

= What Are You Going to Do with Your Life ? =

What Are You Going to Do with Your Life ? is the eighth studio album by the English rock band Echo & the Bunnymen . The album saw the departure of bassist Les Pattinson from the group , partly due to disagreements with vocalist Ian McCulloch ; McCulloch and the remaining band member , guitarist Will Sergeant , subsequently recorded the record with session musicians . The London Metropolitan Orchestra provided backing music and the American alternative hip hop band Fun Lovin ' Criminals appeared as guest musicians on two tracks . The album was produced by Alan Douglas and Echo & the Bunnymen and it was recorded at various locations throughout England . Feeling sidelined during the recording of the album , Sergeant described it as " probably the worst time in my whole life " .

What Are You Going to Do with Your Life ? was released on 16 April 1999 through London Records following the release of the first single from the album , " Rust " , the previous month . One further single , " Get in the Car " , followed the album 's release . The album received mixed reviews from the music press , being described as both flawless and having no appeal . The album was not as popular with the public as earlier releases from Echo & the Bunnymen ; the album peaked at number twenty @-@ one on the UK Albums Chart .

= = Background and recording = =

After the release of Echo & the Bunnymen 's previous album , Evergreen (1997) , and its three singles , the only new material by the band in 1998 was the song " Fools Like Us " . It was released only on the soundtrack for the romantic comedy film Martha , Meet Frank , Daniel and Laurence . Vocalist Ian McCulloch wrote the official song for England 's 1998 football World Cup campaign , which he recorded with the Spice Girls and Ocean Colour Scene as England United . Although McCulloch was proud of the song , it was not popular with the fans , peaking number nine on the UK Singles Chart . It was beaten to the number one position by the unofficial song , " Three Lions ' 98 " , released by David Baddiel , Frank Skinner and The Lightning Seeds .

When Echo & the Bunnymen entered the studio to record What Are You Going to Do with Your Life ? , bassist Les Pattinson received news that his mother was unwell . That , coupled with Pattinson 's perception that McCulloch wanted everything his way , led to Pattinson announcing his retirement from the band . McCulloch and guitarist Will Sergeant were determined to continue as Echo & the Bunnymen and recruited session musicians so they could record the album . The album was produced by Alan Douglas and Echo & the Bunnymen and was recorded at Doghouse Studios in Henley @-@ on @-@ Thames , Parr Street Studios in Liverpool , and Olympic Studios , Maida Vale Studios and CTS in London .

As with previous Echo & the Bunnymen albums , What Are You Going to Do with Your Life ? used the London Metropolitan Orchestra to provide backing music . American alternative hip hop band Fun Lovin ' Criminals appeared on the album as guest musicians on two tracks . Sergeant 's guitar @-@ work on the album was understated and he later said , " It was probably the worst time in my whole life , doing that LP ? I hated it [...] I 'm on all the tracks here and there , but generally I just stayed in the tent ! It was a horrible experience . " The album is a collection of ballads and has been described as a follow @-@ up to McCulloch 's 1989 solo album , Candleland . In a 2005 interview for Record Collector magazine , McCulloch said , " Will [Sergeant] hated the album , and I can understand why . He 'd ask me where his guitar was supposed to go on certain songs and I 'd say , ' Well , nowhere , it doesn 't really have a place ' . "

= = Release and reception = =

Released in March 1999 , " Rust " was the first single to come from What Are You Going to Do with Your Life ? . The single peaked at number twenty @-@ two on the UK Singles Chart , and NME magazine named it their Single of the Week . The album was released the following month on 16 April and , having failed to appeal to the public as much as the band 's previous albums , peaked at

number twenty @-@ one on the UK Albums Chart . " Get in the Car " , one of the tracks recorded with Fun Lovin ' Criminals , was later released as a single .

Having awarded the album a score of nine out of ten , the reviewer for NME said , " At no point does [the album] rock . It glides with a beautiful , uninhibited momentum . " The reviewer described McCulloch 's voice as an " instrument honed by years of life , love and all the shitty bits in between to a ravishing state of molten cashmere " and the album as " flawless " for every " second of its defiantly brief 38 @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half minutes " . M. Tye Comer for CMJ said , " [Echo & the Bunnymen] revisit the melancholia they 've tussled with for nearly 20 years with a mature soul and a romantic urgency , having grown up without growing old . " Awarding the album four out of five stars , Stephen Thomas Erlewine writing for Allmusic said the album " feels of a piece with their earlier albums , not only sonically , but in terms of quality . " Mark Richard @-@ San for Pitchfork Media said , " The over @-@ the @-@ top , bass @-@ driven rockers of yore have been replaced with an album of introspective , acoustic songs appropriate for these aging geezers . " Richard @-@ San also described McCulloch as having a " rich , resonant voice " , adding " the quality of his singing is perfect ? a weary voice transmitting from some abandoned studio of yesteryear . "

Andy Gill for The Independent newspaper took a less favourable view when he said , " [The album] has , as its title suggests , all the appeal of a discussion with a career adviser . " When he described the style of the album , Gill said , " It doesn 't really help matters that as they get more mature , the band appear to be indulging their interest in Burt Bacharach and Jimmy Webb rather more openly , despite lacking either songwriter 's way with a winning melody . " In his 2003 book The Rough Guide to Rock , Peter Buckley described the album as " a little gushing and overall disappointing " .

Echo & the Bunnymen left London Records in early 2000 . McCulloch said , " What they said is , ' We 'll keep you on if you don 't take as much money as in the contract , ' and we had no intention of staying anyway , so it was kind of ' were we pushed or did we fall ? ' " There was also a change in the band 's management with Toogood departing to start his own record label . With the session musicians who recorded What Are You Going to Do with Your Life ? moving on , McCulloch and Sergeant recruited a new band , with whom they would go on to record the 2000 EP , Avalanche , which was only available to buy over the internet .

= = Track listing = =

All tracks written by Ian McCulloch and Will Sergeant .

" What Are You Going to Do with Your Life ? " ? 5 : 11

" Rust " ? 5 : 09

" Get in the Car " ? 4 : 21

" Baby Rain " ? 4 : 17

" History Chimes " ? 3 : 25

" Lost on You " ? 4 : 50

" Morning Sun " ? 4 : 12

" When It All Blows Over " ? 2 : 57

" Fools Like Us " ? 4 : 02

= = Personnel = =

Ian McCulloch ? vocals , guitar , piano

Will Sergeant ? lead guitar

Guy Pratt ? bass

Jeremy Stacy ? drums

Harry Morgan ? percussion

Paul Williams ? backing vocals

Les Pattinson ? bass (" Fools Like Us ")

Michael Lee ? drums (" Baby Rain " and " Morning Sun ")

London Metropolitan Orchestra ? strings , woodwind , brass

Fun Lovin ' Criminals ? guest musicians (" Get in the Car " and " When It All Blows Over ")

Echo & the Bunnymen ? producer

Alan Douglas ? producer , mixer , photography (cover)

Mark Stent ? mixer (" Rust " and " Baby Rain ")

Nick Ingman ? string arrangement

Ed Shearmur ? string arrangement (" Fools Like Us ")

Kevin Westenburg ? photography (liner notes)