

= Polka Party ! =

Polka Party ! is the fourth studio album by " Weird Al " Yankovic , released in 1986 . The album is the fourth of Yankovic 's to be produced by former The McCoys guitarist Rick Derringer . Recorded between April 1986 and September 1986 , the album was Yankovic 's follow @-@ up to his successful 1985 release , Dare to Be Stupid . The album 's lead single was " Living With a Hernia " , although it was not a hit and did not chart .

The music on Polka Party ! is built around parodies and pastiches of pop and rock music of the mid @-@ 1980s , featuring jabs at James Brown , Mick Jagger , El DeBarge , and Robert Palmer . The album also features many " style parodies " , or musical imitations that come close to , but do not copy , existing artists . These style parodies include imitations of specific artists like the Talking Heads , as well as imitations of various musical genres like country music .

Peaking at only number 177 on the Billboard 200 , Polka Party ! was met with mixed reviews and was considered a commercial and critical failure . Despite this , the album was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Comedy Recording in 1986 . Polka Party ! is one of Yankovic 's few studio albums not to be certified either Gold or Platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) and was later demoted to a budget release in 2009 .

= = Production = =

= = = Recording = = =

In April 1986 Yankovic entered the recording studio to begin the sessions to his follow @-@ up to 1985 's Dare to Be Stupid . To produce the album , Yankovic brought in former The McCoys guitarist Rick Derringer , who had also produced Yankovic 's previous albums . Backing Yankovic were Jon " Bermuda " Schwartz on drums , Steve Jay on bass , and Jim West on guitar . The album was recorded in roughly three sessions . The first session took place between April 22 and 23 , and yielded four originals : " Don 't Wear Those Shoes " , " One of Those Days " , " Dog Eat Dog " , and " Christmas at Ground Zero " . The second session , which spanned August 4 ? 5 , produced three parodies : " Living with a Hernia " , " Addicted to Spuds " , and " Here 's Johnny " . The final session , which lasted from August 29 to September 1 produced the parody " Toothless People " , an original song named " Good Enough for Now " , and the album 's titular polka medley . Thematically , Yankovic described the record as " not a whole lot different than " the other albums he had recorded , calling the process " even a bit formulaic " .

= = = Originals = = =

On April 22 , 1986 , Yankovic began recording three new original songs for his next album : " Don 't Wear Those Shoes " , " One of Those Days " , and " Dog Eat Dog " . Although " Don 't Wear Those Shoes " is an original composition , Yankovic admitted that the intro was inspired by the style of The Kinks . Lyrically , the song is a plea by the singer to his wife not to not wear certain shoes which he cannot stand . " One of Those Days " is a song detailing horrible things as if they were everyday annoyances . Each horrible thing escalates up to global annihilation while more mundane annoyances pop up at different times .

" Dog Eat Dog " is a style parody of the Talking Heads . Described as a " tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek look at office life " , the song was inspired by Yankovic 's past experience of working in the mailrooms as well as the traffic department at Westwood One radio station . He noted , " At first I thought [the job] was kinda cool that I had a phone and a desk and a little cubicle to call my own , but after a while I felt like my soul had been sucked out of me . " The song features a line directly parodying the Talking Heads song " Once In a Lifetime " : " Sometimes I tell myself , this is not my beautiful stapler / Sometimes I tell myself this is not my beautiful chair ! " This mirrors a similar line in the Talking Heads song : " You may tell yourself , this is not my beautiful house / You may tell

yourself , this is not my beautiful wife " .

On April 23 , Yankovic recorded " Christmas at Ground Zero " . The song , " a cheery little tune about death , destruction and the end of the world " was the result of Scotti Brothers Records ' insistence that Yankovic record a Christmas record . After Yankovic presented the song to his label , they relented , because it was " a little different from what they were expecting . " After the song 's release , some radio stations banned the record , a move that Yankovic attributes to " most people [not wanting] to hear about nuclear annihilation during the holiday season . " Following the September 11 attacks , when the general term " ground zero " was co @-@ opted as a proper name for the World Trade Center site where two of those attacks took place , the disturbing lyrics caused this song to be banned largely from radio . Yankovic wanted the song to receive a video , but due to budget reasons , his label did not agree . Yankovic , however , directed one himself which was mostly made up of stock footage , with a live action finale that was filmed in an economically devastated part of the Bronx , New York that looked like a bomb had gone off . The final original that was recorded was " Good Enough for Now " , a country music pastiche about how the singer 's lover , who , while not the best , will do for now .

= = = Parodies and polka = = =

On August 4 , Yankovic began recording parodies starting with " Living With a Hernia " . The song , a spoof of " Living in America " by James Brown ? which was also the theme to the 1985 film Rocky IV ? is about hernias . When it came time to pick a song to parody as the lead single for Polka Party ! Scotti Brothers Records " had some very strong ideas " and wished to have Yankovic parody a musician who was signed on the same label . After " Living in America " became a hit , the record label insisted that Yankovic parody the song , to which Yankovic obliged . In order to accurately write the song , Yankovic researched the various types of hernias . Yankovic noted that " it was a real thrill to do James Brown . I 'm a total non @-@ dancer , never went to any dances in high school , but if I analytically dissect a dance routine I can figure it out . " A choreographer named Chester Whitmore was hired to accurately create the dance scenes featured in the video , which was shot on the concert set actually used in the movie Rocky IV . The second parody recorded was " Addicted to Spuds " , a pastiche of " Addicted to Love " by Robert Palmer , about a man 's obsession for potatoes and potato @-@ based dishes . A music video for the song was never made to the song because there was a strict budget for videos for the album , and Yankovic felt that the video would be one big joke and not really worth its own video . A parody of Palmer 's video , however , was later inserted into Al 's " UHF " video .

On August 5 , Yankovic recorded " Here 's Johnny " , a parody of " Who 's Johnny " by El DeBarge . The song , a loving ode to The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson announcer Ed McMahon , features John Roarke of the television series Fridays fame doing an impression of McMahon 's voice . According to Yankovic , Peter Wolf , the man who wrote " Who 's Johnny " , enjoyed the parody idea so much that he personally brought the floppy disc program that had all the synthesizer parts for the original song into the studio when Yankovic was recording his parody . The final parody recorded for the album was " Toothless People " , a play on Mick Jagger 's " Ruthless People " , which was recorded on August 29 , 1986 . The song , about elderly people who are missing their teeth , was written after Yankovic heard it would be the theme to the 1986 film Ruthless People . Assuming the song would be a hit , Yankovic requested and received permission from Jagger to record a parody version . When Jagger 's song failed to crack the Top 40 , Yankovic considered not recording his version , but because Jagger had " authorized " the parody , he decided failing to produce it would be an insult to the artist . Therefore , he recorded the spoof anyway .

The album 's polka medley , the titular " Polka Party ! " , was recorded on the same day as " Here 's Johnny " . This was Yankovic 's third polka medley , and his only medley to bear the same name as an album . Like his other medleys , the song is a conglomeration of then @-@ popular songs in music .

= = Reception = =

== = Promotion = = =

To promote the album 's release , Scotti Brothers Records purchased full @-@ page ads in Billboard magazine that advertised the release as Yankovic 's " biggest bash yet " . Unlike previous albums , Yankovic did not undertake a tour to promote Polka Party ! Instead , he opened for the American rock band The Monkees ; Yankovic later joked that the Monkees merely " closed for me " . Yankovic explained that while it " was a fun tour " and that the crowds were very enthusiastic , the tension between the Monkees was obvious ; on his website , he wrote that while the band members " are all terrific people individually " , they " didn 't seem to get along all that great when they weren 't on stage . "

== = Critical response = = =

Polka Party ! received mixed to negative reviews from critics . Allmusic reviewer Eugene Chadbourne gave the album three stars and wrote that " just about anyone could feel let down by this album . " Chadbourne was largely critical of the parody choices , noting that many of the original versions would be forgotten in " fifteen years " . Christopher Thelen from The Daily Vault gave Polka Party ! an F and described it as an album that " seemed like it could well have been the ' last call ' for Yankovic . " Thelen heavily criticized the record , writing that both the parodies and originals were not good and that " Yankovic [was] going through the motions " . Rolling Stone awarded the album three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars , tying it with the 1992 album Off the Deep End and the 1999 release Running with Scissors as Yankovic 's best @-@ rated album . Although it was not a critical success , the album was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best Comedy Recording in 1987 , but lost to Bill Cosby 's Those of You with or Without Children , You 'll Understand .

Despite the album 's lackluster reception , many of the songs on the album , such as " Dog Eat Dog " , " Addicted to Spuds " , and " Christmas at Ground Zero " , went on to become fan favorites and live staples . Two of the album 's tracks , " Living with a Hernia " and " Addicted to Spuds " , appeared on Yankovic 's first greatest hits album (1988) , " Christmas at Ground Zero " appeared on the second volume (1994) . In addition , the 1994 box set Permanent Record : Al in the Box contained five of the album 's songs : " Addicted to Spuds " , " Dog Eat Dog " , " Here 's Johnny " , " Living with a Hernia " , and " Christmas at Ground Zero " . Only " Dog Eat Dog " , however , appeared on Yankovic 's 2009 Essential collection , although the 3 @-@ 0 version contained " Living with a Hernia " .

== = Commercial performance = = =

Polka Party ! was released October 21 , 1986 . After it was released , the album peaked at number 177 on the Billboard 200 . Compared to Yankovic 's previous albums ? Dare to Be Stupid peaked at number 50 and In 3 @-@ D peaked at number 17 ? Polka Party ! was a major commercial disappointment for the comedian . The album was the lowest @-@ charting studio album released by Yankovic and is one of his few studio albums not to be certified either Gold or Platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) . The others include the soundtrack to his film UHF (1989) and Poodle Hat (2003) . Due to low sales the album was demoted to a budget release along with various other Yankovic albums in August 2009 .

Yankovic was dismayed by the album 's lackluster reception . He noted that he " thought it was the end of [his] career " . Yankovic explained that " I figured I 'd peaked with ' Eat It ' and ' Like a Surgeon ' and now people were slowly forgetting about me and I was well on my way to obscurity . " However , Yankovic 's next album , Even Worse , would resurrect his career and become his best @-@ selling album at the time ; the experience led Yankovic to realize that " careers have peaks and valleys , and whenever I go through the rough times , another peak might be right around the corner . "

= = Track listing = =

The following is adapted from the album liner notes .

= = Credits and personnel = =

= = Charts and certifications = =

= = = Charts = = =