

= Washing Machine ( album ) =

Washing Machine is the ninth studio album by the American experimental rock band Sonic Youth , released on September 26 , 1995 by DGC Records . It was recorded at Easley Studios in Memphis , Tennessee and produced by the band and John Siket , who also engineered the band 's previous two albums . The album features more open @-@ ended pieces than its predecessors and contains some of the band 's longest songs , including the 20 @-@ minute ballad " The Diamond Sea " , which is the longest track to feature on any of Sonic Youth 's studio albums .

Upon release , Washing Machine reached No. 58 on the US Billboard 200 chart and No. 39 on the UK Albums Chart . Two songs from the album , " The Diamond Sea " and " Little Trouble Girl " , were released as singles . The album received generally positive reviews from music critics , who praised the band for exploring new challenges as well as the guitar playing of band members Thurston Moore and Lee Ranaldo . In 1996 , the album was ranked at No. 18 in The Village Voice 's Pazz & Jop critics ' poll for 1995 .

= = Background and recording = =

Washing Machine is the follow @-@ up to Sonic Youth 's 1994 DGC album Experimental Jet Set , Trash and No Star . After Experimental Jet Set , the band decided to take a hiatus from performing live and concentrated on numerous side projects . Band member Kim Gordon played with Julia Cafritz of Pussy Galore in Free Kitten , drummer Steve Shelley performed with Jad Fair in Mosquito , guitarist Lee Ranaldo played with free jazz drummer William Hooker and singer / guitarist Thurston Moore released his first solo album , Psychic Hearts . Moore and Gordon also had their first child , Coco . According to Moore , their daughter had provided a different perspective for the band : " I 'm more focused and level @-@ headed . There 's a sublime awareness factor of your spiritual place in the world . I feel more at ease with myself ... Babies are little Buddhas . They 're completely great " .

Unlike previous Sonic Youth albums , Washing Machine was recorded at Easley Studios in Memphis , where indie rock bands like Pavement , Guided by Voices and Grifters previously recorded albums . Moore remarked that the atmosphere in Memphis " lent itself to avoiding the reality of the record @-@ buying public . In the past we were always very aware of who was out there checking us out . This was the first record where we 've gotten this certain level of notoriety and we were just , like , ' fuck it ' " . He also felt that Washing Machine was conceived and recorded like some of the band 's earlier albums : " It hearkens back to records like Sister where we 'd write a bunch of songs , go into the studio for a month , put them down , then go on the road and play them for a year . By the end of the year they 'd mutate into something much more excited " . Gordon credited Memphis for its relaxed atmosphere and cited the album as one of her favorites .

The song " The Diamond Sea " is notable for its 19 : 35 duration . Moore explained the length of some of the album 's songs : " We all have different aesthetics as to how songs should work . I generally push for a lot of abandon while some people in the group are more interested in truncating things . If I was the leader as much as people say I am , every song would be 20 minutes long " . The unlisted ninth track , officially called " Becuz Coda " , was originally part of the song " Becuz " , but the record label felt they needed to cut the seven @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half @-@ minute track to make the album 's opening more accessible . The album was produced by Sonic Youth and John Siket , who also engineered the band 's previous two albums . Audio mixing took place at Greene Street Studios in New York City in June 1995 .

= = Music and lyrics = =

Unlike Experimental Jet Set , which is often described as difficult and claustrophobic , Washing Machine was considerably more open @-@ ended and contains some of the band 's longest songs . It was also the first Sonic Youth album on which Gordon almost exclusively played guitar instead of bass , resulting in a three @-@ guitar and drums lineup . Trouser Press remarked that the album contains musical references to The Shangri @-@ Las and The Byrds and described its style as " [

veering ] between trance @-@ guitar experiments and more concise statements . " Entertainment Weekly described it thus : " These songs unfold over even @-@ tempered rhythms and guitars that linger rather than attack . A splatter of distortion may enter , but the effect is mostly languid and wonderfully hypnotic " .

Although Gordon 's lyrics on Experimental Jet Set addressed gender roles and stereotypes , her contributions to Washing Machine were considered more feminine and girl @-@ oriented . Tom Moon of Rolling Stone noted , " The title track is an odd , earnest love song ; ' Panty Lies ' is a playground taunt blown to absurd extremes ; and ' [ Little ] Trouble Girl ' , the Spector sendup , is a dramatic , earnest coming @-@ of @-@ age story " . The latter was described by David Browne of Entertainment Weekly as " a teen @-@ pregnancy lullaby " and features vocals by Gordon and Kim Deal ( of Pixies and The Breeders ) along with other musicians . Gordon felt that Deal had an ideal voice for the melodic part and explained that the song was about " wanting to be seen for who you really are , being able to express those parts of yourself that aren 't ' good girl ' but that are just as real and true " . Rinaldo contributed to two songs , " Saucer @-@ Like " and " Skip Tracer " . The latter was co @-@ written with Rinaldo 's wife Leah Singer and inspired by a performance that the couple attended of riot grrrl duo Mecca Normal . The song alludes to the band 's special relationship with the major labels .

The track " Junkie 's Promise " , sung by Moore , was described as a " heroin vignette " . It was originally interpreted by many as a tribute to Kurt Cobain of Nirvana . However , Moore later clarified that the song " is purely about the emotional relationship between friends , one of which is a user . Any individual involved with drug addiction will lie to his friends for the self @-@ serving need . It 's the cruelest truth of the situation . Kurt may fit this profile and he was surely in my mind as I wrote but the song is not a specific dedication to him " . Other songs such as " Becuz " and " No Queen Blues " were built upon " numb grooves with slivers of melody , power , and gorgeously crafted noise " . The final track on the album , " The Diamond Sea " , was described as a " Neil Young @-@ esque ballad billowing into an epic noise excursion " . It is considered the longest track on any Sonic Youth album , excluding Sonic Youth Recordings releases . Due to its long duration , the song was edited down to 5 : 15 for release as a single , which also included an alternative 25 @-@ minute version as an additional track .

= = Artwork and release = =

The album cover consists of a cropped Polaroid photograph of two unidentified fans taken at a Sonic Youth show in Amherst , Massachusetts in April 1995 , during a short tour undertaken while the album was still in production . The fans are depicted wearing T @-@ shirts that were sold as merchandise during that tour ; early in 1995 , the band was toying with the idea of changing their name to Washing Machine . Visible on the shirt on the left are signatures by Thalia Zedek and Chris Brokaw of the tour 's opening band Come . The photo was taken by Gordon , who believed it could be used as the album cover . The band liked the shot , but the record label did not want to use it without permission from the fans . As the band did not have any way to contact them , their faces had to be cut off .

Washing Machine was released on vinyl , CD and cassette formats on September 26 , 1995 by DGC , shortly after the group concluded their stint headlining the 1995 Lollapalooza music festival . During the festival , the band previewed some tracks from the album in addition to playing several songs from Daydream Nation , Dirty , and Experimental Jet Set . In Germany , the record was also released with a bonus disc containing four live songs that were recorded in Paris on September 12 , 1995 . Upon release , Washing Machine reached No. 58 on the US Billboard 200 chart and No. 39 on the UK Albums Chart . The album also charted in several other countries , including Australia , New Zealand , The Netherlands and Belgium . Two singles and music videos for " The Diamond Sea " and " Little Trouble Girl " were released in 1995 and 1996 respectively . As of 2005 , the album had sold 159 @, @ 000 copies in the US according to Nielsen SoundScan .

= = Critical reception = =

Washing Machine received generally positive reviews from music critics . Stephen Thomas Erlewine of AllMusic opined that the album is " easily [ the band 's ] most adventurous , challenging and best record since Daydream Nation ... Not only are the songs more immediate than most of the material on their earlier records , the sound here is warm and open , making Washing Machine their most mature and welcoming record to date ... Washing Machine encompasses everything that made Sonic Youth innovators , and shows that they can continue to grow , finding new paths inside their signature sound " . Similarly , Peter Margasak of CMJ New Music Monthly described the album as a " powerful consolidation of the band 's accomplishments , but a distillation that looks forwards " . He also highlighted the song " The Diamond Sea " as the album 's centerpiece , stating that it was one of Moore 's " most ambitious excursions into pure sonic colors , textures , and tension " .

Writing for Rolling Stone , Tom Moon called Washing Machine " a sardonic , wise @-@ ass , indulgent and totally captivating album " , declaring that it was " anti @-@ hook " and " disavows ( and sometimes mocks ) the conventional post @-@ Nirvana wisdom " . He highlighted Rinaldo and Moore 's guitar interplay on every track , commenting that " they 've developed an attack that is astonishingly intricate and jazzlike in its extreme flexibility " . Prominent music critic Robert Christgau also praised the album and compared some songs favorably to the Grateful Dead and The Fleetwoods . Los Angeles Times writer Lorraine Ali stated that the album " finds Sonic Youth taking no radical new steps but instead holding onto its original groundbreaking formula and watching the big pop world come to it " . In contrast , David Browne of Entertainment Weekly felt that the band explored new challenges and wrote that Washing Machine was their " most audacious step yet " .

In a mixed review , Spin reviewer Erik Davis criticized the album for its aimless structure , stating that each of the band 's members " wanders off in a different direction " . Despite this , he heavily praised " The Diamond Sea " , calling it " a gorgeous tapestry buried in Washing Machine 's uneven load " . He wrote that the band " drifts into a beautiful ambient sea glittering with overtones . Then a metallic storm brews on the horizon , before a string of four riveting notes unleashes a festival of Hendrix necromancy ... It 's easy to make guitar noise harsh and grating ? but Sonic Youth can make it glow . It 's easy to use noise as an orgasmic peak ? but Sonic Youth can make it plateau , restraining their distortion only to intensify its monstrous serenity " . He also said that the song showed that Sonic Youth " may get better the farther out they go " , while NME magazine remarked that it " is probably the best song Sonic Youth have ever written " . In 1996 , the album was ranked at No. 18 in The Village Voice 's Pazz & Jop critics ' poll for 1995 . Similarly , editors for NME placed the album at No. 31 in their albums of the year list for 1995 .

= = 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