

= So Far , So Good ... So What ! =

So Far , So Good ... So What ! is the third studio album by American thrash metal band Megadeth . It was released on January 19 , 1988 through Capitol Records ; a remixed and remastered edition including several bonus tracks was reissued in August 2004 . It is the band 's only album recorded with drummer Chuck Behler and guitarist Jeff Young , both of whom were fired immediately after the subsequent tour . So Far , So Good ... So What ! features music performed at very fast tempos with technical ability ; lyrically , frontman and guitarist Dave Mustaine addresses a variety of topics , including nuclear holocaust and freedom of speech .

The record was well received among contemporary music critics , although retrospective analysis has been less favorable . It managed to enter the top 30 on the Billboard 200 with no commercial radio play ; it charted in several other countries as well . The album was eventually certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America ( RIAA ) and indicated Megadeth 's forthcoming emergence from the underground scene .

= = Background and production = =

Guitarist Chris Poland and drummer Gar Samuelson had been expelled from the band following the conclusion of the Peace Sells tour for disruptive behavior , including Poland 's habit of pawning band equipment to pay for drugs . Samuelson was immediately replaced by his drum technician , Chuck Behler . However , a new guitarist would take longer to emerge . At first , the band hired guitarist Jay Reynolds from the band Malice , but Reynolds was not up to the task of recording , and was subsequently replaced by his guitar teacher , Jeff Young . Dave Mustaine has since stated his regret for the way he handled Reynolds 's firing .

Work on the album started while Reynolds was in the band , but continued after the induction of Young . To mix the album , the label turned to Paul Lani , who previously had remixed the band 's previous album , Peace Sells ... but Who 's Buying ? . Mustaine was initially skeptical , but later became very irate with Lani 's " eccentricities " and his way of handling things . To mix the album , Lani relocated himself and Mustaine to Bearsville Studios , near Woodstock , New York , ostensibly for the purpose of inspiration . Mustaine decided he had had enough when he , having just awakened and made coffee , noticed Lani outside in his underwear feeding an apple to a deer . Mustaine flew back to Los Angeles later that day and fired Lani , who was replaced by Michael Wagener . Mustaine has since criticized Wagener 's " pedestrian " mixing efforts , citing the album 's " muddy feel " , in particular . Mustaine was able to recruit Sex Pistols guitarist Steve Jones to perform guitar parts on " Anarchy in the UK " .

= = Music and lyrics = =

According to music critic J. D. Considine of Spin , So Far , So Good ... So What ! displays music performed at " volumes approaching the threshold of pain " . The album features fast guitar solos , multiple tempo changes and technical dexterity . Mike Stagno of Sputnikmusic observed that the album offers the classic " take no prisoners " style which is commonly associated with Megadeth ; however , he noted that the sound does not differ much from the other underground metal bands from that period . Jim Farber of Rolling Stone called Mustaine 's vocals " bloodthirsty " and praised the musicianship for keeping rhythmic pace even at the " most anarchic moments " . Los Angeles Times journalist Dennis Hunt noted that the music was filled with extensive and " torrid " instrumentals and described Mustaine 's singing as a combination of extreme shrieking and screaming . Despite the positive overview , " Anarchy in the U.K. " received some negative criticism , partially because it was perceived to lack the rebelliousness of the original version .

The lyrical themes on the album explore a variety of subjects , from nuclear holocaust ( " Set the World Afire " ) to revisionism and censorship ( " Hook in Mouth " ) . Still , the majority of the songs are accompanied by the same sentiment of disillusion and nihilism as their previous two albums . Unlike traditional topics related to heavy metal music , the song " In My Darkest Hour " contains

emotional lyrics which deal with loneliness and isolation . Dave Mustaine revealed that he tried to write about subject matters that were in touch with reality , including social issues and taboo topics . The lyrics on Megadeth 's cover of " Anarchy in the U.K. " were slightly mistaken because Mustaine claimed he had heard them incorrectly .

= = Songs = =

The album 's first track , " Into the Lungs of Hell " , is an instrumental composition which features synthesized horns , winds and percussion . " Set the World Afire " is the first song Dave Mustaine wrote for Megadeth after being fired from Metallica . He was a member of Metallica from 1982 ? 83 , and was dismissed just before Metallica recorded its debut album Kill ' Em All . He later said that he wrote the lyrics during his journey home from the departure . Inspiration for the song came from a newspaper he read while on the bus back to California . Originally intended to be titled " Megadeath " , Mustaine later decided to use the name , minus the " a " in " death , " for the band instead . " Anarchy in the U.K. " is a Sex Pistols cover , which quickly became a staple of the band 's live set . Over the years , the song was dropped from the set list because of its anti @-@ Christian viewpoint . " Mary Jane " tells a story about a young witch buried alive by her father near the Loon Lake cemetery in Minnesota . According to the legend , anyone who dared to disturb her grave was doomed to a prompt death . The song features descending guitar lines and begins with Mustaine summoning her spirit during the introduction .

" 502 " is about driving fast cars . " In My Darkest Hour " was written by Mustaine shortly after the death of Metallica bassist Cliff Burton . Mustaine had found out through word of mouth , as his former band mates never contacted him about the tragic event that occurred in Europe . He later recalled that he was extremely unhappy that day and wrote the song in one sitting . " Liar " is a rant directed at past member Chris Poland . " Hook in Mouth " declaims censorship and the Parents Music Resource Center ( PMRC ) . Mustaine elaborated that the lyrics were aimed at those who were " f \* \* \* ing around with our constitutional rights and trying to take away our freedom of speech " .

= = Critical reception = =

The album received positive feedback from music critics at the time of its release . In a contemporary review , Holger Stratmann from Rock Hard hailed the album as " the new masterpiece of Megadeth " and asserted that the band had created a great follow @-@ up to their highly acclaimed Peace Sells ... but Who 's Buying ? Jim Farber of Rolling Stone also gave the album a favorable review , saying it propelled the group " right at the top of the thrash @-@ rock heap " . He concluded his review by saying , " amid today 's narcoleptic pop scene , albums like So Far , So Good ... So What ! offer a disruptive noise that 's welcome indeed " . Writing for Spin , J. D. Considine felt that the record showed a " genuine maturity " for the band . Robert Christgau reacted enthusiastically towards the album and wrote that Megadeth garnered " its modest portions of profit and respect " with their latest studio release . He gave special praise to " Anarchy in the U.K. " , commenting that Mustaine covers the Sex Pistols " like a champ " .

Retrospective reviews , however , tend to be more critical of the album . AllMusic 's Steve Huey criticized the album for lacking " the conceptual unity and musical bite " of its predecessor . According to him , the album " wants to sound threatening but mostly comes off as forced and somewhat juvenile " , citing the cover track as an example . Mike Stagno of Sputnikmusic opined that the record is " a fairly decent album , but not a great one " . He felt that apart from " Set the World Afire " and " Mary Jane " , the rest of the album " feels somewhat uninspired " . Conversely , Adrien Begrand from MSN Music opined that the record was " somehow ignored " in the band 's discography .

= = Touring = =

The tour that followed the album 's release was the first to feature new band members Chuck Behler and Jeff Young . Bassist David Ellefson said that previous members Gar Samuelson and Chris Poland were tired of constantly being on the road and their departure was inevitable . He further revealed that drummer Behler was appointed shortly before because the band feared that Samuelson would not be able to continue touring . However , some problems occurred during the Australian leg of the tour . The band was forced to cancel some of these shows because of drug issues . Mustaine claimed that the group returned home because guitarist Young " ran out of heroin " , which Young denied , stating that it was Mustaine who wanted to go back to Los Angeles and seek rehabilitation . Both Young and Behler were fired immediately after the end of the tour , in August 1988 .

Megadeth started performing the album 's songs live before the record was released . During 1987 they toured with other thrash metal bands such as Kreator and Overkill at a number of European venues . The following year Megadeth appeared with more established heavy metal acts such as Ronnie James Dio for some shows in North America . Later in 1988 the group made an appearance at the Monsters of Rock festival , but were dropped from the line @-@ up after one show . Dave Mustaine explained that the band toured quite often because they were not receiving much media exposure : " We do a lot of shows and sell records by word @-@ of @-@ mouth " . Los Angeles Times reported that So Far , So Good ... So What ! sold 400 @,@ 000 copies one month after its release , becoming Megadeth 's fastest selling album at that point . The record eventually went platinum and indicated Megadeth 's forthcoming emergence from the underground scene .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Dave Mustaine , except where noted .

= = Personnel = =

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

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =