

Kisses on the Bottom, by Paul McCartney

reviewed by [Steve Thorngate](#) in the [May 30, 2012](#) issue

In Review



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by Paul McCartney

Hear

The first question to ask about a Paul McCartney standards album is why it took him so long. The guy's always been fascinated by the American Songbook, and unlike some pop singers who have taken detours to the land of jazzy old tunes and

swinging little combos, Sir Paul has a powerful and chameleonic voice.

Perhaps it's because his elder statesman identity is primarily as a songwriter. McCartney contributes two originals here. "Only Our Hearts" sounds like a real live 1940s song, though not a memorable one; the stronger "My Valentine" juxtaposes period harmony with a more modern feel. On these and on the covers—a well-chosen mix of the familiar and the less so—McCartney delivers with a soft-lit croon.

It's a shame, though, that he doesn't *play* on the album—and that the arrangements stick with the lounge-swing script, all polish and no spark. Given the skillful yet unorthodox ways McCartney has been known to attack instruments and mixing boards over the years, this could have been something a lot more interesting.