

= The Number of the Beast (album) =

The Number of the Beast is the third studio album by the English heavy metal band Iron Maiden , released in March 1982 . It was their first release to feature vocalist Bruce Dickinson and their last with the late drummer Clive Burr .

The Number of the Beast met with considerable critical and commercial success and was a landmark release for the band ? becoming their first album to reach No. 1 in the UK Albums Chart , and be certified platinum in the US . The album also produced the singles " Run to the Hills " and " The Number of the Beast " , the former of which was the band 's first top @-@ ten UK single . The album was also controversial , particularly in the US , due to the religious nature of its lyrics and its artwork .

Since the release of The Number of the Beast and its subsequent tour , The Beast on the Road , " The Beast " has become an alternate name for Iron Maiden and was later used in the titles of some of their compilations and live releases , including Best of the Beast and Visions of the Beast .

= = Writing and recording = =

The Number of the Beast is Iron Maiden 's only album to include songwriting credits from Clive Burr and was the band 's first album to feature writing by guitarist Adrian Smith . In addition , the release saw Steve Harris adopt a different approach to writing , which would cater more for new vocalist Bruce Dickinson . The album 's producer Martin Birch remarked , " I simply didn 't think [former vocalist Paul Di 'Anno] was capable of handling lead vocals on some of the quite complicated directions I knew Steve wanted to explore ... When Bruce joined , it opened up the possibilities for the new album tremendously . "

According to several interviews , Dickinson was heavily involved in writing several of the album 's songs , and in particular the tracks " Children of the Damned " , " The Prisoner " and " Run to the Hills " . Due to his previous band Samson 's ongoing contractual issues , Dickinson could not legally take part in any songwriting for the record , and had to make what he called a " moral contribution " , which meant he was able to influence particular tracks , but not provide enough creative input so as to earn a writing credit . The recording and mixing of the album had to be completed in only five weeks , after the band had spent too long constructing the new songs . This was because the group were for the first time creating a new album from scratch , with very little material written prior to the record 's pre @-@ production stage .

Music press reports told stories of unexplained phenomena occurring during the sessions at Battery Studios , such as lights turning on and off of their own accord and the recording gear mysteriously breaking down . This all climaxed when Birch was involved in a car accident with a mini @-@ bus transporting a group of nuns , after which he was presented with a repair bill for £ 666 .

= = Songs = =

" Run to the Hills " was released as a single on 12 February 1982 , two weeks before Iron Maiden 's UK tour , acting as a preview for the forthcoming album , which would not be released until two days after the British dates ended . Released alongside a music video , made using live footage and clips from Buster Keaton films , the single performed remarkably well , earning the band their first top ten in the UK Singles Chart . As they were rushing to complete the album in time , as well as record and mix the single for an even earlier release , the band hastily selected " Total Eclipse " as the B @-@ side .

As they had written too much material , they had to choose between " Total Eclipse " and " Gangland " for the " Run to the Hills " single release , with the understanding that the other song would make it onto the album . Several band @-@ members have since expressed regret over the decision , with Steve Harris commenting , " We just chose the wrong track as the B @-@ side . I think if ' Total Eclipse ' had been on the album instead of ' Gangland ' it would have been far better . " On top of this , Harris has stated that the record 's opening track , " Invaders " , was not good

enough , commenting that it " could have been replaced with something a bit better , only we didn 't have anything else to replace it with at the time . We had just enough time to do what we did , and that was it . "

While the title track was considered by many religious groups in the United States as evidence that Iron Maiden were a Satanic band , the song was in fact inspired by a nightmare bassist Steve Harris had , triggered by watching the film *Damien : Omen II* late at night . In addition , Harris has stated that the lyrics were also influenced by Robert Burns ' *Tam o ' Shanter* . The track opens with a spoken introduction from the Book of Revelation , read by actor Barry Clayton . According to Dickinson , the band originally approached actor Vincent Price to record the passage , but asked Clayton after Price insisted on a fee of £ 25 @, @ 000 . Although the liner notes state that the passage is from Revelations 13 : 18 , the first line comes from 12 : 12 .

The closing song " *Hallowed Be Thy Name* " has remained in all but one of the band 's setlists since the album 's recording (the only exception being the Maiden England World Tour 2012 ? 14) . AllMusic describes the track as " perhaps the most celebrated of the band 's extended epics ; it 's the tale of a prisoner about to be hanged , featuring some of Harris ' most philosophical lyrics . " Several band @-@ members have since stated that it is one of their favourite tracks , with Dickinson describing it as " fantastic " and that performing it live is like " narrating a movie to the audience . " A live version of the song was released in 1993 , gaining the band another top ten placement in the UK Singles Chart .

" *Children of the Damned* " is based on the films *Village of the Damned* and *Children of the Damned* , which in turn were adapted from the novel *The Midwich Cuckoos* by John Wyndham . On his last radio show for BBC Radio 6 , during a segment in tribute to the late Ronnie James Dio , Dickinson mentioned that *Children of the Damned* was inspired by Black Sabbath 's " *Children of the Sea* " .

" *The Prisoner* " was inspired by the British TV show of the same name , and features dialogue from its title sequence . The band 's manager , Rod Smallwood , had to telephone Patrick McGoohan to ask permission to use the audio clips for the song and was extremely hesitant during his conversation with whom Smallwood himself describes as " a real bona fide superstar actor " . McGoohan was reported to have said " What did you say the name was ? A rock band , you say ? Do it . " Iron Maiden later made another song based on the series , " *Back in the Village* " from 1984 's *Powerslave* .

" *22 Acacia Avenue* " is the second song in the " *Charlotte the Harlot* " saga , which was originally written by Adrian Smith several years earlier , while playing in his old band , *Urchin* . According to Smith , Steve Harris remembered hearing the song at an *Urchin* concert in a local park , and modified it for *The Number of the Beast* album .

= = Reception and controversy = =

The album was strongly opposed by social conservatives ? especially in the United States , where Iron Maiden were accused of being Satanists . Public burnings of the band 's catalogue were organised , although some religious groups smashed the records with hammers , for fear of inhaling fumes from burning vinyl . The *Beast on the Road* tour was subject to numerous boycotts and demonstrations : venues were sometimes surrounded by activists who handed out leaflets and , in one case , a 25 @-@ foot cross was carried in protest . Harris has stated , " It was mad . They completely got the wrong end of the stick . They obviously hadn 't read the lyrics . They just wanted to believe all that rubbish about us being Satanists . "

Since its release , the album has received consistent critical acclaim , with AllMusic describing it as " among the top five most essential heavy metal albums ever recorded . A cornerstone of the genre . " Sputnikmusic calls it " a classic in the world of metal " , while BBC Music praised the record 's complex arrangements , stating " Whereas even some of the venerable HM institutions (think Black Sabbath) would struggle to make material that was something more than a collection of minor @-@ key riffs , Iron Maiden pull this feat off with considerable élan . " Q magazine placed the album at No. 100 in its list of the " 100 Greatest British Albums Ever " in 2000 ; in 2001 named it one of the " 50 Heaviest Albums of All Time " ; and in 2006 placed it at No. 40 in its " 40 Best Albums of the ' 80s

" list . IGN and Metal Rules placed it third and second , respectively , in their lists of the Top Heavy Metal Albums , and Guitar World ranked it at No. 17 on their list of " 100 Greatest Guitar Albums of All Time " . Classic Rock placed it at No. 15 in their list of the " 100 Greatest British Rock Albums " , describing it as " the most important metal album of the decade " , and it was voted No. 1 in HMV 's list of " The Best British Albums of the Past 60 Years " in 2012 . The Number of the Beast is one of two Iron Maiden records listed in Robert Dimery 's book , 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die (1980 's Iron Maiden being the other) .

In 2001 , the BBC made a documentary about The Number of the Beast as part of the Classic Albums series , which was released on DVD in the same year .

= = Album artwork = =

Like all of Iron Maiden 's album artwork during the 1980s and early 90s , it was painted by Derek Riggs . The cover was originally created for the song " Purgatory " , but Rod Smallwood deemed it of too high a calibre for a single release and decided to save it for The Number of the Beast album instead . The original 1982 artwork includes a blue sky in the background ; this was a mistake by the printers of the album cover , and was later rectified and became black when the album was remastered for compact disc in 1998 .

The album was also the centre of controversy , particularly in the United States , due to the lyrics of the title track and the cover art depicting Eddie controlling Satan like a puppet , while Satan is also controlling a smaller Eddie . Smallwood explains that the concept was to ask " who 's the really evil one here ? Who 's manipulating who ? " According to Riggs this was inspired by a Doctor Strange comic book " which had some big villain with Doctor Strange dangling on some strings like a puppet , it was something I read as a child back in the 1960s I think " , while the images of hell were " taken from my knowledge of medieval European Christian art which was full of such scenes . "

The album 's cover art has been parodied several times ? by crossover thrash band Stormtroopers of Death for the cover art of their 1999 album Bigger than the Devil , and on a T @-@ shirt by Streetwear brand Diamond Supply Co .

= = Versions and performances by other artists = =

On 24 October 2002 , progressive metal outfit Dream Theater played the original album in its entirety at La Mutualite in Paris , France . The performance was recorded and has been released through the band 's YtseJam Records label .

" Run to the Hills " was covered on the tribute album Numbers From The Beast , featuring vocalist Robin McAuley , guitarists Michael Schenker and Pete Fletcher , bassist Tony Franklin and drummer Brian Tichy . A Tribute to the Beast , Vol . 2 features covers of " Children of the Damned " , by Sebastian Bach of Skid Row fame , and " Hallowed Be Thy Name " , by Iced Earth , who have also covered " Hallowed Be Thy Name " and " The Number of the Beast " on their own album , Tribute to the Gods . " Hallowed Be Thy Name " has also been covered by Machine Head on Maiden Heaven : A Tribute To Iron Maiden , which was released by Kerrang ! magazine in 2008 , and by Cradle of Filth , while the title track has also been covered by Djali Zwan on the soundtrack of the film Spun . Acoustic reinterpretations of " Children of the Damned " and " 22 Acacia Avenue " were included on the album Across The Seventh Sea (2012) by the tribute project Maiden unitedD .

= = Appearances in other media = =

Several of the record 's songs have been used in video games : " Run to the Hills " is featured in SSX On Tour as the opening theme , Grand Theft Auto : Episodes from Liberty City , and a cover version is included in Rock Band , the only song in the game listed as ' Impossible ' for all instruments . In addition , " The Number of the Beast " (as the original master recording) , " Run to the Hills " and " Hallowed Be Thy Name " (the latter being a live recording found on Flight 666) were made downloadable to Rock Band on 8 June 2009 . " The Number of the Beast " was also

featured in Guitar Hero III : Legends of Rock (master recording) , and on Tony Hawk 's Pro Skater 4 .

= = Release details and reissues = =

The Number of the Beast was released on 22 March 1982 through EMI and its sister label Capitol in the United States . The album was reissued in 1995 with a bonus CD containing two songs (" Total Eclipse " , and a live version of " Remember Tomorrow ") that had been the b @-@ sides of the album 's two singles . The US version of the 1995 reissue incorrectly gives Paul Di 'Anno a song @-@ writing credit for " Total Eclipse " ; the song had actually been written by Harris , Murray , and Burr .

The album was also reissued in 1998 by EMI and Sanctuary / Columbia in the US as an enhanced CD version , which included photos , band history and the music videos for the songs " The Number of the Beast " and " Run to the Hills " , in addition to " Total Eclipse " , which was restored to the album 's track listing (having been excluded from the original edition due to space constraints) . This version mistakenly lists the track lengths for " 22 Acacia Avenue " and " The Number of the Beast " as 4 : 49 and 3 : 50 ; they are in fact 6 : 38 and 4 : 51 , respectively .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Steve Harris , except where noted .

= = = Original track listing = = =

= = = 1998 remastered release = = =

= = = 1995 reissue bonus disc = = =

= = Personnel = =

Production and performance credits are adapted from the album liner notes and AllMusic .

Iron Maiden

Bruce Dickinson ? lead vocals

Dave Murray ? guitar

Adrian Smith ? guitar , backing vocals

Steve Harris ? bass , backing vocals

Clive Burr ? drums

Production

Martin " Farmer " Birch ? producer , engineer

Nigel Hewitt @-@ Green ? second engineer

Derek Riggs ? illustration

Simon Fowler ? photography

Ross Halfin ? photography

Toshi Yajima ? photography

Andre Csillag ? photography

Bob Ellis ? photography

P.G. Brunelli ? photography

Rod Smallwood ? management , photography

Simon Heyworth ? remastering (1998 edition)

Denis O 'Regan ? photography (1998 edition)

George Chin ? photography (1998 edition)

= = Chart performance = =

The Number of the Beast was a commercial success , with The New York Times reporting in 2010 that 14 million copies have been sold worldwide . It was the band 's first record to top the UK charts , entering the Top 40 directly at No. 1 on 10 April , maintaining the top position for a further week , and then remaining in the Top 75 for a total of 31 weeks . It entered the Billboard 200 at No. 150 and went on to peak at No. 33 . In addition , the album reached the Top ten in Austria and Sweden , and No. 11 and No. 13 in Canada and Norway , respectively .

It was awarded platinum by the British Phonographic Industry (BPI) , and received a gold certification by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) on 4 October 1983 (eventually going platinum in 1986) . The album reached No. 11 in Germany and was certified gold ten years later , and it received a 3x platinum award in Canada for sales exceeding 300 @,@ 000 units .

The two singles , " Run to the Hills " and the title track , debuted in the UK single charts at No. 7 and No. 18 , respectively . Both songs entered the Irish Singles Chart in the same order , and reached No. 16 and No. 19 .

Singles