

Paul McCartney □ – Press To Play (1986)

Written by bluesever

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A1 Stranglehold 3:35 A2 Good Times Coming / Feel The Sun 4:54 A3 Talk More Talk 5:17 A4 Footprints 4:31 A5 Only Love Remains 4:12 A6 Press 4:42 A7 Pretty Little Head 5:12 B1 Move Over Busker 4:04 B2 Angry 3:35 B3 However Absurd 4:55 B4 Write Away 2:59 B5 It's Not True 5:52 B6 Tough On A Tightrope 4:42 B7 Spies Like Us 4:45 B8 Once Upon A Long Ago (Long Version) Harmony Vocals
[Harmonies] – Eric Stewart, Kate Robbins, Linda McCartney, Ruby James Musician – Carlos Alomar, Dick Morrissey, Eddie Rayner, Eric Stewart, Gary Barnacle, Gavin Wright, Graham Ward, Jerry Marotta, John Bradbury, Lennie Pickett, Nick Glennie-Smith, Paul McCartney, Pete Townshend, Phil Collins, Ray Cooper, Simon Chamberlain Producer, Arranged By – Hugh Padgham, Paul McCartney Voice [Spoken Word] – Eddie Klein (tracks: A3), James McCartney (tracks: A3), John Hammel (tracks: A3), Linda McCartney (tracks: A3), Matt Howe (tracks: A3), Steve Jackson (tracks: A3) Violin [Solo] – Nigel Kennedy (tracks: B8)

At the time, Press to Play was occasionally promoted as Macca's response to punk -- which we all better hope is not true, since that means he was responding ten years after the fact, signaling just how out of touch he was. But McCartney wasn't that disconnected from reality (he did talk about punk in interviews from the late '70s), so a more accurate view of Press to Play is to see it as McCartney trying to reconnect with his classic strengths, from orchestral pop and whimsy to driving rockers and sweet love songs. All this is apparent on the record, often in pretty charming fashion. "Stranglehold" has an offhand charm, "Good Times Coming/Feel the Sun" feels like a forgotten Red Rose Speedway medley, "Move Over Busker" has a brisk gait (better than its cousin, "Angry," anyway), and "Press" is a terrific mid-'80s drum machine-driven slice of synth-pop, utterly featherweight in the best possible way. Each of these captures a different side of McCartney, and that's the overriding impression of Press to Play -- McCartney is dabbling in each of his strengths, just to see what works. It doesn't wind up as one of his stronger albums, but it's more interesting than some of his more consistent ones, and those aforementioned cuts demonstrate that he could still cut effective pop records when he put his mind to it. ---Stephen Thomas Erlewine, AllMusic Review

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