

= No Code =

No Code is the fourth studio album by the American rock band Pearl Jam , released on August 27 , 1996 through Epic Records . Following a troubled tour for its previous album , Vitalogy (1994) , in which Pearl Jam engaged in a much @-@ publicized boycott of Ticketmaster , the band went into the studio to record its follow @-@ up . The music on the record was more diverse than what the band had done on previous releases , incorporating elements of garage rock , worldbeat , and psychedelia .

Although No Code debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 , it left a large section of the band 's fanbase unsatisfied and quickly fell down the charts . Critical reviews were also mixed , with praise to the musical variety but the album being considered inconsistent . The album became the first Pearl Jam album to not reach multi @-@ platinum status , receiving a single platinum certification by the RIAA in the United States .

= = Recording = =

For its fourth album , Pearl Jam again worked with producer Brendan O 'Brien , with whom they had worked on predecessors Vs . (1993) and Vitalogy (1994) . No Code was the band 's first album with drummer Jack Irons , who had joined the band as Vitalogy was being completed . Following the summer U.S. leg of the band 's Vitalogy Tour , the band began work on No Code in Chicago , Illinois in July 1995 during the infamous Chicago heat wave . The Chicago sessions lasted a week at the Chicago Recording Company . During a break in a string of make @-@ up dates for the 1995 tour the band went into the studio for a week @-@ long session in New Orleans , Louisiana , where the band recorded " Off He Goes " . The rest of the recording took place in the first half of 1996 in Seattle , Washington at Studio Litho , which is owned by guitarist Stone Gossard . The album was then mixed by O 'Brien at his mixing facility at Southern Tracks in Atlanta , Georgia .

The sessions for the album began with strife and tension . Bassist Jeff Ament wasn 't made aware that the band was recording until three days into the sessions , and said that he " wasn 't super involved with that record on any level . " Guitarist Mike McCready said , " I 'm sure Jeff was pissed , but it was more about separating , because if we played all together nothing would get done . We 'd all just get pissed off at each other . " At one point Ament even walked out of the recording sessions , and considered quitting the band due to lead vocalist Eddie Vedder 's control of the creation process . Due to Pearl Jam balancing recording and touring , Irons commented that the band was " more on @-@ the @-@ fly during the making of No Code , and some good things happened out of that , but we were also really tired . It was difficult to tour and play these shows that were two or three hours long and then force ourselves to produce something in a studio . "

McCready said that a lot of the songs were developed out of jam sessions , and said " I think we kind of rushed it a little bit . " Ament said that the band members would bring in fragments of songs , and it would take hours before Vedder could have music to which he could add vocals . He added that " Ed 's typically the guy who finishes off the songs ... But by the end of No Code , he was so burnt , it was so much work for him . " The band 's mood had gone better by the time the album was finished , and the bandmembers gave credit for this to Irons . Regarding Irons , O 'Brien stated that " everybody was on their best musical behavior around him . " McCready said that Irons urged the band members to discuss their problems , and called him " a big spiritual influence , if not the biggest . " Vedder said , " Making No Code was all about gaining perspective . " Commenting upon the sessions as a whole , O 'Brien said , " It was really a transitional record . We had a good time making it . "

= = = Outtakes = = =

Two outtakes from the recording sessions ended up as B @-@ sides , " Black , Red , Yellow " on the " Hail , Hail " single , and " Dead Man " , which was originally intended for the film Dead Man Walking , on " Off He Goes . " Both songs were included on the 2003 Lost Dogs collection of rarities

, along with four other tracks from the No Code sessions , two of which ended up in compilations - " Leaving Here " , which appeared on Home Alive , and " Gremmie Out of Control " , featured on Music for Our Mother Ocean Vol . 1 . The other rejected songs were " All Night " and " Don 't Gimme No Lip . " " Olympic Platinum " , written by the album 's mixer Nick DiDia around the time of the 1996 Summer Olympics , was recorded by the band and released on its 1996 fan club Christmas single .

= = Music and lyrics = =

While Vitalogy had shifted away from the earlier albums ' accessible compositions and polished production , No Code represented a deliberate break from Ten 's stadium sound , favoring experimental ballads and noisy garage rock songs . It stood out with its emphasis on subtle harmony (" Off He Goes ") , Eastern influences (" Who You Are ") , and spoken word (" I 'm Open ") . Irons lends a tribal drum sound on the songs " Who You Are " and " In My Tree " . Irons stated , " To turn my drum music into a song is pretty challenging , but the guys have been really supportive of me doing it , and we 've worked some things into a few songs . " Vedder said , " We realized that we had an opportunity to experiment . " David Browne of Entertainment Weekly stated that " No Code displays a wider range of moods and instrumentation than on any previous Pearl Jam album . "

The lyrical themes on the album deal with issues of spirituality , morality , and self @-@ examination . Vedder said , " I think there 's a little self @-@ examination in those songs , something that a lot of my friends are going through too , as they approach 30 . " Ament said , " In some ways , it 's like the band 's story . It 's about growing up . " The lyrics of " Hail , Hail " refer to two people in a troubled relationship struggling to hold it together . Vedder has said that he wrote the song " Off He Goes " about himself and how he is a " shit friend , " adding , " I 'll show up and everything 's great and then all of the sudden I 'm outta there ... " " Lukin " is about the " pretty intense stalker problem , " Vedder faced during the mid @-@ 1990s . " Around the Bend " was written by Vedder as a lullaby that Irons could sing to his son .

The lyrics to " Smile " are taken from a note that Dennis Flemion of The Frogs hid inside Vedder 's notebook while he was onstage performing . The words used in the note are taken from the Frogs songs " This Is How I Feel " and " Now I Wanna Be Dead " . Flemion is given credit in the vinyl , but the credit is absent from the CD version . The lyrics to " Red Mosquito " were inspired by the events surrounding Pearl Jam 's June 24 , 1995 concert at San Francisco 's Golden Gate Park , which happened on the same day Vedder was hospitalized due to food poisoning . Vedder only made it through seven songs and the band was forced to cancel the remaining dates of the short tour that it was on . For the first time on a Pearl Jam album a band member other than Vedder contributed lyrics , with Gossard writing the lyrics to " Mankind " . Gossard also sang lead vocals on the track .

= = Packaging and title = =

The album package consists of 156 Polaroid photos that unfold into a 2x2 square . The Polaroid photos are seemingly random . One of the photos featured on the front cover is the eyeball of Dennis Rodman , former Chicago Bulls player and friend of the band , while another photo is of Vedder 's foot after he had been stung by a stingray . The pictures , when viewed from afar , blend to form the No Code triangle / eyeball logo that is the theme throughout the album . The CD and vinyl came with lyrics printed on the back of replica Polaroids . Only nine Polaroids came in a set , leaving one to have to obtain another set to accumulate all thirteen songs .

When discussing the album 's title , Vedder said " it 's called No Code because it 's full of code . It 's misinformation . " In medical terminology , a " no code " order is a medical order to withhold CPR on a patient . It is also known as a " do not resuscitate " order . In another interview , Vedder said that " if the record is a complete failure you 've kind of owned up to it in a subliminal way . No Code was the same thing . For me , No Code meant ' Do Not Resuscitate ' . "

= = Tour = =

Pearl Jam promoted the album with tours in North America and Europe in the fall of 1996 . The short tour of North America focused on the East Coast of the United States . As with Vitalogy , very little touring was done in the United States to promote No Code because of the band 's refusal to play in Ticketmaster 's venues . The band chose to use alternate ticketing companies for the shows . A European tour followed in the fall of 1996 , of which the band 's November 3 , 1996 show in Berlin , Germany at Deutschlandhalle was broadcast on many radio stations worldwide .

During the North American tour fans complained about the difficulty in obtaining tickets and the use of non @-@ Ticketmaster venues , which were judged to be remote and impersonal . Gossard stated that there was " a lot of stress associated with trying to tour at that time " and that " it was growing more and more difficult to be excited about being part of the band . " He added , " Ticketmaster , as monopolistic as it may be , is very efficient so we weren 't playing the venues we wanted to play . "

On October 17 , 2014 at the i wireless Center in Moline , Illinois , during the Lightning Bolt Tour , Pearl Jam played the entire album in order as part of their set .

= = Release and reception = =

= = = Commercial performance = = =

No Code sold 366 @,@ 500 copies in its first week of release , topping the Billboard 200 , but falling short of analysts ' predictions of at least 535 @,@ 000 copies . This was significantly less than what the band 's previous two albums sold in their respective first weeks of release . It was , however , the seventh biggest @-@ selling debut of what was a slow year for the industry . It stayed at number one for two weeks , and was Pearl Jam 's last album to debut at number one on the album chart until Backspacer was released in 2009 . No Code was the band 's first album to not reach multi @-@ platinum status , being certified platinum by the RIAA , and , as of 2013 , has sold 1 @.@ 75 million copies in the United States according to Nielsen SoundScan .

Three singles were released from No Code . The lead single " Who You Are " peaked at number 31 on the Billboard Hot 100 , and reached number one on the Modern Rock charts and number five on the Mainstream Rock charts . Neither of the album 's other singles , " Hail , Hail " and " Off He Goes " , charted on the Hot 100 , but both placed on the Mainstream Rock and Modern Rock charts , as did album track " Red Mosquito " .

= = = Critical response = = =

Upon its release , No Code received a mixed to positive critical reception . Rolling Stone staff writer David Fricke gave No Code four out of five stars , saying that the album " is abrupt in its mood swings almost to the point of vertigo . " He praised the album as " the kind of impulsive , quixotic , provocative ruckus that has become rare in a modern @-@ rock mainstream " and added that " No Code basically means no rule books , no limits and , above all , no fear . " Q gave the album four out of five stars . The review said that the album " constantly adds unexpected and facinating [sic] details A solid attraction amid intriguing oddities is the powerful array of guitar sounds . " Critic Robert Christgau described the album as " slowly winning a heartwarming battle against constitutional melancholia . " AllMusic staff writer Stephen Thomas Erlewine gave the album three and a half out of five stars , saying , " While a bit too incoherent , No Code is Pearl Jam 's richest and most rewarding album to date as well as their most human . " NME gave No Code a seven out of ten . In the review , it is stated that " Vedder is still preoccupied with his own mortality , but now he appears more quasi @-@ mystical than miserable for all its relative placidity , No Code is still a difficult beast . "

Referring to the songs on the album , Jon Pareles of The New York Times said " about half are worth the effort . " He observed that " too often , [Vedder] falls into American culture 's Disney syndrome , idealizing childhood innocence above all . " David Browne of Entertainment Weekly gave

the album a C , saying that while No Code " cracks open their sound , " it " becomes a collection of fragments that don 't add up to much of anything , except a portrait of a musically disjointed band . " On the change in mood compared with the band ' s previous releases , he said that " the album leaves you with the vaguely unsettling feeling that Pearl Jam without pain are like a pretzel without salt , or Seattle without rain . " Ryan Schreiber of Pitchfork Media called it " a nice listen , " but stated that " there 's a ton of filler here . In fact , it 's almost all filler . " Time reviewer Christopher John Farley said that the album " makes it sound as if they 're having a midlife crisis . " Farley added that " too few of the songs on the Pearl Jam CD explore the musical possibilities they suggest in any kind of definitive or provocative manner . "

= = Track listing = =

All lyrics written by Eddie Vedder , except where noted .

= = Personnel = =