

= Remain in Light =

Remain in Light is the fourth studio album by American new wave band Talking Heads , released on October 8 , 1980 , on Sire Records . It was recorded at locations in the Bahamas and the United States between July and August 1980 and was produced by the quartet 's long @-@ time collaborator Brian Eno . The album peaked at number 19 on the Billboard 200 in the US and at number 21 on the UK Albums Chart . Two singles were released from Remain in Light : " Once in a Lifetime " and " Houses in Motion " as well as promotional single " Crosseyed and Painless " . The record was certified Gold in the US and in Canada during the 1980s .

The members of Talking Heads wanted to make an album that dispelled notions of frontman and chief lyricist David Byrne leading a back @-@ up band . They decided to experiment with African polyrhythms and , with Eno , recorded the instrumental tracks as a series of samples and loops , a novel idea at the time . Additional musicians were frequently used throughout the studio sessions . The lyric @-@ writing process slowed Remain in Light 's progress , but was concluded after Byrne drew inspiration from academic literature on Africa . The artwork for the album 's cover was crafted with the help of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology 's computers and designing company M & Co . Following the album 's completion , Talking Heads expanded to nine members for promotional concerts .

Remain in Light was widely acclaimed by critics . Praise centred on its cohesive merging of disparate genres and sonic experimentation . The record has been featured in several publications ' lists of the best albums of the 1980s and the best albums of all time , and it is often considered Talking Heads ' magnum opus . In 2006 , it was remastered and reissued with the addition of four unfinished outtakes .

= = Origins = =

In January 1980 , the members of Talking Heads returned to New York City after the tours in support of their 1979 critically acclaimed third album , Fear of Music , and decided to take time off to pursue personal interests . Byrne worked with Eno , the record 's producer , on an experimental collaboration named My Life in the Bush of Ghosts . Jerry Harrison produced an album for soul singer Nona Hendryx at the Sigma Sound Studios branch in New York City ; the singer and the location were later used during the recording of Remain in Light on Harrison 's advice . Husband and wife Chris Frantz and Tina Weymouth discussed the possibility of leaving the band after the latter suggested that Byrne 's level of control was excessive . Frantz was not open to the idea of ending Talking Heads , and the two decided to take a long vacation in the Caribbean to ponder the state of the band and their marriage . During the trip , the couple became involved in Haitian Vodou religious ceremonies and practised with several types of native percussion instruments . While in Jamaica they socialised with the famous reggae rhythm section of Sly and Robbie .

Frantz and Weymouth ended their holiday by purchasing an apartment above Compass Point Studios in Nassau , the Bahamas , where the band had recorded their second album More Songs About Buildings and Food . Byrne joined the duo and Harrison there in the spring of 1980 . The band members realised that it had been solely up to Byrne to bear the creative burden of crafting songs even though the tracks were performed as a quartet . The conception of Remain in Light occurred partly because they tired of the notion of a singer leading a back @-@ up band ; the ideal they aimed for , according to Byrne , was " sacrificing our egos for mutual cooperation " . The frontman additionally wanted to escape " the psychological paranoia and personal torment " of what he had been writing and feeling in 1970s New York City . Instead of the band writing music to Byrne 's lyrics , Talking Heads performed instrumental jam sessions without words , using the Fear of Music song " I Zimbra " as a starting point .

Eno arrived in the Bahamas three weeks after Byrne and was at first reluctant to work with the band again after collaborating on the previous two full @-@ length releases . He changed his mind after hearing the instrumental demo tapes and noted , " I absolutely love the direction you 're going in . " Both parties decided to experiment with the communal African way of making music , in which

individual parts mesh as polyrhythms to create a cohesive whole . Afrodisiac , the 1973 Afrobeat record from Nigerian musician Fela Kuti , became the template for the album . Weymouth has commented that the advent of the 1980s marked the beginnings of hip @-@ hop music , which made Talking Heads realise that the musical landscape was changing . Before the studio sessions , long @-@ time friend David Gans instructed the band members that " the things one doesn 't intend are the seeds for a more interesting future " . He encouraged them to experiment and improvise when recording and to make use of " mistakes " .

= = Recording and production = =

Recording sessions started at Compass Point Studios in July 1980 . The album 's creation required the use of additional musicians , particularly extra percussionists . Talking Heads used the working title Melody Attack throughout the studio process after watching a Japanese game show of the same name . Harrison has commented that the ambition was to blend rock and African genres , rather than simply imitate African music . Eno 's production techniques and personal approach were key to the record 's conception . The process was geared to promote the expression of instinct and spontaneity without overtly focusing on the sound of the final product . Sections and instrumentals were recorded one at a time in a discontinuous process . Samples and loops played a key part at a time when computer programs could not yet adequately perform such functions . The band 's performances and jam sessions acted as sampling and looping mechanisms . Eno has compared the creative process to " looking out to the world and saying , ' What a fantastic place we live in . Let 's celebrate it . ' " .

After a few sessions in the Bahamas , engineer Rhett Davies left following an argument with the producer over the fast speed of recording . Steven Stanley , who since the age of 17 had engineered for musicians such as Bob Marley , stepped in to cover the workload . He is credited by Frantz with helping create the track " Once in a Lifetime " , which was later released as a single . A Lexicon 224 digital reverb effects unit , obtained by engineer and mixer Dave Jerden , was used on the album . The machine was one of the first of its kind and able to simulate environments such as echo chambers and rooms through interchangeable programs . Like Davies , Jerden was unhappy with the fast pace at which Eno wanted to record sonically complicated compositions , but did not complain . The basic tracks focused wholly on rhythms and were all performed in a minimalist method using only one chord . Each section was recorded as a long loop to enable the creation of compositions through the positioning or merging of loops in different ways .

The tracks made Byrne rethink his vocal style and he tried singing to the instrumental songs , but sounded " stilted " . Few vocal sections were recorded in the Bahamas . The writing process for the lyrics occurred when the band returned to the US and was split between New York City and California . Harrison booked Talking Heads into Sigma Sound , which focused primarily on R & B music , after convincing the owners that the band 's work could bring them a new type of clientele . In New York City , Byrne struggled with writer 's block . Harrison and Eno spent their time tweaking the compositions recorded in the Bahamas , while Frantz and Weymouth often did not show up at the studio . Doubts began to surface about whether the album would be completed . The recording sessions only built up pace after the recruitment of guitarist Adrian Belew at the request of Byrne , Harrison and Eno . He was advised to add guitar solos to the Compass Point tracks , making use of a Roland guitar synthesiser .

Byrne recorded all the tracks , as they were after Belew had performed on them , in a cassette and looked to Africa to break his writer 's block . He realised that , when African musicians forget words , they often improvise and make new ones up . The lyricist used a portable tape recorder and tried to create onomatopoeic rhymes in the style of Eno , who believed that lyrics were never the center of a song 's meaning . Byrne continuously listened to his recorded scatting until convinced that he was no longer " hearing nonsense " . After the frontman was satisfied , Harrison invited Nona Hendryx to Sigma Sound to record backing vocals for the album . She was advised extensively on her vocal delivery by Byrne , Frantz , and Weymouth , and often sang in a trio with Byrne and Eno . The voice sessions were followed by the overdubbing process . Brass player Jon Hassell , who had been

working on parts of *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts* , was hired to perform trumpet and horn sections . In August 1980 , half of the album was mixed by Eno and engineer John Potoker in New York City with the assistance of Harrison , while the other half was mixed by Byrne and Jerden at Eldorado Studios in Los Angeles .

= = Packaging and title = =

The cover art was conceived by Weymouth and Frantz with the help of Massachusetts Institute of Technology researcher Walter Bender and his MIT Media Lab team . Using *Melody Attack* as inspiration , the couple created a collage of red warplanes flying in formation over the Himalayas . The planes are an artistic depiction of Grumman Avenger planes in honour of Weymouth 's father , Ralph Weymouth , who was a US Navy Admiral . The idea for the back cover included simple portraits of the band members . Weymouth attended MIT regularly during the summer of 1980 and worked with Bender 's colleague , Scott Fisher , on the computer renditions of the ideas . The process was tortuous because computer power was limited in the early 1980s and the mainframe alone took up several rooms . Weymouth and Fisher shared a passion for masks and used the concept to experiment with the portraits . The faces ( except for eyes , noses and mouths ) were blotted out with blocks of red colour . Weymouth considered superimposing Eno 's face on top of all four portraits to insinuate his egotism ? the producer wanted to be on the cover art together with *Talking Heads* ? but decided against it in the end .

The rest of the artwork and the liner notes were crafted by the graphic designer Tibor Kalman and his company M & Co . Kalman was a fervent critic of formalism and professional design in art and advertisements . He offered his services for free to create publicity , and discussed using unconventional materials such as sandpaper and velour for the LP sleeve . Weymouth , who was sceptical of hiring a designing firm , vetoed Kalman 's ideas and held firm on the MIT computerised images . The designing process made the band members realise that the title *Melody Attack* was " too flippant " for the music recorded , and they adopted *Remain in Light* instead . Byrne has noted , " Besides not being all that melodic , the music had something to say that at the time seemed new , transcendent , and maybe even revolutionary , at least for funk rock songs . " The image of the warplanes was relegated to the back of the sleeve and the doctored portraits became the front cover . Kalman later suggested that the planes were not removed altogether because they seemed appropriate during the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979 ? 81 .

Weymouth advised Kalman that she wanted simple typography in a bold sans serif font . M & Co. followed the instructions and came up with the idea of inverting the " A " s in " TALKING HEADS " . Weymouth and Frantz decided to use the joint credit acronym C / T for the artwork , while Bender and Fisher used initials and code names because the project was not an official MIT venture . The design credits read " HCL , JPT , DDD , WALTER GP , PAUL , C / T " . The final mass @-@ produced version of *Remain in Light* boasted one of the first computer @-@ designed record jackets . Psychoanalyst Michael A. Brog has called its front cover a " disarming image , which suggests both splitting and obliteration of identity " and which introduces the listener to the album 's recurring theme of " identity disturbance " ; he states , " The image is in bleak contrast to the title with the obscured images of the band members unable to ' remain in light ' . "

= = Promotion and release = =

Brian Eno advised *Talking Heads* that the music on *Remain in Light* was too dense for a quartet to perform . The band expanded to nine musicians for the tours in support of the album . The augmenting members recruited by Harrison were Belew , Funkadelic keyboardist Bernie Worrell , bassist Busta " Cherry " Jones , Ashford & Simpson percussionist Steven Scales , and backing vocalist Dolette MacDonald . The larger group performed sound checks in Frantz and Weymouth 's loft by following the rhythms established by Worrell , who had studied at the New England Conservatory and Juilliard School . Their first appearance was on 23 August 1980 at the Heatwave festival in Canada in front of 70 @,@ 000 people ; Robert Hilburn of the *Los Angeles Times* called

the band 's new music a " rock @-@ funk sound with dramatic , near show @-@ stopping force " . On August 27 , the expanded Talking Heads performed a showcase of tracks to an audience of 125 @,@ 000 at the Wollman Rink in New York City 's Central Park . The Canada and New York gigs were the only ones initially planned , but Sire Records decided to support the nine @-@ member band on an extended tour .

Remain in Light was released worldwide on October 8 , 1980 . Talking Heads and Eno originally agreed to credit all songs in alphabetical order to " David Byrne , Brian Eno , Chris Frantz , Jerry Harrison and Tina Weymouth " after failing to devise an accurate mathematical formula for the split , but the album was released with the credits " David Byrne , Brian Eno , Talking Heads " . Frantz , Harrison , and Weymouth disputed Byrne and Eno 's attempt to claim sole credits , especially for a process they had partly funded . According to Weymouth , Byrne told Kalman to doctor the credits on Eno 's advice . Later editions rectified the error . Remain in Light received its world premiere airing in its entirety on 10 October 1980 on WDFM . It was certified Gold by the Canadian Recording Industry Association in February 1981 after shipping 50 @,@ 000 copies , and by Recording Industry Association of America in September 1985 after shipping 500 @,@ 000 copies . Over one million copies have been sold worldwide .

= = Content = =

= = = Lyrics = = =

Remain in Light contains eight songs that possess a " striking free @-@ associative feel " according to psychoanalyst Michael A. Brog , in that there is no long @-@ lasting coherent thought process that can be followed in the stream @-@ of @-@ consciousness lyrics . David Gans instructed Byrne to be freer with his lyrical content by advising him that " rational thinking has its limits " . The frontman included a bibliography with the album press kit along with a statement that explained how the album was inspired by African mythologies and rhythms . The release stressed that the major inspiration to the lyrics was Professor John Miller Chernoff 's African Rhythm and African Sensibility , which examined the musical enhancement of life in the continent 's rural communities . The academic travelled to Ghana in 1970 to study native percussion and wrote about how Africans have complicated conversations through drum patterns . One of the songs , " The Great Curve " , exemplifies the African theme by including the line " The world moves on a woman 's hips " , which Byrne used after reading Professor Robert Farris Thompson 's book African Art in Motion . He additionally studied straight speech , from John Dean 's Watergate testimony to the stories of African American former slaves .

Like all the other tracks , album opener " Born Under Punches ( The Heat Goes On ) " borrows from " preaching , shouting and ranting " . The expression " And the Heat Goes On " , used in the title and repeated in the chorus , is based on a New York Post headline Eno read in the summer of 1980 whilst Byrne rewrote the song title " Don 't Worry About the Government " from Talking Heads ' debut album , Talking Heads : 77 , into the lyric " Look at the hands of a government man " . The " rhythmical rant " in " Crosseyed and Painless " ? " Facts are simple and facts are straight . Facts are lazy and facts are late . " ? is influenced by old school rap , specifically Kurtis Blow 's " The Breaks " given to Byrne by Frantz . " Once in a Lifetime " borrows heavily from preachers ' diatribes . Some critics have suggested that the song is " a kind of prescient jab at the excesses of the 1980s " . Byrne disagreed with the categorisation and commented that its lyrics are meant to be taken literally ; he stated , " We 're largely unconscious . You know , we operate half awake or on autopilot and end up , whatever , with a house and family and job and everything else , and we haven 't really stopped to ask ourselves , ' How did I get here ? ' . "

= = = Music = = =

Byrne has described the album 's final mix as a " spiritual " piece of work , " joyous and ecstatic and

yet it 's serious " ; he has pointed out that , in the end , there was " less Africanism in Remain in Light that we implied ... but the African ideas were far more important to get across than specific rhythms " . According to Eno , the record uniquely blends funk and punk rock or new wave music . None of the compositions include chord changes and instead rely on the use of different harmonics and notes . " Spidery riffs " and layered tracks of bass and percussion are used extensively throughout the album . The first side contains the more rhythmic songs recorded ? " Born Under Punches ( The Heat Goes On ) " , " Crosseyed and Painless " , and " The Great Curve " ? which include long instrumental interludes . The last @-@ named track contains extended synthesiser @-@ treated guitar solos from Adrian Belew .

The second side of Remain in Light features more introspective songs . " Once in a Lifetime " pays homage to early rap techniques and the music of art rock band The Velvet Underground . The track was originally called " Weird Guitar Riff Song " because of its composition . It was conceived as a single riff before the band added a second , boosted riff over the top of the first . Eno alternated eight bars of each riff with corresponding bars of its counterpart . " Houses in Motion " incorporates lengthy brass performances from Jon Hassell , while " Listening Wind " features Arabic music elements . The final track on the album , " The Overload , " was Talking Heads ' attempt to emulate the sound of British post @-@ punk band Joy Division . The song was made despite no band member having heard the music of Joy Division ; rather , it was based on an idea of what the British quartet might sound like based on descriptions in the music press . The track features " tribal @-@ cum @-@ industrial " beats created primarily by Harrison and Byrne .

= = Critical reception = =

= = = Reviews = = =

The album has attained widespread acclaim from media outlets since its release . Ken Tucker of Rolling Stone explained that it was a brave and absorbing attempt to locate a common ground in the early 1980s divergent and often hostile musical genres ; he concluded , " Remain in Light yields scary , funny music to which you can dance and think , think and dance , dance and think , ad infinitum . " Robert Christgau , writing in The Village Voice , described the record as one " in which David Byrne conquers his fear of music in a visionary Afrofunk synthesis ? clear @-@ eyed , detached , almost mystically optimistic " . Michael Kulp of The Daily Collegian commented that the album deserves the tag " classic " like each of the band 's three previous full @-@ length releases , while John Rockwell , writing in The New York Times , suggested that it confirmed Talking Heads ' position as " America 's most venturesome rock band " . Sandy Robertson of Sounds praised the record 's innovative nature , while Billboard wrote , " Just about every LP Talking Heads has released in the last four years has wound up on virtually every critics ' best of list . Remain in Light should be no exception . "

AllMusic 's William Ruhlmann noted that Talking Heads ' musical transition , first witnessed in Fear of Music , comes to full fruition in Remain in Light ; he stated , " Talking Heads were connecting with an audience ready to follow their musical evolution , and the album was so inventive and influential . " In the 1995 Spin Alternative Record Guide , Eric Weisbard praised Eno 's production effort which helped rein in any excessive appropriations of African music by Talking Heads . In 2004 , Slant Magazine 's Barry Walsh labelled its results as " simply magical " after the band turned rock music into a more global entity in terms of its musical and lyrical scope . In a 2008 review , Sean Fennessey of Vibe concluded , " Talking Heads took African polyrhythms to NYC and made a return trip with elegant , alien post @-@ punk in tow . "

= = = Accolades = = =

Remain in Light was named the best album of 1980 by Sounds , ahead of The Skids ' The Absolute Game , and by Melody Maker , while The New York Times included it in its unnumbered shortlist of

the 10 best records issued that year . It figured highly in other end @-@ of @-@ year best album lists , notably at number two , behind The Clash 's London Calling , by Robert Christgau , and at number six by NME . It featured at number three ? behind London Calling and Bruce Springsteen 's The River ? in The Village Voice 's 1980 Pazz & Jop critics ' poll , which aggregates the votes of hundreds of prominent reviewers .

In 1989 , Rolling Stone named Remain in Light as the fourth best album of the decade . In 1993 , it was included at number 11 in NME 's list of The 50 Greatest Albums Of The ' 80s , and at number 68 in the publication 's Greatest Albums Of All Time list . In 1997 , The Guardian collated worldwide data from renowned critics , artists , and radio DJs , which placed the record at number 43 in the list of the 100 Best Albums Ever . In 1999 , it was included by Vibe as one of its 100 Essential Albums Of The 20th Century . In 2002 , Pitchfork Media featured Remain in Light at number two behind Sonic Youth 's Daydream Nation in its Top 100 Albums Of The 1980s list . In 2003 , VH1 named the record at number 88 during its 100 Greatest Albums countdown , while Slant magazine included it in its unnumbered shortlist of 50 Essential Pop Albums . Rolling Stone placed it at number 129 in its December 2015 issue of " The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " , higher than three other Talking Heads releases . In 2006 , Q ranked Remain in Light at number 27 in its list of the 40 Best Albums of the 80s . In 2012 , Slant listed the album at number six on its list of the " Best Albums of the 1980s " .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written by David Byrne , Brian Eno , Chris Frantz , Jerry Harrison , and Tina Weymouth .

The remastered reissue was produced by Andy Zax with the help of Talking Heads .

The DVD portion of the European reissue contains videos of the band performing " Crosseyed and Painless " and " Once in a Lifetime " on German music show Rockpop in 1980 .

= = Personnel = =

Those involved in the making of Remain in Light were :

= = Chart positions = =