

Paul McCartney

Fleetwood Mac's Rumours



and proclaims the high-energy Springsteen to be "the future of rock and roll." *Born to Run*, Springsteen's third album, was released in 1975, and he appeared on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek* simultaneously. Critics hailed the emotional, churning excitement of Springsteen's live performances as a return to rock's roots—a world of fast cars, leather jackets and running with the boys. *Born to Run* sold well, but faded fast. Springsteen continues to tour to good reviews while legal hassles delay production of a new album and publicity wanes. Whether Bruce Springsteen is a new rock hero remains to be seen.

August 10, 1975: Stevie Wonder Reaps Biggest Bucks Ever

Superstar Stevie Wonder signs the richest recording contract in history at age 26 with Motown records—a seven-year agreement for \$13 million. Regarded by many as the primal pioneer of musical innovation, Wonder carved his own musical niche in the Seventies. Songs like "For Once in My Life," "Superstition," "Living for the City" and "Higher Ground" continually top the soul and pop charts. By the time he signed the Motown contract, Wonder had captured nine Grammys. His 1976 album, *Songs in the Key of Life*, topped the charts in one week.

April 10, 1976: Peter Frampton Sees Double-Record Record

Frampton Comes Alive! moves to #1 on the charts. It went on to become the top-selling double LP in history, capping a phenomenal year for Frampton,

who hit big in England in 1968 at age 16. The gentle rock and catchy tunes of Frampton cut across musical divisions and generate enormous appeal. Frampton, a former lead guitarist for Humble Pie, grossed more than \$50 million in 1976 and played to over two million fans on tour. He followed up with a 44-concert tour in 1977 and a new album and hit single, "I'm In You."

May 3, 1976: Paul McCartney Spreads His Wings

Ex-Beatle Paul McCartney and his band Wings begin a 21-city U.S. tour in Fort Worth, Texas. It was McCartney's first live appearance in the U.S. in 10 years. Wings played to SRO crowds across the nation. Formed by McCartney in 1971, Wings has often been criticized as musically shallow and adolescent. But the public loves them. Songs such as "Hi, Hi, Hi," "Silly Love Songs," "Band on the Run" and "Live and Let Die" have flooded the Top-40 airwaves in the Seventies. *Band on the Run* became the top-selling album of 1973, and by the end of 1976 no less than five Wings' albums had hit #1 on the charts, including the 1977 three-disc release *Wings Over America*. McCartney is undoubtedly the most successful ex-Beatle.

November 22, 1976: Boston Proves American Dream

The debut album of the rock group Boston goes platinum after only three months on the charts. It became the most rapidly selling first album in history, spurred on by skillful promo-

tion and heavy FM radio play. Two songs—"More Than a Feeling" and "Peace of Mind"—were hit singles. A sold-out national tour followed, capping an incredible rise for a group that three months earlier had been only a dream of Polaroid engineer Tom Scholz. After seven years of making demo tapes alone in his basement, guitarist Scholz recruited a band when he finally landed a recording contract. Boston became living proof that the "overnight sensation" can really happen.

October 14, 1977: Linda Ronstadt Sings National Anthem

Linda Ronstadt sings the "Star-Spangled Banner" at Game Three of the World Series in Dodger Stadium—a first among rock stars. With a broad spectrum of fans that crosses musical lines from pure country to basic rock, Ronstadt sits on top of the pop world, filling several stadiums on her own. Stardom hit Ronstadt after 10 frustrating years of ups and downs with the release of her fifth solo album, *Heart Like a Wheel*, in 1974. The disc was her first under British producer/manager Peter Asher, to whom she attributes a large part of her success. With a rich blend of rock, country and blues cuts, the Ronstadt album became the top-selling LP of 1974, and was followed by two more platinum discs by the time she sang at the Series.

February 23, 1978: Fleetwood Mac Attack Comes to Grammy

Popular rock group Fleetwood Mac wins a Grammy Award for its album *Rumours*. Although 10 years old by name, the present group was formed in early 1975 when British founder Mick Fleetwood recruited two struggling West Coast musicians to fill out the band after the departure of guitarist Bob Welch. Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks gave Fleetwood Mac a totally new, upbeat sound. Without extraordinary promotion, the 1975 *Fleetwood Mac* album sold over eight million copies by mid-1976. *Rumours* did even better, quickly shooting to the top of the charts where it stayed for 33 weeks. The album sold over 13 million copies to become the top-selling LP in recording history.

Perhaps more than any other group, Fleetwood Mac—a band that is old and new, British and American, male and female—is the best example of the evolving sounds and styles of contemporary music in the Seventies. ☒

Staff writer Tim Smight has been smitten by Linda Ronstadt since he was a student at Northwestern University.