

= Pacer (album) =

Pacer is an album released in October 1995 by the Amps , Kim Deal 's side project from her group the Breeders , who took a break from playing together beginning in late 1994 . Deal recruited two new musicians and named the group the Amps . The band recorded Pacer at several studios in the USA and in Ireland , with different engineers each time , including Steve Albini , Bryce Goggin , and John Agnello .

The album received mixed reviews , ranging from highly enthusiastic to quite dismissive . Despite radio airplay for its single , " Tipp City " , Pacer did not sell well . The Amps toured in 1995 and 1996 with groups such as Sonic Youth , Guided By Voices , and Foo Fighters . In 1996 , Deal changed the band 's name back to the Breeders , making Pacer the Amps ' only album .

= = Background = =

Kim Deal 's band the Breeders released Last Splash in August 1993 ; the album was very successful , and its release was followed by much touring . The Breeders then took an extended break from activity . One reason was that Deal 's sister Kelley , who was also in the group , was arrested on drug charges in November 1994 . Member Josephine Wiggs likewise took time away from the band , although Wiggs and Deal have different memories of the circumstances surrounding this . Wiggs recalls offering to be involved if Deal 's next album was going to be a Breeders record , but having the impression that Deal wanted to do a solo release ; Deal remembers Wiggs declining to be part of any immediate Breeders ' recording , but offering to be on the one after that .

Regardless of the causes of the Breeders ' hiatus , by early 1995 Deal believed her next album would be a solo one , and at first intended to play all instruments on it herself . Back at her home in Dayton , Ohio , she practiced the drums and initially prepared six songs for recording . Around the same time , she produced some tracks for Guided by Voices at Easley Studios in Memphis , Tennessee . While there , Deal used a portion of the studio time to record demos for some of her new songs . As an attempt to distract her sister from her drug problems , Deal recruited Kelley to play on three songs at this initial recording session . Kelley 's involvement changed Deal 's mind about playing all the instruments herself , and she began to conceptualize the album as a band project .

After the Easley recording session , Deal returned to Dayton . She asked Breeders ' drummer Jim Macpherson to play drums in the new project , and Dayton musicians Luis Lerma and Nate Farley to play bass and guitar , respectively . Deal adopted a stage persona for herself named Tammy Ampersand , and called the band " Tammy and the Amps " ; this later evolved into simply " the Amps " . The group began by performing at small shows , and learned the songs well to prepare for recording the album . At some point during the recording sessions , Kelley 's drug difficulties and rehabilitation prevented her from continuing as a member of the band .

= = Recording = =

Pacer was recorded at seven studios in total , with different engineers each time . The track " Tipp City " was used from the original session at Easley Studios , recorded in February 1995 and engineered by Doug Easley and Davis McCain . The Amps ' next session was with engineer Steve Albini at his Chicago studio . Deal had previously worked with Albini on the Pixies ' Surfer Rosa and the Breeders ' Pod releases . The Amps and Albini recorded songs including further versions of " Tipp City " , which are unreleased , and " Hoverin " ; an earlier version of the latter song had previously been released on the Breeders ' " Divine Hammer " single in October 1993 . Other recording sessions , whose various engineers included Bryce Goggin and John Agnello , took place at studios in Long Island and Woodstock , New York , as well as Dayton , Los Angeles , and Dublin , Ireland .

In a 1996 interview , Deal said that for Pacer , she focused on the vocals : " Usually , I tend to spend more time with the instruments . Last Splash had quite a few instrumentals and quite a few

songs where I might say five words . [On Pacer , the] songs are all vocal @-@ heavy . The vocal leads , and if you take the vocal away , you don 't have much of a song . " The sound of the album has been described as " lo @-@ fi " .

= = Release = =

Pacer was released in late October 1995 . It peaked at No. 60 on the UK Album Chart , and No. 29 on the American Heatseekers Album chart . " Tipp City " was released as the album 's single and included an alternate version of " Empty Glasses " , as well as a cover of the Tasties ' " Just Like a Briar " . The single received some radio airplay in the USA , and reached No. 61 on the UK Singles Chart , but Pacer did not sell well .

= = Reception = =

Critical appraisal of Pacer has been mixed . Allmusic 's Stephen Thomas Erlewine describes the album as " exciting , gut @-@ level rock & roll " . The Rough Guide to Rock calls Pacer " satisfyingly lo @-@ fi " . In Spin magazine , reviewer Joy Press writes that the album includes " a half @-@ dozen gems " but that its overall " foggy sound " and " indecipherable lyrics " prevent the listener from fully embracing the work . Robert Christgau considers the album 's songs to be " definitely slight " and " uneven " but praises the vocals , stating that " speedy or dreamy , Kim Deal sounds so sane , so unpretentious , so goddamn nice that you want to take her home and give her a shampoo " . In The Trouser Press Guide to ' 90s Rock , critic Ira Robbins writes that " Other than the fine title track and a few others , the performances are forced and lackluster ; the production varies between flat and colorless . " The New Rolling Stone Album Guide similarly praises the title song while dismissing the rest of the album as " forgettable " .

= = Aftermath = =

The Amps toured in 1995 and 1996 , with bands including Guided by Voices , Sonic Youth , Brainiac , the Tasties , Helium , and Foo Fighters . Later in 1996 , the group added member Carrie Bradley (who had played on Pod) , and Deal changed its name back to the Breeders . The band 's lineup continued to evolve , and within a few years , Deal was the only of the former Amps left in the group . Pacer is the sole album that the Amps released .

A number of artists have covered songs from Pacer . The Muffs included a version of " Pacer " on their compilation albums Hamburger and Kaboodle . On Gigantic : A Tribute to Kim Deal , released on American Laundromat Records , the German Art Students covered " Bragging Party " and Tara King Theory , " Tipp City " . Musician Girl Talk included a sample of " Tipp City " on " Touch 2 Feel " on his album Unstoppable . The Breeders themselves released a new version of " Full on Idle " on Title TK and over the years have sometimes performed Amps ' songs at their concerts .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Kim Deal , except where noted .

= = Chart positions = =