

= Anniemal =

Anniemal is the debut album by Norwegian recording artist Annie . It was first released by 679 Recordings in September 2004 . Annie began recording music in 1999 with her boyfriend , Tore Kroknes , who died in 2001 . She returned to recording later that year , collaborating with Richard X , Röyksopp , and Timo Kaukolampi .

The album combines Annie 's thin , airy vocals with heavily layered beats . It is heavily influenced by 1980s dance @-@ pop . Upon release , the album was successful in Norway . Blogs leaked tracks from Anniemal before it was released internationally , and publications from other countries soon praised the album for its blissful but melancholic sound .

Before releasing the album internationally in 2005 , Annie 's record label 679 Recordings was not confident in the album 's ability to achieve commercial success overseas , so it did not heavily promote Anniemal . The album eventually sold over 100 @, @ 000 copies worldwide . It yielded four singles : " Chewing Gum " , " Heartbeat " , " Happy Without You " , and " Always Too Late " .

= = Background and development = =

In the late 1990s , Annie held a monthly DJ night called Pop Till You Drop with friend Frøken Blytt in her hometown of Bergen , Norway . There she met producer Tore Kroknes , and the two began dating . Annie and Kroknes borrowed a small studio from downtempo duo Röyksopp to record her debut single " The Greatest Hit " . The song , which uses a sample of Madonna 's 1982 dance @-@ pop single " Everybody " , had a limited edition release in 1999 . It became an underground hit at clubs in Norway and Britain , resulting in offers for record deals . The two recorded Annie 's second single , titled " I Will Get On " . She focused on vocals and melodies in music , and Kroknes concentrated on production , influenced by techno , disco and house music . As she began to work on her debut album , Kroknes became ill due to a heart defect . He died eighteen months later , in April 2001 . Because of their plan to make the album together , Annie struggled with the idea of collaborating with anyone else and stopped work on it entirely .

Half a year passed before Annie returned to music . She asked Timo Kaukolampi from Finnish electronic group Op : I Bastards to DJ in Bergen . Starting with a song titled " Kiss Me " , he had Annie contribute vocals to some of his tracks . She asked Kaukolampi to work on the album , and he produced nine of its songs for her . She could not afford to rent a studio , so Annie recorded demos by asking to use local studios at night or borrowing one owned by her friend . In late 2003 , Annie signed with 679 Recordings , and the advance enabled her to complete the record . Producer Richard X , impressed with " The Greatest Hit " , asked her to record vocals for his debut album Richard X Presents His X @-@ Factor Vol . 1 . In exchange , he contributed " Chewing Gum " and " Me Plus One " , both written with Hannah Robinson . Annie also worked with Röyksopp , who co @-@ wrote and produced three songs on the album .

Rather than recording and selecting from a large number of songs , Annie stopped after around thirteen and compiled the tracklist . She selected the title Anniemal based on a suggestion by Kroknes . The two had planned on writing a song titled " Anniemal " , so she chose it as the album 's title because to her , " it just made sense . Anniemal is simple and easy and good . "

= = Composition = =

When working on songs , Annie was involved with the whole recording and production processes , with a focus on the melodies . Annie stated that while promoting the album , she wanted to make sure people knew of her involvement in the album 's writing and production . Of its twelve songs , ten were co @-@ written by Annie . She stated that although singing songs written by someone else might not feel less personal , " It 's special to be on the stage and actually sing something you had done . " With respect to her involvement in the songwriting process , Annie referred to herself as " a bit of a control freak " .

The lyrics of Anniemal generally describe falling in or out of love . Annie 's vocals are thin and

breathy , working within a narrow vocal range . Reviewers noted a sense of melancholy in the vocals , suggesting that it could be attributed to the death of Kroknes . Annie acknowledged that none of the songs " are directly happy " and that some are " happy but still a bit melancholy . " She stated that she thought bittersweet melodies " [sound] timeless ? Very Scandinavian of me ! " She insisted , however , that she tries to write songs that are cheerful :

" For me , it 's really easy to write depressive songs and that 's why I never do that . I try to do songs that are a bit happier and a bit more complicated . I think there are too many songwriters writing sad , depressive songs , and I find it really boring , listening to music where people are just complaining . People should stop whining ! I find it much more challenging to make songs that are pop songs , to make happy songs , and that 's why I like to do it . I really like to make quite hopeful , happy music with a little bit of melancholy in it , with a little spice of melancholy . "

Anniemal focuses on heavily layered beats , with a strong 1980s influence . Annie was influenced by 1980s dance @-@ pop , and on " No Easy Love " , she includes a sample of Shakatak 's 1982 song " Easier Said Than Done " . Unlike many of her contemporaries , Annie avoids using an ironic or kitschy in her take on 1980s music . The songs ' styles span genres including bubblegum pop , electro , disco , R & B , dance @-@ pop , and rock . Annie 's DJing experiences taught her about sound and production and had an impact on her music . She stated that she wanted to make a pop album that would not quickly become dated , " an album that you could listen to in five years and it wouldn 't sound terrible . " Annie considered excluding " Greatest Hit " from Anniemal to achieve this but ultimately included it because she felt it did not sound as if it were five years old .

= = Critical reception = =

Anniemal received acclaim from music critics . At Metacritic , which assigns a normalised rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics , the album received an average score of 81 , based on 23 reviews , which indicates " universal acclaim " . Scott Plagenhoef of Pitchfork Media referred to the songs as a " dozen slices of stylish , sophisticated electro @-@ pop , crisp tracks that move between the fizzy and the woozy , all anchored by Annie 's breathy (sometimes almost muted) vocals . " The site 's endorsement was uncommon during a period when sites covering independent music were often dismissive of pop acts . In his review for AllMusic , Andy Kellman described Anniemal as " cunning " but also " deeply affecting " . Dylan Hicks ' review for The Village Voice stated that the blogosphere and British music press overrated Anniemal but that " an overrated good record is still a good record " . Jody Rosen wrote for The New York Times that the album " is a true album , strong from top to bottom " and that " there is charm in [Annie 's] deadpan delivery , and her songwriting is full of the flair for melody for which Scandinavian pop is famous . " Rosen also contributed a review to Slate , where she noted that " other singers have made whole careers out of singles less winning than ' Chewing Gum , ' but [Anniemal] includes several other superb songs " . Kitty Empire 's review in The Observer stated that the album 's songs " boast a winning combination of innocence and experience , breezy blonde melodies and just @-@ so productions " . PopMatters ' Pierre Hamilton called Anniemal " riveting " for how " it lacks the waxy sheen " that listeners were used to hearing in manufactured pop music . However , a second PopMatters review , written by Rob Horning , criticised the album for using a similar formula to previous generations of electropop , adding that the result was " exquisitely empty ? enough to suck the feelings out of its listeners and leave them happily vacant , blank and unburdened . " In his review for Billboard magazine , Michael Paoletta described the album as " slinky and sensual , cool and classy , fun and fiery " and labeled it " one of the best debut albums of 2005 . "

Several reviewers drew parallels between mainstream pop acts and Annie . Entertainment Weekly 's Raymond Fiore called the album an " addictive " debut where Annie " flaunts whispery Kylie cool and old @-@ school @-@ Madonna cheekiness " , but added that " this sugar rush of an album proves ? candy is best consumed in moderation . " Hua Hsu of Blender magazine made a similar comparison , proclaiming Annie the " Kylie Minogue hipsters don 't have to feel guilty about liking " . Barry Walters of Rolling Stone touted how the album " comes packed with both instant surface fizz and quirky finesse that sustains repeated listenings " , and ending his review , " Goodbye , Britney .

Hello , Annie . "

Pitchfork listed Anniemal at number fifteen on its list of the top fifty albums of 2004 , stating that its strength was how " its downtime feels so decidedly personal " , and the album appeared at number 167 on Pitchfork 's list of the top 200 albums of the 2000s . The album was placed on Slant Magazine 's list of best albums of the 2000s at number twenty @-@ three . Rolling Stone ranked Anniemal number thirty @-@ nine on its " Top 50 Records of 2005 " list , exclaiming , " Hail the Norse goddess . "

= = Release and commercial performance = =

679 Recordings first released Anniemal in Norway on 28 September 2004 . The album debuted at its peak of number six on the Norwegian Albums Chart . It won in the pop category at the 2005 Alarm Prizes , and Annie won for newcomer of the year . She again won for Newcomer of the Year at Spellemannprisen 2005 , where she was invited to present an award .

Following the album 's Norwegian release , the songs were leaked onto the Internet , and some appeared on year @-@ end best @-@ of lists in other countries . Annie stated that she had not expected North American publications to show interest in the album because she thought " the record sounds really European . " The songs reached an international audience through online blogs , message boards , and file @-@ sharing networks before they had been released outside Scandinavia . This was more common for independent bands , and Annie became the first European dance @-@ pop musician to cultivate an underground fanbase this way .

679 released the album in the rest of Europe during early 2005 but was unsure how to categorise and market Anniemal . It asked Annie about artists like Goldfrapp whose audiences 679 thought it should target . Uncertain that the album 's Internet hype would significantly bolster the album 's sales , the label did not heavily promote it . In support of the album , Annie opened for English alternative dance band Saint Etienne at several June 2005 gigs in the United Kingdom . Annie had never performed her songs live before the release of Anniemal , so replicating the sound of more electronic songs like " Chewing Gum " became a long process . By September of that year , the album had sold 20 @,@ 000 copies .

For its 7 June 2005 American release , Anniemal was distributed by Big Beat Records . To promote the album , Annie performed a set of DJing gigs in the United States for the Anniemix Tour during late June and early July 2005 . She and Kaukolampi spun vinyl , and Annie performed her songs during the tour . Before the tour began , Anniemal was selling over one thousand copies per week in the US , and it went on to sell a total of 22 thousand copies there . Although it did not chart on the US Billboard 200 , Anniemal reached number thirteen on the Top Electronic Albums chart . When released in Australia the following year , the album failed to chart on the ARIA Albums Chart but peaked at number twenty @-@ five on the Dance Albums Chart . Anniemal sold a total of over 100 @,@ 000 copies worldwide .

= = Singles = =

" Chewing Gum " was released as the album 's lead single in September 2004 . Built around a retro beat by Richard X , the song uses chewing gum as a metaphor for men , with Annie singing " You spit it out when all the flavor has gone / Wrap him round your finger like you 're playing with gum " . It was the album 's most commercially successful single , reaching number eight on the Norwegian Singles Chart and number twenty @-@ five on the UK Singles Chart . It was also a critical success , listed thirty @-@ first on the 2004 Pazz & Jop list , a survey of several hundred music critics conducted by Robert Christgau .

" Heartbeat " was the second single released from Anniemal . It narrates a night of going to clubs with friends , using a beat symbolizing a heartbeat , which doubles its tempo when Annie 's persona catches the attention of her romantic interest on the dancefloor . Like " Chewing Gum " , it received acclaim from music critics . It was one place behind " Chewing Gum " on the Pazz & Jop list , and Pitchfork Media named it the best single of 2004 . However , it did not sell as well as " Chewing

Gum " , reaching number eighteen in Norway and fifty in the United Kingdom . " Happy Without You " and " Always Too Late " were released as the third and fourth singles in 2005 , but neither charted .

== Track listing ==

== Personnel ==

Credits adapted from Anniemal album liner notes .

== Charts ==

== Release history ==