

= Slap @-@ Happy =

Slap @-@ Happy is the sixth and final studio album by the American rock band L7 . It was released on August 24 , 1999 by Bong Load Records in collaboration with Wax Tadpole Records , an independent record label that the band formed after being dropped by Reprise Records in 1997 . L7 recorded the album as a trio formed by founding members Donita Sparks and Suzi Gardner , and longtime drummer Demetra Plakas following the departure of bassist Gail Greenwood . It was made with a low budget and produced by the band and their friend Brian Haught .

Unlike previous L7 albums , Slap @-@ Happy more varied and slower @-@ paced songs , with some of which borrowing elements from other genres like hip hop . Upon release , the album received generally mixed reviews from music critics and suffered dismal sales partly due to the poor distribution and support by Bong Load . Some critics found the album predictable and too similar to previous L7 albums , but others highlighted certain songs for their nifty musical style .

= = Background and recording = =

Slap @-@ Happy is the follow @-@ up to L7 's 1997 album The Beauty Process : Triple Platinum . Like its predecessors , The Beauty Process was released by Slash Records in collaboration with Reprise , a major record label owned by the Warner Music Group . After the release of The Beauty Process , bassist Gail Greenwood , who replaced founding member Jennifer Finch in 1996 , left the band due to uncoordinated schedules ; Greenwood was rooted in Rhode Island , while L7 was based in Los Angeles , California . L7 would then continue as a trio formed by founding members Donita Sparks and Suzi Gardner , and longtime drummer Demetra Plakas . In 1998 , the band released a live album , Live : Omaha to Osaka , through the independent record label Man 's Ruin Records .

After being dropped by Reprise in 1997 , L7 was interested in maintaining an independent , do it yourself approach . Sparks and Gardner explained that the band wanted to release an album in 1999 , and if they opted for another major label opportunity , they would certainly have to wait until 2000 for a release slot . As a result , the band signed a deal with Bong Load Records and formed Wax Tadpole Records , an independent record label named after the first song of their self @-@ titled debut album . Although the band had left the indie music scene before due to distribution problems , Sparks said that she would be watching the Bong Load deal to ensure the distribution of Slap @-@ Happy , noting that " there 's nothing more painful to tour for a record and the fans not being able to find your record in stores . "

Most of the songs on Slap @-@ Happy were recorded before the band decided to form Wax Tadpole . Sparks and Gardner wrote all the songs , usually at Gardner 's home , even though the whole group contributed to the album in one form or another . Unlike its predecessor , Slap @-@ Happy was made with a low budget . According to Sparks , " We utilized a lot of home studios , did a lot of our tracking ourselves , used a lot of first takes . I think there 's a lot of life in this record , and yet I think when we started our own label we were fearing having to take a major step down in production because of the financial aspects . " The album was produced by Brian Haught , a friend of the band who let the band use his studio " just out of the kindness of his heart . " It was recorded and mixed at Synical Labs , PCS Studios , Sound City , de Prume Studios , Sonors Studios , and King Sound and Pictures in Los Angeles . Audio mastering took place at Precision Mastering in Los Angeles .

= = Music and lyrics = =

Slap @-@ Happy was considered more varied than previous L7 albums . Although the album features several songs with aggressive guitar riffs that are reminiscent of the band 's previous releases , as seen in the tracks " On My Rockin ' Machine " , " Long Green " and " Mantra Down " , it also contains slow @-@ paced and guitar @-@ driven ballads like " Livin ' Large " and " Freezer Burn " . The former song was described by Marc Weingarten of Rolling Stone as " a kind of rallying

cry for the indie @-@ rock underclass " , while the latter was seen as a melodic song that " juxtaposes harsh words delivered in mellow , floating vocals . " Slap @-@ Happy also contains songs that borrow elements from genres other than rock . For example , the song " Little One " contains elements of both polka and country music . As Sparks noted , " We 're all into all kinds of music , but I listen to very little rock , actually . Our approach was to pretty much do what we 've always done , but we 're not concerned with sticking with a particular style . There 's diversity in our songwriting . "

The track " Freeway " , which was referred by the band as " the feel bad dance hit of the year " , features a hip hop @-@ influenced style with sampled voices . Its lyrics were inspired by an article in Los Angeles Times about a man who stopped his truck on a Los Angeles freeway and committed suicide after litting his truck on fire and obstructing the traffic . The sampled voices were taken from Casio keyboards that Sparks and Suzi had previously bought at a Guitar Center store . The album features humorous and irreverent lyrics . Sparks noted that many songs are " double @-@ sided . There 's a lot of masking of fuck @-@ you 's going on . " She also said that Slap @-@ Happy was " almost a spit in the eye of our label , who had dropped us . It was like , ' Fuck you , we ? re going to make another record anyway , so fuck off ! ' Some of the writing on [the] record is very angry , because we were pissed . " The opening track " Crackpot Baby " , which is the first L7 song that features a three @-@ part vocal harmony , features " unforgiving lyrics about plastic L.A. types " , while " Stick to the Plan " is about a " chronic masturbator / With love in his eyes " .

= = Promotion and release = =

Slap @-@ Happy was released on August 24 , 1999 on vinyl and CD . A different version of " Freeway " was released by the online record label Atomic Pop in February 1999 . To promote the album , a plane flew over the crowd during the Lilith Fair concert tour at the Rose Bowl stadium in Pasadena , California on July 17 , 1999 , with a banner that read : " Bored ? Tired ? Try L7 . " The following day , an airplane towed a banner over the crowd during the Warped Tour at the Stone Pony lot in Asbury Park , New Jersey . The banner read : " Warped Needs More Beaver , Love L7 . " The band supported the album with a tour across the US that started on August 15 , 1999 in San Diego , California and ended on September 24 , 1999 in Cleveland Heights , Ohio . Bassist Janis Tanaka , formerly of the San Francisco band Stone Fox , joined the band as part of the touring group . The band also toured across Europe in 2000 . Unlike previous L7 albums , Slap @-@ Happy did not chart in either the US or the UK . In 2008 , Sparks revealed that the album suffered dismal sales partly due to the poor distribution and support by Bong Load .

= = Critical reception = =

Upon release , Slap @-@ Happy received generally mixed reviews from music critics . Marc Weingarten of Rolling Stone praised the band for " doing punk metal right " , commenting that Slap @-@ Happy " is all hopped @-@ up , pared @-@ down riffage with no apologies or gratuitous change @-@ ups . " Q magazine highlighted the album for its " distinctive punk noise " , which " stays roughly the same but evolves enough to be interesting . " In contrast , Craig Daniels of Exclaim ! criticized the album 's sound for being " sterile and lacking in energy " compared to previous L7 albums , but overall considered Slap @-@ Happy to be " a fairly solid record " .

Entertainment Weekly editor Natasha Stovall highlighted the album 's different approach , stating that although the " neo @-@ Go @-@ Go 's vibe " of songs like " Livin ' Large " and " Little One " can be disappointing " for those addicted to the ultra @-@ macha @-@ punk throb of L7 watersheds " , Slap @-@ Happy 's " harmonious pop sweetness " has " a super @-@ catchy , Joan Jett @-@ meets @-@ the @-@ Breeders feel that zestfully floors the accelerator . " Jason Hardy of Daily Nebraskan stated similar pros , noting that the album 's new style introduced a " groovy " side of L7 that " most probably didn 't know existed . " AllMusic 's Stephen Thomas Erlewine described the album as " a respectable but predictable effort " , stating that it " leaves very little lasting impression " even though " a few of the songs hit hard , and the band sounds energetic and

muscular . "

Not all reviews were favorable , though . Erik Himmelsbach of Spin criticized Slap @-@ Happy for essentially being the same as all of the band 's previous albums , commenting " What was once fast and loose and dump now sounds lazy and stupid " . Raoul Hernandez of The Austin Chronicle heavily criticized the second half of the album for being " one long , nasal , wise @-@ ass line after wise @-@ ass line from Donita Sparks , who [...] is quickly becoming self @-@ parody . " Although the album received a mixed reaction from media outlets , Sparks retrospectively regards Slap @-@ Happy as " a good record " .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Donita Sparks and Suzi Gardner .

= = Personnel = =

Credits are adapted from the album 's liner notes .