

= The Hot Rock (album) =

The Hot Rock is the fourth studio album by the American rock band Sleater @-@ Kinney , released on February 23 , 1999 by Kill Rock Stars . It was produced by Roger Moutenot and recorded at Avast studio in Seattle , Washington in July 1998 . The Hot Rock marks a considerable change in the band 's sound , veering into a more relaxed and gloomy direction than the raucous punk rock style of its predecessors . The lyrical themes of the album explore issues of failed relationships and personal uncertainty .

Upon release , The Hot Rock reached number 181 on the U.S. Billboard 200 chart and number 12 on the Heatseekers Albums chart , becoming the first Sleater @-@ Kinney album to enter the charts . Two songs from the album , " Get Up " and " A Quarter to Three " , were released as singles . The album received positive reviews from music critics , who praised the songwriting and the vocal and guitar interplay between band members Corin Tucker and Carrie Brownstein .

= = Background and recording = =

The Hot Rock is the follow @-@ up to Sleater @-@ Kinney 's highly acclaimed third album Dig Me Out , released in 1997 by the independent record label Kill Rock Stars . After the success of Dig Me Out and its predecessor Call the Doctor , several major record labels grew interested in the band and offered them recording contracts , but the band ultimately decided to remain on Kill Rock Stars . As singer and guitarist Corin Tucker recalls , " We want to project the image that we 're successful " . Co @-@ vocalist and guitarist Carrie Brownstein added , " And we 're proud that we 've been able to do that from a tiny label [...] We 've been able to do it non @-@ traditionally , and hopefully that 's inspiring and encouraging to people " .

For its fourth album , Sleater @-@ Kinney wanted to work with producer Roger Moutenot due to his textural work on Yo La Tengo 's critically acclaimed 1997 album I Can Hear the Heart Beating as One . This marked a change from regular producer John Goodmanson , who had recorded every previous Sleater @-@ Kinney album . As Tucker explained , " These songs warranted a different production , so we looked to other people " . The band wanted to expand their sound and challenge themselves in new ways , stating that it was important for them not to make the same record twice . According to Tucker , " We have to keep pushing in order to stay interested in making music together , we want to have longevity as a band " . Similarly , drummer Janet Weiss stated that they " wanted the record to sound different than Dig Me Out , to make each song have a real strong personality " . The album was written over the course of a year , which was the longest period the band had spent on making an album . It was recorded at Avast studio in Seattle , Washington in July 1998 .

= = Music and lyrics = =

The Hot Rock marks a considerable change in the band 's sound , veering into a more relaxed and gloomy direction than the raucous punk rock style of its predecessors . As Rolling Stone noted , Sleater @-@ Kinney " delved into more oblique sounds [...] Brownstein 's abandoned power chords to slither in abstract patterns , backed by Weiss ' increasingly subtle and complex drumming [and] Tucker expanded her vocal range steering from bellow to fragile ululations " . Likewise , The Village Voice writer Sara Sherr considered The Hot Rock to be Sleater @-@ Kinney 's darkest album . Brownstein remarked that the album 's sound and lyrics were heavily influenced by the music of The Go @-@ Betweens .

Unlike previous Sleater @-@ Kinney albums , most of the lyrical themes on The Hot Rock are more intimate , exploring failed relationships and personal uncertainty . As Weiss recalled , the songs are " really honest , even if they 're sometimes unpleasant . The lyrics evoke so many emotions . Our analogies are visual and the metaphors are direct . Corin and Carrie are singing about things they care about " . The album features a notable amount of vocal and guitar interplay between Tucker and Brownstein , who interweave their voices and play off each other to create very atmospheric

songs such as " The End of You " and " Burn Don 't Freeze " . Music critic Robert Christgau said that " even reading the booklet it 's hard to keep track of who 's saying what to whom about what , as if they 'd fallen in love with (or to) the Velvets ' ' Murder Mystery ' " .

The title track " Hot Rock " , named after the 1972 film of the same name , notes the similarities between relationships and jewelry heists . The song " Banned from the End of the World " deals with the Y2K crisis and an uncertain future , while " God Is a Number " alludes to the impact of technology in society . The single " Get Up " features lead guitar lines by Brownstein and staccato riffs by Tucker . For Tucker , the song reflects the album 's thematic structure : " It 's more metaphorical and spiritual [...] It 's not about one concrete thing ; it 's about searching for meaning and maybe finding it an unexpected place " . The tracks " The Size of Our Love " and " Memorize Your Lines " feature violin lines by Seth Warren of Red Stars Theory . The Village Voice described the former song , a ballad about two lovers in trouble , as " the saddest of the sad " . The last song , " A Quarter to Three " , features slide guitar work by the album 's producer .

= = Release = =

The Hot Rock was released on February 23 , 1999 by Kill Rock Stars . The album cover is a photo shot on Southwest Broadway in Portland , Oregon . The Hot Rock reached number 181 on the U.S. Billboard 200 chart and number 12 on the Heatseekers Albums chart , becoming the first Sleater @-@ Kinney album to enter the charts . After its release , the band supported the album with a tour across the United States , sharing stages with various bands including Sonic Youth , Guided by Voices , Bratmobile , and Superchunk . As of July 1999 , the album has sold 42 @,@ 000 copies in the U.S. according to Nielsen SoundScan . As of February 2015 , The Hot Rock has sold 97 @,@ 000 copies .

Two songs from the album , " Get Up " and " A Quarter to Three " , were released as singles on January 22 , 1999 and April 6 , 1999 by Kill Rock Stars and Matador Records respectively . The first single features an outtake , " By The Time You 're Twenty Five " , as the B @-@ side , while the second single features " Burn , Don 't Freeze " from The Hot Rock . The compact disc version of " Get Up " includes a third song , " Tapping " , which is another outtake from the album 's studio sessions . A music video was made for " Get Up " under the direction of writer and performance artist Miranda July . According to July , the video alludes to the band 's friends . For example , the field where most of the music video was filmed stands near the house of Kill Rock Stars labelmate and Unwound bassist Vern Rumsey .

= = Critical reception = =

The Hot Rock received positive reviews from music critics . AllMusic reviewer Steve Huey said that The Hot Rock " isn 't quite as immediately satisfying as its two brilliant predecessors , but it does reward those willing to spend time absorbing its nervy introspection and moodiness " . Huey also praised the band 's use of dynamic tempo changes within the album 's songs . Wendy Mitchell , writing for CMJ New Music Monthly , felt that the band " has matured into the musical equivalent of a twentysomething ; still holding on to the energy of its youth , but exploring new options " . The A.V. Club writer Stephen Thompson opined that The Hot Rock " lacks the blaze @-@ of @-@ glory freshness of its justly acclaimed predecessors , [...] but [the album] works just fine on its own as a terrific , explosive , and fun rock record " .

Rob Sheffield , writing for Rolling Stone , opined that " the expansive new sound gives Sleater @-@ Kinney room to experiment with their Husker Du @-@ style storytelling . " Sheffield also felt that the band had grown as songwriters , citing the song " The Size of Our Love " as the highlight of the album : " No other band could have made this song hit home -- not even Sleater @-@ Kinney , until now . They 've earned the right to keep reinventing themselves " . In his review for The Village Voice , Robert Christgau praised the vocal interplay between Tucker and Brownstein , stating that the band " emerges as a diary of adulthood in all its encroaching intricacy " . Sara Sherr of The Village Voice gave high marks to Tucker 's vibrato , describing it as " a human teardrop [...] The one that

hits you and feels like a kiss " .

In a very positive review , Will Hermes of Entertainment Weekly highlighted the depth of the group 's interplay , commenting that " Tucker explores what her voice can do when it 's not in overdrive , stretching vowels like a religious suppliant or spewing prosody like Patti Smith . At the same time , Brownstein blossoms as a singer herself [...] braiding lines with Tucker so artfully the result sounds like the voicings of a single restless mind " . He considered The Hot Rock as Sleater @-@ Kinney 's " most finely turned record " and that its music " never falters " . Peter Tarizan of Out magazine credited the work of the producer for polishing the band 's sound without losing its intensity or muscle . The album appeared at number 23 in The Village Voice 's Pazz & Jop critics ' poll for 1999 . Similarly , Spin placed The Hot Rock at number 18 in its list of " The Top 20 Albums of 1999 " . In 2002 , Rolling Stone ranked the album at number 17 on its list of " Women in Rock : The 50 Essential Albums " .

= = Track listing = =

All music composed by Sleater @-@ Kinney .

= = Personnel = =

Credits are adapted from The Hot Rock 's album notes .