

= Pinkerton (album) =

Pinkerton is the second studio album by the American rock band Weezer , released on September 24 , 1996 on DGC Records . After abandoning plans for a rock opera titled Songs from the Black Hole , Weezer recorded Pinkerton between songwriter Rivers Cuomo 's terms at Harvard University , where he wrote much of the album .

To better capture their live sound , Weezer produced Pinkerton themselves , creating a darker , more abrasive album than their 1994 self @-@ titled debut . Cuomo 's lyrics express disillusionment with the rock lifestyle ; the album is named after the character BF Pinkerton from Giacomo Puccini 's 1904 opera Madama Butterfly , whom Cuomo described as an " asshole American sailor similar to a touring rock star " . Like the opera , the album contains references to Japanese culture .

Pinkerton debuted at number 19 on the US Billboard 200 and fell short of sales expectations after the success of Weezer 's debut . It initially received mixed reviews , but went on to achieve cult status and wide acclaim years later ; the 2010 " Deluxe Edition " reissue holds a perfect score on aggregate review website Metacritic . The album produced three singles : " El Scorcho " , " The Good Life " and " Pink Triangle " . It is the last Weezer album to feature bassist Matt Sharp .

= = Background = =

In 1994 , after the multi @-@ platinum success of Weezer 's self @-@ titled debut album , Weezer took a break from touring for the Christmas holidays . In his home state of Connecticut , songwriter Rivers Cuomo began preparing material for Weezer 's next album using an 8 @-@ track recorder . His original concept was a science fiction rock opera titled Songs from the Black Hole that expressed his mixed feelings about success . Weezer developed Songs from the Black Hole through intermittent recording sessions throughout 1995 .

In March , Cuomo , who was born with one leg shorter than the other , had extensive leg surgery to lengthen his right leg , followed by painful physiotherapy sessions . This affected his songwriting , as he would spend long periods hospitalized , unable to walk without the use of a cane , and under the influence of painkillers . In the same period , Cuomo applied to study classical composition at Harvard University with an application letter describing his disillusionment with the rock lifestyle , writing :

Fans ask me all the time what it is like to be a rock star . I can tell that they are dreaming , as I dreamed , when I was a kid , of someday ruling the world with a rock band . I tell them the same thing I would tell any young rock @-@ star @-@ to @-@ be [...] you will get lonely . You will meet two hundred people every night , but each conversation will generally last approximately thirty seconds , and consist of you trying to convince them that no , you do not want their underwear . Then you will be alone again , in your motel room . Or you will be on your bus , in your little space , trying to kill the nine hours it takes to get to the next city , whichever city it is . This is the life of a rock star .

Cuomo felt frustrated by the " limitations of rock " . Every night after performing with Weezer , he would listen to Giacomo Puccini 's 1904 opera Madama Butterfly ; the " depth of emotion and sadness and tragedy " inspired him to go further with his music . By May 1996 , Cuomo 's songwriting had become " darker , more visceral and exposed , less playful " , and the Songs from the Black Hole concept was abandoned . Weezer 's second album would instead feature songs written while Cuomo was at Harvard , chronicling his loneliness and frustration , or what Cuomo referred to as his " dark side " .

= = Recording = =

In 1995 , a few days before Cuomo left to study at Harvard University , Weezer gathered for two weeks of recording at New York City 's Electric Lady Studios where they had recorded their debut , and tracked the songs " Why Bother ? " , " Getchoo " , " No Other One " and " Tired of Sex " . Weezer hoped to explore " deeper , darker , more experimental stuff " which would better resemble

the band 's live sound ; to this end , they decided against hiring a producer , feeling that " the best way for us to sound like ourselves is to record on our own . " To give the album a live , " raw " feel , Cuomo , guitarist Brian Bell and bassist Matt Sharp recorded their vocals in tandem around three microphones rather than overdubbing them separately .

While Cuomo was at Harvard , other Weezer members worked on side projects . Sharp promoted the debut album by his band The Rentals . Bell and drummer Patrick Wilson worked on material for their bands the Space Twins and the Special Goodness , respectively . In January 1996 , during Cuomo 's winter break , Weezer regrouped for a two @-@ week recording session at Sound City Studios in Van Nuys , California to complete the songs they had worked on the previous August . After recording new songs " El Scorcho " and " Pink Triangle " , Weezer separated again while Cuomo returned to Harvard .

During Cuomo 's 1996 spring break , Weezer regrouped at Sound City Studios and recorded three new songs , " The Good Life " , " Across the Sea " and " Falling for You " , before Cuomo returned to Harvard for his university finals . The band put the finishing touches on the album in the summer of 1996 in Los Angeles . Two additional tracks , " I Swear It 's True " and " Getting Up and Leaving " , were abandoned prior to the mixing process .

= = Writing and composition = =

Pinkerton features a darker , more abrasive sound than Weezer 's debut . Writing from a more direct and personal perspective , Cuomo wrote of his dysfunctional relationships , sexual frustration , and struggles with identity . The album charts his " cycle between ' lame @-@ o and partier ' . " At just under thirty @-@ five minutes , Pinkerton is , according to Cuomo , " short by design . "

The album 's first song , " Tired of Sex " , written before the release of the Blue Album , has Cuomo describing meaningless sex encounters with groupies , reciting his list of encounters and wondering why true love eludes him . " Across the Sea " was inspired by a letter Cuomo received from a Japanese fan : " When I got the letter , I fell in love with her . It was such a great letter . I was very lonely at the time , but at the same time I was very depressed that I would never meet her . " Second single " The Good Life " chronicles the rebirth of Cuomo after an identity crisis as an Ivy League loner . Cuomo , who felt isolated at Harvard , wrote the song after " becoming frustrated with that hermit 's life I was leading , the ascetic life . And I think I was starting to become frustrated with my whole dream about purifying myself and trying to live like a monk or an intellectual and going to school and holding out for this perfect , ideal woman . And so I wrote the song . And I started to turn around and come back the other way . " Lead single " El Scorcho " addresses Cuomo 's shyness and inability to approach a girl while at Harvard ; he explained that the song " is more about me , because at that point I hadn 't even talked to the girl , I didn 't really know much about her . " The album 's final single , " Pink Triangle " , describes a man who falls in love and wants to get married , but discovers the object of his devotion is a lesbian .

= = Themes = =

Pinkerton is named after the character BF Pinkerton from Madama Butterfly , who marries a Japanese woman named Butterfly . Calling him an " asshole American sailor similar to a touring rock star " , Cuomo felt the character was " the perfect symbol for the part of myself that I am trying to come to terms with on this album . " Other titles considered included Playboy and Diving into the Wreck (after a poem by Adrienne Rich) .

Like Madama Butterfly , Pinkerton views Japanese culture from the perspective of an outsider who considers Japan fragile and sensual ; the album infuses the Japanese allusions with its narrator 's romantic disappointments and sexual frustration . Cuomo wrote that Pinkerton " is really the clash of East vs West . My hindu , zen , kyokushin , self @-@ denial , self @-@ abnegation , no @-@ emotion , cool @-@ faced side versus my Italian @-@ American heavy metal side . " He stated that " the ten songs are sequenced in the order in which I wrote them (with two minor exceptions) . So as a whole , the album kind of tells the story of my struggle with my inner Pinkerton . "

== = Artwork == =

The artwork on the album 's cover is Kambara yoru no yuki (" Night snow at Kambara ") , print number 16 in Japanese ukiyo @-@ e artist Hiroshige 's popular 53 Stations of the T?kaid? series . Lyrics from Madama Butterfly are printed on the Pinkerton CD in their original Italian : " Everywhere in the world , the roving Yankee takes his pleasure and his profit , indifferent to all risks . He drops anchor at random ... "

Behind the album 's CD tray is a map with the title " Isola della farfalla e penisola di cane " (Italian for " Island of the Butterfly and Peninsula of Dog ") ; on the map are a ship named USS Pinkerton and " Mykel and Carli Island " , an allusion to Weezer 's fan club founders . The map includes the names of some of Cuomo 's influences , including Howard Stern , Yngwie Malmsteen , Brian Wilson , Lou Barlow , Joe Matt , Camille Paglia and Ace Frehley .

== = Release and promotion == =

Geffen A & R rep Todd Sullivan described Pinkerton as a " very brave record , " but worried : " What sort of light does this put the band in ? It could have been interpreted as them being a disposable pop band . " The label was pleased with the record and felt that " no one 's going to be disappointed " .

Weezer turned down a video treatment for lead single " El Scorcho " proposed by Spike Jonze , who had previously helped raise the band 's status with his videos for " Undone ? The Sweater Song " and " Buddy Holly " . Cuomo explained : " I really don 't want the songs to come across untainted this time around ... I really want to communicate my feelings directly and because I was so careful in writing that way . I 'd hate for the video to kinda misrepresent the song , or exaggerate certain aspects . " The final video featured the band playing in an assembly hall in Los Angeles , surrounded by light fixtures flashing in time to the music . Mark Romanek , the video 's director , quit after numerous arguments with Cuomo , leaving Cuomo to edit the video himself . The video debuted on MTV 's 120 Minutes and received moderate airplay .

A day before Pinkerton was to be released on September 24 , 1996 , a restraining order was obtained against the band and Geffen by Encino , California @-@ based security firm Pinkerton 's Inc . The company sued Weezer and Geffen for alleged federal trademark infringement , claiming they were trying to capitalize on the company 's reputation . Under the terms of the restraining order , which had Pinkerton 's Inc seeking two million dollars in damages , Weezer would be kept from " selling , distributing , or advertising an album with the name Pinkerton . " Geffen spokesman Dennis Dennehy defended the title , arguing that " to Weezer , Pinkerton is a character in Puccini 's opera Madama Butterfly ... It was not meant to be aimed at any sort of corporate entity . " Cuomo wrote a six @-@ page paper defending his choice of the title , explaining " why I chose it , and how it works for the album , and how it 's essential . " The case was thrown out of court after the judge determined that " the hardship of not issuing the Pinkerton disc would be greater for Geffen than any hardship Pinkerton 's Inc or its shareholders might incur from consumers who mistakenly presume the company has anything to do with the album . "

As it became apparent that Pinkerton was not meeting expected sales figures , Weezer felt pressure to make another music video more to the liking of MTV . The music video for " The Good Life " , directed by Jonathan Dayton and Valerie Faris , stars Mary Lynn Rajs kub as a pizza delivery girl and uses simultaneous camera angles appearing on screen as a fractured full image . Geffen rush @-@ released the video to try to save the commercially failing album , but was not successful .

In October 1996 , the band toured the Far East with concert appearances in Australia , New Zealand and Japan . Afterwards , the band flew home to Los Angeles , where Patrick Wilson and Matt Sharp made a promotional appearance on the nationally syndicated radio show Modern Rock Live in an attempt to improve the album 's standing on the US album charts . A few days later , on November 1 , Weezer launched its tour of North America at the Ventura Theatre in Ventura ,

California . On November 6 , Weezer performed an acoustic set at Shorecrest High School in Seattle due to a contest won by a student . A few of the songs performed at the acoustic set were released in 1997 on the Good Life EP . Weezer continued to tour until Christmas 1996 .

== = " Deluxe edition " and demo releases == =

In July 2009 , Karl Koch , the webmaster for Weezer 's website , revealed that Weezer was preparing a " deluxe edition " of Pinkerton . On November 20 , 2010 , the reissue debuted at number six on the Billboard Catalog Albums chart .

On December 12 , 2011 , Cuomo released the third album of his demos , Alone III : The Pinkerton Years . It comprises demos recorded between 1993 and 1996 , when Cuomo was studying at Harvard and writing material for Pinkerton and the abandoned Songs from the Black Hole project . The album was included with a book , The Pinkerton Diaries , which collects Cuomo 's writings from the era .

== Reception ==

== = Initial == =

Pinkerton peaked at number 19 on the US Billboard charts , falling far short of sales of its multi @-@ platinum predecessor , The Blue Album . Initial reviews were mixed . Jeff Gordinier of Entertainment Weekly criticized Weezer 's choice to self @-@ produce the album and dismissed it as " a collection of get @-@ down party anthems for agoraphobics " . Writing for Rolling Stone , Rob O 'Connor called the songwriting " juvenile " and described the song " Tired of Sex " as " aimless " . Rolling Stone readers voted the album the third worst of 1996 .

Melody Maker praised Pinkerton 's music , but advised the listener " to ignore the lyrics entirely . " NME praised the album , writing that " by the time the affecting acoustic lament ' Butterfly ' wafts in like Big Star at a wildlife protection meeting , Pinkerton starts feeling like a truly moving album . " Pitchfork awarded the album 7 @.@ 5 out of 10 , writing that " Pinkerton might actually be a bit much for fans who were wooed with the clean production and immediately accessible sound of these guys ' debut , but if given a chance , it might surprise even some anti @-@ Weezer folk . "

Cuomo was embarrassed by the album 's mixed reception and the confessional nature of its songs . In August 1997 , he wrote : " This has been a tough year . It 's not just that the world has said Pinkerton isn 't worth a shit , but that the Blue album wasn 't either . It was a fluke . It was the [" Buddy Holly "] video . I 'm a shitty songwriter . " In 2001 , he told Entertainment Weekly : " It 's a hideous record ... It was such a hugely painful mistake that happened in front of hundreds of thousands of people and continues to happen on a grander and grander scale and just won 't go away . It 's like getting really drunk at a party and spilling your guts in front of everyone and feeling incredibly great and cathartic about it , and then waking up the next morning and realizing what a complete fool you made of yourself . "

== = Retrospect == =

Despite its mixed initial reception , Pinkerton has had enduring sales ; by August 2009 , it had sold 852 @, @ 000 copies in the United States and was certified gold . In later years it garnered critical acclaim and cult status through internet word @-@ of @-@ mouth , and eventually came to be considered among Weezer 's best work by fans and critics .

In 2002 , Rolling Stone readers voted Pinkerton the 16th greatest album of all time . In 2004 , Rolling Stone gave the album a new review , awarding it five stars out of five and adding it to the " Rolling Stone Hall of Fame " . In 2005 , Spin named it number 61 in its list of the 100 best albums from 1985 to 2005 . In 2003 , Pitchfork placed Pinkerton at # 53 on their " Top 100 Albums of the 1990s " list , and also gave it a perfect rating . In 2007 , Drowned in Sound praised it as " the

ultimate break @-@ up album , the best unrequited love album and the greatest collection of confused emotions captured in the universe ... EVER ! " Guitar World ranked it # 76 on its list of the " Top 100 Guitar Albums of All @-@ Time " . New Zealand 's The Movement placed it # 12 on its list of " The 101 Best Albums of the 90s " and Pure Pop of Mexico ranked it # 21 on its list of " The 50 Best Albums of the 90s . " It received perfect scores from both AllMusic and Tiny Mix Tapes , the latter calling it " one of the best albums of the 20th century . " The 2010 " Deluxe Edition " reissue holds a perfect 100 out of 100 score (indicating " universal acclaim ") on aggregate review website Metacritic .

By 2008 , Cuomo had reconsidered the album , saying : " Pinkerton 's great . It 's super @-@ deep , brave , and authentic . Listening to it , I can tell that I was really going for it when I wrote and recorded a lot of those songs . " In 2010 , Brian Bell told The Aquarian Weekly : " Pinkerton has definitely taken on a life of its own and became more successful and more accepted ... As an artist , you just have to do what you believe in at the time , whether it ? s accepted or not . You just have to keep going with it . " In 2015 , following the Pinkerton reissue and the " Memories " tour , in which Weezer performed Blue and Pinkerton in their entirety , Cuomo said :

The experience of learning those songs again , singing them every night , working on them with the guys , and then being in a relatively small venue with 1 @,@ 000 of the most hardcore Weezer fans and hearing them sing every syllable , seeing them air @-@ drum all the fills ? it was such an amazing experience and so different from what we 'd been doing the years before that ... So it was a great feeling of validation from the fans , for this album that was so personal to me and had been such a source of pain for years .

Pinkerton has been influential on acts including Manchester Orchestra , Yellowcard , Saves the Day , Taking Back Sunday , The Ataris , Thursday , the Used , The Brobecks , Dashboard Confessional , The Promise Ring , The Long Goodbye , and Rye Coalition .

= = = Accolades = = =

Pinkerton has featured in several music publication " best of " lists .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Rivers Cuomo , except where noted .

= = = Deluxe Edition = = =

= = Sales chart positions = =

= = = Album = = =

= = = Singles = = =

= = Personnel = =

All information is derived from the booklet enclosed with the album .

Weezer

Rivers Cuomo ? guitar , vocals , keyboards , xylophone

Patrick Wilson ? drums

Brian Bell ? guitar , backing vocals

Matt Sharp ? bass , backing vocals

Karl Koch ? percussion on " Butterfly "
Production