



Fab: An Intimate Life of Paul McCartney

By Howard Sounes

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Howard Sounes, the bestselling author of *Down the Highway: The Life of Bob Dylan* and *Charles Bukowski: Locked in the Arms of a Crazy Life*, turns his considerable reporting and storytelling skills to one of the most famous, talented—and wealthiest—men alive: Paul McCartney.

Fab is the first exhaustive biography of the legendary musician; it tells Sir Paul's whole life story, from childhood to present day, from working-class Liverpool beginnings to the cultural phenomenon that was The Beatles to his many solo incarnations.

Fab is the definitive portrait of McCartney, a man of contradictions and a consummate musician far more ruthless, ambitious, and moody than his relaxed public image implies. Based on original research and more than two hundred new interviews, *Fab* also reveals for the first time the full story of his two marriages, romances, family feuds, phenomenal wealth, and complex relationships with his fellow ex-Beatles.

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Fab: An Intimate Life of Paul McCartney By Howard Sounes Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Sounes has earned a well-deserved reputation for writing thoroughly researched, intricately detailed biographies. This comprehensive biography of McCartney is no exception. Sounes seems to have spoken to every living person with any connection to the former Beatle, from the singer's neighbors near his Kintyre, Scotland, farm to the family veterinarian. Divided into two equally large sections—"With the Beatles" and "After the Beatles"—*Fab* covers all the highlights of McCartney's life and long career: his early days in Liverpool; his meeting with John Lennon; the craziness of Beatlemania; his solo albums; the creation and collapse of his post-Beatles band, Wings; his marriage to Linda Eastman; his last meetings with Lennon; his drug bust in Japan; his forays into classical music; his disastrous second marriage to Heather Mills. This is by no means a hagiography. On the contrary, Sounes gives criticism when warranted, remarking on McCartney's flaws both as a musician (settling for the ordinary, or, worse, mediocre rather than putting in the extra effort to create something exceptional) and as a man (a streak of selfishness that could turn callous). Indeed, Sounes is often brutally honest, offering a full portrait—warts and all—of one of the most famous men of the modern era. A must for Beatles and McCartney fans. **HIGH-DEMAND BACK STORY:** In spite of his persistent mega-fame, this is the first comprehensive, candid, and up-to-date portrait of Sir Paul McCartney, making it a magnet for boomers and serious music lovers. --June Sawyers

Review

***Booklist*, Top Ten Biographies: 2011, 6/1/11**

"This is the first comprehensive, candid, and up-to-date portrait of Sir Paul McCartney."

Curled Up with a Good Book, 9/25/11

"Sounes is not afraid to call out McCartney on some of his less than stellar work...*Fab* is a good book for learning who McCartney was and who he became."

***Hudson Valley News*, 12/21/11**

"The Beatles did, indeed, change the course of music forever. Read all about it, fans."

***Portland Book Review*, March/April Issue**

"This book takes readers beyond the success of the Beatles—the pop culture icons and classic musicians—and sheds light upon their life before stardom. The author writes with so much heart he makes readers feel as though they're walking with Paul McCartney through his life...*Fab* is an essential piece to add to any Beatles fan collection."

***Vancouver Columbian*, 6/24/12**

"A well-researched extremely detailed biography...If you're a fan of 'the cute Beatle' and want more than the tidbits you might find in *People* magazine, this is the biography for you."

***Publishers Weekly* (web-exclusive), 11/22/10**

"An engaging, set-the-record-straight biography...Sounes writes knowledgeably of the Beatles' close relationship with their tortured manager, Brian Epstein, the genius produced by George Martin, and the dismal details of the group's final falling out...Sounes packs in a lot."

Asbury Park Press, 11/21/10

“[A] comprehensive biography...The book is in two parts—before and after The Beatles. It will not be surprising that the first part is a real page-turner. Even though a lot of that material has been covered before in countless books and articles, Sounes makes the stories interesting.”

Blogcritics.org, 11/25/10

“A must-read for the Beatles or McCartney fan who thinks he has read it all. Billed as the first complete biography of Paul McCartney's life, Sounes' exhaustively researched book more than lives up to that lofty claim...Through it all, Sounes is both thorough and unflinching in his appraisal of both McCartney's music, and of the man himself.”

TheBookWeb.com, 11/18/10

“[A] fascinating and minutely detailed biography...An illuminating portrait of the most successful Beatle, and unlike many other Beatle biographies, Sounes gives as much time to his post-Beatle life as the Beatle era.”

Montreal Gazette, 12/11/10

“One might think Paul McCartney's life has already been examined exhaustively, but the post-Beatles years—and that's a lot of years—have always been given short shrift until now...Sounes is a tenacious researcher.”

Kirkus

One of the Best Biographies of 2010.

Booklist, 12/20/10

2010 Adult Editors' Choice

New York Times, 12/19/10

“Expand[s] on the myth for insatiable Beatlemaniacs.”

Washington Times, 12/24/10

“[Sounes] writes quite movingly about [Linda McCartney's] death from cancer.”

WomanAroundTown.com, 12/17/10

“This book...is nearly as fascinating as ‘the cute Beatle’ himself.”

Blog on Books, 12/1/10

Metroland, 12/13/10

“Moves smoothly from the familiar coming together and dissolution of the Beatles on to the subsequent bulk of his life as a solo artist, father, husband (including the disastrous second go-round), and knighted man of wealth.”

Waterbury Sunday Republican, 12/5/10

“Door-stopper thick...Though the Beatles may be the most written about musical act in world history, Sounes' giant book reminds us that the existence of the ‘Fab Four’ comprised only a thin slice of McCartney's life.”

***Acadiana LifeStyle*, December 2010**

“Paul’s life, loves and music are fully explored. This is a must for Beatle/McCartney fans.”

***Winnipeg Free Press (Canada)*, 12/11/10**

“Provid[es] a window into the entirety of the great pop musician's creative and personal journey...Impressive...McCartney's life has been well documented in print, but never with such expanse...In many ways, *Fab* is as much a recollection of another time as it is a window onto a great artist's accomplishments and, not infrequently, failures.”

***Word*, November 2010**

“[T]he first major unauthorized biography.... Howard Sounes brings to the task the same solid journalistic values he employed in writing his Dylan biography *Down the Highway*, which succeeded in unearthing troves of new information through the simple expedient of diligent legwork, hunting down the right people, and asking them the right questions.”

***Rolling Stone*, 11/11/10**

“Few Beatle biographies are as exhaustive as this 634-page epic: Sounes paints an unsparing portrait of McCartney...For fans willing to ponder their hero’s flaws, *Fab* delivers all you need to know—and a lot more.”

***Wall Street Journal*, 10/29/10**

“Provide[s] sound background on Mr. McCartney's working-class roots, the environs of Liverpool, and the bonding of two song-writing youths (Mr. McCartney and John Lennon) who both lost their mothers while still in their teens. The author turns up new details on these early topics.”

***San Antonio Express-News*, 10/24/10**

“[A] massive, exhaustively researched biography.”

***New York Journal of Books*, 10/26/10**

***Booklist*, July 2010**

“Everyone knows who Paul McCartney is. And everyone can imagine how much in demand this biography will be.”

***Kirkus*, 9/15/10**

“[A] solid addition to the ever-expanding library of books about the Beatle named Paul...More than 200 interviews—and no-nonsense attention to detail...The graceful prose and superb storytelling create a riveting narrative.”

***Booklist*, 10/15/10 (starred review)**

“Sounes has earned a well-deserved reputation for writing thoroughly researched, intricately detailed biographies. This comprehensive biography of McCartney is no exception. Sounes seems to have spoken to every living person with any connection to the former Beatle...*Fab* covers all the highlights of McCartney’s life and long career...This is by no means a hagiography. On the contrary, Sounes gives criticism when warranted, remarking on McCartney’s flaws both as a musician and as a man. Indeed, Sounes is often brutally honest, offering a full portrait—warts and all—of one of the most famous men of the modern era. A

must for Beatles and McCartney fans...In spite of his persistent mega-fame, this is the first comprehensive, candid, and up-to-date portrait of Sir Paul McCartney, making it a magnet for boomers and serious music lovers.”

Eat Sleep Drink Music, 12/9/10

“A proper biography...Given that Sounes manages to tackle both the highs and the lows of McCartney’s career while neither rhapsodizing nor crucifying the man, it’s no surprise that the reviews for *Fab* have been, well, *fab*.”

Melbourne Herald Sun (Australia), 1/8/11

“Howard Sounes has done his homework to turn up so much that even Beatles fans might not have known. These 672 pages mostly demand attention, much more so than 671 pages of McCartney’s authorised biography...A compelling re-telling of rock’s greatest story.”

Charleston Post and Courier, 1/9/11

“This comprehensive text is billed as ‘the first exhaustive biography of Sir Paul,’ and it lives up to that billing. The book is well-researched and finely detailed, with many pages of source documentation provided...The book is stuffed with fascinating anecdotes and previously unpublished incidents...An excellent resource.”

Ellsworth American, 1/13/11

“An insightful and human look at the cute (and nice) Beatle from his early life in Liverpool up to the present day.”

Midwest Book Review, January 2011

“A ‘must’ for any library seeking a definitive representation of the Beatles.”

Library Journal, 10/15/10

“A probing work that examines McCartney’s foibles to a much greater extent than, for example, Barry Miles’s authorized *Paul McCartney: Many Years from Now*...There is a ton of engrossing, well-documented material here...A worthwhile read for McCartney fans; recommended for all public libraries.”

The Independent, 9/24/10

“Exceedingly thorough...A good read for those seeking a Pauline perspective on the Beatles plus a look at his solo career.”

“A 634-page epic about Paul McCartney that covers almost every aspect of his life...Sounes has done his homework, his research detailed and meticulous...The result is a rather unsettling portrait of an incredibly creative, complex man who could be petty and nasty, generous and charitable...Revealing, well-crafted, and utterly fascinating.”

Toronto Star, 11/5/10

“[An] unauthorized biography of the famous and unimaginably wealthy bassist and composer...A minutely detailed and comprehensive account of the famous musician’s life up to now...On the whole, Sounes renders his subject sympathetically, as a gifted but flawed character.”

Montreal Gazette's "Words & Music" Blog, 11/11/10

"The first book to properly deal with McCartney's career after the Beatles."

BookPage, December 2010

"Impressively thorough and up-to-date."

Kirkus Reviews website, 10/26/10

"Reveal[s] a side of the 'nice' Beatle most people never knew existed."

San Francisco Book Review, November 2010

"A fascinating and nostalgic trip back to when the Beatles changed the course of music forever."

National Post(Canada), 11/1/10

"Massive...Full of intriguing snapshots."

CBC News (Canada), 11/4/10

"A compelling biography."

Record Collector (UK), December 2010

"Macca examined in high-def accuracy...Where Sounes scores...is in scything through the wild undergrowth of facts, misinformation and myths to present a level-headed portrait of a musician who, obviously, is still held in fascination by the public...The definitive take on an extraordinary career...Sounes is also admirably responsible in his dissection of the Heather Mills years, sifting through the tabloid salaciousness to outline chains of events with the confident, dispassionate eye of a seasoned and reliable journalist."

The Onion, 11/11/10

"*Fab* does a credible job of outlining McCartney's life and habits. So much has been written about The Beatles—and by contrast, so little about McCartney's far longer (and during the '70s, nearly as popular) solo career—that Sounes' equal treatment of the eras is welcome."

Tucson Citizen, 11/8/10

Stuff.co.nz "Blog on Tracks," 9/14/10"

A fantastic tome...Sounes adds a lot to the story and his methodical, meticulous research style means that he's actually bringing new things out...Sounes has, through hundreds of interviews, built a book about McCartney that addresses the myth, understands the legend and is balanced; never getting anywhere near the all too common hagiography that is the bane of reading the modern music biography/ghost-written-autobiography...I found it the perfect balance of entertainment and education/research—and, as such, it's **one of the best biographies I've ever read.**"

Blurt Online, 10/18/10

"The portrait painted in Howard Sounes' *Fab* is of a man with more to him than meets the eye or ear...Sounes' treatment of Paul is fairly even-handed though. He doesn't shy away from the bad and doesn't overstate the good...There's still a hunger for all things Beatle and Sounes' book has its place."

InfoDad.com, 11/18/10

“Exhaustively researched...Name-packed, gossipy, interpretative but not judgmental, and very detail-oriented...Fans of McCartney will surely find [it] intriguing if they receive it as a gift.”

BlogTalkRadio’s “Mr. Media”, 11/18/10

“Howard Sounes won’t deny that there have been an awful lot of books about the Beatles and Paul McCartney. But that didn’t give him pause; he just researched and wrote one of the best.”

***New York Times Book Review*, 12/5/10**

“*Fab* lifts off...in 1967, with the introduction of its most interesting character—the rock photographer Linda Eastman, who set her sights on Paul and determined to marry him even before they had met...Sounes’s portrayal of her is complicated, fascinating in its contradictions.”

***Miami Herald*, 11/28/10**

“The first serious biographical attempt to pay as much attention to the 40-year span that followed McCartney’s run in the Beatles as it does to his decade within the Fab Four...Sounes’ reach is commendable.”

HistoryWire.com, 12/3/10

“[A] doorstep of a biography of one of the few musicians ever knighted by the Queen.”

***Los Angeles Times*, 12/5/10**

“Ambitious, ruthless and charming: A Liverpool lad’s journey to music superstardom and icon status. And it’s unauthorized, love.”

***Detroit Metrotimes*, 11/30/10**

“Exhaustive... A warts-and-all treatment.”

Salon.com, 12/6/10

“I’m not going to pretend that I’ve read everything or even most of what has been written about McCartney; from what I have read, Sounes’ book is easily the best. For one thing, he can write...For another, Sounes has a proper appreciation of how much sleaze is needed in a book about any pop idol...Sounes is quite good on Paul’s childhood years, his Liverpool working-class background, and his early associations with the other future Beatles.”

***Austin Chronicle*, 12/10/10**

“Sounes’ epic McCartney biography is essential...Sounes is no hagiographer, but in the end, his vivid rendering of McCartney reveals a fundamentally decent chap on balance.”

***Houston Press Rocks Off Blog*, 1/26/11**

“Howard Sounes has produced the finest, most detailed, and most up-to-date doorstep tome on the life and music of Macca. And that includes the similarly-large near-autobiography *Many Years from Now*...[He] conducted more than 200 original interviews, and the effort shows...Fresh glimpses and incidents from McCartney’s youth and solo career abound.”

***Reference & Research Book News*, February 2011**

“The author's lively style makes his book an interesting read.”

Internet Review of Books, 1/4/11

“A solid, exhaustively researched, and very readable account...The portrait of ‘Sir Paul’ is a balanced and honest one.”

Magill Book Reviews

“Sounes makes a convincing case that McCartney needed to play off the strong-willed Lennon to do good work...Well written, with Sounes providing lively accounts of concerts he has attended.”

LosingToday.com, 5/22/11

“The author does a more than commendable job of detailing McCartney's activities in both the public and personal domain...A very detailed and very human portrait that can just as easily be enjoyed by casual fans as devotees.”

“Excellent researched...Sounes has assembled an immensely detailed yet personal look at both halves of the public McCartney era. (Beatles and post-Beatles). The book is the most complete (in terms of time span), interesting and even handed look at the ‘cute’ Beatle to hit the market yet...Attention to detail and a highly readable format...puts this book head and shoulders above many of the more superficial or purely data driven works on the subject.”

“Delivers on every promise it even thinks about making...McCartney fans will enjoy hearing some of the never-before-told stories about his family...The author handles the rougher topics with a professionalism that attempts to be as unbiased as possible...Sounes’ narrative writing style is easy to read. Instead of feeling like a dry, academic work, the book reads almost like a novel...The 500+ pages do not necessarily fly by, but the tale told is worth the time it takes to tell it.”

***The Independent*, 9/24/10**

“Exceedingly thorough...A good read for those seeking a Pauline perspective on the Beatles plus a look at his solo career.”

Blogcritics.org, 10/29/10

“A compelling read...Since Sounes has dug so deep into McCartney lore, there is bound to be a surprise or two for even for the staunchest admirer...Hard to put down. Sounes' writing style is breezy without being slight. His admiration for his subject is evident, even when he is at his most candid, all of which makes *Fab* a worthwhile read.”

***Desert News*, 10/31/10**

“[The] first exhaustive biography of James Paul McCartney.”

Bookviews.com, November 2010

“Will more than satisfy any one of his fans.”

About the Author

Howard Sounes is the bestselling author of meticulously researched and revelatory books including *Down*

the Highway: The Life of Bob Dylan and Charles Bukowski: Locked in the Arms of a Crazy Life. He lives in London.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Robert Hester:

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Alan Fan:

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