

= Experimental Jet Set , Trash and No Star =

Experimental Jet Set , Trash and No Star is the eighth studio album by the American experimental rock band Sonic Youth , released on May 3 , 1994 by DGC Records . It was produced by Butch Vig and recorded at Sear Sound studio in New York City , the same studio where the band 's 1987 album Sister was recorded . Unlike its predecessor Dirty , Experimental Jet Set features a more low @-@ key approach and references the band 's earlier work on the independent record label SST Records . The album contains quieter and more relaxed songs that deal with personal and political topics .

Upon release , Experimental Jet Set reached No. 34 on the US Billboard Top 200 chart and No. 39 on the UK Albums Chart . It was the band 's highest peak on the US charts until their 2009 album The Eternal reached No. 18 . The song " Bull in the Heather " was released as a single and as a music video featuring Kathleen Hanna of Bikini Kill . The album received generally favorable reviews from music critics , who highlighted the band 's ability to create both noise and melody . However , some felt that the album 's anti @-@ commercial style was difficult to appreciate .

= = Background and recording = =

Experimental Jet Set , Trash and No Star is the follow @-@ up to Sonic Youth 's 1992 album Dirty , which was released by DGC in the wake of Nirvana 's breakthrough into the mainstream . Dirty became one of the band 's most commercially successful albums , selling around 500 @,@ 000 copies worldwide as of May 1994 . The album also reached No. 83 on the US Billboard Top 200 chart and No. 6 on the UK Albums Chart . After Dirty , Sonic Youth decided to step away from major @-@ label alternative rock acts , which singer and guitarist Thurston Moore thought the media associated the band with . Touring with indie rock bands like Pavement , Sebadoh , and Royal Trux inspired Sonic Youth to write a quieter and more subtle album .

Like its predecessor , Experimental Jet Set was produced by the band and alternative rock veteran Butch Vig . According to the band , " The idea this time was to cut as much of it live as we could , and not labor over polishing and overdubbing in the usual big @-@ rock manner . " Similarly , guitarist Lee Ranaldo explained that the band wanted to achieve a more lo @-@ fi approach : " None of [Experimental Jet set 's] music was labored , some of it was done in people 's bedrooms , even . [... We wanted] to write the songs and record them simply and basically . " Additionally , the band ordered Vig to refrain from his desire to apply a buzz remover to several tracks . The album was engineered by John Siket and recorded at Sear Sound studio in New York City , the same studio where the band 's 1987 album Sister was recorded . The band claimed that the album was recorded over the master tapes of Sister to save costs , and it is possible to hear some parts of Sister during quiet sections of the final recording . The album was recorded on a two @-@ inch 16 @-@ track analog tape recorder through antiquated equipment .

= = Music and lyrics = =

Unlike Dirty , which features a loud and " dense blast of noise " , Experimental Jet Set was considered warmer and more relaxed . Singer and bassist Kim Gordon described the sound of the album as " art @-@ core " and Bradley Bambarger of Billboard noted that the album references the band 's earlier work on the independent record label SST Records , stating that it features " a sparse , bracingly dichotomous work of ' quiet noise ' that , with its wayward tonalities and laconic grooves , speaks to the future while thinking of the past . " In fact , the song " Screaming Skull " is about the band 's nostalgia for their days on SST Records , which is mentioned frequently throughout the song . It also references fellow bands Hüsker Dü and The Lemonheads . The song was inspired by a conversation Moore had with film director Dave Markey about the SST Superstore , a shop located on Sunset Strip which supplies SST records and skateboard @-@ related products .

Most of the lyrics on Experimental Jet Set deal with political and personal topics . Gordon explained that the song " Bull in the Heather " is about " using passiveness as a form of rebellion ? like , I 'm

not going to participate in your male @-@ dominated culture , so I 'm just going to be passive . " Similarly , the song " Androgynous Mind " addresses traditional gender roles , while " Self @-@ Obsessed and Sexxee " is an observation on an anonymous riot grrrl . Moore explained that the latter is not about Courtney Love of Hole or Kathleen Hanna of Bikini Kill ; it is about " being attracted to somebody who 's obviously out of control with self @-@ obsession in the high @-@ profile alternative @-@ rock world . " The track " Quest for the Cup " deals with a person who desires more than it is needed . The opening track , " Winner 's Blues " , alludes to the pressure of fame and has been described as an acoustic and sad lullaby . The song was originally intended to be an outtake designated for the compilation DGC Rarities Vol . 1 , but the band ultimately decided to include it in the album at the last minute during the mixing sessions . Another outtake , " Compilation Blues " , was instead included on the compilation .

Experimental Jet Set was also the first Sonic Youth album to feature a hidden track on the CD release ; just over a minute after the closing track " Sweet Shine " finishes , there is 1 : 30 of " bonus noise " featuring a looped speech of a Japanese gas attendant . Unlike on previous Sonic Youth albums , Rinaldo did not write or sing any songs because he did not like how his compositions were treated and assembled for Dirty and its predecessor Goo . David Browne , author of Goodbye 20th Century : A Biography of Sonic Youth , remarked that " a sense of ambivalence and impermanence hung over [Experimental Jet Set] , even down to the cover " , which " for the first time since Sonic Youth in 1982 , featured their faces instead of a piece of art . "

= = Promotion and release = =

To promote the album , the song " Bull in the Heather " was released as a single in April 1994 . The single features an outtake , " Razor Blade " , which was recorded at the same sessions as " Winner 's Blues " and " Compilation Blues " , and an alternate version of " Doctor 's Orders " as B @-@ sides . The song reached No. 13 on the US Modern Rock Tracks and No. 24 on the UK Singles Chart . The track " Self @-@ Obsessed and Sexxee " was intended to be the second single from the album . A promo CD was issued , but plans for a regular release were eventually canceled . The remaining copies were sold off through the Sonic Death fan club magazine . The CD includes the same B @-@ sides as " Bull in the Heather " . A music video featuring Kathleen Hanna was made for " Bull in the Heather " under the direction of Tamra Davis .

Experimental Jet Set , Trash and No Star was released on May 3 , 1994 by DGC , which also released the band 's previous two albums . The album peaked at No. 34 on the US Billboard Top 200 chart and No. 39 on the UK Albums Chart . It was the band 's highest position on the US charts until their 2009 album The Eternal reached No. 18 . The album also charted in several other countries , including Australia , New Zealand , The Netherlands and Sweden . The band did not support the album with a tour due to Gordon 's advanced pregnancy at the time . As of 2005 , the album had sold 246 @, @ 000 copies in the US according to Nielsen SoundScan .

= = Critical reception = =

Experimental Jet Set , Trash and No Star received generally favorable reviews from music critics . Barbara O 'Dair of Rolling Stone felt that the album was " quietly confident ; more ambitious and weirder than Dirty " . However , she remarked that the band " saved their integrity at the expense of quality ; with a little more grease , their grit might get across better . " Lorraine Ali , writing for the Los Angeles Times , praised Gordon 's dynamic singing and the guitar playing for giving the album a sleepy and dreamy mood , concluding that Sonic Youth " transcends the confining roles of pretentious art @-@ rock band or palatable alternative group , and instead offers a penetrating album that 's all its own . " Billboard also praised the album , saying that it offered both noise and melody that " cohabitate exceedingly well " .

In a mixed review , AllMusic reviewer Jason Birchmeier criticized Experimental Jet Set for its stripped @-@ down sound , saying that the album only contains " odd lyrics and unique guitar nuance . " Similarly , Evelyn McDonnell of Entertainment Weekly noted that the songs " never quite

emerge from the sketch stage " and that newcomers may find it difficult to appreciate . In contrast , Alternative Press highlighted the album 's anti @-@ commercial aesthetic , claiming that " It doesn 't get much cooler than this " . The Advocate criticized the album and the band for not taking risks , concluding : " Sonic Youth is stuck repeating the same experience . And this time around , the songs don 't stick . " Mike Rubin , writing for Spin , described Experimental Jet Set as a " low @-@ key , mellow affair " , but highlighted the guitar playing and the audio feedback on some songs .

In a very positive review , prominent music critic Robert Christgau asserted the band 's ability to create unexpected noises , which he described as " marks of flesh @-@ and @-@ blood creatures thinking and feeling things neither you nor they have ever thought or felt before . If they can 't quite put those things into words , that 's what unexpected noises are for . " Unlike previous Sonic Youth albums , Experimental Jet Set was not ranked in the Top 40 of The Village Voice 's Pazz & Jop critics ' poll for 1994 , but Christgau placed it at No. 3 in his own " Dean 's List " . In a retrospective review for About.com , 90s rock expert Melissa Bobbitt wrote : " Though it might not be as universally celebrated as 1988 's Daydream Nation or Dirty , this record represented the triumphant rise of the Alternative Nation and its progressive nature . " In 2014 , Guitar World placed Experimental Jet Set , Trash and No Star at No. 44 in their " Superunknown : 50 Iconic Albums That Defined 1994 " list .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Sonic Youth unless otherwise noted .

= = Personnel = =

Credits are adapted from the album 's liner notes .

= = Charts = =

Album
Singles