

= The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill =

The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill is the debut solo album by American recording artist Lauryn Hill, released on August 25, 1998, by Ruffhouse Records and Columbia Records. After touring with her former group Fugees, Hill became involved in a romantic relationship with Jamaican entrepreneur Rohan Marley, and shortly after, became pregnant with his child. This pregnancy, as well as other circumstances in her life, inspired Hill to make a solo album. Recording sessions for the album took place from late 1997 to June 1998 mainly at Tuff Gong Studios in Kingston, as Hill collaborated with a group of musicians known as New Ark in writing and producing the songs. Primarily a neo soul album, The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill incorporates musical styles from R & B, hip hop, soul, and reggae. Its lyrics touch upon Hill's pregnancy and the turmoil within the Fugees, along with themes of love and God. The album's title was inspired by the film and autobiographical novel The Education of Sonny Carson, and Carter G. Woodson's The Mis @-@ Education of the Negro.

The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 chart, selling 422 @, @ 624 copies in its first week, which broke a record for first @-@ week sales by a female artist. The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill produced three hit singles: "Doo Wop (That Thing)", "Ex @-@ Factor", and "Everything Is Everything". Its lead single "Doo Wop (That Thing)" peaked at number one in the US, with the latter two singles peaking within the top 40. The album's success propelled Hill to international superstardom, and contributed to bringing hip hop and neo soul to the forefront of popular music. At the 41st Annual Grammy Awards, The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill earned 10 nominations, winning five awards, making Hill the first woman to receive that many nominations and awards in one night. By 2013, it had sold over 8 million copies in the US and over 19 million copies worldwide.

Critics generally praised The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill for Hill's presentation of a woman's view on life and love, along with her artistic range. New Ark, however, felt Hill and her record label did not properly credit the group on the album; a lawsuit filed by the group was settled out of court in 2001. Since the record's release, it has been ranked in numerous best @-@ album lists, with a number of critics regarding it as one of the greatest albums of the 1990s, as well as one of the greatest albums of all time. In 2015, it was included by the Library of Congress in the National Recording Registry.

= = Background = =

In 1996, Lauryn Hill met Rohan Marley while touring as a member of the Fugees. The two gradually formed a close relationship, and while on tour, Hill became pregnant with his child. The pregnancy and other circumstances in her life inspired her to record a solo album. After contributing to fellow Fugees member Wyclef Jean's 1997 solo record The Carnival, Hill took time off from touring and recording due to her pregnancy and cases of writer's block. This pregnancy, however, renewed Hill's creativity, as she recalled in an interview several years later: "When some women are pregnant, their hair and their nails grow, but for me it was my mind and ability to create. I had the desire to write in a capacity that I hadn't done in a while. I don't know if it's a hormonal or emotional thing ... I was very in touch with my feelings at the time." Of the early writing process, Hill said, "Every time I got hurt, every time I was disappointed, every time I learned, I just wrote a song."

While inspired, Hill wrote over thirty songs in her attic studio in South Orange, New Jersey. Many of these songs drew upon the turbulence in the Fugees, as well as past love experiences. In the summer of 1997, as Hill was due to give birth to her first child, she was requested to write a song for gospel musician CeCe Winans. Several months later, she went to Detroit to work with soul singer Aretha Franklin, writing and producing her single "A Rose is Still a Rose". Franklin would later have Hill direct the song's music video. Shortly after this, Hill did writing work for Whitney Houston. Having written songs for artists in gospel, hip hop, and R & B, she drew on these influences and experiences to record The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill.

= = Recording and production = =

Hill began recording *The Miseducation* in late 1997 at Chung King Studios in New York City , and completed it in June 1998 at Tuff Gong Studios in Kingston , Jamaica . In an interview , Hill described the first day of recording , stating : " The first day in the studio I ordered every instrument I ever fell in love with : harps , strings , timpani drums , organs , clarinets . It was my idea to record it so the human element stayed in . I didn 't want it to be too technically perfect . " Initially , Jean did not support Hill recording a solo album , but eventually offered to help as a producer , which she did not accept . Aside from doing work at Chung King Studios , Hill also recorded at Perfect Pair Studios in New Jersey , as well as Sony Studios , with some songs having different elements recorded at different studios . The bulk of the album , however , was recorded at Tuff Gong Studios in Kingston , Jamaica , the studio built by reggae musician Bob Marley . Regarding this shift in environment , Hill stated : " When I started recording in New York and New Jersey , lots of people were talking to me about going different routes . I could feel people up in my face , and I was picking up on bad vibes . I wanted a place where there was good vibes , where I was among family , and it was Tuff Gong . " Many members of the Marley family were present in the studio during the recording sessions , among them Julian Marley , who added guitar elements to " Forgive Them Father . "

In an interview , recording engineer Gordon " Commissioner Gordon " Williams recalled the recording of " Lost Ones " , stating : " It was our first morning in Jamaica and I saw all of these kids gathered around Lauryn , screaming and dancing . Lauryn was in the living room next to the studio with about fifteen Marley grandchildren around her , the children of Ziggy , and Stephen , and Julian , and she starts singing this rap verse , and all the kids start repeating the last word of each line , chiming in very spontaneously because they were so into the song . " Columbia Records considered bringing in an outside producer for the album and had early talks with RZA of the Wu @-@ Tang Clan . However , Hill was adamant about writing , arranging , and producing the album herself : " It would have been more difficult to articulate to other people . Hey , it 's my album . Who can tell my story better than me ? " She recalled Ruffhouse Records executive Chris Swartz ensuring her artistic freedom while recording the album : " I had total control of the album . Chris Swartz at Ruffhouse , my label , said , ' Listen , you 've never done anything stupid thus far , so let me let you do your thing ' . "

= = Music and lyrics = =

A neo soul album , *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* incorporates musical styles such as R & B , soul , hip hop , and reggae . Some songs are based in hip hop soul . " When It Hurts So Bad " is musically old roots reggae mixed with soul . While mostly in English , " Forgive Them Father " and " Lost Ones " both feature singing in patois , which is the common dialect in Jamaica . Although heavily R & B , the song " Superstar " contains an interpolation of the rock song " Light My Fire " by The Doors . Hill said that she " didn 't want to come out with a [Fugees] type of sound " , but create " something that was uniquely and very clearly a Lauryn Hill album . " She also said that she did not intend for the album 's sound to be commercially appealing : " There 's too much pressure to have hits these days . Artists are watching Billboard instead of exploring themselves . Look at someone like Aretha , she didn 't hit with her first album , but she was able to grow up and find herself . I wanted to make honest music . I don 't like things to be too perfect , or too polished . People may criticize me for that , but I grew up listening to Al Green and Sam Cooke . When they hit a high note , you actually felt it . "

Much of Hill 's lyrics dealt with motherhood , the Fugees , reminiscence , love , heartbreak , and God . Commenting on the album 's gospel content , Hill stated " Gospel music is music inspired by the gospels . In a huge respect , a lot of this music turned out to be just that . During this album , I turned to the Bible and wrote songs that I drew comfort from . " Several of the album 's songs , such as " Lost Ones , " " Superstar , " " Ex @-@ Factor " and " Forgive Them Father " were widely speculated as direct attacks at Fugee members Wyclef and Pras . " Ex @-@ Factor " was originally intended for a different artist , however , Hill decided to keep it after it was completed , due to its

personal content . Although a large portion of the album 's love songs would turn out to be bitter from Hill 's previous relationship , " Nothing Even Matters , " a duet performed by Hill and R & B singer D 'Angelo , showcased a brighter , more intimate perspective on the subject . The song was inspired by Hill 's relationship with Rohan Marley . Speaking about " Nothing Even Matters " ' lyrics , Hill remarked : " I wanted to make a love song , á la Roberta Flack & Donny Hathaway , and give people a humanistic approach to love again without all the physicality and overt sexuality . "

" To Zion , " among the more introspective tracks on the album , spoke about how Hill 's family comes before her career and her decision to have her first child , even though many at the time encouraged her to abort the pregnancy , so as to not conflict with her burgeoning career . In an interview she discussed the song 's origin and significance , commenting " Names wouldn 't come when I was ready to have him . The only name that came to me was Zion . I was like , ' is Zion too much of a weight to carry ? ' But this little boy , man . I would say he personally delivered me from my emotional and spiritual drought . He just replenished my newness . When he was born , I felt like I was born again . " She further stated : " I wanted it to be a revolutionary song about a spiritual movement , and also about my spiritual change , going from one place to another because of my son . "

Throughout The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill , several interludes of a teacher speaking to what is implied to be a classroom of children are played . The " teacher " was played by American poet and politician Ras Baraka speaking to a group of children in the living room of Hill 's New Jersey home . Hill requested that Baraka speak to the children about the concept of love , to which he improvised in the lecture . Slant Magazine 's Paul Schrodt remarked on the title 's reference to Carter G. Woodson 's The Mis @-@ Education of the Negro : " [Hill] adopts Woodson 's thesis and makes it part of her own artistic process . Like the songs themselves , the intro / outro classroom scenes suggest a larger community working to redefine itself . " Along with Woodson 's book , the album 's title was inspired by the film and autobiographical novel The Education of Sonny Carson .

= = Release and reception = =

After The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill was released on August 25 , 1998 , it entered at number one on the Billboard 200 , selling 422 @,@ 624 copies in its first week . The album 's chart debut broke the record for first @-@ week sales by a female artist . It topped the Billboard 200 for a second consecutive week , during which it sold 265 @,@ 000 copies . In the United States , the album sold one million copies in less than a month and 2 @.@ 4 million copies by December . It spent 81 weeks on the Billboard 200 , and topped the Billboard Year @-@ End Top R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Albums chart .

The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill was promoted with three singles ? " Doo Wop (That Thing) " , " Ex @-@ Factor " , and " Everything Is Everything " ? all of which became hits and produced popular music videos . The album 's sales increased after Hill 's appearance at the 41st Annual Grammy Awards , as it sold 234 @,@ 000 more copies in the week of March 3 , 1999 , and 200 @,@ 000 copies the following week . By August , it had sold 10 million copies worldwide , including nearly 700 @,@ 000 in Canada . On December 17 , 2001 , it was certified 8x platinum by the RIAA . In April 2002 , Columbia said that the album had sold 12 million copies worldwide , and in 2009 , its global sales were reported to be 19 million copies . By 2013 , it had sold more than eight million copies in the US .

The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill received highly positive reviews from contemporary critics and , according to the Los Angeles Times , was the most acclaimed album of 1998 . Reviewers frequently praised Hill 's presentation of a female 's view on life and love . Eric Weisbard from Spin called her a " genre @-@ bender " whose confident singing and rapping was balanced by vulnerable themes and sentiment . In The New York Times , Ann Powers found it " miraculous " and " exceptional " for Hill to use " her faith , based more in experience and feeling than in doctrine , " to " connect the sacred to the secular in music that touches the essence of soul . " AllMusic 's John Bush was impressed by how she produced most of the album , " not as a crossover record , but as a collection of overtly personal and political statements " , while demonstrating " performing talents , vocal range

, and songwriting smarts ". David Browne , writing in Entertainment Weekly , called it " an album of often @-@ astonishing power , strength , and feeling " , crediting Hill with " easily flowing from singing to rapping , evoking the past while forging a future of her own " . Dream Hampton of The Village Voice said she seamlessly " travels her realm within any given song " , while Chicago Tribune critic Greg Kot deemed the record a " vocal tour de force " with arrangements that " bristle with great ideas " .

In a less enthusiastic review , Q magazine 's Dom Phillips felt the music 's only flaw was " a lack of memorable melody " on some songs that did not utilize interesting samples , while John Mulvey from NME quibbled about what he felt were redundant skits and Hill 's " propensity " for histrionics and declarations of " how brilliant God is " on an other " essential " album . Pitchfork Media 's Neil Lieberman found some of the ballads tedious and the melodies " cheesy " . Citing " Lost Ones " and " Superstar " as highlights , Village Voice reviewer Robert Christgau deemed it the " PC record of the year " , featuring exceptionally understated production and skillful rapping but also inconsistent lyrics , average singing , and superfluous skits . He appreciated the " knowledge [and] moral authority " of Hill 's perspective and values , although he lamented her appraisal of God on record . In the Los Angeles Times , Soren Baker believed Hill was more effective as a critical rapper than a singer on the more emotional songs , where her voice was " too thin to carry such heavy subject matter " .

= = Tour = =

Initially , there was no immediate tour planned due to the album not needing the promotion , and Hill was pregnant again with a child due in September 1998 . Her first live performances of the songs were at Saturday Night Live and the Billboard Music Awards . In January 1999 , Hill recruited a band and began rehearsals for what would become The Miseducation Tour . As soon as the tour was announced , tickets immediately sold out .

The tour began at Budokan in Tokyo on January 21 , 1999 . Hill performed there again the following night , and played at two other Tokyo venues in the following week . One week later , she flew to London for her performance at the Brixton Academy on February 8 , 1999 . With 20 US dates total , the American part of the tour , which featured Outkast as the opening act , started on February 18 in Detroit , and ended on April 1 , 1999 , at Hill 's hometown , Newark , New Jersey . She began the tour 's 14 @-@ date European leg on May 13 , when she performed at the Oslo Spektrum in Norway , closing on June 2 at the Manchester Arena in England . She then returned to Japan , where the tour was completed .

Hill did not want an extensive tour because of obligations to her family and the difficulties she experienced touring with the Fugees in 1996 , which she found desensitizing and isolating . According to Hill biographer Chris Nickson in 1999 , " there was the possibility of more dates being added ... but it was unlikely that Lauryn would be willing to make the tour more grueling and draining . She 'd come to know that there was much more to life than a career . "

= = Lawsuit = =

Though The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill was largely a collaborative work between Hill and a group of musicians known as New Ark (Vada Nobles , Rasheem Pugh , Tejumold and Johari Newton) , there was " label pressure to do the Prince thing , " wherein all tracks would be credited as " written and produced by " the artist with little outside help . While recording the album , when Hill was asked about providing contracts or documentation to the musicians , she replied : " We all love each other . This ain 't about documents . This is blessed . "

In 1998 , New Ark filed a 50 @-@ page lawsuit against Hill , her management and her record label , stating that Hill " used their songs and production skills , but failed to properly credit them for the work . " The musicians claimed to be the primary songwriters on two tracks , and major contributors on several others , though Gordon Williams , the album 's mixer and engineer , described the project as a " powerfully personal effort by Hill ... It was definitely her vision . " In response to the lawsuit ,

Hill claimed that New Ark took advantage of her success . New Ark requested partial writing credits , and monetary reimbursement . The suit was eventually settled out of court in February 2001 for a reported \$ 5 million .

= = Accolades = =

At the end of 1998 , The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill was voted the second best record of the year in the Pazz & Jop , an annual poll of American critics published in The Village Voice . Hill was nominated ten times for the 1999 Grammy Awards , making her the first woman to ever be nominated that many times in one year . She won five Grammys , including awards in the Best New Artist , Best R & B Song , Best Female R & B Vocal Performance , and Best R & B Album categories . The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill also won the Grammy Award for Album of the Year , making it the first hip hop record to ever receive that award . Hill set a new record in the industry , as she also became the first woman to win five Grammys in one night . It also earned her nominations at the NAACP Image Awards for Outstanding Female Artist , Outstanding Album , and Outstanding Song (" Doo Wop (That Thing) ") . At the Billboard Music Awards , the record won in the R & B Album of the Year category , while " Doo Wop " won Best R & B / Urban New Artist Clip , and at the 1999 American Music Awards , Hill won the award for Best New Soul / R & B artist . She also won a Soul Train award and received a nomination for Best International Female Solo Artist at the Brit Awards .

The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill has since appeared on a number of lists ranking the greatest albums ever ; according to Acclaimed Music , it is the 154th most ranked record on critics ' all @-@ time lists .

= = Legacy = =

With The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill 's success , Hill became a national media icon , as magazines ranging from Time to Esquire to Teen People vied to place her on their front covers . In a February 8 , 1999 , Time cover @-@ story , Hill was credited for helping fully assimilate hip hop into mainstream music , making her the first hip hop artist to ever appear on the magazine 's front cover . In 2012 , Rolling Stone ranked the record at number 314 in the magazine 's " 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " list , its entry reading , " Hill took Seventies soul and made it boom and signify to the hip @-@ hop generation on her solo debut . " Jon Caramanica , writing in The Rolling Stone Album Guide (2004) , called it " as earnest , unpretentious , and pleasantly sloppy an album as any woman of the hip @-@ hop generation has ever made " , and said that , by appealing to a wide spectrum of listeners with hip hop filtered through a " womanist lens " , the album propelled Hill to superstardom " of epic proportions " and " the focal point at hip @-@ hop 's crossover into the mainstream . " Music journalist Peter Shapiro cited it as " the ultimate cross @-@ over album of the hip @-@ hop era . "

Along with Erykah Badu 's 1997 debut Baduizm , The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill was also an important release in the neo soul music scene . According to Ebony magazine , it brought the neo soul genre to the forefront of popular music , and became the genre 's most critically acclaimed and popular album . According to the Encyclopedia of African American Music (2010) , " some tracks are based more in hip hop soul than neo soul , but the record is filled with live musicians and layered harmonies , and therefore it is a trendsetting record that connects modern hip hop , R & B , and classic soul music together , creating groundwork for what followed it in the neo soul genre . " On its fifteenth anniversary , American rapper Nas reviewed the album for XXL giving it the publication 's highest rating . He viewed it as a model for artists of all genres to follow and " a timeless record , pure music ... It represents the time period ? a serious moment in Black music , when young artists were taking charge and breaking through doors . " In 2015 , The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill was deemed " culturally , historically , or aesthetically significant " by the Library of Congress and selected for inclusion in the National Recording Registry .

= = Track listing = =

= = Personnel = =

Credits are adapted from the album 's liner notes .

= = = Instrumentalists = = =

= = = Production = = =

= = = Vocalists = = =

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =