turned-writer, looking to transform every word uttered into some kind of sacred text. What appealed to me immediately was that Muldoon is a poet. Like me, he is into words and understands the poetics of words – how the lyrics themselves become their own form of music that can become even more magical when paired with a melody.

Our conversations took place over five years, a few in London but most in New York. I would make a point of seeing him whenever I was in town. That's a long period of time, and the more we talked, the more we realised we had a lot in common. It was easy for me to identify with Paul, not only because he was a poet but because we shared an Irish heritage, an ancestral link in our families' pasts. Not to mention that Paul actually plays rock and roll and writes his own songs.

I never thought I would want to analyse these lyrics, many from back in the 1960s and '70s. Many of them I hadn't thought about in years, and many I hadn't played in concert for decades. But with Paul as my sounding board, it became a challenge – and a very pleasant one – to revisit the songs and pick them apart, to discover patterns that I never knew were there.

The act of writing a song is a unique experience, unlike anything else I know. You have to be in the right mood and start with a clear mind. You must trust your initial feelings because at the beginning you don't really know where you're going. Conversations with Paul were much the same. The only thing we knew in advance of each meeting was which songs we would be discussing; everything else was free rein. Inevitably, long-dormant memories were stirred up, and new meanings and patterns suddenly emerged.

The best comparison I can think of is an old snapshot album that's been kept up in a dusty attic. Someone brings it down, and suddenly you're faced with page after page of memories. Some of the old photos appear distinct and familiar, but others are a good bit hazier. When confronted with the words, I found it a challenge to remember how these songs came about: how I structured them; what event – a visit to a movie set, a row with someone I thought was a friend – might have inspired them; and what my feelings were at the time.

Given the way memory works, often the oldest songs from youth were the easiest to remember. For example, I could easily conjure up a conversation with Jane Asher's mother, a woman whom I liked a great deal, that I had when I was living in Wimpole Street in my mid-twenties, whereas

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memories of concerts only ten or fifteen years ago were more difficult to retrieve. But what was so invaluable about talking to Paul was that one old line would lead to another until, all of a sudden, a flood of memories I never knew were there would wash over me.

It's a lot like entering a forest. At first you see only the thicket of trees, but as you proceed deeper into the woods, you start appreciating things you might not have noticed before. You begin to look to each side, and up and down, noticing all kinds of things that weren't at first apparent. And once you've explored these things, your inclination is to head out of the forest. This is a pattern developed over many years; the tendency is to take the same path time and again, but if you continue to repeat yourself, which is so easy to do, eventually you might recognise that you haven't made any progress.

A furniture maker, a genuine craftsman, might see things differently. He's been very comfortable making the same chair over and over, but what if he pushed himself to make chairs that were different? He'd have to think about what kinds of legs they'd have, how the seats would be constructed, and how much weight they'd be able to bear. His furniture would start taking on a certain style, but no two chairs he produced could be quite alike. The same thing happened with my songs.

MANY OF MY SONGS ARE BASED ON PEOPLE I KNEW IN AND around Liverpool. And readers of these commentaries may be surprised by how often I mention my parents. When I first began this project, Jim and Mary McCartney were certainly not the first people who came to mind. But as I started to think about songs written at every stage of my career, I could not help but realise that, even without my conscious knowledge, they were the original inspiration for so much that I've written.

I was very lucky because my immediate Liverpool family were just ordinary working-class people. Their attitudes weren't religious, but they were good people and they showed us a good way. In school and in church, we were given more formal religion – Jesus's version, you might say – but my own sense of goodness, of a certain kind of spirituality, had already come from home. My parents' beliefs had a big impact, so I just naturally grew up thinking that the right thing was to be tolerant, the right thing was to be good. We were never told at home that you shalt *not* do this, you shalt *not* do that. And growing up, we thought the whole world turned in much the same way, so when I matured and was able to put my own thoughts and feelings into songs, I drew from this foundation.

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I was only fourteen when my mum died. Because she died so young, you might think she did not have a great influence on my songs. But the more I think back, the more I now appreciate her effect on my identity as a songwriter. And as I'm recalling her now, I realise that today, 29 September, is her birthday, so - talk about spiritual - *she is certainly here*; the mother who made sure we ate our meals and washed behind our ears never seems to leave.

As I remember her, I think of her accent. Accents in Liverpool can vary greatly, from sort of soft and gentle to quite hard and aggressive, but hers was more lilting. That's because her ancestry was Irish, and there were influences from both Ireland and Wales. And just like her accent, she was very gentle-natured - so gentle that I never heard her shout. She never needed to. My brother Mike and I just knew that she wanted the best for her kids.

Even though mum didn't play an instrument, she appreciated music. I can still recall hearing her whistling in the kitchen whilst cooking. It could have been something that was on the radio or maybe a tune she knew. And I remember thinking, 'Oh, it's beautiful that she's happy,' and this feeling is something I've carried with me right to this day.

In those years right after the war, we would see her leaving the house and coming back home dressed in her nurse's uniform. Nursing was a role that came to her easily, both in and out of the house. If anything happened to us, if we got ill or got into a scrape in the yard, she was there, as if always on call. Sometimes she would decide we needed an enema, even though we were little kids, and that was a bit too much. But overall, she was very loving and soft-spoken.

I'd like to think that I've always been very empathetic towards women, but the point was brought home to me one day when a girl stopped me and asked, 'Have you ever realised how many of your songs are about women?' I hadn't ever really thought about it. All I could respond with was, 'Yeah, well, I do love and respect women.' But I got to thinking that my feelings towards women might have all come from my mum – the fact that I always remembered her as gentle and happy. On the most basic level, and in unexplainable ways, she embodied the humanity that you might find in my songs.

While my mother always appreciated music, my dad really was the musical one. I suppose at another time he might have been a musician himself, but he worked in Liverpool as a salesman for a company that imported cotton from America, Egypt, India, South America - the whole world. As an amateur pianist, he played in a little group called Jim Mac's Jazz Band.

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This was the 1920s, the flapper era in Liverpool, so playing in a band must have been pretty exciting for a young man his age. I wasn't around then, of course, but when I was a kid I'd hear him playing the piano at home. He would just sit at the family piano and play his old tunes. Generally, they were American standards, songs like 'Chicago' or 'Stairway to Paradise', performed by Paul Whiteman and his orchestra. One song that was a real education for me was a little tune that I can still hum called 'Stumbling', which I was later told was an American foxtrot song from 1922. The syncopation in 'Stumbling' fascinated me. I would lie on the carpet, my head on my knuckles, just listening to Dad play. Everyone in the house heard him play his favourite standards, but for me it was an education, listening to all these examples of rhythm, melody, and harmony.

He made sure the baton would be passed on. One day he actually took my brother and me aside to show us what harmony meant. 'If you sing that note there, and he sings that note here,' he instructed, 'there's then a blend of two notes, which is called "harmony".' Sometimes when we heard a song on the radio he'd say, 'Can you hear that low noise there?' We'd say, 'Yeah,' and he'd reply, 'Well, that's the bass.'

While Dad's entire audience was usually just the four of us, there were singsongs, big bashes that took place once a year on New Year's Eve. The extended family – the kids our age, the older kids, the younger parents, and the older parents – would come together, and we'd get a very wide, lusty view of life from all these generations. The carpets would be rolled back, and Dad would get on the piano. The ladies would sit on chairs around the edge of the room and sing, sometimes dance, while the men, who always had a good line on the latest jokes, would stand around nursing pints of beer. It was really great, and I grew up thinking everybody had a loving family like this – lovely, always nurturing. As an older lad I was shocked to find that this wasn't true – that many people had disastrous childhoods – and John Lennon was one of them.

I didn't know it when we first met, but John had suffered so many personal tragedies. His father disappeared when he was three, and reappeared only much later, when John was famous and found his dad washing dishes in the local pub. John wasn't allowed to stay with his mother, so the family sent him to live with his Aunt Mimi and Uncle George, which they thought would be better for him, and it might have been, but who really knows? John lived with Mimi and George for most of his childhood, but when he was about fourteen, George died. I didn't know his uncle, but I remember John saying to me a few years later, 'I think I'm a jinx on the male line.' I would have to reassure him and respond, 'No, it's

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not your fault your father left you, or that Uncle George died; it's nothing to do with you.' In this way I tried to give him the kind of reassurance I had from my home.

My own father's influence extended well beyond music. He gave me a love of words that may first have been apparent when I was in school. It was hard as a kid *not* to be aware of the way he could juggle words or how much he loved crossword puzzles. It's a very Liverpool thing to say silly things, but he carried it a good step further, and it took some doing to keep up with the subtleties of his jokes and puns. He would tell us, 'The pain is exquisite,' but he was really making a joke about the pain being excruciating, because you would not expect pain to be exquisite (I think it sounded better in person!). He wasn't particularly well-read, since he'd left school early because the family had no money. When he was fourteen, he had to go to work straightaway, but that departure from school never vanquished his love of words. As a boy, I did not realise that I was absorbing my father's love of words and phrases, but this, I believe, was the start of it all for me. Musicians get only twelve notes to work with, and in a song, often you use only about half of them. But with words the options are limitless, so it dawned on me that I, just like my dad, could play with them. It was as if I could toss them up in the air and then see when they all came down how language could become magic.

IT'S EASY FOR ME TO RECALL MY DAD, BUT THERE ARE SO many other people who also helped shape the way I would write songs. I mention Alan Durband, my teacher at the Liverpool Institute High School for Boys, a few times in these commentaries. As much as anyone else, he inspired my love of reading and opened things up for me so much that I came to live for a while in a fantasy world drawn from books. First I would learn something about a writer or poet in school; then I would head to the bookshop to augment what I didn't know. I started buying paperbacks – often novels, but also poetry books, and things like Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood*, just to see what it was and how Thomas dealt with words. I also bought plays, like *Camino Real* by Tennessee Williams and *Salome* by Oscar Wilde.

One thing led to another, and I started going to plays in Liverpool. All I could afford was the cheapest seat in the house. I generally enjoyed these plays, works like Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*, but I also enjoyed eavesdropping on conversations during the interval, listening to the chatter in the stairwell. I was the guy who just stood there, listening unobtrusively,

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and it was worth it because I would pick up opinions, criticisms, turns of phrase and stuff like that. Everything I absorbed would come to inform my own writing.

This was about the same time that I met John Lennon, and it's pretty clear now that we were a huge influence on each other. Readers might detect duelling emotions in my recollections of John; that's because my relationship with him was very mixed. Sometimes it was filled with great love and admiration, but other times not, especially around the time The Beatles were breaking up. In the beginning, though, the relationship was a young Liverpool guy looking up to another guy a year and a half older.

It was hard *not* to admire John's wit and wisdom. But as I came to see him as a person and a human being, there were, of course, arguments, though never anything violent. There's even a movie out there in which John's character punches my character, but the truth is that he never punched me. As with many friendships, there were disputes and there were arguments, but not many. Sometimes, though, I certainly thought John was being a complete idiot. Even though I was younger, I would try to explain to him why he was being stupid and why something he'd done was so unlike him. I remember him saying things to me like, 'You know, Paul, I worry about how people are gonna remember me when I die.' Thoughts like that shocked me, and I'd reply, 'Hold on; just hold it right there. People are going to think you were great, and you've already done enough work to demonstrate that.' I often felt like I was his priest and would have to say, 'My son, you're great. Just don't worry about that.'

My reassurances seemed to make him feel better, but with our songwriting I'd sometimes have to be tough. When he would suggest a line, sometimes I'd have to tell him that it was from something else, like *West Side Story*. I was the guy who had to say, 'No, that's been done before.' Sometimes I would take a song he'd written and suggest that he mould it another way. To his credit, he would take my advice – just as I would when he would tell me, 'Oh no, we can't have that' – and we would change the line. And that was the great thing about our collaboration: we respected each other's opinions in all sorts of special ways.

Just as The Beatles were beginning to fragment, Linda Eastman came into my life – as not only my wife but also my muse. No one was more influential on my writing and composing at that time. Just the fact that she got it, that she understood what I was trying to do, was very comforting, so she crops up frequently in the commentaries. If I wrote a song and played it for her, she could be very encouraging, but I always knew that she'd give me a straightforward opinion. On that level she was very helpful. Her love

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of music meshed with mine, and we could suggest things to each other so easily that if she had an idea for a song or two, I could take it and run with it. At the time, I really needed someone like that because The Beatles had just broken up.

Linda was especially helpful in other ways that readers of *The Lyrics* will, I hope, appreciate. When The Beatles started out, we hung on to things like newspaper clippings. After things started getting crazy with the band, my dad continued to cut out articles from the papers. He was so proud of what we were doing. But it was Linda who helped me realise the importance of the things we'd saved. Until then, we'd always seen the written-out lyrics as sort of ephemeral. We jotted them down just so that we could compose and record the song. At that time, our focus seemed to be all about the music, which is something you cannot physically see. We just threw away the lyric sheets afterwards, and it's funny to think about everything that ended up in the wastebaskets of Abbey Road Studios. Linda, though, had a background as a photographer. Producing beautiful prints was her art and craft, and she was steeped in a world of physical artefacts. She started picking up the handwritten lyrics we left in the studio, and she'd paste them into a scrapbook for me. She saw them as memories and parts of my history.

I'm told that the archive now has over a million items, which just goes to show how many objects can pass in and out of a life. I sit with these things from time to time – things that I've not seen for ages, like my old schoolbooks or the original *Sgt. Pepper* suit. For me it's a trip down memory lane, but in putting together this book, I wanted to make sure we illustrated the commentaries with objects and pictures from my past so that readers could immerse themselves in the period when the songs were written. It's all to give a sense of what was happening then.

The illustrations in the book – some quite straightforward, but others quite wild – will strike readers in unpredictable ways. By analysing the lyrics, someone might think that a particular song came from my mum or my dad, or was inspired by the Maharishi, or came out of my meeting with the queen, a person I admire very much. But songwriting, as well as the way people view songs, often comes from pure serendipity, sheer accident. Who would guess that the inverted wording of 'A Hard Day's Night' came from a malapropism that Ringo once uttered? Or that 'Lovely Rita' was inspired by a real meter maid stationed across from the Chinese embassy in Portland Place? Or that it took Hurricane Bob and the collapse of all electrical power on Long Island for me to write 'Calico Skies'? Or that the inspiration for 'Do It Now' was my father order-

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ing me and my brother to pick up horse shit around our neighbourhood in Liverpool?

LIFE HAS TAUGHT ME THAT WE AS A SOCIETY WORSHIP celebrity. And for sixty years now I've had to face being a celebrity, something I could never have imagined when I was starting out in Liverpool. Even now at my age, journalists and photographers still want to break a story or expose some dirt, as if I were suddenly feuding with my fellow Beatle Ringo, or fighting with Yoko, a woman now well into her eighties. It's not hard to understand why some celebrities become reclusive, like Greta Garbo or my friend Bob Dylan. I also empathise with singers who've been crushed by fame – a list far too long.

While I do wish I could take my wife Nancy out to dinner without being stopped half a dozen times or photographed repeatedly while chewing my pasta, I'm grateful to have had parents who believed in me and my brother, loved us and provided us with a foundation that has enabled me to handle all the rough moments that have come my way. Going through more than 150 of my songs over the course of five years helped me put so many things into perspective, especially the role that Jim and Mary McCartney played in teaching me that people are basically good – sound lessons that I absorbed and imparted to my children. There are a few baddies, of course, but most people have a good heart.

I can still picture my father waiting with my brother and me at a bus stop in Liverpool, along with other people in the queue. He's wearing his trilby, a kind of hat men wore in those days like a uniform. He'd make sure we raised our own school caps to women. 'Good morning,' we'd say. It was such a sweet, old-fashioned gesture, and something that has stuck with me all these years. And I can remember Dad always talking to us about tolerance. 'Toleration' and 'moderation' were two of his favourite words.

It's a mystery how all this happened. People stop me in the street, and they can get very emotional. They say, 'Your music changed my life,' and I know what they mean – that The Beatles brought something very important to their lives. But it's still a mystery, and I don't mind ending up being a mystery. With regard to this all-pervading mystery, there's one incident I'll always remember. We were driving north in a van – just the four of us Beatles and our roadie. It was freezing cold, during a big blizzard, and we couldn't see our hands in front of our faces, and we really needed to, since we were in this van. All we could do was basically follow the tail lights of the car in front of us. The snow was so bad that we

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couldn't make out the road. At one point, our van spun out of control and slipped sideways down an embankment. We looked up at the road, shaken but okay, and we thought, 'How the hell are we going to get up there?' It was a mystery. But one of us – I can't remember who – said, 'Something will happen.'

Some people might find this outlook – 'something will happen' – simple or banal, but I think it's a great philosophy. Recently I told this story to one of my friends, a big guy in business, and he was so taken with what I'd told him that he repeated back to me, 'Something will happen.' The idea is that no matter how desperate you are, no matter how bad everything seems, something will happen. I find that idea helpful, and I think it's a philosophy worth holding on to.

Paul McCartney
Sussex, England
Autumn 2020

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Introduction by Paul Muldoon

IT WAS TOWARDS THE END OF 2016 WHEN I HAD A PHONE CALL from an unfamiliar number. The voice, though, was immediately familiar. The newly elected Donald Trump introduced himself quite matter-of-factly. He lost no time in getting to the point: Would I be willing to come to Washington to serve as his 'Poetry Supremo'?

That Sir Paul McCartney turns out to be such a brilliant mimic shouldn't have come as a surprise. Like almost all great writers, he'd apprenticed himself to the masters of the trade, including an impressive array of literary masters: Dickens, Shakespeare, Robert Louis Stevenson, Lewis Carroll – names that roll quite naturally off his tongue. All apprenticeships are characterised by caricature and impersonation.

The context in which Paul McCartney was exposed to King Lear and, no less significantly, Edward Lear, is vital to an understanding of his achievement. Born in 1942, he was among the very first UK citizens to benefit directly from the 1944 Education Act, which allowed many more possibilities for the historically underprivileged. Paul's parents had both come from immigrant families of Irish extraction and had at once an intrinsically complex relationship to the UK and a sense of belonging to Liverpool's vast Irish community. More significantly, though, they identified with the newly confident, comparatively optimistic post-war generation.

As Paul McCartney attests, his parents always wanted 'greatness' for him and his brother Mike, so the boys were encouraged to go to the best available schools. His father, a cotton salesman, was 'very good with

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words', and the fact that his mother was a nurse ensured that Paul was 'the only boy in school who could spell "phlegm"'.

The single greatest influence on young McCartney turned out to be his high school English teacher, Alan Durband, who had attended Downing College, Cambridge, and had been a student of F. R. Leavis, the doyen of close reading of 'the words on the page'. Paul McCartney's capacity for textual analysis, of his own work as much as others', may then be traced directly to Durband's influence. I'm certain that, in another life, Paul McCartney would have been a schoolteacher – perhaps a university don – wearing a mortarboard as lightly as a mop top.

TO HAVE HAD SUCH A SECURE GROUNDING IN THE WORLD of English literature accounts for only part of Paul McCartney's success. That he is equally steeped in the popular song tradition – not only Little Richard and Chuck Berry, but the songwriters of the Brill Building and Tin Pan Alley – has given him a remarkably wide musical vocabulary. Among his earliest heroes were Fred Astaire, Hoagy Carmichael, George and Ira Gershwin and Cole Porter. Though he would later be in conversation with such avant-garde composers as Karlheinz Stockhausen and John Cage, Paul McCartney's immediate influences were The Everly Brothers and, preeminently, Buddy Holly. He remarks that 'Elvis wasn't a writer or a lead guitarist; he was just a singer. Duane Eddy was a guitar player but not a singer. So Buddy had it all.' Here he's referring to the fact that Buddy Holly wrote his own songs, sang them *and* played guitar.

In his own songwriting buddy, John Lennon, what Paul McCartney recognised from the outset was John's equally prodigious ventriloquistic capacities. However groundbreaking their work would turn out to be, The Beatles were constantly in dialogue with their contemporaries, whether the artists associated with Motown, The Beach Boys, or Bob Dylan, or the singers and songwriters of a slightly earlier era. Even now, Paul McCartney will psych himself into a song by channelling Little Richard or Fred Astaire. He may even occasionally channel John Lennon, in whom he recognised a partner whose name might one day be paired with his as Gilbert was paired with Sullivan, and Rodgers with Hammerstein. He acknowledges that the interplay of Lennon and McCartney was 'nothing short of miraculous', describing how they 'wrote with two guitars'. 'The joy of that was that I was left-handed and he was right-handed, so I was looking in a mirror and he was looking in a mirror.'

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THE OTHER GIFT THAT PAUL McCARTNEY RECOGNISED AB initio in John Lennon was his willingness not only to improvise but to improve. Together, they were always 'on the lookout for the kind of subject that hadn't really been the stuff of popular song'. They shared the eternal schoolboy's engagement with nonsense and nursery rhyme, and they did so with a Byronic lingering over the slightly outrageous rhyme, whether 'Edison/medicine' or 'Valerie/gallery'. They were blessed to find in George Martin a producer who could keep pace with them – sometimes, indeed, setting the pace. Martin's suggestions for string arrangements and his openness to the inventiveness of Robert Moog and his newfangled synthesizer allowed The Beatles to be chronically inventive themselves.

A persistent component in The Beatles' soundscape that is often overlooked is the impact of radio. Paul McCartney describes *Sgt. Pepper* as 'a big radio programme'. Like the rest of The Beatles, he grew up on a diet of madcap radio comedy like *The Goon Show*, which ran from 1951 until 1960 and starred Peter Sellers, Spike Milligan and Harry Secombe. Other radio stars included the Liverpudlian zany Ken Dodd, often considered the last great music hall comedian. The influence of radio underscored Paul McCartney's fascination with 'what's missing in a piece', as well as the power of a few well-chosen words to set a scene. The impact of radio drama, including Dylan Thomas's 1954 masterpiece *Under Milk Wood*, cannot be overstated. It was a radio version of Alfred Jarry's *Ubu Cocu*, broadcast in 1966, that introduced Paul McCartney to the term 'pataphysical', referring to a particular realm of nonce science. Then there's the role of stage drama, whether Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* or Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. Paul McCartney may usefully be thought of as a writer of mini-plays. He has the capacity to render a fully rounded character from what might otherwise be merely a thumbnail sketch.

Two other long-standing areas of interest for Paul McCartney fall under the rubric of the visual arts. The first is painting. He is both literally a painter, having completed hundreds of works in oil, and figuratively a presenter of images. The second is cinema. He is a presenter of the moving image, insisting along the way that 'my camera is looking around and sweeping life for clues'.

TO THINK OF THE SONG AS A SHOOTING SCRIPT IS AN ANGLE of entry into the planetary atmosphere of 'Eleanor Rigby', one of Paul McCartney's best-known songs. Here I will attempt to inter-

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pret some aspects of it as Alan Durband, *pace* F. R. Leavis, might have done. Like Leavis, Durband would probably have resisted the urge to disentangle the song from its historical moment. The other great Cambridge critic, I. A. Richards, would have insisted that the poem (or song) is a self-contained artefact, but Leavis and Durband would have been more inclined to allow for contextualisation.

Take the name of the main character. The song was released in 1966, when the most famous Eleanor in the UK was Eleanor Bron. A star of the popular 1964–65 television comedy series *Not So Much a Programme, More a Way of Life*, Bron had also appeared in the 1965 Beatles film *Help!* Visualisations of Eleanor Rigby by the very first UK audiences to hear the song are likely to have been strongly tinged by the strikingly beautiful Ms Bron. 'Rigby' is essentially a Viking name meaning 'ridge farm' or 'ridge village' and would tend to locate the song somewhere in the northern half of Great Britain. Being Scottish, Father McKenzie, the other main character of the poem, also evokes a northern-UK setting.

Part of the impact of 'Eleanor Rigby' is its filmic structure, where the two main characters are introduced in the first and second verses and are then brought together in the third. It's a version of the technique that Alfred Hitchcock used for the shower scene in his 1960 film, *Psycho*, in which he establishes the image of bloody water flowing down a drain, cuts away from it and then returns to a shot of the same drain with clear water swirling into the vortex. The shower scene in *Psycho* is also relevant because the frenzied playing of the double string quartet orchestrated by George Martin is reminiscent of Bernard Herrmann's 'stabbing' film score, so for those who first heard 'Eleanor Rigby', superimposed on the image of Eleanor Bron was the image of the mummified mother from *Psycho*. Part of the impact of 'Eleanor Rigby' is this all-but-invisible subtext of isolation and death.

THE DEATH OF HIS OWN MOTHER WHEN HE WAS FOURTEEN – something he's 'never gotten over' – is what hurt Paul McCartney into song. From 'I Lost My Little Girl' to such pieces as 'Despite Repeated Warnings', Paul McCartney has taken as his subject matter an astonishing array of topics – everything from his relationships with Jane Asher, Linda Eastman and Nancy Shevell, through climate change and racial injustice, to the family dog and the family car. Readers of *The Lyrics* will come away with a sense that they are in the presence of a poet for whom 'the London bookshops were almost as good as the guitar shops'. When Paul

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McCartney reminds us that 'what made The Beatles such a great band was that no two tracks are the same', we do well to remember that, throughout his long career with Wings and as a solo artist, he has had an unfailing 'aversion to being bored'. For sixty years he has embodied the restlessness we associate with the artist of the first rank. Beyond that, Paul McCartney is remarkable in that he is one of the very few who is not only influenced by his time but whose work has substantially defined that time. He is living proof of his fellow lyricist William Wordsworth's brilliant dictum that 'every great and original writer, in proportion as he is great and original, must himself create the taste by which he is to be relished'.

A WORD OR TWO ABOUT THE METHODOLOGY OF THE PRESent tome. It's based on twenty-four separate meetings over a five-year period between August 2015 and August 2020. I'd been introduced to Paul McCartney by Robert Weil and John Eastman in early 2015. Most of these meetings took place in New York, and each involved two or three hours of intensive conversation. The process was a little reminiscent of the two-or-three-hour writing sessions that were a feature of the Lennon-McCartney partnership, though the tea was green rather than Brooke Bond or PG Tips. For snacks there were bagels with hummus, cheese and pickles, occasionally Marmite. Our times together were universally upbeat, sometimes uproariously so. Part of the reason we got on so well was our shared culture and range of reference, given that we were born a mere nine years apart. Our birthdays are also separated by just two calendar days, and we were both named Paul for the same reason: the fact that the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul falls on the twenty-ninth of June.

However good he may be at putting people at ease, and however comfortable in his own skin he may be, there's no getting around the fact that Paul McCartney will always be a twentieth-century icon. For that reason, if no other, I did occasionally have to allow myself a starstruck moment. Successive starstruck moments occur whenever Paul McCartney takes the stage. His live shows continue to be of such high voltage that one half expects him to burst into flames. During our collaboration, then, it was a particular delight to have him quite often pick up a guitar to demonstrate a chord sequence and play a few bars of one of his songs to an audience of one.

Despite all this to-ing and fro-ing, we did somehow manage to discuss six to eight songs each time we met. Our conversations were recorded simultaneously on two devices and professionally transcribed. The commentar-

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ies on the lyrics included here I then edited into a semi-seamless narrative that eschewed my own questions and comments and was sometimes resequenced for sense. That text was then line-edited by the redoubtable Robert Weil and occasionally augmented with factual information by the equally redoubtable Issy Bingham and Steve Ithell, both of MPL.

THE DEPTH AND DURABILITY THAT ARE THE HALLMARKS OF Paul McCartney's lyrics derive from the combination of two seemingly irreconcilable forces that I characterise as the 'physics' and the 'chemistry' of the song. The physics has to do with the song's engineering, with its concomitant apprenticeship to craft that I referred to earlier. One estimate has The Beatles playing nearly 300 times in Germany between 1960 and 1962. That sheer exposure to the business of how songs are constructed lies at the root of the word 'poet', a version of the Greek term for a 'maker'. It's no accident that one Scottish term for a poet or bard is *makar*.

The chemistry component is reflected in another term for a poet: 'troubadour'. The word 'troubadour' is related to the French word *trouver*, 'to find'. Paul McCartney often uses some version of the phrase 'I came across the chords' to describe how a song begins its mysterious life. It's the magical combination of two elements – whether musical notes or the components of a simile – that causes a chemical reaction.

Paul McCartney often refers to a version of inspiration before which he is all but inert. The element of ventriloquism is one which he continues to valourise, as when he says that 'with the Little Richard thing you just have to give yourself over to it'. He remembers his father being 'into crossword puzzles' and acknowledges that he has 'inherited a love of words and crossword puzzles'. The word he uses of his attitude to the puzzle of a song – the answer to the question only it has raised – is 'fascination'. It brings to mind W. B. Yeats's insistence that 'The *fascination* of what's difficult / Has dried the sap out of my veins'. Like Yeats, Paul McCartney is committed to the serviceability of the idea of the mask, or persona, reminding us that 'starting with myself, the characters who appear in my songs are imagined' and it's 'all about making it up'.

Paul McCartney also has at least a partial regard for what the French philosopher Roland Barthes described as the 'death of the author', the idea by which the act of reading necessarily involves a degree of writing, or even rewriting, the text. In Paul McCartney's case, this idea is represented by his trust in the notion that each of his millions of fans around the world will round out their own version of the song he has offered them. The song

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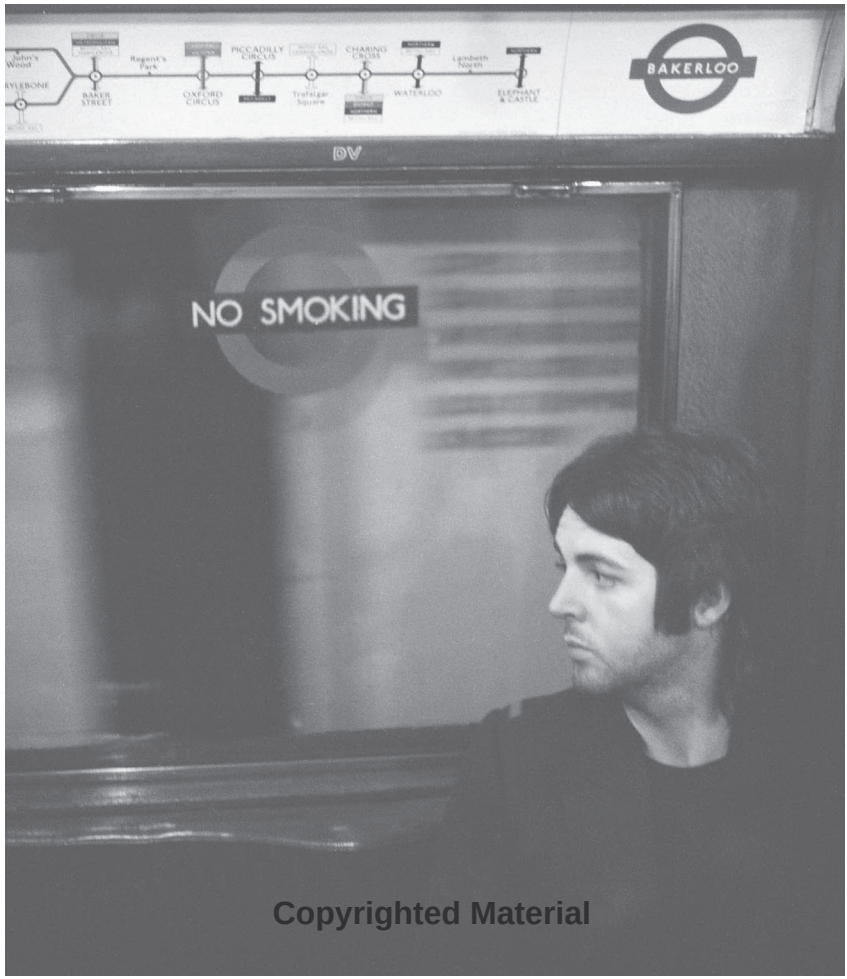
becomes what it might most truly be only when it is heard and heralded. The single quality that makes Paul McCartney great, though, is his well-attested humility. He would be on exactly the same page as the perennially wise novelist and short story writer Donald Barthelme, who, in an essay titled 'Not-Knowing', categorised the writer as 'one who, embarking on a task, does not know what to do'. The emotional range and intellectual robustness of *The Lyrics* are testimony to Paul McCartney's profound selflessness – the implicit acknowledgment that he represents no more or less than what Barthelme calls 'the work's way of getting itself written'.

Paul Muldoon
Sharon Springs, New York
October 2020

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A

All My Loving 2
And I Love Her 7
Another Day 11
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Average Person 19



All My Loving

WRITERS	Paul McCartney and John Lennon
ARTIST	The Beatles
RECORDED	Abbey Road Studios, London
RELEASED	*With The Beatles*, 1963
	Meet The Beatles! 1964

Close your eyes and I'll kiss you
Tomorrow I'll miss you
Remember I'll always be true
And then while I'm away
I'll write home every day
And I'll send all my loving to you

I'll pretend that I'm kissing
The lips I am missing
And hope that my dreams will come true
And then while I'm away
I'll write home every day
And I'll send all my loving to you

All my loving, I will send to you
All my loving, darling, I'll be true

Close your eyes and I'll kiss you
Tomorrow I'll miss you
Remember I'll always be true
And then while I'm away
I'll write home every day
And I'll send all my loving to you

All my loving, I will send to you
All my loving, darling, I'll be true
All my loving, all my loving
All my loving, I will send to you

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WE WERE ON A PACKAGE TOUR, WITH PROBABLY FIVE or six other bands, because one act was not enough to sell tickets. Even in New York, a show would have Buddy Holly, Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard, Fats Domino, The Everly Brothers – all on the same bill!

So I was on a tour bus somewhere in the UK, with nothing to do, and I started to think of these words: 'Close your eyes . . .' Although we'd met at this point, I don't know that I was thinking specifically of Jane Asher when I wrote this, though we were courting. It's probably more of a reflection on what our lives were like then – leaving behind family and friends to go on tour and experience all these new adventures. It's one of the few songs I've written where the words came first. That almost never happens, I usually have an instrument with me. So, I'd started work on the lyrics on the bus, and back then we were playing what was known as the Moss Empires circuit. The Moss Empires company owned a number of venues across the country, which would be some of the stops on the tour. They were these large, gorgeous turn-of-the-century music halls, but nowadays most of them are bingo halls. These places had really nice, big, empty backstage areas, and I remember we were on a package tour with Roy Orbison, and we arrived at the venue, and with all the hustle and bustle around me – all the various bands and tour crews and stagehands running about – I made my way to a piano and then somehow found the chords. At that point, it was a straight country-and-western love song.



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The Beatles during their first appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*. New York, 9 February 1964

With songwriting, you conceive of it in one genre (because you can't conceive of things in thousands of genres), and you have one way of hearing it. If you get it right, however, you realise it has a certain elasticity; songs can be flexible. And when other members of The Beatles would get into the studio, often that's when that elasticity would kick in.

The thing that strikes me about the 'All My Loving' recording is John's guitar part; he's playing the chords as triplets. That was a last-minute idea, and it transforms the whole thing, giving it momentum. The song is obviously about someone leaving to go on a trip, and that driving rhythm of John's echoes the feeling of travel and motion. It sounds like a car's wheels on the motorway, which, if you can believe it, had only really become a thing in the UK at the end of the fifties. But, it was often like that when we were recording. One of us would come up with that little magic thing. It allowed the song to become what it needed to be.

It's a letter song, of course, in the same vein as the epistolary song 'P.S. I Love You', which was the B-side of 'Love Me Do'. It's part of a tradition of letter songs like Fats Waller's 'I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter' or Pat Boone's 1956 hit 'I'll Be Home'. So, 'All My Loving' is a song that has a lineage.

'All My Loving' has somewhat of a lineage within the story of The Beatles too. It was recorded in the summer of 1963 and ended up on our second album, *With The Beatles*, released later that same year. At least, it was on *With The Beatles* in the UK. In the US the song came out on *Meet The Beatles!* in early 1964. At the beginning of our career, up until around the time of *Help!*, the US albums were different to the ones in the UK. Capitol used to take a few songs from here, a few from there, and add in a single or two, and that would be the US album. But what's great about *With The Beatles* and *Meet The Beatles!* is that they both have the same photo by Robert Freeman on the cover

Bob had worked with some really cool jazz musicians, like John Coltrane and Dizzy Gillespie, and we'd shown him some of our favourite photos taken of the band by our friend Astrid Kirchherr back in the Hamburg days. We asked Bob to keep that kind of style, and if you look at Astrid's photos of us you can definitely see the influence. I get asked about that cover a fair bit, and people are often surprised to hear how quickly it was done. It looks like it was taken in a studio with professional lighting to achieve those shadows, but the photo was actually taken in a hotel corridor in Bournemouth, a seaside town on the south coast of England. We were over there to play a string of shows at the Odeon Cinema, and Bob came to our hotel and was given an hour to get the cover. He set up a row of chairs and tried a few different arrangements – some with John at the

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front, some with me or George. But it was all done very quickly and with natural light. That photograph has become pretty iconic now, so we were pleased it was on the cover of both releases.

These albums came out at a time when Beatlemania was in full swing. A young lady in Washington, DC, had contacted her local radio station, asking them to play 'I Want to Hold Your Hand'. I think they had to ship a copy in from England at that point, but they put it on, and I think they even had her introduce the record on their station. That kick-started everything, and the song went to number one a few weeks later. We'd always said that we didn't want to go to America until we had a number one record, and here it was. So all that led to our first trip there.

There were crazy scenes at London Airport when we took off with a thousand-odd fans and the press waving us off and wishing us well. Cynthia, John's wife, mistook the screams for the sound of a plane. The scenes were even crazier on our arrival at JFK. At the time I don't think it necessarily occurred to us, but the airport had only recently been renamed after Kennedy. Our trip was only a few months after his assassination – which happened on the same day as the release of *With The Beatles* in the UK – and, though it's not for me to say, people have written that the country, especially teenagers, had been looking for something new and positive and fun to latch onto after mourning his death. It's one possible explanation for why Beatlemania took off so quickly in the US.

Capitol Records, our US label, had gone on a publicity drive to make sure people knew we were coming, and did they ever. We were met in New York by five thousand screaming fans and a hundred police officers trying to cordon them off. There's a film of a press conference we gave right after stepping off the plane, and you can see just how out of control it all was.

A couple of weeks after the release of *Meet The Beatles!*, we played *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Ed Sullivan was a real gentleman to us, and he always wore these finely tailored suits. There were only three major channels in the US at the time, and his show defined what people talked about. You hadn't made it in America until you'd been on it. We'd heard that some of our heroes, like Buddy Holly and The Crickets, had performed on the show, and there was that story about how they'd let Elvis Presley back on after performing 'Hound Dog', but he had to be shown from the waist up.

Our first appearance has now become sort of mythical in the story of The Beatles. Just before it aired, we received a telegram from Elvis Presley, wishing us well. I'd nearly done well at school; then Elvis came along, and school was all but forgotten, and here he was saying good luck to us. Then there was the sound of the audience, which is still ringing in my ears. The show had received something like fifty thousand applications for the seven

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hundred studio tickets. When the show aired, seventy-three million people watched us, and it became a cultural marker. So many people have come up to me through the years to tell me they watched it. People like Bruce Springsteen, Tom Petty, Chrissie Hynde, Billy Joel – they'd all seen it. It's probably not true, but the story goes that the crime rate went down too; even the robbers were tuning in. It was such a great way for us to be introduced to the US. During our second song, 'Till There Was You', they cut to shots of each of us and put our names up on the screen. When they got to John, they added, 'Sorry girls, he's married' – which had been a badly kept secret up until that point.

Some of the press the next day were a bit mean, though. The *New York Herald Tribune* – who, I might add, are no longer with us – wrote that The Beatles were '75 percent publicity, 20 percent haircut, and 5 percent lilting lament'. But then the 'mop top' became a whole new trend in the way that teenage boys started to wear their hair. At that point, the fringe – or bangs, as they're called in the US – wasn't supposed to go anywhere near the eyebrows. That all changed. You could even buy Beatles wigs.

The *Ed Sullivan Show* brings us back to 'All My Loving'. The song had always done well live, so after he'd introduced us as 'these youngsters from Liverpool', it became the first song that America saw The Beatles play live on TV. A month or so afterwards we had the top five songs in the Billboard charts.

So to illustrate how quickly things were moving for us in those days, 'All My Loving' helped us go from the Moss Empires circuit to conquering America in a little over six months. And a few months later I turned twenty-two.

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And I Love Her

WRITERS	Paul McCartney and John Lennon
ARTIST	The Beatles
RECORDED	Abbey Road Studios, London
RELEASED	*A Hard Day's Night*, 1964

I give her all my love
That's all I do
And if you saw my love
You'd love her too
I love her

She gives me everything
And tenderly
The kiss my lover brings
She brings to me
And I love her

A love like ours
Could never die
As long as I
Have you near me

Bright are the stars that shine
Dark is the sky
I know this love of mine
Will never die
And I love her

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NEVER MIND THE BARRETTS OF WIMPOLE STREET; WHAT about the Ashers of Wimpole Street? Number 57 to be precise. The area is what many people might think of when they think of London. It's in Marylebone and a little like something out of *Mary Poppins* – Edwardian townhouses with quite a literary background: Elizabeth Barrett met Robert Browning there; Virginia Woolf wrote that it was 'the most august of London streets'; Henry Higgins supposedly lived there in *Pygmalion*. And it was in the house belonging to my girlfriend Jane Asher's family that I wrote this song.

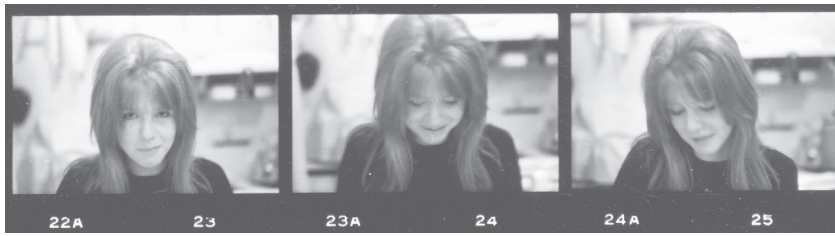
When things really started to pick up for The Beatles, around 1963, we moved from Liverpool down to London. That happened partly because it's where the music 'business' was, but it was also a new world of adventures. The city was still pitted with bomb sites from the war, and it was undergoing a huge redevelopment: while I was staying in Wimpole Street, the Post Office Tower was built about a ten-minute walk from the Ashers' house. For a while, that was the tallest building in the city, and I could see it going up from my attic bedroom window. There was a real sense of renewal and anything goes in London; it was an exciting place to be.

I was staying with Jane partly because I didn't like where Brian Epstein had arranged for us to stay in Mayfair. He was a suave man with sophisticated taste, but the place had no soul, and even though I'd come from a poor background – especially compared to Mayfair – our house had soul, and all my uncles' and aunties' houses had soul. This was a plain, unfurnished flat. I was only twenty-one and never thought to buy some pictures and put them up. I just got annoyed that there was nothing on the wall.

Jane and I first met in the spring of 1963, when she came to the Royal Albert Hall to interview The Beatles for the *Radio Times*. I remember we were all surprised by her red hair, because we'd only ever seen her in black and white before. She and I started dating shortly afterwards, and towards the end of the year the Ashers must have heard me grumbling about Mayfair and said, 'Well, do you want to stay here?' This gesture was in the long tradition of giving a garret room to a starving artist. So, I had a little room up at the top, next to Jane's brother Peter's room. Jane would have been around seventeen or eighteen, and Peter was a little older, around nineteen or twenty at this time. And even though I was technically a lodger, I would often get to eat with the family, and I remember that it all worked out great.

It was a big eye-opener living there, because I'd never seen this class of people, except maybe on telly. I didn't know anybody like that. Brian Epstein was kind of classy but not this kind of classy; this was sort of a showbiz family in a way. Jane's mother Margaret had taken her to audi-

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Jane Asher at her family home. Wimpole Street, London, 1963

tions, and Jane had been in little commercials and things. ('Don't Put Your Daughter on the Stage, Mrs. Worthington' – an old Noël Coward song.) And because of Jane's success – she'd been acting and making films since the 1950s – I think Peter and younger sister Clare might have gone for auditions too.

So, the family knew all about art and culture and society, whereas I'd never known anyone who knew about going for auditions, or had an agent. It was really nice staying in that house. Lots of books to read, art on the walls, interesting conversations; and Margaret was a music teacher. It was at least a home, and I'd sorely missed that since I'd come down from Liverpool and since my mum had died six or seven years before.

As far as the gossip columns were concerned, Jane and I were what they would call an 'item'. So much so that we were in a theatre one night – I liked literature and theatre, and of course she, as an actress, did too, which might have explained a good deal why I was drawn to her in the first place – and we were sitting there, and the lights went up for the interval. We had decided not to go to the bar, so we were just going to sit it out. Despite some of those huge early concerts, I really was not used to the personal burdens imposed by fame, so we were just talking in our seats, and suddenly ten paparazzi came scampering in with those cameras going *flash*, *flash*, *flash*, like *La Dolce Vita*, and then, just as quickly, they all just scampered out again. They were like the Keystone Cops. But, oh my God, we were *shocked*. The theatre had probably tipped them off, to get a bit of publicity for the play.

But precisely because Jane was my girlfriend, I wanted to tell her *there* that I loved her, so that's what initially inspired this song; that's what it was. Listening to it so many years later, I do think it's a nice melody. It starts with F-sharp minor, not with the root chord of E major, and you gradually work your way back. When I'd finished it, I felt, almost immediately, proud of it. I thought, 'This is a good 'un.'

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It really reached me, so I thought it might reach other people too. I brought it to the recording session where The Beatles' producer George

Martin listened to it. We were about to record it, and he said, 'I think it would be good with an introduction.' And I swear, right there and then, George Harrison went, 'Well how about this?' and he played the opening riff, which is such a hook; the song is nothing without it. We were working very fast and spontaneously coming up with ideas.

Another thing worth recalling is that George Martin was inspired to add a chord modulation in the solo of the song, a key change that he knew would be musically very satisfying; we shifted the chord progression to start with G minor instead of F-sharp minor – so, up a semitone. I think George Martin's classical training told him that that would be a really interesting change. And it is. And this sort of help is what started to make The Beatles' stuff better than that of other songwriters. In the case of this song, the two Georges – George Harrison with the intro and then George Martin on the key change into the solo – gave it a bit more musical strength. We were saying to people, 'We're a little bit more musical than the average bear.' And then, of course, the song – which is now in F major, or arguably D minor – eventually finishes on that bright D major chord, a lovely, pleasing resolution. So, I was very proud of that. It was very satisfying to make that record and to have written that song for Jane.

Many years later, long after we had lived together in St John's Wood, I ran into her when I was going to a doctor on Wimpole Street. I'd been walking down the street from Marylebone, and I passed the house and thought, 'Wow, great memories there.' Then I went further down the street to where my doctor was, and I was just pressing the bell when I sensed someone behind me. I turned around, and it was Jane. I said, 'Oh my God, I was just thinking about you and the house.'

That was the last time I saw her, but the memories don't fade.

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Another Day

WRITERS	Paul McCartney and Linda McCartney
ARTIST	Paul McCartney
RECORDED	CBS Studios, New York
RELEASED	Single, 1971

Every day she takes a morning bath she
wets her hair
Wraps a towel around her as she's
heading for the bedroom chair
It's just another day

Slipping into stockings, stepping into shoes
Dipping in the pocket of her raincoat
It's just another day

At the office where the papers grow she
takes a break
Drinks another coffee and she finds it
hard to stay awake
It's just another day

It's just another day
It's just another day

So sad, so sad
Sometimes she feels so sad
Alone in apartment she'd dwell
Till the man of her dreams comes to
break the spell
Ah stay, don't stand her up
And he comes and he stays but he leaves
the next day
So sad
Sometimes she feels so sad

As she posts another letter to The
Sound of Five
People gather round her and she
finds it hard to stay alive
It's just another day

It's just another day
It's just another day

So sad, so sad
Sometimes she feels so sad
Alone in apartment she'd dwell
Till the man of her dreams comes to
break the spell
Ah stay, don't stand her up
And he comes and he stays but he leaves
the next day
So sad
Sometimes she feels so sad

Every day she takes a morning bath she
wets her hair
Wraps a towel around her as she's
heading for the bedroom chair
It's just another day

Slipping into stockings, stepping
into shoes
Dipping in the pocket of her raincoat
It's just another day

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It's just another day
It's just another day

THINK 'ELEANOR RIGBY' MEETS HITCHCOCK'S *REAR WINDOW*. For, much as I hate to admit it, there is indeed a voyeuristic aspect to this song. Like many writers, I really am a bit of a voyeur; if there's a lit window and there's someone in it, I will watch them. Hands up, guilty. It's a very, very natural thing.

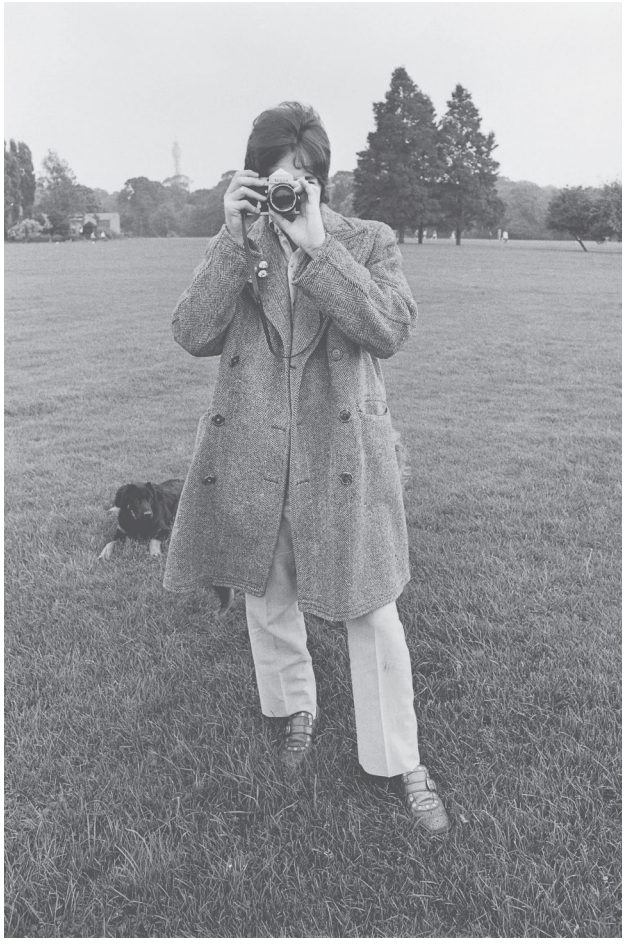
In a strange way, I may be interested in this subject matter because I get stared at quite a lot myself. It's because I have a recognisable face. It happens on the underground, on the subway, which I take when I can. You don't think people are looking at you until a little bit later, and you realise they were. Of course, I'm also looking back at them too. So I get to experience this from both sides.

There's a decorum, an unwritten rule that you don't say anything. But you do recognise distinct personality types. Some people will come right up to you with, 'Hey, how you doing, man?' You get the fist bumps and everything. Then there are some people who don't talk at all. The people I talk to are the ones who don't say anything. For example, I'm on the mat in the gym, and there's loads of people around. There's a guy who's doing stuff with a pole and I'm fascinated by what he's doing. I say, 'Oh, that's pretty amazing,' and then we get talking and he says, 'I remember you've got horses.' And he starts talking about horses. But it can really be anything that we'll talk about – even dipping into the contents of their raincoat. It's always interesting to hear these stories, which, in a roundabout way, can sometimes make their way into a lyric.

So, people do notice me and I am kind of aware of it, but that unwritten rule means you don't talk to each other about any of that obvious stuff. And you certainly don't take photos or ask for autographs. If they do, I often tell them I'm enjoying a private moment, and pretty much everyone gets that.

I mentioned 'Eleanor Rigby'. But while both that song and this one focus on the same idea – trying to capture the everyday of this character's life – the language here is more formal, less impressionistic. Eleanor Rigby 'lives in a dream', and that's reflected in lines like 'Wearing the face that she keeps in a jar by the door'. The protagonist here works in an office, though, and the lyrics are almost like a list, like her itinerary for the day. The person I'm gazing at here just happens to be a version of Linda living alone in New York before I met her, although *The Sound of Five* was a British radio show that people would write to about their problems. So, there's a transatlantic quality to it too. But I like to think I'm the 'man of her dreams', who shows up. So, it's rather appropriate that I recorded this in New York with Phil Ramone. Phil was a great producer

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Regent's Park, London, 1968

who had made a lot of records I admired. He'd worked with Paul Simon and Billy Joel.

This was just after The Beatles broke up, and I was trying to establish myself as a solo artist with a new repertoire. If it was going to work like the Beatles repertoire had worked, I had to have a hit. One in two songs had to be a hit. So, this was a conscious effort to write a hit, and Phil was very helpful. We knew that if we had a hit, it would cement our relationship and we would keep working together, which we did with the *RAM* album. It would prove that we were both good - he as a producer and I as a singer-songwriter. Releasing my first solo song after the breakup felt like a big moment. Thrilling, though tinged with sadness. It also felt like I had something to prove, and that kind of challenge is always exciting. The

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song went to number two in the UK singles chart and number five in the US Billboard Hot 100, so it did pretty well.

Of course, this was still a time when there was a bit of tension between John and me, and this sometimes filtered into our songwriting. John made fun of this song in one of his own, 'How Do You Sleep?'

The only thing you done was yesterday
And since you've gone you're just another day

One of his little piss takes.

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Arrow Through Me

WRITER	Paul McCartney
ARTIST	Wings
RECORDED	Abbey Road Studios, London; and Spirit of Ranachan Studio, Scotland
RELEASED	*Back to the Egg*, 1979 US single, 1979

Ooh baby, you couldn't have done
A worse thing to me
If you'd have taken an arrow
And run it right through me

Ooh baby, a bird in the hand
Is worth two flying
But when it came to love
I knew you'd be lying

It could have been a finer fling
Would have been a major attraction
With no other thing
Offering a note of distraction
Come on, get up
Get under way
And bring your love

Ooh baby, you wouldn't have found
A more down hero
If you'd have started at nothing
And counted to zero

Ooh baby, you couldn't have done
A worse thing to me
If you'd have taken an arrow
And run it right through me

It could have been a finer fling
Flying in a righter direction
With no other thing
Featuring but love and affection
Come on, get up
Get under way
And bring your love

Ooh baby, you wouldn't have found
A more down hero
If you'd have started at nothing
And counted to zero

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WINGS, WHICH WE BEGAN IN 1971, WAS IN MANY WAYS an experiment to see whether there was life after The Beatles, to see whether that success could be followed. It was the result of asking myself, 'Am I going to stop now?' The Beatles were so wonderful and all-encompassing, so successful. Now, should I stop and look for something else to do? But I thought, 'No. I like music too much, so whatever the something else is, it will be music.' I actually saw Johnny Cash one night on television and he had a band, and he'd never had a band to my knowledge. I thought, 'That looks like fun,' and Johnny looked like he was having fun. I was with Linda; we'd been together for around three years at this point, and our daughter Mary would have been a little over one, so we were a relatively new family. I said to her, 'You fancy starting a band?' It felt like it would be a fun new adventure for us. And she said, 'Yeah.'

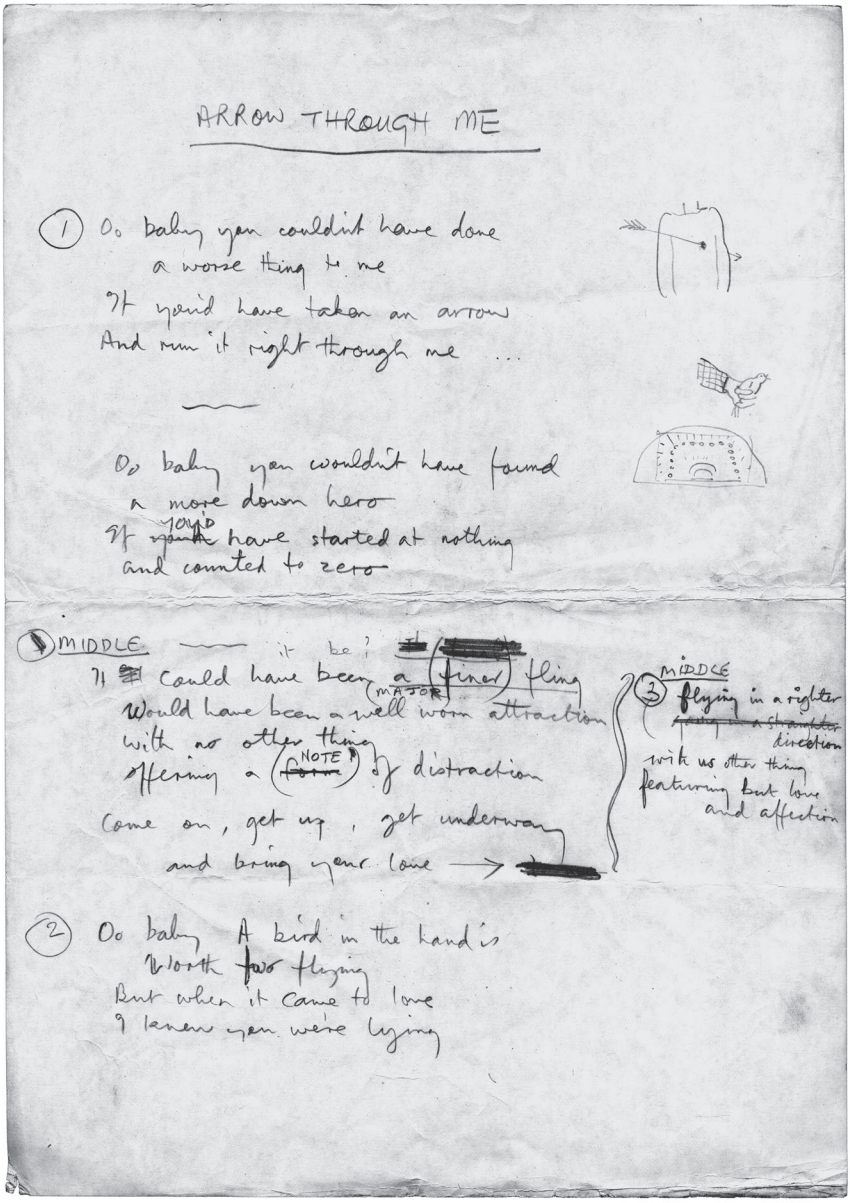
The band name, Wings, came from the time of the birth of Stella, another daughter. It had been a difficult delivery, and she'd had to go into intensive care in an incubator. I stayed on at the hospital, sleeping on a camp bed in the room next to Linda's while they were recovering. After situations like that, your mind goes into overdrive. I was thinking angelic thoughts because we'd just been through this family emergency, and the vision of an angel with big wings came to me. Wings really stuck with me. But it wouldn't be *The* Wings, like The Beatles. Just Wings.

My problem after The Beatles was, who's going to be as good as them? I thought, 'We can't be as good as The Beatles, but we can be something else.' I knew that if I were to go ahead with this project I'd have to tough it out, but I had reserves of courage from being part of The Beatles when pennies were thrown at us at the village hall in Stroud, when we were still starting out.

I had to put up with the equivalent once again. The hardest thing had to do with Linda, who was a complete amateur, but I thought, 'Well, so was George when he joined the group; so was I; so was John; so was Ringo.' I showed her a few things on keyboard, and then she taught herself and she had a couple of lessons, and it turned out her strength wasn't necessarily the keyboard, although she handled the job. It was more as a spirit. She was a great cheerleader, and she would get crowds going, get them clapping their hands and singing along.

In those days there weren't many women in groups, so she was sort of a pioneer in that respect, and listening back to the records, you can hear that she was a damn good singer, especially on harmonies. She would do the hand-clapping thing and singing backing vocals at the same time, and that's not easy to do – which is why people employed tapes and backing

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tracks. Starting off a new band is always a lot of fun, but it's a lot of hard work too; you have to establish yourself. Following The Beatles was one of the most difficult things for me, just trying to live up to those expectations. It was even more difficult for her.

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I started to write songs for Wings from 1971 onwards, when we got started, and I tried to keep them away from The Beatles' style. There were

avenues I could go down that I wouldn't have gone down with The Beatles, like bringing in the influence of reggae, which Linda and I got into in Jamaica. I fancied doing something crazy, and Wings allowed me a little bit more freedom. So, this is a love song in which Cupid's arrow is referenced, but it's a malevolent arrow. It's possible I'd seen an illustration of Cupid and thought, 'Cupid fires a bow, but I'll switch it. It won't be love; it will be the opposite.'

The character in the song has been wounded. He's been cheated on. And it could've been a great relationship, could've been fantastic. As things stand, you couldn't 'have found a more down hero', because there was nobody more down than me at that moment. So, get it together and bring your love.

I have always had a soft spot for this song. There's a nice horn riff in it, and it's funky. Sometimes you write to get a sort of feeling rather than a perfectly 'correct' lyric. Sometimes the lyric can be secondary to the feeling. This one has as much, or more, to do with the feel of the song, the groove.

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Average Person

WRITER	Paul McCartney
ARTIST	Paul McCartney
RECORDED	AIR Montserrat; and AIR Studios, London
RELEASED	*Pipes of Peace*, 1983

Look at the Average Person
Speak to the man in the street
Can you imagine the first one
you'd meet?

Well I'm talking to a former engine driver
Trying to find out what he used to do
Tells me that he always kept his engine
Spit and polished up as good as new
But he said his only great ambition
Was to work with lions in a zoo
Oh to work with lions in a zoo

Yes dear, you heard right
Told me his ambition was to work with
lions every night

Look at the Average Person
Speak to the man on the beat
Can you imagine the first one
you'd meet?

Well I met a woman working as a
waitress
I asked exactly what it was she did
Said she worked the summer crowd at
seasides
Wintertime she ran away and hid
Once she had a Hollywood audition
But the part was given to a kid
Yes the part was given to a kid

Yes sir, you heard right
Hollywood ambition made a starlet
grow up overnight

Well I bumped into a man who'd
been a boxer
Asked him what had been his
greatest night
He looked into the corners of
his memory
Searching for a picture of the fight
But he said he always had a feeling
That he lacked a little extra height
Could have used a little extra height

Yes mate, you heard right
He always had a feeling that he might
have lacked a little height

Look at the Average Person
Speak to the man in the queue
Can you imagine the first one is you?

Look at the Average Person

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WHAT'S MY LINE WAS A GAME SHOW IN WHICH A FOUR-person panel would have to figure out the occupations of mystery guests by asking them yes-or-no questions. It was great fun and tremendously popular. The UK version began in the early 1950s, and we often had it on in our house, so it was very much at the back of my mind and, I'd say, part of the hinterland of this song.

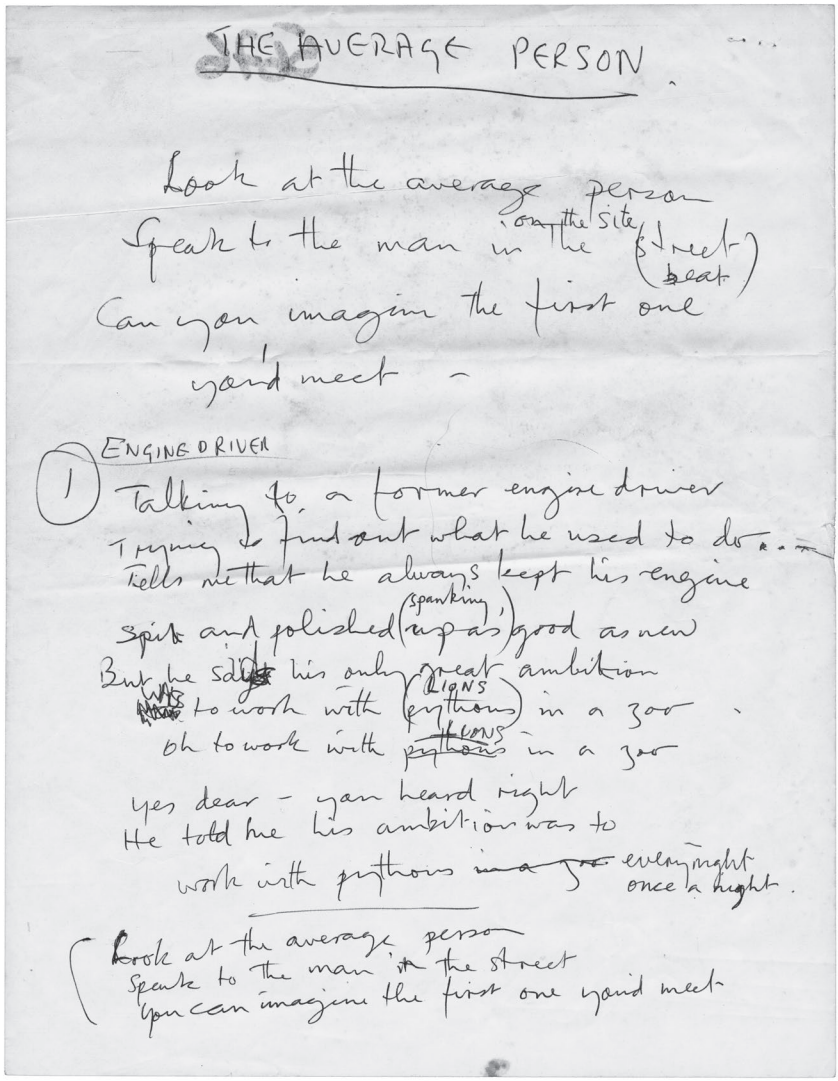
You're walking down the street and all the people look sort of ordinary, but one of them might be a vicar and another one might be a criminal or a plumber or a bread maker. I'm interested in the idea that people have these hidden sides and ambitions. I think writers are drawn to people like that. If you've got someone who's just purely glorious, it's not quite as interesting as if they're glorious but they've got a little Achilles' heel somewhere. All of these people are tarnished in some way. All of these people want to be something else.

I think my interest in these stories comes partly from growing up in such a tight-knit working-class community. We'd always be there for our family and our neighbours, helping out. Dad used to make me and my brother Mike go round door-to-door, canvassing for new members for the Speke Horticultural Society, where he was secretary. Knock, knock. 'Would you like to join the gardening club?' 'Piss off.' So we really got to know whose door to knock on and whose to avoid. But you'd get to hear about their lives, their troubles; this was post-war, remember, and we'd been bombed and gone through rationing. And that makes you realise we all have our stories, our own worries. It gets a little poignant, and it's about being empathetic.

It makes the story more interesting too. I know he wouldn't be counted as an 'average person', but would we be interested in Hamlet if his father had died of natural causes and he'd just ascended to the throne? Probably not. It's because he suspects that his father was murdered and thus is thrust into an agonising situation that the drama is so rich. It's his inner life and struggles that make him such a compelling character.

Another inspiration for this song was an old music hall routine having to do with the identity of a window washer that I saw on telly as a kid. My dad came from that music hall era, and the family were kind of steeped in that; we listened to it and sang all those songs at the piano. My Auntie Milly and Auntie Jin used to sing an old music hall song called 'Bread and Butterflies'. Later he worked in the cotton exchange, of course, but back in the 1920s my dad was a limelight operator – working those old stage lights – at a place in Liverpool called the Royal Hippodrome. So, I think that's how a lot of it crept into us, because every night he would be hearing 1920s and '30s music hall songs, and all those artists came through

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THE AVERAGE PERSON

Look at the average person
Speak to the man in the street
Can you imagine the first one
you'd meet -

1 ENGINE DRIVER
Talking to a former engine driver
Trying to find out what he used to do -
Tells me that he always kept his engine
spick and polished (spanking) as good as new
But he said his only great ambition
was to work with (lions) in a zoo
Oh to work with ~~pythons~~ lions in a zoo

Yes dear - you heard right
He told me his ambition was to
work with pythons ~~in a zoo~~ every night
once a night.

Look at the average person
Speak to the man in the street
You can imagine the first one you'd meet

on tour. They'd do the Hippodrome in Liverpool, and then they'd go on to the Manchester Hippodrome, and so on. Dad told a story about how he trimmed the lime on the limelight – the music hall equivalent of how spotlights are used today.

So, because of my dad, these old music hall references sometimes make their way into my writing. I knew of Noël Coward's music because of my dad, and Noël was obviously hugely famous. His songs appealed to my songwriting ear. Once, he was in Rome at the same time as The Beatles, and our manager Brian Epstein, being gay and quite gregarious in his own

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way, knew some of the crowd that was around Noël. We were in the same hotel, but we were kind of rock and roll kids. So, we were asked whether we wanted to go meet him, and the others were a little bit more ambivalent. But I said, 'I'd better go.' I was often that guy who thought, 'Oh no, we can't not.' Now it was, 'We can't snub him; he's Noël Coward.'

So I went down with Brian and just met him in his hotel room, and he said, 'Hello, dear boy.' He was so very Noël Coward. His poise, his mannerisms – exactly as you'd imagined him to be.

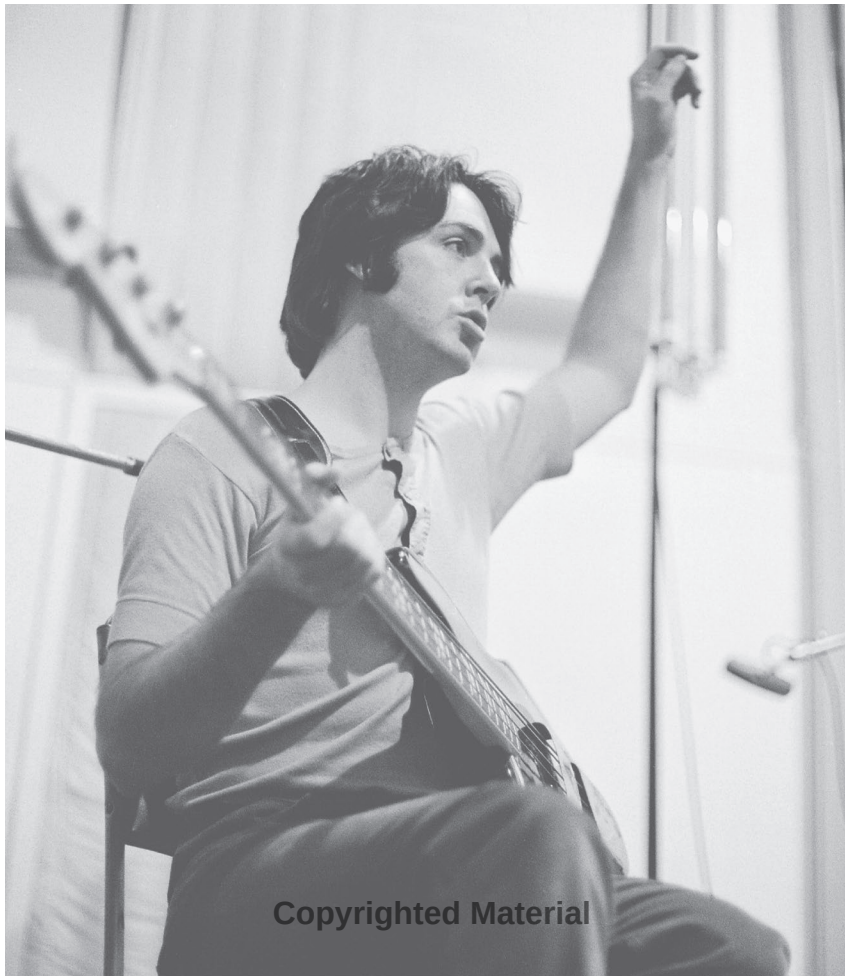
But we were sometimes a little weird about meeting people like that. We were likewise very weird with Marlene Dietrich, who was a colossal star. We were on the same bill together at the Prince of Wales Theatre – the 1963 Royal Variety Performance, where John made a joke about the posh people rattling their jewellery. I think she would have sung 'Lili Marleen' and 'Where Have All the Flowers Gone?' This was at the time when Beatlemania was getting really crazy, and someone came up from her dressing room and said, 'Would you like to meet Miss Dietrich?' and invited us to say hello. So we replied, 'Oh yeah!' They said she was very proud of her legs. Now, by this time she was getting old, maybe in her sixties, and we were all in our early twenties, so it would be like looking at your auntie's legs or your grandma's legs. I wasn't sure we wanted to do that. But as soon as we got there, one of us said, 'Oh bloody hell, what great legs you've got!' Somebody had to say it, I suppose, but it was all a bit embarrassing.

With a song like Dietrich's 'Lili Marleen', you have the struggles of a couple in love being torn apart by war. The longing and the heartache are what make it such a poignant song. And, I think, it's this sort of pathos that I'm drawn to and that people relate to in characters like Eleanor Rigby or Father McKenzie. So that's also why, in 'Average Person', we meet the former engine driver whose ambition was to work with lions in a zoo; the waitress who had the Hollywood audition; and the boxer who always felt he lacked that little extra height. Ordinary people with ordinary problems.

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Back in the U.S.S.R.

WRITERS	Paul McCartney and John Lennon
ARTIST	The Beatles
RECORDED	Abbey Road Studios, London
RELEASED	*The Beatles*, 1968

Flew in from Miami Beach BOAC
Didn't get to bed last night
On the way the paper bag was
on my knee
Man I had a dreadful flight

I'm back in the U.S.S.R.
You don't know how lucky you are, boy
Back in the U.S.S.R.

Been away so long I hardly knew
the place
Gee it's good to be back home
Leave it till tomorrow to unpack my case
Honey disconnect the phone

I'm back in the U.S.S.R.
You don't know how lucky you are, boy
Back in the U.S.
Back in the U.S.
Back in the U.S.S.R.

Well the Ukraine girls really
knock me out
They leave the West behind
And Moscow girls make me sing
and shout
That Georgia's always on my mind

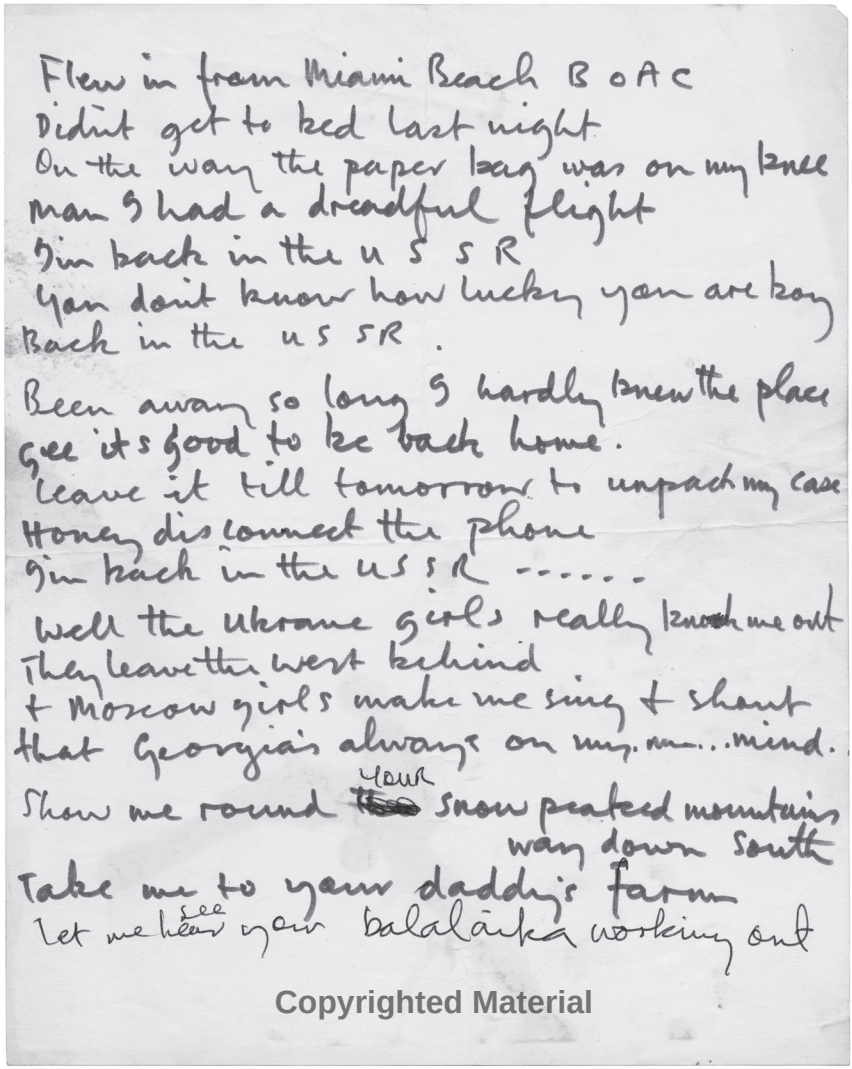
Oh show me round your snow-peaked
mountains way down south
Take me to your daddy's farm
Let me hear your balalaikas ringing out
Come and keep your comrade warm

I'm back in the U.S.S.R.
You don't know how lucky you are, boy
Back in the U.S.S.R.

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WHEN THE BEACH BOYS RELEASED *PET SOUNDS* IN 1966, we could see once and for all that they were presenting us with some serious competition. Until then, they'd seemed like a pretty good surf band. They'd already produced some great stuff, some innovative work that had itself come out of the doo-wop tradition, and we'd already nicked a few of those little things. The harmonies would be a case in point. Of course, they were nicking from us. Everybody was nicking from everybody else. There was a circularity to the whole enterprise.

One way or another, the Russian 'protagonist' of this song has certainly


Flew in from Miami Beach B o A C
Didn't get to bed last night
On the way the paper bag was on my knee
Man I had a dreadful flight
I'm back in the U S S R
You don't know how lucky you are boy
Back in the U S S R.

Been away so long I hardly knew the place
Gee it's good to be back home.
Leave it till tomorrow to unpack my case
Honey disconnect the phone
I'm back in the U S S R .....

Well the Ukraine girls really knock me out
They leave the west behind
And Moscow girls make me sing and shout
That Georgia's always on my.mm...mind.

Show me round YOUR snow peaked mountains way down South
Take me to your daddy's farm
Let me hear your balalaika working out

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been influenced by The Beach Boys, and Chuck Berry's 'Back in the U.S.A.' is in there too. And it's perfectly in order for him to have been influenced by The Beach Boys. He's on a plane from Miami, after all, where he's been listening to 'California Girls' in particular, which is why our bridge section refers to how the 'Ukraine girls really knock me out'. There's a pretty blatant parody of a Beach Boys chorus in the background.

Then we've got the humorous reference to 'Georgia on My Mind', as sung by Ray Charles, but referring to Georgia in the Soviet Union rather than the US state. That this character somehow prefers the USSR to the USA is what makes this song funny. And once we start running through the USSR territories, we could go on for hours. It's almost as if the song is writing itself at this stage. The line 'show me round your snow-peaked mountains way down south' has a bit of a naughty schoolboy tinge, not to mention 'Come and keep your comrade warm'.

At a couple of points, the idea that a Russian guy is saying you don't know how lucky you are to live in the USSR is a bit undercut. I'm thinking of the reference to disconnecting the phone. Phone tapping was probably part of the back-of-the-mind view of the USSR. The reference to 'your daddy's farm' is a bit complex too, when you consider that collectivisation had been the order of the day in the USSR. So 'daddy' might be Stalin or Brezhnev, who was in power at the time.

The Beatles were banned in the USSR, needless to say, which had the usual effect of making us very popular there. When I did eventually sing 'Back in the U.S.S.R.' in Red Square, in 2003, it was a moment to savour.

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Band on the Run

WRITERS	Paul McCartney and Linda McCartney
ARTIST	Paul McCartney and Wings
RECORDED	EMI Studios, Lagos; and AIR Studios, London
RELEASED	*Band on the Run*, 1973
	Single, 1974

Stuck inside these four walls
Sent inside forever
Never seeing no one nice again
Like you, mama, you, mama, you

If I ever get out of here
Thought of giving it all away
To a registered charity
All I need is a pint a day
If I ever get out of here
If we ever get out of here

Well the rain exploded with a
mighty crash
As we fell into the sun
And the first one said to the second
one there
I hope you're having fun

Band on the run
Band on the run
And the jailer man and Sailor Sam
Were searching everyone
For the band on the run
Band on the run
For the band on the run
Band on the run

Well the undertaker drew a heavy sigh
Seeing no one else had come
And a bell was ringing in the
village square
For the rabbits on the run

Band on the run
Band on the run
And the jailer man and Sailor Sam
Were searching everyone
For the band on the run
Band on the run

The band on the run
The band on the run
The band on the run
The band on the run

Well the night was falling as the
desert world
Began to settle down
In the town they're searching for us
everywhere
But we never will be found

Band on the run
Band on the run
And the county judge who held a grudge
Will search for evermore
For the band on the run
The band on the run
Band on the run
The band on the run

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THE WORD 'BAND' IN THE TITLE OF THIS SONG REFERS mostly to the idea of a group of people who've escaped prison. A band of desperadoes. Certain aspects of it remind me of *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. The undertaker is ringing a bell because he's upset he has so few customers. Sailor Sam's a character out of *Rupert Bear*, the comic strip by Mary Tourtel. But he fitted in somehow.

As it happens, the song was recorded in Lagos, Nigeria, in an EMI studio. Lagos sounded good, exotic. It wasn't quite what I'd imagined. I hadn't imagined cholera or the mugging or the half-ready studios or my children being told they weren't allowed in the hotel swimming pool because they were naked. You block out all the worst stuff and you remember all the cool stuff.

Chief Abiola, 'Hey, hello Mac.' (He called me Mac.) 'Mac, why you no have four wives?'

'One's enough trouble, Chief.'

The main thing is it's a story song. A song about freedom. A lot of us at that time felt free from the strictures of civilisation. That's one of the great things about rock and roll: it does allow you to break rules. One rule often broken is that a piece of music has to be highly complex to be any good.

I've mentioned it time and time again, but it's worth remembering



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In Lagos with Fela Kuti during the recording of *Band on the Run*, 1973

that, when The Beatles started, we had very few musicians' skills. We knew only a few chords. But we developed – to the point that when we broke up, we had become quite a sophisticated machine. With Wings, we would show up at student unions and say, 'Can we do a gig?' because we knew they had a hall and they had people. We'd charge 50p at the door. We had only eleven songs, so we had to repeat some of them. Some of the gigs must have been quite bad because we didn't really know what we were doing.

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Birthday

WRITERS	Paul McCartney and John Lennon
ARTIST	The Beatles
RECORDED	Abbey Road Studios, London
RELEASED	*The Beatles*, 1968

You say it's your birthday
It's my birthday too, yeah
They say it's your birthday
We're gonna have a good time
I'm glad it's your birthday
Happy birthday to you

Yes we're goin' to a party, party
Yes we're goin' to a party, party
Yes we're goin' to a party, party

I would like you to dance
(Birthday) Take a cha-cha-cha-chance
(Birthday) I would like you to dance
(Birthday) Dance

You say it's your birthday
It's my birthday too, yeah
They say it's your birthday
We're gonna have a good time
I'm glad it's your birthday
Happy birthday to you

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'*MACH SCHAU! MACH SCHAU!*' WHEN THE BEATLES were first in Hamburg, in 1960, and were living on cornflakes and milk and trying to build an audience, we were told to shout, '*Mach schau!*' Putting on a show was always an important element of what The Beatles did, and what I continue to do. We were trying to pull people into the Indra Club in Hamburg, and we simply had to learn certain skills to do that. We used to do a song called 'Dance in the Street', for example, to lure people in. John stood up without his guitar and clapped as he 'danced in the street'. A little bit of spectacle, and indeed it pulled people in.

'Birthday' is one of those songs that was written to be played in a live show – with a view to being performed. There are songs like 'Sgt. Pepper', with its 'We'd like to take you home with us', which work really well at the end of a concert. 'Birthday' still works well for an audience because there's always someone who's got a birthday. Some of my songs have functions above and beyond merely getting themselves into the world.

This one came into the world one night in Abbey Road. We more or less lived in Studio Two, and a few of our friends were around. I remember Pattie Boyd, George Harrison's wife, was there. I'm pretty sure Eric Clapton was around. Normally, there weren't visitors in the studio, but this was some sort of occasion. It might even have been someone's birthday.



Onstage with Stuart Sutcliffe, John Lennon and George Harrison. Top Ten Club, Hamburg, 1961

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