

= Ecstasy ( My Bloody Valentine album ) =

Ecstasy is the second mini album by the alternative rock band My Bloody Valentine , released on 23 November 1987 on Lazy Records . Released in a limited edition of 3 @, @ 000 copies , it was the band 's final release for Lazy Records and second to feature vocalist and guitarist Bilinda Butcher , who was recruited in April 1987 following the departure of original My Bloody Valentine vocalist David Conway . Ecstasy followed the noise pop and twee pop standards of My Bloody Valentine 's earlier releases for the label , drawing influence from various artists including The Jesus and Mary Chain , Love and The Byrds , and the album distanced the band further from their earlier post @-@ punk and gothic rock sound .

The album experienced several technical and financial problems during its recording sessions , including errors in the mastering process , and the band were dissatisfied with its outcome ; although upon its release , Ecstasy received moderate critical acclaim and peaked at number 12 on the UK Independent Albums Chart . The album was later combined with My Bloody Valentine 's preceding single , " Strawberry Wine " , and reissued on the compilation album Ecstasy and Wine ( 1989 ) , which was released on Lazy Records without the band 's consent .

= = Background = =

Following minor success on the underground scene after the release of The New Record by My Bloody Valentine ( 1986 ) and 1987 's " Sunny Sundae Smile " , original My Bloody Valentine vocalist David Conway left the band due to a gastric illness , disillusionment with music and his ambitions to become a writer . The remaining members ? guitarist Kevin Shields , drummer Colm Ó Cíosóig and bassist Debbie Googe ? considered splitting up and forming a new band under a different name . However , the band placed advertisements for a vocalist in the local music press in London , which Shields referred to later as " pointless , ? disastrous and excruciating [ sic ] " due to the advertisements attracting a number of Morrissey inspired vocalists who he referred to as " fruitballs " . Through mutual friends the band recruited two vocalists , Joe Byfield and Bilinda Butcher . After performing one show in April 1987 with both on vocals , My Bloody Valentine considered Byfield " unsuitable " for the band and he was subsequently fired . Butcher , whose prior musical experience had been playing classical guitar as a child , and singing and playing tambourine " with some girlfriends for fun " , was chosen as My Bloody Valentine 's new vocalist and began rehearsing with the band in the middle of 1987 .

Lazy Records , on which the band released " Sunny Sundae Smile " , requested a full @-@ length album from My Bloody Valentine during summer 1987 . The band refused the label 's request , claiming their newly formed line @-@ up " had only been together a couple of months and hadn 't really had time to get settled " . However , the band compromised and agreed to record a mini album , provided they could release a single beforehand . The preceding single , " Strawberry Wine " , was released on 9 November 1987 and peaked at number 13 on the UK Independent Singles Chart .

= = Recording = =

The recording sessions for Ecstasy took place a week after the recording sessions for " Strawberry Wine " . My Bloody Valentine spent a total of 10 days recording the album . According to Kevin Shields , the sessions " had no direction and [ the band ] didn 't even know what [ they ] were doing " and " bashed out all these tunes quickly , very demo @-@ like " . A number of songs were recorded that did not feature on the final release , as the band considered them " awful " . However , the sessions were " the first time [ the band had ] actually played around properly in the studio " , which resulted in " extreme " and " quite nasty " guitar sounds , which My Bloody Valentine would later become associated with .

Ecstasy 's recording was plagued by technical and financial errors , which impacted the eventual release of the album . The mastering process was affected by the album 's engineer Steve Nunn ,

who mislaid the source material of the final mix prior to its transfer to the master recording . Shields subsequently " brought an independent engineer in to the studios to point out what was wrong " but Lazy Records refused to invest further finances into the album 's recording process . As a result , " much of what was originally the sound of Ecstasy [ sic ] was lost , and much of the tone was dulled " and the album " showed a group who appeared to have run out of money half way through recording " .

= = Composition = =

All of Ecstasy 's seven tracks were written and composed by Kevin Shields , with Colm Ó Cíosóig credited as the co @-@ writer of three tracks ? " The Things I Miss " , " Clair " and " ( Please ) Lose Yourself in Me " . Regarding the lyrical content of the album in contrast to the music , Shields said that " the songs may sound sweet , but the subject matter isn 't necessarily very nice . A lot of it is relationship @-@ based , but it 's always vague , and never just boy @-@ meets @-@ girl . It could easily be boy @-@ meets @-@ boy , or girl @-@ meets @-@ girl . Then there 's hate , and whimsical thoughts you get from nowhere " . Ó Cíosóig remarked that " it 's more weird perversions of feeling you get in a relationship " and referred to the lyrics as being marked by " extremes , because we 're entertained by extreme things " . Shields noted that the lyrics were a progression from the band 's earlier releases as " the idea of composing a sweet pop song that sugar @-@ coated some lyrical horror and sending it hurtling up the charts appealed to our sense of humour " and considered the songwriting process for Ecstasy as " fresh after having made pure noise earlier " .

My Bloody Valentine experimented with a noise pop sound on the album , a venture which was influenced by The Jesus and Mary Chain , and incorporated elements of twee pop similar to " Strawberry Wine " . Shields used a twelve @-@ string electric guitar during the Ecstasy 's recording sessions and was influenced by The Byrds during the writing process , which resulted in the guitar tones being " too jingly jangly " . Writer Colin Larkin described Ecstasy 's sound as " bubblegum pop with buzzsaw guitars " , which was similar to their prior releases and further diverged from their earlier post @-@ punk and gothic rock sound . Jim DeRogatis noted that Ecstasy 's overall sound " ushered in a sunnier , more optimistic vibe " for the band which was reminiscent of the sound of 1960s American psychedelia , in particular the Los Angeles based band Love . " Clair " , one of the first recordings to feature Bilinda Butcher , features a sampled tape loop of audience screams from The Beatles ' live album , The Beatles at the Hollywood Bowl ( 1977 ) . The sample was processed through audio filters to emulate guitar feedback .

However , the music on Ecstasy has been criticised as being " directionless and floundered about within the framework of songs which appeared to be only half formed ideas , " which was due to the band 's in @-@ studio experimentation with different aspects of their guitar sound . In hindsight , Shields said that " even when we 'd finished it we didn 't like half the songs we 'd done . The record never came out right and it made us realise that we were still too twee " . In response to the band 's " unwanted reputation for jangly feyness " , My Bloody Valentine later incorporated elements of American indie rock music and Shields customised his guitars ' tremolo systems , resulting in the band pioneering an alternative rock subgenre known as shoegazing . The term " shoegazing " , which was considered derogatory , was coined by Sounds journalists in the early 1990s to describe certain bands ' " motionless performing style , where they stood on stage and stared at the floor " .

= = Release and reception = =

Ecstasy was released on 23 November 1987 on Lazy Records . It received a limited edition release of 3 @, @ 000 LP copies distributed by Rough Trade Records and went out of print within three months of its release . The album entered the UK Independent Albums Chart in December 1987 and spent four weeks in total on the chart , peaking at number 12 . The contents of the album were later combined with the band 's preceding single , " Strawberry Wine " , and reissued on the compilation album Ecstasy and Wine , released in February 1989 on Lazy Records . Ecstasy and Wine ,

however , was released without the band 's consent and Kevin Shields retrieved 10 @,@ 000 LP copies from the manager of Lazy Records soon after its release . Shields sold the records to various distributors in the early 1990s , after My Bloody Valentine were dropped from Creation Records , and used the funds to finance later recording sessions .

Upon its release Ecstasy received moderate critical acclaim . Melody Maker referred to the album as " a series of aloof , pastel washes of sound , suspended guitars , words from the back of beyond tying in to a large , shifting whole " and " larger than the sum of its parts " . In Loveless , a book from the 33 ? series about the My Bloody Valentine album of the same name , Mike McGonigal referred to Ecstasy as a " rarified , effete and poppy approach to Byrdsian rock " and AllMusic rated the album two and a half out of five stars . In a separate review of Ecstasy and Wine , AllMusic writer Bradley Torreano described Ecstasy as the point where the band " started moving toward Cocteau Twins territory , using guitarist Bilinda Butcher 's airy voice to define their image " and when " Shields and Butcher [ were ] exploring the guitar landscapes that would later become their trademark " .

On Ecstasy 's supporting tour My Bloody Valentine conceived the idea of " the holocaust " , an interlude of noise and excessive feedback during live performances which was later attributed to their song " You Made Me Realise " and often exceeded 130 decibels . The band toured small student venues and , according to Kevin Shields , at " one particular place , there were these guy playing pool in the background , shouting amongst themselves and being quite loud and not paying attention " . Before performing " Clair " , Shields said to the band " let 's just do it until those guys stop " and performed a two @-@ chord riff in the song that lasted for an approximate 30 minutes .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Kevin Shields unless otherwise noted .

= = Personnel = =

All personnel credits adapted from Ecstasy 's liner notes .

My Bloody Valentine

Kevin Shields ? vocals , guitar

Bilinda Butcher ? vocals , guitar

Debbie Googe ? bass

Colm Ó Cíosóig ? drums

Additional musicians

Nick Brown ? violin ( 5 )

Technical personnel

My Bloody Valentine ? production

Steve Nunn ? engineering

Lucy Smith ? photography

= = Chart positions = =