

Paul McCartney & Wings – Band on the Run [25th anniversary edition] (1999)

Written by bluesever

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Personnel

* Paul McCartney – vocals, lead, rhythm, acoustic and bass guitars, drums, piano, keyboards, percussion.

* Linda McCartney – organ, keyboards, vocals

* Denny Laine – rhythm, lead, acoustic, flamenco and bass guitars, keyboards, percussion,

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vocals

Additional personnel

- * Howie Casey – saxophone
- * Ginger Baker – percussion
- * Remi Kabaka – percussion
- * Tony Visconti – orchestrations
- * Ian and Trevor – backing vocals
- * Geoff Emerick – Producer and Sound Engineer

Sometimes, music fans have to ask themselves some very serious questions, things like "Do you really need another copy of this album?" If you're a Paul McCartney fan and the record is the Wings' classic Band on the Run, then the answer is probably, "Yes. Yes you do."

One of the things that is often mentioned as key to Band on the Run's success is the duress under which it was created. Still in legal battle over the dissolution of Apple, and coming off of disappointing reviews of his post-Beatles work, McCartney was looking to get away and record his next album with Wings in an exotic location. He chose studios in Lagos, Nigeria. Practically on the eve of departure for Africa, Wings' lead guitarist Henry McCullough and drummer Denny Seiwell quit the band. This left McCartney, his wife Linda and Denny Laine. The three, along with engineer Geoff Emerick, arrived in Lagos in August. Unprepared for the appalling studio conditions, not to mention the heat, the trio nevertheless persevered. They even endured a mugging at knife point in which the thieves stole the demo tapes, thereby forcing the band to record the entire album from memory. This probably contributes greatly to the spontaneous, energetic feeling that pervades the album. Despite the hardships of its recording process, Band on the Run went on to become a commercial and critical triumph. It was number one on the US album chart three separate times, won a Grammy and sold more than 7 million copies worldwide.

The 2010 Band on the Run reissue is the first release in the Paul McCartney Archive Collection, and the remastered sound is superb. The sound on the previous, 25th Anniversary, remaster was pretty good, but this is noticeably superior. McCartney personally supervised the process, working with the same team who did the recent remastering of the Beatles' catalog at Abbey Road. Not being a technical expert, I can't give you the science behind it, but I can say that the sound is somehow deeper and rounder than on the 25th Anniversary Edition. Comparing the two side by side, there's a slightly thin sound to some tracks on the previous discs, a sense of narrowness or confinement. There's a greater depth to the Archive set, particularly to the bass

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lines, because this is McCartney, after all.

The Archive Collection's Band on the Run Special Edition, which is the basis for this review, features two CDs and one DVD. The first disc is the remastered album with its original nine tracks (this is also available separately as the Standard Edition). Listeners may not be able to pinpoint any differences during the title track, but at some point during the irrepressible joy that is "Jet", even non-audiophiles will recognize that this sounds bloody fantastic. All of the rockers sound great, but the softer tracks like "Bluebird" benefit, as well. There are several details and flourishes in the arrangements that I swear I'd never noticed before, but I won't go quite so far as to say this is like hearing the album for the first time. However, it may be similar to finally hearing something on good equipment, that you'd always listened to on your old car stereo cassette player before. ---popmatters.com

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