

= Peace Sells ... but Who 's Buying ? =

Peace Sells ... but Who 's Buying ? is the second studio album by American thrash metal band Megadeth , released on September 19 , 1986 . The project was originally handled by Combat Records , resulting in the first mix of the album being co - @ - @ produced by Randy Burns . Capitol Records then bought the rights to the album and hired another producer , Paul Lani , to mix it himself . The album 's front cover , featuring the band 's mascot Vic Rattlehead , was created by Ed Repka . The recording of the album was difficult for the band because of the ongoing drug issues the members had at the time . This was the last Megadeth album to feature drummer Gar Samuelson and guitarist Chris Poland , who were fired shortly after the album 's promotional tour for drug abuse . The title track , noted for its politically conscious lyrics , was released as the album 's lead single .

Peace Sells ... but Who 's Buying ? is regarded as a thrash metal classic and as an album that gave prominence to extreme metal . It has been featured in several publications ' best album lists , including Robert Dimery 's 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die and Martin Popoff 's Top 500 Heavy Metal Albums of All Time . The album has been reissued several times over the years . In 2004 , the album was remixed and remastered by Megadeth frontman Dave Mustaine , with extensive liner notes detailing the album 's background . In 2011 , the three different versions were reissued as part of the album 's 25th anniversary celebration . All of them , with the exception of the 2004 mixes , feature new remastering .

= = Background and recording = =

In an interview for Metal Forces in December 1985 , frontman Dave Mustaine revealed that the band had already started writing new material for the second album . He said that two songs (" Black Friday " and " Bad Omen ") were finished and described them as a " total blur " , being much faster than " Rattlehead " . Speaking about the lyrical content of the album , Mustaine and bassist David Ellefson stated that they wanted to change the public perception of heavy metal by writing songs that contained socially aware lyrics . Mustaine further noted that the band was not unaware of the political situation at the time and that some of his political beliefs were reflected in the songs . Professional rock critic Steve Huey noted the album 's combination of " punkish political awareness with a dark , threatening , typically heavy metal worldview " .

During the first two months of 1986 , Megadeth commenced a brief tour at the East Coast of the United States . At the shows , which were practically a continuation of the Killing for a Living tour , the band performed a number of songs from its upcoming album . Following the conclusion of the tour , the band intended to start making the record at the Music Grinder studio on Melrose Avenue in Hollywood . Mustaine lifted the title from an article in Reader 's Digest , which was titled " Peace Would Sell But No One Would Buy It " . Their current label , Combat Records , provided a recording budget of \$ 25 @ , @ 000 , which allowed the band to hire a freelance producer , Randy Burns . The recording of the album was very difficult for the band , because Mustaine and Ellefson were homeless at the time . Furthermore , guitarist Chris Poland and drummer Gar Samuelson would not show up for hours because of their heroin addiction . Shortly after the band finished the final recordings of the album for Combat , they were approached by Tim Carr , an A & R representative of Capitol Records . After securing a contract with the group , Capitol hired producer Paul Lani to remix the original mixes done by Randy Burns , the previous producer .

= = Release and promotion = =

Peace Sells ... but Who 's Buying ? was released on September 19 , 1986 . The album 's artwork was designed by Ed Repka , who would go on to do several other pieces of artwork for the band over the years . The cover art depicts the band 's mascot , Vic Rattlehead , in front of the United Nations building . He is portrayed as a real estate agent , who is selling the devastated remains of the organization 's headquarters . The title track was released as a single , for which the band filmed

its first video . In 1987 , a video was made for the second single , " Wake Up Dead " , which exposed the band performing in a steel cage . Soon after the album 's release , Megadeth began a tour as a supporting band for Motörhead . The tour took place in California and the southwestern parts of the United States . However , due to disagreements between the managements of the two bands , Megadeth were pulled from the last three shows . Following the short stint with Motörhead , Megadeth were added as the opening act on Alice Cooper 's Constrictor tour , which took place at the beginning of 1987 . Later in 1987 , after the conclusion of the album 's promotional tour , Mustaine fired Poland and Samuelson due to their substance abuse issues .

= = Songs = =

= = = Tracks 1 ? 4 = = =

" Wake Up Dead " features lyrics which describe a man who has been cheating on his wife or girlfriend and is sneaking into his house , knowing that if his wife finds out about his other lover , she will kill him . Mustaine said that " Wake up Dead " was written about him cheating on a girl he was living with . He stayed with her because he was homeless at the time and needed a place to stay . Unfortunately , he was in love with another girl and thought the one he lived with would be mad because he was cheating her . He had to leave her because he thought she had intentions to kill him . " The Conjuring " , according to author Bob Larson , simulates a Satanic ceremony , and makes references about being the devil 's advocate and his salesman . Mustaine explained the song is about black magic and contains instructions for hexes . However , because the subject matter appears incompatible to his conversion to Christianity , the song has not been played live since 2001 .

" Peace Sells " reflects Mustaine 's political and social beliefs . The lyrics are disapproval of the American way and convey Mustaine 's wish for a new social structure . Ellefson has stated that during the tour prior to recording the album , the band could tell then that the song was going to be a hit . The video for the title track became an MTV mainstay and the opening bass line was used as introduction to MTV News . However , Mustaine proclaimed that they received no royalties because the song was excluded shortly before MTV would have to pay them for its use . " Devils Island " is a reference to a former French penal colony off the coast of French Guiana . The lyrics detail the thoughts of a condemned prisoner awaiting execution . He is spared by God , but must spend the rest of his life on the island .

= = = Tracks 5 ? 8 = = =

" Good Mourning / Black Friday " is a two @-@ piece song , which begins with an instrumental part called " Good Mourning " . Lyrically , Mustaine has described " Black Friday " as being about " a homicidal madman who goes on a killing spree " . With an excessive use of gory language and violent imagery , the song chronicles the acts of a serial killer . It was inspired by Dijon Carruthers , who was briefly the band 's drummer prior to the hiring of Gar Samuelson . According to Mustaine , Carruthers was hanging out with people who were practicing occultism , and they inspired him to write songs based on spiritual themes .

" Bad Omen " explores the theme of occultism . Mustaine described " Bad Omen " like " two happy campers who have stumbled onto a Satanic orgy in the middle of the woods " and then " they see these fools waiting around for Satan 's blessing " . Asked whether the band members really believe in the subject matters they write , Mustaine responded : " We 're aware of the subjects we write about ? witchcraft , Satanic sacrifices and the like ? but we 're not condoning them . " " I Ain 't Superstitious " was written by Willie Dixon and originally recorded by Howlin ' Wolf in 1961 . However , Megadeth 's version is vastly different from the original . " My Last Words " is about a game of Russian roulette and the fear one goes through when playing the game . Despite being one of the lesser known tracks on the record , music journalist Martin Popoff said that the song was an

example of the band 's " fast thrashers " and an evidence why Megadeth were dubbed as the " fearless speed progenitors " .

= = Critical reception = =

= = = Contemporary reviews = = =

Peace Sells ... but Who 's Buying ? was well received by contemporary music critics . Billboard 's critic Fred Goodman facetiously remarked that the album is an " array of impressive tracks " that he does not recommend for " the weak @-@ hearted " . Colin Larkin , writing in the Encyclopedia of Popular Music , viewed the album as a vast improvement over their previous record , from both technical and musical aspect . Kerrang ! deemed Peace Sells ... but Who 's Buying ? as the album that saw the inception of Megadeth 's always @-@ distinctive sound . Writing in The Rolling Stone Album Guide , author Nathan Brackett said that Megadeth were representing " the dark and nasty side " of American thrash throughout the 1980s . However , he considered the album to be almost identical to the rest of their discography from this period .

= = = Legacy = = =

In retrospect , Peace Sells ... but Who 's Buying ? has been regarded as a milestone of the American thrash metal movement . Along with Metallica 's Master of Puppets and Slayer 's Reign in Blood , which were also released in 1986 , Peace Sells ... but Who 's Buying ? is considered pivotal in giving prominence to extreme metal . AllMusic 's Steve Huey recognized the record as a notable achievement in the band 's history , and called it a " classic of early thrash " . Similarly , Chad Bowar of About.com said that the album captured Megadeth in their prime , and recommended it as a " mandatory " recording for the fans of this genre . Sputnikmusic 's Mike Stagno named the album a " bona @-@ fide masterpiece " and said it was the main reason why Megadeth became one of the leading acts of the underground scene . Joel McIver , writing in Record Collector , said that the album 's main strength was its fluidity , with all songs moving in a continuous , steady stream . According to him , the album was " flip the bird " to the critics who were hostile to this type of music at the time .

Pitchfork Media 's Jess Harvell said that thanks to this album , Megadeth developed a strong cult following . He viewed the record as a resistance against the glam metal acts from the day , because bands like Megadeth were more appealing to the " dead @-@ end kids " . Adrien Bégard of PopMatters praised the album for making strong impression both musically and visually . Although Bégard acknowledged that this was not Megadeth 's most technically proficient album , he explained that the unique combination of " the extreme and the accessible " is why this album remained a fan @-@ favorite . Spin magazine 's Mike Powell cited the record as an example of " glossy hardcore " with Satanic lyricism . Jeff Treppel from Decibel noted that the album exhibits a distinctive sound , which set Megadeth apart from their contemporaries : " Peace Sells was a leaner , nastier predator . Megadeth preferred to kill with speed and precision instead of size and power . " According to him , the album influenced countless heavy metal bands that followed , from Arch Enemy to DragonForce .

In addition to being critically acclaimed , the album received numerous accolades since its release . It has been featured in Robert Dimery 's book 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die , as well as in Martin Popoff 's edition of the Top 500 Heavy Metal Albums of All Time . About.com ranked it third on their list of " Essential Thrash Metal Albums " , commenting that more than two decades after its release , the record holds a status as an undisputed classic .

= = Reissues = =

In 2003 , Capitol Records re @-@ released the album on DVD @-@ Audio , with the original

tracklist , in 96k / 24 @-@ bit resolution for both surround and stereo mixes , and music videos for " Wake Up Dead " and " Peace Sells " . The album was remixed and remastered in 2004 along with the rest of the band 's Capitol Records albums . This reissue featured four alternate mixes of the album 's songs as bonus tracks .

On July 12 , 2011 , the band re @-@ released the album in both a 2 @-@ Disc reissue and a special 5 @-@ Disc + 3 @-@ LP box set , to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the album . The reissue features liner notes written by Mustaine and Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich . The 25th anniversary re @-@ release sold approximately 2 @, @ 000 units in its first week of release .

The 25th Anniversary edition box set features five discs . Discs 1 ? 3 all feature the original album , with disc 1 having the original mix (remastered version from 2011) , disc 2 featuring the 2004 remix , and disc 3 featuring the Randy Burns mixes (several examples of which appear as bonus tracks on the album 's 2004 release) . Disc 4 features the same 1987 show available on the 2 @-@ disc set . Disc five contains both the original album (again , remastered version from 2011) , and the above listed 1987 show in hi @-@ resolution audio . The 25th anniversary 2 CD edition features the original album on disc one and a previously unreleased 1987 concert on disc two .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Dave Mustaine , except " I Ain 't Superstitious " by Willie Dixon .

= = Personnel = =

Production and performance credits are adapted from the album liner notes .

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Accolades = =

Except where otherwise cited , all listed accolades attributed to Peace Sells ... but Who 's Buying ? are adapted from Acclaimed Music .