

= Echo & the Bunnymen (album) =

Echo & the Bunnymen is the fifth studio album by the English post-punk band Echo & the Bunnymen, and the last with their drummer Pete de Freitas, who died in 1989 at age 27 in a motorcycle accident. The album was produced by Laurie Latham who recorded the album in Germany, Belgium, London and Liverpool after an aborted attempt at recording the album without de Freitas and with producer Gil Norton. With Latham being an exacting producer and singer Ian McCulloch receiving star treatment and drinking heavily, the recording of the album was more difficult than the band had initially hoped. The album made more use of keyboards than their previous albums, which had been string heavy.

Although Echo & the Bunnymen was successful in the United Kingdom and, to a lesser degree, the United States, it received mixed reviews from the music press following its release in July 1987. The album reached number four on the UK Albums Chart, number 51 on the United States Billboard 200, number 51 on the Canadian RPM100 Albums and number 22 on the Swedish Albums Chart. Since its release, the album has been certified silver by the British Phonographic Industry. The album includes the singles "The Game", "Lips Like Sugar" and "Bedbugs and Ballyhoo".

= = Background = =

Echo & the Bunnymen took time off from touring, writing and recording after the release of the critically acclaimed *Ocean Rain* in 1984, because the band's manager, the fabled prankster Bill Drummond, felt that a year off would help the band write different kinds of songs in preparation for the next album. During the time off, drummer Pete de Freitas travelled Spain and France on his motorcycle, bass guitarist Les Pattinson worked on his new boat, singer Ian McCulloch released a solo single "September Song", leaving guitarist Will Sergeant as the only band member to spend the time doing nothing. Even though the band enjoyed an excellent and creative working relation with Drummond, by the end of 1984 they had mutually parted company as the band were not making enough money.

Under the new management of Mick Hancock, Duran Duran's tour manager, the band returned to work in May 1985 with a tour of Scandinavia. They also made a headline appearance at the Glastonbury Festival on 21 June 1985, when they played live for the first time two new songs which would later be included on the album: "Satellite" and "All in Your Mind". Now ready to start recording, they entered the studio with their former producer Ian Broudie and Clive Langer to record the songs they had played at Glastonbury as well as "Like a Rollercoaster" and "Jimmy Brown". Not liking the results of this session, the band considered Eddy Grant and ABBA's production team, before settling on Laurie Latham as their producer. McCulloch had been impressed by the sharp quality of Latham's production on The Stranglers' single "Skin Deep". The band met with Latham in Brussels and recorded "All in Your Mind", "Like a Rollercoaster" and "Jimmy Brown", which was renamed "Bring on the Dancing Horses". "Bring on the Dancing Horses" appeared on the WEA compilation album *Songs to Learn & Sing* in November 1985 and was released as a single in the same month. An early version of "Bedbugs and Ballyhoo", a song that would appear on the album, appeared on the B-side to the 12-inch version.

The band faced 1986 with a commitment to record an album, but without their drummer; a musician who was considered fundamental to the band's creative success. On 31 December 1985, de Freitas had gone to New Orleans with the road crew on a drug binge and there announced his resignation from the band. The band then hired former Haircut One Hundred drummer Blair Cunningham for the spring 1986 tour of the United States; but he didn't fit in, and after the tour left to join The Pretenders. The band then hired former ABC drummer David Palmer, and recorded a few sessions with producer Gil Norton for the new album. However, by July 1986 Palmer had decided he did not want to remain with the band. As Palmer left the band, de Freitas returned to the United Kingdom and expressed a wish to rejoin. Uncertain of de Freitas's commitment to the band, and his fragile mental state, they took him back as a hired hand rather than a full member.

Now with the line @-@ up that would record Echo & the Bunnymen , the band gave a live television appearance for the BBC in September 1986 when they played two new songs , " The Game " and " Lips Like Sugar " . According to Will Sergeant , the band were under pressure from Warner Music chairman Rob Dickins to produce an album that would replicate the success of Peter Gabriel 's recent number one album So : " I couldn 't believe it when Rob Dickins brought us into his office and played us Peter Gabriel 's album : ' I want you to sound like this ! ' I think he escaped with his life that day . "

= = Recording , production and music = =

Recording of the tracks that were to appear on Echo & the Bunnymen began at Conny Plank 's studio in Cologne . Both Echo & the Bunnymen and their label , WEA Records , were unhappy with the results of the Norton sessions with Palmer playing drums . Keen to record again with de Freitas , the band decided to scrap the Norton sessions and to start recording a new album with Latham who had previously worked with the band on their 1985 single " Bring on the Dancing Horses " . The sessions moved from Cologne to ICP Studios in Brussels before returning to Cologne and finishing off at The Workhouse in London and Amazon Studios in Liverpool . The band hoped that the album would be a collection of simple songs ; however , Latham was very specific and exacting , and he would work on one song for as long as a month . Recording was also complicated by the star treatment received by McCulloch . This , along with his heavy drinking , alienated him from the rest of the band . In a 1995 interview , band guitarist Will Sergeant said of McCulloch 's treatment , " We just found it all ridiculous . He had people running around behind him , basically wiping his arse . " McCulloch later said in a 1997 interview : " I knew I was losing it . I was on another planet but then I didn 't want to be on the one [the other Bunnymen] were on . "

While making the album , the band recorded a version of The Doors ' 1967 single " People Are Strange " for the soundtrack of the 1987 film The Lost Boys . Ray Manzarek , former keyboard player with The Doors , was brought in to provide keyboards on the song . While in the studio , he also contributed keyboards to a re @-@ recording of " Bedbugs and Ballyhoo " , which had previously been the B @-@ side to the 12 @-@ inch version of " Bring on the Dancing Horses " . Once Echo & the Bunnymen had been recorded the band 's management company , Direct Management , decided to have it mixed by Bruce Lampcov in the United States . While the album was mixed , the band was on tour in Brazil and listened to the finished tracks over the phone .

Latham moved the band away from the use of strings , which featured heavily on Ocean Rain and to a lesser extent on Porcupine (1983) , and introduced keyboards to the melody of the tracks . De Freitas 's drumming was contained and discreet and McCulloch 's vocals were more restrained . Although the album contained hook @-@ heavy tracks such as " Lips Like Sugar " , the guitars on tracks such as " Lost and Found " are more representative of the album as a whole .

The resulting album was disliked by the entire band . Describing what he thought of as the over @-@ production of the album Sergeant described it as " an overcooked fish " in 1987 ; bass guitarist Les Pattinson said , " I like the songs , just hated the mixes " ; and in 1995 McCulloch said , " It still sounds crap . "

= = Release and critical reception = =

After previewing the album with a short concert on top of the HMV shop on Oxford Street in London , Echo & the Bunnymen was first released on 6 July 1987 as an LP and CD by WEA Records in the United Kingdom and elsewhere and by Sire Records in the United States . The album reached a peak of number four on the UK Albums Chart . The album became the band 's most successful in the United States where it reached number fifty @-@ one on the Billboard 200 . The album also reached number fifty @-@ one on the Canadian RPM100 Albums chart and number twenty @-@ two on the Swedish Albums Chart . The album has also been certified silver by the British Phonographic Industry for having shipped more than 60 @,@ 000 copies . Along with the other four of the band 's first five albums , Echo & the Bunnymen was remastered and reissued on CD in 2003

? these were released for the band 's twenty @-@ fifth anniversary . Seven bonus tracks were added to the album and included early versions of " Bring on the Dancing Horses " (title " Jimmy Brown ") , " The Game " and " Bedbugs and Ballyhoo " . Also included was a cover version of The Doors ' " Soul Kitchen " , an extended version of " Bring on the Dancing Horses " and the previously unreleased track " Hole in the Holy " . The reissued album was produced by Andy Zax and Bill Inglot and released by Rhino Entertainment .

In his 1987 review of the album for Rolling Stone magazine , music journalist J. D. Considine described Latham 's production of the album as " ineffectual " and " well mannered " . He went on say that there was no " anxious energy or knife @-@ edged irony that made the group 's earlier albums so compelling " . He finishes his review by saying the album is " as vacant as it is pretty " . Reviewing the 2003 remastered album , Andrew Harrison for Blender magazine 's website said , " Egomania and off @-@ message electronics experiments sank their eponymous 1987 comedown ... " Taking a more positive stance , David Cleary for AllMusic describes the album as " the hookiest and most memorable the band would ever write " . Having described de Freitas 's drumming as solid and veering toward the danceable , and McCulloch 's singing as " restrained and tasteful " , Cleary added that , " The production values were excellent , with many subtle touches that do not detract from the album 's overall directness . " Although he stated that the production " watered the band 's sound down " , Joe Tangari for Pitchfork Media said , " The band 's attempt to reach a wider audience worked out . "

Three tracks from the album were released as singles . The first of these was " The Game " , which was released on 1 June 1987 . This was followed by " Lips Like Sugar " , which was released in August 1987 . The final single to be released from the album was " Bedbugs and Ballyhoo " , which was also released before the year 's end in the United States and Germany . " The Game " and " Lips Like Sugar " reached numbers 28 and 36 respectively on the UK Singles Chart .

= = Track listing = =

All tracks written and composed by Will Sergeant , Ian McCulloch and Les Pattinson except where noted .

Additional tracks

= = Personnel = =