

= Ruby Blue (album) =

Ruby Blue is the debut solo album of Irish singer Róisín Murphy , released by Echo Records on 13 June 2005 (see 2005 in music) . After she and Mark Brydon dissolved their electronic duo Moloko , Murphy began working with producer and musician Matthew Herbert , known for his experimental work in jazz and electronic music . The songs were first released through three extended plays and were then compiled into a studio album .

The album often samples sounds made by everyday objects and actions , including cosmetics , brass mice , dancing and ornaments . It mixes the electronic music for which Moloko was known with jazz and pop styles . The album received positive reviews from music critics . Ruby Blue , upon its June 2005 European release , charted at No. 88 in the United Kingdom . It produced two singles , " If We 're in Love " and " Sow into You " .

= = Background = =

Murphy and Mark Brydon ended their romantic relationship but were still contractually obligated to record another album , which became Moloko 's 2003 album Statues . When she finished touring , she found herself alone and had to re @-@ evaluate the friendships she had built . During this time , she got to know Matthew Herbert , whom she had met when he remixed several of Moloko 's songs . Murphy had wanted to work with him again , commenting that " it felt very natural ? because Matthew makes things seem quicker and easier " . During the first day of recording with Herbert , he had her bring an unspecified object so that they could hit it against a microphone and record the sound it made . Herbert 's approach was that for Murphy to go solo , the album should revolve around her and the sounds that surround her . They wanted to carry out recording and audio mixing in one room , so Herbert invested in a studio . There , Herbert recorded Murphy 's voice without accompaniment so that she could better hear how her voice naturally sounded . On occasion , the two added instruments to a track by having her hire an instrumentalist , sometimes to play an unusual instrument such as a hammered dulcimer .

After the pair had recorded a few songs , Murphy found that she enjoyed working with Herbert , and her label let her work freely without any deadline . When she presented them the album , they found it odd and did not hear any songs that would make successful singles . The A & R division suggested that Murphy make some changes to make it more radio @-@ friendly . Murphy refused , stating that she " wanted it to be as pure as possible " . The label later came to support her . The songs on Ruby Blue were gradually released on 12 " vinyl EPs titled Sequins 1 , Sequins 2 , and Sequins 3 , in January , February , and May 2005 respectively .

The cover of Ruby Blue was painted by Simon Henwood . Murphy met Henwood in a pub , and Henwood , who was known for his simplified paintings of teenagers , thought that she would be a good subject for a painting . Henwood came to Murphy 's house the next week and , while they were looking through her wardrobe , decided to have her dressed in sequins . Murphy positioned her body in abstract shapes for Henwood to paint . She developed a character , which Henwood described as a " disco electro pop diva with a 1940s look " . His canvases were displayed at The Hospital in Victoria , London , and Murphy purchased them " for [her] kids so they can see what [she] once looked like " . The three EPs and both singles used Henwood 's paintings in the cover , and he later directed the music videos for the singles .

= = Composition = =

Ruby Blue mixes electronica with early twentieth century vocal jazz , an interest of Herbert 's . The instruments , primarily brass and woodwinds , are layered over sampled noises such as alarm clocks , a water cooler , hairspray and helmets . Murphy 's vocals were described as a combination of " a less @-@ pained Billie Holiday and a less @-@ sheltered Doris Day " . She identified OutKast 's 2003 double album Speakerboxxx / The Love Below as an influence , stating that " it was experimental , it was soulful and funky " . The album 's lyrics are based on her romantic

relationships with Brydon and then with Henwood .

The opening track " Leaving the City " slowly builds up during the introduction and uses out of tune instrumentation and a repetitive chorus . Following " Sinking Feeling " , which uses a beat constructed from clicking sounds , is " Night of the Dancing Flame " , which combines synthesisers with 1920s jazz . It is written in waltz time and was compared to Stevie Wonder 's work during his peak . After opening with noises such as rustling and coughing , the longest track " Through Time " proceeds into a ballad that was compared to those by Carole King . The fifth track " Sow into You " was released as the album 's second single . The song uses a metaphor of rain and harvests to describe love and sex , atop a baroque pop brass arrangement . " Dear Diary " is a torch song mixing northern soul with disco music with the sounds of doorbells and telephones ringing .

The seventh track " If We 're in Love " was released as the album 's lead single . It is a downtempo song featuring a boogie swing rhythm and sharp brass parts , opening with phased vocals and closing with a call and response between brass and keyboard parts . " Ramalama (Bang Bang) " , the eighth track , contains a chorus of onomatopoeic lyrics delivered over a tribal rhythm . The title track uses overdriven guitar parts and layers of overdubbed vocals . Its lyrics caution a woman who has become out of control and its title was chosen to contrast feelings of passion and melancholy . " Off on It " , a more experimental song with an unsteady rhythm , precedes " Prelude to Love in the Making " , an excerpt of less than one minute taken from " Love in the Making " on Sequins 2 . The album closes with " The Closing of the Doors " , a cabaret @-@ style ballad driven by the piano .

= = Critical reception = =

The album received positive reviews from music critics . The Guardian called it " the kind of ambitious avant @-@ pop hybrid that gets Björk rapturous acclaim " . AllMusic wrote that " Murphy keeps the alluring sensuality and unpredictable quirks that made Moloko unique , without sounding like she 's rehashing where she 's already been " . Stylus Magazine said the album " happily represents something of a midpoint between the downright oddity of Moloko 's early albums ... and the mix of disco sensibility and wrenching balladry of their swansong " . PopMatters referred to the album as " one of the best examples of production shaping but not overwhelming the artist 's vision " . The Guardian agreed , stating that because of Herbert 's production , Murphy sounded " sonically enticing and varied ? at times sultry , rude , powerful and tender across white noise , waltz time signatures and jazz sass " but was mixed on the album overall , adding that the pair " their noodling eclipse the songs , leaving few you 'll actually be able to sing back to anyone " . Pitchfork Media remarked that " it 's hard to imagine anyone not ranking this is [sic] the best thing Murphy has ever done " and that " when the songwriting is on , Ruby Blue seems perfect , the ultimate combination of human warmth and technological know @-@ how " . The publication listed the album at number forty @-@ one in its list of the top fifty albums of 2005 .

= = Chart performance = =

Ruby Blue was released in Europe on 13 June 2005 and was less successful than Murphy 's work with Moloko . The album reached number eighty on the Billboard European Top 100 Albums , dropping off the chart the next week , and charted at number eighty @-@ eight on the UK Albums Chart . It had the most success in Belgium , where it reached number seven and remained on the albums chart for twelve weeks . Elsewhere in Europe , it reached the top forty in Finland and the top fifty in Austria , Germany , the Netherlands and Switzerland . Echo released the album in the United States on 25 April 2006 , but it did not chart on the Billboard 200 .

= = Soundtrack appearances = =

A third of the album 's songs were used in the second season of medical drama Grey 's Anatomy . " Ruby Blue " , " Ramalama (Bang Bang) " , " Love in the Making " and " Night of the Dancing Flame " were used for " Make Me Lose Control " , " Deny , Deny , Deny " , " Bring the Pain " and " Much

Too Much " respectively . The show 's music supervisor , Alexandra Patsavas , stated that she had been a fan of Moloko and gave Ruby Blue a positive review . " Ruby Blue " is included in the first volume of the show 's soundtrack .

Three songs have been used for reality show So You Think You Can Dance . " Ramalama (Bang Bang) " was used for a group performance on the sixth week of the second season . Contestants wore costumes and make @-@ up to show them as zombies in a performance combining the 1968 horror film Night of the Living Dead with Michael Jackson 's 1983 music video for " Thriller " . At the 59th Primetime Emmy Awards , the performance was part of a three @-@ way tie for Outstanding Choreography with a So You Think You Can Dance performance of Céline Dion 's " Calling You " , choreographed by Mia Michaels , and the television special Tony Bennett : An American Classic . " Night of the Dancing Flame " was used for a couple 's jazz dance in the fourth week of the following season with contestants Neil Haskell and Lauren Gottlieb . The performances were choreographed by Wade Robson . Robson also did a number to " Ruby Blue " in the fifth season of So You Think You Can Dance .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written by Róisín Murphy and Matthew Herbert .

" Leaving the City " ? 4 : 49
" Sinking Feeling " ? 3 : 32
" Night of the Dancing Flame " ? 3 : 26
" Through Time " ? 5 : 58
" Sow into You " ? 3 : 56
" Dear Diary " ? 5 : 50
" If We 're in Love " ? 4 : 31
" Ramalama (Bang Bang) " ? 3 : 35
" Ruby Blue " ? 2 : 48
" Off on It " ? 5 : 22
" Prelude to Love in the Making " ? 0 : 53
" The Closing of the Doors " ? 3 : 29

= = Personnel = =

= = Charts = =