

## Paul McCartney - Chaos and Creation in the Backyard (2005)

Written by bluesever

Friday, 17 September 2010 11:34 - Last Updated Sunday, 21 October 2018 19:39

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1. *Fine Line* 2. *How Kind of You* 3. *Jenny Wren* 4. *At the Mercy* 5. *Friends to Go* 6. *English Tea* 7. *Too Much Rain* 8. *A Certain Softness* [play](#) 9. *Riding to Vanity Fair* 10. *Follow Me* 11. *Promise to You Girl*

[play](#)

12. *This Never Happened Before* 13. *Anyway*

Personnel: Paul McCartney (vocals, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, 12-string guitar, classical guitar, autoharp, cello, melodica, recorder, flugelhorn, grand piano, spinet, electric piano, harmonium, Moog synthesizer, bass guitar, drums, cymbals, maracas, shaker, tambourine, triangle, tubular bells, percussion); Paul McCartney (piano, Wurlitzer piano, glockenspiel); Nigel Godrich (acoustic guitar, piano, loops); Abe Laboriel, Jr. (tambourine, wood block, percussion); Rusty Anderson, Brian Ray (acoustic guitar); Jason Falkner (electric guitar, classical guitar); Millenia Ensemble (strings, brass); Los Angeles Music Players (strings); Pedro Eustache (duduk); James Gadson (drums); Joey Waronker (bass drum, bongos, shaker).

This is the first time since, ooh, 1978's *London Town* that a Paul McCartney album been genuinely awaited. That's not to say the listener hasn't been surprised and delighted by the contents of many of his records since then. When they have been good (*Flaming Pie*, *Flowers In The Dirt*), they have bordered on exemplary; when they have been less good (*Press To Play*, *Off The Ground*) they have bordered on the execrable. But, throughout, there is always something there to remind us of Pauly's shimmering majesty. Now, we all know McCartney doesn't need to work, but his endless drive to be cutting edge makes him all the more endearing. He's Paul bloody McCartney, after all.

2001's *Driving Rain* was a fine rock album despite it's awful sleeve. What truly killed it was mixing eulogies to his recently deceased wife with ones to his new partner. It felt a little, er, hasty. And he'd forgot, in the main, to pack the tunes. Oh, and 9/11 happened on its release date too. No wonder it only spent a solitary week in the chart.

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Since then, McCartney has reconnected with his live audience and has gone back to playing virtually everything himself in the studio. In working with Radiohead/Beck producer Nigel Godrich, McCartney actually sounds somewhat stretched.

So what does it sound like? Very, very good. He still finds it essential to play the chart game hence opener "Fine Line", the weakest track on the 14-track collection. But "Riding To Vanity Fair", "Too Much Rain", "Anyway" and "How Kind Of You" are full of subtle nuances, killer hooks and sweet surprises. They really do rank among his very best work. And "Jenny Wren" nods to "Blackbird" too.

Chaos and Creation In The Backyard is a better album than anyone could reasonably expect from a 63-year-old who helped remould not just world popular music but world popular culture, as well. He's Paul bloody McCartney, after all. ---Daryl Easlea, [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk)

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