

= Hail to the Thief =

Hail to the Thief (also referred to as Hail to the Thief , (or , The Gloaming .) by the album 's liner notes) is the sixth studio album by the English rock band Radiohead , released on 9 June 2003 by Parlophone internationally and by Capitol Records in the United States . It was produced by Radiohead 's longtime producer Nigel Godrich . Following the electronic and jazz styles of Kid A (2000) and Amnesiac (2001) , the album returned to the guitar rock of Radiohead 's earlier albums , but retained electronic elements such as drum machines , synthesisers and digital manipulation . To avoid the protracted recording sessions of previous albums , the band recorded it quickly , employing a live , " spontaneous " approach .

Many of the album 's lyrics were written in response to the War on Terror and the resurgence of right @-@ wing politics in the Western part of the world after the turn of the millennium . Songwriter and vocalist Thom Yorke said the album expresses " frustration and powerlessness and anger , and the huge gap between the people that put themselves in control and the people that allegedly voted for them . "

Despite a high @-@ profile internet leak ten weeks before its release , Hail to the Thief debuted at number one in the United Kingdom and number three in the United States . It produced three charting singles : " There There " , " Go to Sleep " and " 2 + 2 = 5 " . It is certified platinum in the UK , Canada and the US . It received positive reviews and became the fifth consecutive Radiohead album to be nominated for the Grammy Award for Best Alternative Music Album . It was Radiohead 's last studio album released as part of their six @-@ album recording contract with Parlophone and Capitol Records .

= = Background = =

With their previous albums Kid A (2000) and Amnesiac (2001) , Radiohead replaced their earlier guitar @-@ led rock sound with a more electronic style . On tour in 2000 and 2001 , the band learned how to perform the electronic music live , combining synthetic sounds with conventional rock instrumentation . Songwriter Thom Yorke said : " Even with electronics , there is an element of spontaneous performance in using them . It was the tension between what 's human and what 's coming from the machines . That was stuff we were getting into . " He stated that Radiohead did not want to make a " big creative leap or statement " with their next album .

In early 2002 , after the Amnesiac tour had finished , Yorke sent his bandmates CDs containing demos of songs he was considering for Radiohead 's sixth album . The three CDs , titled The Gloaming , Episcoval and Hold Your Prize , comprised electronic music and piano and guitar sketches . Radiohead had tried to record some of the songs , such as " I Will " and " A Wolf at the Door " , in the joint sessions for Kid A and Amnesiac , but were not satisfied with the results . The band spent May and June 2002 arranging and rehearsing the songs before performing many of them on their tour of Spain and Portugal in July and August .

= = Recording = =

In September 2002 Radiohead moved to the Ocean Way Recording studios in Hollywood , Los Angeles with producer Nigel Godrich and artist Stanley Donwood , who have both worked with the band since their second album , The Bends (1995) . The location was suggested by Godrich , who had used the studio to produce records by Travis and Beck and thought it would be a " good change of scenery " for Radiohead . Yorke said : " We were like , ' Do we want to fly halfway around the world to do this ? ' But it was terrific , because we worked really hard . We did a track a day . It was sort of like holiday camp . "

Radiohead had created Kid A and Amnesiac through a years @-@ long process of recording and editing that drummer Phil Selway described as " manufacturing music in the studio " . For their next album , the band sought to capture a more immediate , " live " sound . Yorke told MTV : " The last two studio records were a real headache . We had spent so much time looking at computers and

grids , we were like , that 's enough , we can 't do that any more . This time , we used computers , but they had to actually be in the room with all the gear . So everything was about performance , like staging a play . "

Most electronic elements were not overdubbed but recorded live in the studio . Greenwood used the music programming language Max to sample and manipulate the band 's playing in real time , and continued to use modular synthesisers and the ondes Martenot , an early theremin @-@ like electronic instrument he first used on Kid A. After using effects pedals heavily on previous albums , he mostly used clean guitar sounds to see if he could " come up with interesting things " without them .

Radiohead tried to work quickly and spontaneously , avoiding procrastination and over @-@ analysis . Yorke was forced to write lyrics differently , as he did not have time to rewrite them in the studio ; for some songs , he returned to the method of cutting up words and arranging them randomly he had employed for Kid A and Amnesiac . Greenwood said : " We didn 't really have time to be stressed about what we did . We got to the end of the second week before we even heard what we did on the first two days , and didn 't even remember recording it or who was playing things . Which is a magical way of doing things . " The approach protected against the tension of previous sessions ; O 'Brien told Rolling Stone that Hail to the Thief was the first Radiohead album " where , at the end of making it , we haven 't wanted to kill each other . "

Inspired by the Beatles , Radiohead tried to keep the songs succinct . The opening track , " 2 + 2 = 5 " , was initially recorded as a studio test , and was finished in two hours . Radiohead struggled to record " There There " ; after rerecording it in their Oxfordshire studio , Yorke was so relieved to have captured the song he wept , feeling it was the band 's best work . Radiohead had attempted to record an electronic version of " I Will " in the Kid A and Amnesiac sessions , but abandoned it as " dodgy Kraftwerk " ; instead they used components of this recording to create " Like Spinning Plates " on Amnesiac . For Hail to the Thief , the band sought to " get to the core of what 's good about the song " and not be distracted by production details or new sounds , settling on a stripped @-@ back arrangement .

Radiohead recorded most of Hail to the Thief in two weeks , with additional recording and mixing at Radiohead 's studio in Oxfordshire , England in late 2002 and early 2003 . In contrast to the relaxed Los Angeles sessions , which Godrich described as " very fruitful " , mixing and sequencing the album created conflict . Yorke said : " We had massive arguments about how it was put together and mixed . Making it was a piece of piss , for the first time it was really good fun to make a record ... but we finished it and nobody could let go of it . ' Cause there was a long sustained period during which we lived with it but it wasn 't completely finished , so you get attached to versions and we had big rows about it . " Godrich estimated that rough mixes from the Los Angeles sessions were used for a third of the final album .

= = Lyrics and themes = =

Hail to the Thief 's lyrics were influenced by what Yorke called " the general sense of ignorance and intolerance and panic and stupidity " following the 2000 election of US President George W. Bush . He took words and phrases from discussion of the unfolding War on Terror and used them in the album 's lyrics and artwork . He denied any intent to make a " political statement " with the songs , and told the Toronto Star : " I desperately tried not to write anything political , anything expressing the deep , profound terror I 'm living with day to day . But it 's just fucking there , and eventually you have to give it up and let it happen . "

At the time the father of an infant son , Yorke adopted a strategy of " distilling " the political themes into " childlike simplicity " . He took phrases from fairy tales and folklore , such as the tale of Chicken Little , and children 's literature and television he shared with his son , including the 1970s TV series Bagpuss , whose creator Oliver Postgate is thanked in the liner notes . Parenthood made Yorke concerned about the condition of the world and how it could affect future generations . Jonny Greenwood felt Yorke 's lyrics expressed " confusion and escape , like ' I 'm going to stay at home and look after the people I care about , buy a month 's supply of food ' . "