

= Lightning Bolt (Pearl Jam album) =

Lightning Bolt is the tenth studio album by the American rock band Pearl Jam . Produced by long @-@ time Pearl Jam collaborator Brendan O 'Brien , the album was released in the United States on October 15 , 2013 , through the band 's own Monkeywrench Records , with Republic Records handling the international release .

The band began composing new songs in 2011 , and had the album 's first recording sessions in early 2012 before the musicians decided to take a break . As all the band members got into side projects afterwards , work on Lightning Bolt only resumed in March 2013 . The music for Lightning Bolt has a harder rock sound with longer songs to contrast predecessor Backspacer (2009) , and the lyrics convey singer Eddie Vedder 's feelings on aging and mortality .

Preceded by a promotional campaign focusing on Pearl Jam 's website and social network profiles and two moderately successful singles , " Mind Your Manners " and " Sirens " , Lightning Bolt was well received by critics , who considered the album an effective return to the band 's old sound , and topped the charts in the United States , Canada , and Australia .

= = Production = =

Soon after completing Backspacer in 2009 , Pearl Jam and producer Brendan O 'Brien intended to soon repeat the experience given that according to O 'Brien " we had a really good time doing it . " . In 2011 , amidst preparations for the documentary Pearl Jam Twenty and its accompanying tour , the band recorded some tracks with O 'Brien at Los Angeles ' Henson Recording Studios , with the song " Olé " being issued as a free download . O 'Brien considered that the studio helped the band get to a " submarine mentality , and everybody going into the ship together " , and bassist Jeff Ament added that working outside the band 's hometown Seattle led the musicians to work more efficiently .

After some time developing demos , the musicians returned to Henson in March 2012 , recording seven songs before the band decided to take a break , as according to guitarist Mike McCready " we had to take some time to figure out what we wanted to do . " Guitarist Stone Gossard added that despite the bandmembers thinking that after the productive sessions the album was nearing completion , eventually they considered the tracks " didn 't feel strong enough for a record . Work on the album resumed only in March 2013 as the bandmembers regrouped with new compositions , mostly done separately in each member 's home studio ? though McCready at times worked along with drummer Matt Cameron ? before the group reunited to finish the songs together . O 'Brien attributed the long break to the band 's busy schedule , as the musicians got into side projects after putting the Pearl Jam album on hold : singer Eddie Vedder started a solo tour , drummer Matt Cameron returned to Soundgarden , guitarist Stone Gossard rejoined side project Brad , Ament recorded solo album While My Heart Beats and started the project RNDM , and McCready formed the group Walking Papers while also taking part in a partial reunion of Mad Season . Vedder still considered that all the diversions helped Pearl Jam to have " more importance placed on the records " and focusing on making the best album possible . Like with previous records the songs had their first recordings with all the musicians playing together , though O 'Brien added that with Lightning Bolt " we don 't keep as much of [the live recordings] as we used to . " Guest musicians include O 'Brien himself at the keyboards , long time keyboardist Boom Gaspar , and violinist Ann Marie Calhoun . After six weeks of new recording sessions , the album was mixed in Seattle at the band 's desire , with the process taking place in Studio X.

= = Composition = =

In contrast to the short tracks of Backspacer , Lightning Bolt features longer songs , and a more experimental sound that McCready declared to aim for " a logical extension of what Backspacer was " . Stone Gossard added that the band being more comfortable with the composing and recording process lead to " a slight return to some of the more sort of peculiar things we did , say , between

No Code and Binaural . " McCready said that " there 's a Pink Floyd vibe to some of it , there 's a punk rock edge to other stuff " , with the lead singles " Mind Your Manners " and " Sirens " being inspired by the Dead Kennedys and a concert in Roger Waters ' The Wall Live , respectively . Neil Young was noted as an influence in " Yellow Moon " . O 'Brien considered the track listing to have " a lot of drama " from the intensity of the musicians ' work , but that the band itself were united and enjoying themselves during the creation process . According to Gossard , the album 's simpler arrangements , " sussed out " songwriting and less production than in Backspacer made for songs that were easier to learn and play live . One of the tracks , " Sleeping by Myself " , had been previously featured in Vedder 's 2011 solo album Ukulele Songs . O 'Brien suggested the re @-@ recording as he thought that the composition was " a Pearl Jam song as far as I ? m concerned . " Another , " Pendulum " , was originally composed during the Backspacer sessions .

While writing the lyrics to Lightning Bolt , Vedder tried to be less cryptic in expressing his feelings compared to the " word games " of previous Pearl Jam albums . The songs discuss lasting relationships , bad faith (" Getaway , " " Mind Your Manners ") , the state of the world (" Infallible ") and life 's transience (" Pendulum ") , which Vedder summed up as " the same mysteries that I ? ve been trying to unravel for a few decades now . " Gossard explained that the reflective tone was indicative of the bandmembers ' age : " [At] 40 @-@ something , almost 50 @-@ something , you 're looking at life through your kids ' eyes , through the filter of relationships that are 20 or 30 years long , through the filter of your parents getting older and the passing of friends and relatives @-@ relationships and all that they encompass , the difficulties of them and the sacrifices you make in them and also the joy they bring you . " Vedder at first was afraid of writing songs about mortality , but relented given he felt that " death is everywhere " and writing about death would help " getting through it " , as " living to the day you die , and being cognizant of the end , you might lead a more appreciative life " . One of the compositions about the theme was " Future Days " , which discusses the loss of Vedder 's friend Dennis Flemion , who accidentally drowned in 2012 . The concernment in the songs also owed to Vedder being a father , as the singer detailed that " It ? s going to be their world and what is their future ? It feels like there is a lot that can be lost in the next 50 years if people don ? t pay attention . "

= = Release and promotion = =

Pearl Jam 's website and social network pages were extensively used to create expectations create excitement for their upcoming album , with two countdown clocks being posted on the band 's website . The first was revealed on July 1 , 2013 , and once it hit zero one week later , the site had an announcement of a 24 date two @-@ leg tour in North America from October 11 , 2013 , through December 6 , 2013 . After the tour was revealed , the PearlJam.com countdown clock reset , showing a new countdown which was set to end on July 11 , 2013 , and afterwards lead to news of the band 's tenth studio album Lightning Bolt being released on October 15 , 2013 . On the same day the band revealed lead single " Mind Your Manners " through digital download , radio airplay and an audio @-@ only YouTube video . The track had heavy airplay on rock radios , debuting at 12th on the Billboard Rock Airplay charts , and with 14 @,@ 000 downloads reached number 14 at Rock Digital Songs and 12 on the Alternative Rock Tracks charts . An official Pearl Jam app was made available on iTunes on July 25 , 2013 , and through the final week of August , the band 's Twitter revealed Lightning Bolt 's track list through the artwork made by designer Don Pendleton for each track . " Mind Your Manners " was played live for the first time at their show in London , Ontario on July 16 , 2013 . Three days later the band debuted two more songs , " Lightning Bolt " and " Future Days " , at their show at Wrigley Field . On August 23 , 2013 , the music video was released for " Mind Your Manners " , directed by Danny Clinch .

On September 18 , 2013 , the band released Lightning Bolt 's second single , " Sirens " , and put online a short documentary directed by Danny Clinch where the bandmembers discussed the new album with friends Carrie Brownstein , Judd Apatow , Mark Richards and Steve Gleason . Ament suggested the concept of the video inspired by the Vanity Fair Comedy Issue , thinking it would be a variant on traditional press interviews . On September 23 , 2013 , the music video was released for "

Sirens " , also directed by Clinch . A special listening party with fans was held by Sirius XM at Seattle 's Studio X eleven days before the album 's release . Monkeywrench Records and Republic Records sent the album 's title track , " Lightning Bolt " to mainstream rock and modern rock radio on March 4 , 2014 as the album 's third single .

Pearl Jam released the album through Monkeywrench Records / Republic Records in conjunction with Universal Music Group in the United States . The album also saw release through the band 's official website , independent record stores and online retailers . It was made available to stream for free for a limited time on iTunes on October 7 , 2013 , in the run up to the official release . The band promoted the release of the album with a week @-@ long programme of shows on Late Night with Jimmy Fallon , which included live performances of " Sirens " and the title track " Lightning Bolt " . Pearl Jam also licensed the songs of Lightning Bolt along with 36 other tracks from their catalog to Fox Sports for the network 's coverage of the 2013 World Series .

= = = Lightning Bolt Tour = = =

Pearl Jam promoted the album with shows in North America in 2013 before a tour of Oceania in January 2014 . The band headlined the Voodoo Music + Arts Experience on November 1 , 2013 . The shows in Oceania were part of the Big Day Out festival . On November 15 , 2013 , drummer Matt Cameron announced that he would not be touring with Soundgarden in 2014 , due to prior commitments promoting Lightning Bolt . On December 13 , 2013 , the band announced an eleven @-@ date European leg starting on June 16 , 2014 . In May 2014 , the band announced a ten @-@ date tour of the American Midwest starting on October 1 , 2014 , to coincide with two appearances at the Austin City Limits Music Festival . To conclude the tour , the band played at the annual Bridge School Benefit in Mountain View , California . In March 2015 the band announced a nine @-@ date tour of Latin America , scheduled to start in November .

= = = Packaging = = =

The artwork for Lightning Bolt was made by Don Pendleton , who is best known as a skateboard graphic artist . Ament bought some of Pendleton 's paintings " in 2008 or 2009 " and later asked the artist to do a logo for their upcoming album , which would later develop into all the illustrations . The bassist then kept in contact with Pendleton to guide his work , sending him the song lyrics , some sketches he had done and an unmastered copy of the album . The intention was to " make something that was a total package " , according to Pendleton , who said that there was an attempt to bring back " these classic LPs in the days where you would read the lyrics . You related the band to the imagery to the song to the lyrics . " Pendleton tried to " keep it iconic with some symbols but also really heavy with archetypes " , given the body of images could be used consistently with all of the promotion . While some of the graphics evolved directly from Ament 's sketches , Pendleton took some inspiration from his past work , such as a series of skateboards he painted " based around icons and logos " , and the very first image sent to Ament , an eye with a lightning bolt which Pendleton made back in 2006 for a failed project , that evolved into the album cover . Said cover was painted by hand as Pendleton wanted " something so geometric that there would be some flaws in it , especially compared to the vector / computer stuff " . Republic Records art designer Joe Spix then handled the presentation , with particular detail in the vinyl packaging . Pendleton also painted Ament 's bass , Pearl Jam @-@ themed shirts for Volcom , and posters for the Barclays Center concerts in October 2013 . At the 57th Annual Grammy Awards in February 2015 , the album won the award for Best Recording Package .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical response = = =

Upon its release , Lightning Bolt was met with generally positive reviews from music critics . At Metacritic , which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics , the album received an average score of 73 , based on 33 reviews , indicating " generally favorable reviews " . Stephen Thomas Erlewine of AllMusic gave the album four out of five stars , stating that the band seemed more settled and comfortable while " accentuating the big riffs and bigger emotions , crafting songs without a worry as to whether they 're hip or not and , most importantly , enjoying the deep @-@ rooted , nervy arena rock that is uniquely their own . " Jim Farber of the New York Daily News gave the album four out of five stars , commenting that while " some key sounds and sensibilities " and uplifting lyrics were unlike Pearl Jam 's earlier style , the music in Lightning Bolt marked a return to the " thick @-@ bottomed rhythms , hard @-@ nosed guitars and darkened tone of classic Pearl Jam " compared to predecessor Backspacer . Cole Waterman of PopMatters gave the album an eight out of ten , praising " Pearl Jam thriving in their persona , building on what worked in the past without trying to copy it while adding new elements to the mix " and feeling that despite " the closing songs get [ting] monotonous in their united balladry " , " Future Days ? was a good album closer , comparing it to Tom Waits .

Dom Lawson of The Guardian gave the album three out of five stars , describing it as " a sturdy return to great form " . Tom Willmott of The Independent gave the album three out of five stars , considering Lightning Bolt to " offer a broad range of styles " and praising the rock @-@ focused tracks . Will Hermes of Rolling Stone gave the album three and a half stars out of five , saying that Eddie Vedder 's earnest lyrics and vocals made for compelling tracks , and that the musicians " overthink , overemote and overreach ? fruitfully " . Josh Modell of The A.V. Club gave the album a B + , complaining about the excessive length and " a couple too many songs that revisit the past without any fresh insight " while feeling that " the album still feels fresher and more relevant than the world at large might expect at this point . " Marc Hirsh of The Boston Globe considered the album to showcase that Pearl Jam " has plenty of spark left " , comparing it to both the " dense eclecticism " of the band 's own Vitalogy (1994) , and " The Who ? s solidity of purpose " .

Some reviewers still felt that Lightning Bolt was not up to the standards set by the band 's previous work . Blue Sullivan of Slant Magazine gave the album three out of five stars , saying that the album had a " familiar spark " and was dragged down by " Pearl Jam 's antiseptic ' 70s @-@ album @-@ rock @-@ radio conservatism , along with frontman Eddie Vedder 's ham @-@ fisted lyrics " , ultimately concluding that " Lightning Bolt is no masterwork . Years removed from the raw emotion and desperate appetites of youth , Pearl Jam has slipped into alt @-@ rock elder statesmanship as one would a comfortable old sweater . " Rob Harvilla of Spin gave the album a six out of ten , describing it as " far from an implosion , far from spectacular " , criticizing the focus on calm songs and considering that Backspacer " barked louder and bit harder overall . " In his 5 @.@ 0 out of 10 review for Pitchfork Media , Stuart Berman also had a negative reaction to what he described as " centerpiece ballads [that] tread on odious Lite @-@ FM territory and forcefully tip the scales from poignant to maudlin " . Philip Cosores of Paste gave the album a 4 @.@ 0 out of 10 , saying " The album does grow on the listener , as Vedder 's voice and the band 's seeming ambivalence to all musical trends and developments outside of them is strangely comforting . And maybe some of these songs will come alive when performed , but there is not a single one to love in the set . Essentially , the cruise control is running onward with disregard for all the maintenance and repairs that an engine needs , and the result is the worst album of their career . "

== Commercial performance ==

Lightning Bolt became Pearl Jam 's fifth studio album to have debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 chart , with first @-@ week sales of 166 @,@ 000 copies in the United States . In its second week the album sold 46 @,@ 000 copies holding the number two position on the chart . The album also debuted at number one in Canada , selling 23 @,@ 000 copies in its first week , and becoming the band 's second consecutive album to debut at number one on the Canadian Albums Chart . In Australia , Lightning Bolt became Pearl Jam 's eighth chart @-@ topper at the ARIA Charts . Lightning Bolt debuted at second at the UK Albums Chart , being Pearl Jam 's highest

charting album in the United Kingdom since 1993 's Vs .. The album also topped the music charts in Belgium , Ireland , Croatia and Portugal , and held the second spot in the Netherlands , Italy , New Zealand , Norway and Switzerland .

= = Track listing = =

All lyrics written by Eddie Vedder , all music composed by Vedder , except where noted .

= = Personnel = =

Pearl Jam

Jeff Ament ? bass , background vocals , bowed guitar and keyboard on " Pendulum "

Matt Cameron ? drums , background vocals

Stone Gossard ? guitar , background vocals , bongo drums on " Pendulum "

Mike McCready ? guitar , background vocals , six string bass on " My Father 's Son "

Eddie Vedder ? lead vocals , guitar , ukulele on " Sleeping By Myself "

Additional personnel

Ann Marie Calhoun ? strings

Boom Gaspar ? piano , keyboards

Brendan O 'Brien ? piano on " Future Days " , mixing , production

= = Charts and certifications = =

= = Release history = =