

= Beyoncé ( album ) =

Beyoncé is the fifth studio album by American singer and songwriter Beyoncé , released on December 13 , 2013 , by Parkwood Entertainment and Columbia Records . Developed as a simultaneous audio @-@ visual medium , Beyoncé 's songs are accompanied by non @-@ linear short films that illustrate the musical concepts conceived during production . Its dark , intimate subject material includes feminist themes of sex , monogamous love and relationship issues , inspired by Beyoncé 's desire to assert her full creative freedom .

The album 's initial recording began in New York , where Beyoncé invited producers and songwriters to live with her for a month . During extensive touring the following year , the album changed as she conceived of creating a visual accompaniment to its songs and resumed recording sessions with electronic producer and rock musician Boots . Their collaboration led to more sonically experimental material , which combined rhythm and blues with electronic and soul music . Throughout this period , the album 's songs and videos were composed in strict secrecy as Beyoncé devised an unexpected release .

Beyoncé was released digitally to the iTunes Store without prior announcement or promotion . It debuted at number one on the U.S. Billboard 200 , earning Beyoncé her fifth consecutive number @-@ one album in the country . The record sold 617 @,@ 000 copies in the U.S. , and 828 @,@ 773 copies worldwide in its first three days of availability , becoming the fastest @-@ selling album in the history of the iTunes Store . It was reissued in November 2014 as part of a platinum edition , along with an extended play of new songs . It received universal acclaim from critics who praised its exploration of sexuality , production and Beyoncé 's vocals . It has sold 5 million copies worldwide as of November 2014 , and has spawned the singles " XO " , " Drunk in Love " , " Partition " , " Pretty Hurts " and " Flawless " .

= = Background = =

On January 7 , 2012 , Beyoncé gave birth to her first child , Blue Ivy Carter , at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City . Two months after her labor , she announced a three @-@ night residency show called Revel Presents : Beyoncé Live at Revel Atlantic City 's Ovation Hall in May 2012 . The residency was announced soon after conceiving as she wanted to set an example to mothers that they need not halt their careers . After the Revel shows , Beyoncé spent her summer in The Hamptons , New York , where she mostly cared for Blue Ivy , but also began recording her next project . In early 2013 , Beyoncé sang " The Star @-@ Spangled Banner " at President Obama 's second inauguration and headlined the Super Bowl XLVII halftime show where there was expectation she would debut new music , although these rumors never materialized . She also released a self @-@ directed autobiographical documentary in February entitled Life Is But a Dream .

In March 2013 , a two @-@ part hip hop track entitled " Bow Down / I Been On " was released onto Beyoncé 's Soundcloud account . " Bow Down " , produced by Hit @-@ Boy , was written after Beyoncé woke up one morning with a chant stuck in her head , feeling angry and defensive , while the Timbaland @-@ produced second half , " I Been On " , uses a pitch @-@ distortion vocal as a homage to the Houston hip hop scene . Michael Cragg of The Guardian described the song as " brilliantly odd " , commending its loud , abrasive production . Pitchfork 's Lindsay Zoladz viewed the song as assertive and believed it served as an introduction of what was to come . " Bow Down / I Been On " was perceived as a significant departure from Beyoncé 's existing catalogue , particularly for its aggressive nature . The song 's atmosphere and its controversial " Bow down , bitches " refrain drew a mixed reaction from those who questioned whether the lyric was aimed at women or merely a moment of braggadocio . Beyoncé clarified after the album 's release , where elements of " Bow Down " appear on the track " Flawless " , that the song and its refrain were intended as a statement of female empowerment .

Beyoncé did not explain the intent behind the release of " Bow Down / I Been On " , leaving confusion as to how the song fit into the project . In mid @-@ 2013 , portions of other tracks , "

Grown Woman " and " Standing on the Sun " , were used for television advertising campaigns . It was during this time the media reported that the album was delayed or scrapped , with one story alleging Beyoncé had scrapped fifty songs in favor of starting again . There was considerable confusion among music journalists and fans as Beyoncé engaged in extensive touring , yet avoided discussing the album or its release .

= = Recording = =

Recording sessions began in the summer of 2012 in The Hamptons , New York , where Beyoncé and her husband Jay @-@ Z were living . She invited producers and songwriters to accompany them , including Sia , Timbaland , Justin Timberlake and The @-@ Dream . Beyoncé described the atmosphere as unconventional , saying , " We had dinners with the producers every day , like a family ... it was like a camp . Weekends off . You could go and jump in the pool and ride bikes ... the ocean and grass and sunshine ... it was really a safe place . " She would spend the majority of her day with her newborn daughter , taking some hours out to record music . The album 's opening track " Pretty Hurts " , co @-@ written by Sia , was completed during these sessions . The project was suspended until 2013 and relocated to New York City 's Jungle City and Oven studios where most of the album was recorded . In an interview for Vogue in January 2013 , Jason Gay described Beyoncé 's attention to detail as " obsessive " when observing her studio , noting the vision boards she created for inspiration , which contained potential song titles , old album covers and pictures of performances .

In mid @-@ 2013 , newly discovered musician Boots , notable for fronting rock band Blonds , signed a publishing deal with Jay @-@ Z 's Roc Nation . In an interview for Pitchfork after the album 's release , Boots was coy when answering questions about how Beyoncé discovered his demo or of his work previous to the project , only confirming his signing . In June 2013 , they met in person for the first time and presented her with material he felt would resonate with her . However , Beyoncé was more interested in his experimental material , and he reluctantly played her the piano demo of " Haunted " on his cellphone , believing its instrumental to be lacklustre . She disagreed and refused to ignore it , saying " this shit has to knock harder than any rap album out there " . At a later meeting , he played her a stream of consciousness rap called " Ghost " , which he wrote after an exasperating meeting with a potential record label . Boots began by composing a melody that reminded him of a hypnotic state , then layering guitar arpeggios to resemble the work of English electronic musician Aphex Twin . Subsequently , " Ghost " became the first half of " Haunted " ; he later described Beyoncé as the " only visionary in the room " for her ability to find potential in scraps of songs . Following these sessions , Boots would go on to work on eighty percent of Beyoncé .

While recording in New York City , the previously @-@ released " Bow Down " was incorporated into a track that became " Flawless " . During its composition , Beyoncé was motivated to interpolate archive footage from her loss on the television competition Star Search as a child ; her resulting strength manifested itself into the more aggressive , dominant persona featured in the song . Additionally , a portion of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie 's TED talk " We Should All Be Feminists " was sampled on the same song as Beyoncé identified with her interpretations of feminism . Organic approaches were taken when writing and recording " Drunk in Love " and " Partition " . When working with Detail and Timbaland on a beat that became " Drunk in Love " , she was inspired by what she described as pure enjoyment , as both she and Jay @-@ Z free @-@ styled their verses for the track in the studio . Similarly , the bassline of " Partition " , which Beyoncé found reminiscent of hip hop music during her early romance with Jay @-@ Z , influenced her to accompany the track with sexual lyrics . She took to a microphone without pen and paper and rapped the first verse , finding herself initially embarrassed by the explicitness of the lyrics . When composing " Partition " , a rap known as " Yoncé " was used as the opening of the track , the beat of which was built by Justin Timberlake banging on buckets in the studio .

Only four songs were not recorded entirely in New York studios : " Superpower " and " Heaven " were partially recorded in California , " No Angel " was composed in London and " XO " in Berlin and Sydney . Although the demo of " XO " was recorded when Beyoncé had contracted a sinus infection

, the vocals were never rerecorded as she felt their imperfections fit more appropriately . In October , the album began taking shape and " Standing on the Sun " and " Grown Woman " ? songs which had been previewed in 2013 on television advertisements ? were removed from Beyoncé to fit in with its minimalist approach . During Thanksgiving week , the vocals on the album were edited and producers were notified to submit their final cuts . Beyoncé spent less time on vocal production than she had done with her previous projects , instead focusing on perfecting the album 's music . Beyoncé was mastered at Sterling Sound in New York . In total , 80 songs were recorded for the album .

= = Composition = =

Beyoncé is a fourteen track set with seventeen short films : a video for each audio track , two extra videos to accompany the two @-@ part tracks " Haunted " and " Partition " , as well as a bonus video for " Grown Woman " , which lacks an equivalent audio counterpart . Described by NME as " post @-@ dubstep tinted future R & B " , the album delves into the motifs of alternative R & B with emotive vocals , minimalist production and streams of consciousness . Several critics noted the album 's prominent fusion of electronic music with R & B and soul . The album 's dark , moody production was deemed Beyoncé 's most experimental record to date , with " subdued pulses , ambient effects and throbbing grooves that sneak up on you , threatening to explode " . Its vocal production is even more diverse ; several songs are half @-@ rapped and half @-@ sung with particular use of falsetto . Beyoncé also exercises her expansive vocal range , though unlike her previous releases , restrains from vocal belting and runs as to increase tension in the music .

Several critics identified the album 's central theme as sex . Having been a singer since the age of nine , Beyoncé expressed the restraint she felt by her responsibility as a role model for children , and , into her thirties during recording , desired to assert her creative freedom entirely . Much like her previous albums , the record is feminist , with greater exploration of gender issues and conflated with " an unwavering look at black female sexual agency . " Soraya McDonald of The Washington Post viewed Beyoncé as significant to black feminism as it celebrates black female sexuality in mainstream music and in the context of hip hop , where it is often only shown through the male perspective . The album 's other themes include fear , loss , the benefits and insecurities of monogamous love and motherhood , as well as darker issues , previously unexplored in her music , such as bulimia and postnatal depression .

The album 's opening track " Pretty Hurts " was written with Australian songwriter and recording artist Sia Furler . A neo soul and pop song , its intended as a self @-@ empowerment anthem that decries society 's obsession with harmful and unattainable standards of beauty . The song includes audio snippets of beauty pageants , where Beyoncé was a contestant in , to frame the song in the context of her childhood . The two @-@ part song " Haunted " begins with a stream of consciousness rap called " Ghost " which compares privileged lifestyles to that of the working class over a rhythm similar to that of a heartbeat . In its second @-@ half , she sings of being haunted by a lover over minimalist keyboards and a gradual , building beat that simulates a cold atmosphere . A duet with husband Jay @-@ Z , Beyoncé uses explicit lyrics in " Drunk in Love " to celebrate monogamous love . Her vocal styles are particularly prominent , with a fast @-@ rapped second verse and a chorus sung in her upper register . " XO " , intended as a tribute to the singer 's fans , is executed with " firework synths and a marching @-@ drum beat " .

" Blow " is a funk song that evokes the work of Janet Jackson , particularly her 1997 opus The Velvet Rope . Accompanied by jazz and disco elements , the song has a piano @-@ led electronic groove and a running cunnilingus metaphor in its chorus : " Can you eat my Skittles / That 's the sweetest in the middle " . Far more minimalist in its production , " No Angel " continues the album 's run of sexual songs . Over heavy bass , Beyoncé sings in a high falsetto of how she , and the object of her affections , are by no means perfect . The slow @-@ jam " Rocket " , written with Miguel and Justin Timberlake , harks back to the 1990s soul @-@ infused style of D 'Angelo . Described as a " slippery , six @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half @-@ minute funk excursion " with excessive double entendres , the song features Beyoncé adopting a slow , harmonious vocal . With a first @-@ half

known as "Yoncé", the two @-@ part hip hop track "Partition" begins with Beyoncé rapping over a Middle Eastern rhythm. The song is divided by a brief interlude of camera clicks and the sound of a car window, before launching into a second @-@ half that melds synthesizer pulses with finger snaps to create a bassline reminiscent of the work of Too Short and E @-@ 40. Over this, the song follows a candid narrative that describes sex in the back of a limousine when travelling to a nightclub.

On several songs, Beyoncé demonstrates contentment with expressing all aspects of her personal life, in @-@ keeping with the album's motif of self @-@ liberation. "Mine", a collaboration with rapper Drake, is set against an understated, jazzy beat with lyrics that convey the singer's everyday fears for her family, her postnatal depression and doubts of weakness in her marriage. "Jealous" functions similarly and contains a morose beat replete with echo sounds, which examines the female perspective on suspicion and revenge when taken for granted. The album's most explicit commentary on gender, featuring an excerpt of a speech by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie on the socialization of girls, is found on "Flawless". It presents an aggressive and confrontational stance, in which Beyoncé yells the refrain "Bow down, bitches" over a clattering beat. It starts and finishes with an excerpt from Beyoncé's performance with Girl's Tyme on Star Search when she was a child, intended to draw attention to her work ethic. "Superpower" is a doo wop @-@ inspired duet with Frank Ocean which is sung in their lower registers with harmonies similar to that of her work in Destiny's Child. The album's closing tracks "Heaven" and "Blue" are ballads. "Heaven" is an emotive, piano @-@ led hymn with gospel elements, and "Blue" is built on a piano melody over which Beyoncé sings of the love for her daughter, showcasing the extent of her range. The end of "Blue" features Blue Ivy Carter talking as a toddler.

= = Visuals and artwork = =

All of the music videos, including the bonus, "Grown Woman", were released with the album on the iTunes Store. The videos were filmed between June and November 2013 as Beyoncé traveled on her world tour; set locations included a roller @-@ skating rink she frequented as a child, a Brazilian beach, the Cyclone at Coney Island in New York, a Parisian château and a South American church. The project's exclusive, surprise online release meant that the videos were shared through platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Tumblr where they gained considerable exposure. Jenna Wortham of The New York Times identifies the choreography and lyric "I woke up like this" from the song "Flawless" as a moment that became instantly popular with fans and created a "ripple effect" across social networking platforms.

The visual aspect of the album was first considered by Beyoncé in June 2013, when only three or four songs had been completed. She would often connect images, childhood memories, emotions and fantasies to songs she was in the midst of composing, and was subsequently motivated to shoot visuals to convey the concepts behind what she had conceived during production. Todd Tourso, who directed the videos for "Jealous" and "Heaven", served as the creative director for the entire project. Much of his role concerned liaising between Beyoncé, who for most videos already had concepts, and the respective directors who also had propositions. As most videos were shot outside of the US, the crew surrounding the videos was kept small, consisting only of Tourso, the director of photography and producer, as well as Beyoncé and her stylist, make @-@ up artist and security. When filming in public, Beyoncé would wear in @-@ ear headphones instead of having the music played out loud, in order to prevent any snippets of the songs from being heard by the public. Many of the videos were shot without prior preparation, as the singer found enjoyment in the spontaneity of the filming locations and in resisting the urge to perfect them. The videos centered on Beyoncé's sexuality and motherhood. Noting the visuals' explicit content and exposure of her body, she found shooting them as liberating and was determined to demonstrate sexuality as a power that women should have, especially after giving birth.

Tourso designed Beyoncé's album cover. The original mock up was submitted in Puerto Rico where Tourso directed the video for "Heaven". Over the next three months, he considered over a hundred options for the cover, only to proceed with his original idea. He was inspired by the cover

of Metallica 's 1991 eponymous fifth album to create a bold statement , specifically to deviate from a " beauty shot " of Beyoncé which he felt would be expected . Tourso used a font similar to boxing @-@ match placards to represent abrasive masculinity ; which was contrasted by the greyish @-@ pink font which he described as " a subversion of femininity " .

= = Release and reaction = =

Throughout 2013 , Beyoncé worked on the project in secrecy , sharing details of the album with a small circle of people and shifting the deadline , which was only finalized a week before its release . Secrecy was imposed as Beyoncé felt like album releases had lost meaning as a significant , exciting event in the face of hype created around singles and she wanted the album to be released unexpectedly . In July 2013 , a spokesperson for Beyoncé denied speculation that her album had been delayed , stating there was no official release date to begin with and that when a date is set , it would be announced via an official press release .

In early December 2013 , Beyoncé and her management company Parkwood Entertainment held meetings concerning its release with executives from Columbia Records and the iTunes Store , using the code name " Lily " for the album . On December 9 , 2013 , Rob Stringer , Chairman of Columbia Records , knowingly told media that the album would be released at some point in 2014 and it would be " monumental " . On December 13 , 2013 , the album was released without any prior announcement or promotion exclusively on the iTunes Store . Beyoncé explained that she was " bored " of her music being marketed as it had been done previously , and wanted its release to be a different experience for her fans . The album was available exclusively on iTunes Stores until December 20 , 2013 , when physical copies were distributed to other retailers .

As soon as the album became exclusively available to iTunes Stores , Sony Music Entertainment handed down an edict that forbade retailers to put the album up for pre @-@ order , as to further protect the exclusivity with iTunes . It was then reported that US retailers Target and Amazon refused to sell the physical copy of the album . According to a Target spokesperson , the store was only interested in retailing albums which were released digitally and physically simultaneously . On December 21 , 2013 , all the videos from the album were screened at the SVA Theater in New York .

The surprising release caused " hilarious , honest and hysterical " reaction among Beyoncé 's fans , and " shock " among other musicians . According to data provided by Twitter , the release generated over 1 @.@ 2 million tweets in 12 hours . Rolling Stone 's Rob Sheffield wrote , " Beyoncé has delivered countless surprises in her 15 years on top of the music world , but she 's never dropped a bombshell like this . The Queen Bey woke the world in the midnight hour with a surprise ' visual album ' ? 14 new songs , 17 videos , dropped via iTunes with no warning . The whole project is a celebration of the Beyoncé Philosophy , which basically boils down to the fact that Beyoncé can do anything the hell she wants to . " Additionally , Peter Robinson of The Guardian hailed the shock release as " Beyoncégeddon " , describing it as a " major triumph [ ... ] a masterclass in both exerting and relinquishing control . " Forbes Zack O 'Malley Greenburg 's included Beyoncé on his " Music Industry Winners 2013 " list , highlighting the unconventional release of her album . Music journalists have noted that the album 's release led to other artists adopting similar strategies , including Drake , D 'Angelo , Azealia Banks , J. Cole and Kid Cudi . In September 2014 , Harvard University 's Business School published a case study on the release strategy of the album which examines its difficult planning and execution , as well as its short @-@ term and long @-@ term impact .

= = Promotion = =

After the album 's release , Beyoncé performed " XO " during the remaining stops of the North American leg of The Mrs. Carter Show World Tour in December 2013 . In early 2014 , she performed " Drunk in Love " for the first time at the 56th Annual Grammy Awards on January 26 . " XO " 's first televised performance was at the 2014 BRIT Awards on February 19 , 2014 , marking

her first performance at the ceremony since the one held in 2004 . Later that month , songs from the album were added to the set list of the second European leg of The Mrs. Carter Show World Tour . All the music videos from the album were screened at the 2014 Los Angeles Film Festival on June 13 , 2014 along with commentary from three of the videos ' directors who were present at the ceremony . To further promote the album , Beyoncé embarked on her first co @-@ headlining stadium tour with Jay @-@ Z. The On the Run Tour kicked off in Miami on June 25 , 2014 and ended in Paris on September 13 , 2014 . A pre @-@ recorded performance of " Partition " from the tour was broadcast at the 2014 BET Awards on June 29 , 2014 .

= = = Singles = = =

Two lead singles were released from Beyoncé . " XO " impacted contemporary hit radio ( CHR ) in Italy and hot adult contemporary radio in the United States on December 16 , 2013 . The following day , it impacted US urban , rhythmic and CHR stations . " XO " peaked at number forty @-@ five on the US Billboard Hot 100 and reached the top twenty in charts around the world . Accompanying the release of " XO " , the other lead single " Drunk in Love " was serviced to US urban radio stations on December 17 , 2013 . It peaked at number two on the US Billboard Hot 100 and number one on the US Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs and Rhythmic charts . " Drunk in Love " also peaked at number seven in New Zealand and number nine in France and the United Kingdom . The song was certified platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America , denoting sales of one million digital copies .

" Partition " impacted US urban radio on February 25 , 2014 as the album 's third single . It peaked at number twenty @-@ three on the US Billboard Hot 100 and number one on the US Hot Dance Club Songs chart . On April 24 , 2014 , the music video for the fourth single " Pretty Hurts " was made available for streaming via Time magazine 's official website to accompany Beyoncé 's feature as one of the world 's most influential people . The song impacted US CHR and rhythmic radio on June 10 , 2014 and UK mainstream radio on June 23 , 2014 .

= = Critical reception = =

Upon release , Beyoncé received universal acclaim from music critics . Kitty Empire of The Observer praised the album for its " squeaky sexed @-@ up falsettos , hood rat rapping , wordless ecstasies and effortless swoops " . She found the album 's overt feminist message to be a particular highlight . In The Daily Telegraph , Neil McCormick applauded Beyoncé as " one of the most technically gifted vocalists in pop , with gospel power , hip @-@ hop flow and a huge range . " He also noted the album 's sexual tone and loose song @-@ structure as distinct features . Jon Pareles of The New York Times described the tracks as " steamy and sleek , full of erotic exploits and sultry vocals ; every so often , for variety , they turn vulnerable , compassionate or pro @-@ feminist " . He also noted they were " alert to the current sound of clubs and radio , but not trapped by it " . Noting the lack of " guaranteed hits " , NME found it to be Beyoncé 's most experimental work to date , particularly for its dark production and complex themes .

Pitchfork Media critic Carrie Battan concludes it is " her most explicit and sonically experimental music to date , exploring sounds and ideas at the grittier margins of popular music " . Spin 's Anupa Mistry felt it was Beyoncé 's best album and " more textured than its predecessors in both sound and content " . Mistry also believed the album signified her evolvement from " diva @-@ pop R & B [ ... ] into a different lane , albeit subtly and gracefully " . Andy Kellman of AllMusic called the album " a career highlight " and " her most entertaining and sexually explicit work , yet substantive in every respect . " . Nick Catucci , writer for Entertainment Weekly , found the singer indulging in " clashing impulses ? between strength and escape , megapop and fresh sounds , big messages and resonant lyrics " . Evan Rytlewski of The A.V. Club wrote that " without playing into cheap ' tortured by fame ' tropes , she 's made an emotional album that 's dense and substantial but never difficult or self @-@ important " .

Mof Gimmers who reviewed the album for The Quietus was fond of the confidence displayed on

Beyoncé , calling it " a bold , expansive body of work " and " one of the strongest albums of the year " . PopMatters ' David Amidon praised the album 's honest , albeit highly sexual nature . He also observed it was " her first attempt at bridging an audience , making music that makes the men want to hear what she has to say and the women feel like they can say it to men as well " . Consequence of Sound viewed the album as " not concerned with moving units [ but ] with Beyoncé 's self @-@ exploration , in a complicated , incredibly intriguing way . " Mikael Wood of Los Angeles Times believed the album presented a desire to push creative boundaries and particularly praised " how the music similarly blends the intimate and the extravagant " . In a less enthusiastic review , The Independent 's Andy Gill found its feminist message significant , but its music too similar to contemporary R & B.

= = Accolades = =

Despite being released in December when several publications had completed their year @-@ end lists , Beyoncé was ranked the best album of the year by Billboard , Houston Chronicle and Los Angeles Times , while Spin ranked it the best R & B album of the year . As of January 2015 , Billboard also named Beyoncé as the second best album of the 2010s ( so far ) . The album ranked within the top 10 on lists by Associated Press , HitFix , MTV News , and Digital Spy . Beyoncé was ranked at number eleven on Metacritic 's 25 best @-@ reviewed albums of 2013 list . In the annual Pazz and Jop mass critics poll of the year 's best in music , the album was ranked number four . Robert Christgau , the poll 's creator , ranked it eighteenth on his own year @-@ end list . Some publications included Beyoncé on their 2014 lists , and it was deemed the best album of the year by Vibe , Pretty Much Amazing and Nate Chinen of The New York Times .

In his accompanying essay for The Barnes & Noble Review , Christgau remarked that the sex depicted on the album is " the raunchiest and most convincing I can recall on record , and married sex at that " . He also commended its density and " juicy physicality " suggesting " ideals of interactive performance absent from [ ... ] the regal self @-@ possession that stiffens Beyoncé 's supposedly more serious songs . " Geeta Dayal of Slate compared the album to Michael Jackson 's Thriller , calling it a " tour de force " and helped to reinstate ideas of " the album as an event [ ... ] as a grand , career @-@ defining statement . " The album has been described as the most sexually explicit since Madonna 's Erotica ( 1992 ) . GQ included it on their list of the best albums since 2000 because " the greatest female R & B artist of the century finally made a record as sexy , snarling , soft , strange , and outright superlative as she is . And by releasing it without warning [ she gave us ] a moment when we all listened to the same thing , at the same time " . Pitchfork ranked the album at number 14 on their list of the Top 100 Best Albums of the Decade , writing , " the real shock of Beyoncé was that a seasoned pro who looked to be headed toward adult @-@ contemporary blandness and inoffensive commercial tie @-@ ins had instead used the most adventurous means her money could buy to express an alternate vision of contemporary adulthood . " FACT magazine also included the album at number 9 on their list of the Top 100 Best Albums of the Decade So Far , writing that " what will be remembered most about Beyoncé isn 't its surprising release , but its surprising character . "

Beyoncé was nominated for five Grammy Awards at the 2015 ceremony including Album of the Year , Best Urban Contemporary Album , Best Surround Sound Album and Best R & B Song and Best R & B Performance for " Drunk in Love " , winning the latter three . At the 2014 MTV Video Music Awards , Beyoncé was presented with the Video Vanguard Award for her work on the visual album , performing a sixteen @-@ minute medley of its songs . She won a further three awards , Best Collaboration for " Drunk in Love " and Best Cinematography and Best Video with a Social Message for " Pretty Hurts " . The album was nominated for World 's Best Album at the 2014 World Music Awards and Album of the Year at the 2014 MTV Video Music Awards Japan . It also received two nominations at the 2014 Billboard Music Awards for Top Billboard 200 Album and Top R & B Album , while " Drunk in Love " was nominated for Top R & B Song . At the 2014 mtvU Woodie Awards , Beyoncé won in the category Did It My Way Woodie , awarded for the album 's release strategy . It won in the category for Album of the Year at the 2014 Soul Train Music Awards and

## Favorite Soul / R & B Album at the American Music Awards of 2014 .

= = Commercial performance = =

During its first day of release in the United States , Beyoncé sold 80 @, @ 000 units in three hours and a total of 430 @, @ 000 digital copies within 24 hours . In its second day , the album sold 120 @, @ 000 units , which brought its two @-@ day sales total to 550 @, @ 000 . Billboard predicted it to sell around 600 @, @ 000 digital copies by the end of the tracking week on December 15 , 2013 . Beyoncé debuted at number one on the Billboard 200 , with three @-@ day sales of 617 @, @ 213 digital copies . This gave Beyoncé her fifth consecutive number @-@ one album , making her the first female artist to have her first five studio albums debut atop the chart . It also became the largest debut sales week for a female artist in 2013 , and the highest debut sales week of her solo career . The album also gave her the three largest sales weeks by any female and she became the only female to sell 300 @, @ 000 copies within a week in 2013 and became the first person this decade to score 300 @, @ 000 copies in each of its first 3 weeks . Beyoncé marks the fourth @-@ largest sales week of an album during 2013 , behind Justin Timberlake 's The 20 / 20 Experience , Eminem 's The Marshall Mathers LP 2 and Drake 's Nothing Was the Same .

In its second week , the album remained at number one , selling an additional 374 @, @ 000 copies . Ten days after its release , Beyoncé had sold 991 @, @ 000 copies in the US , making it the best @-@ selling album by a female artist in 2013 . A third week at number @-@ one with sales of 310 @, @ 000 copies brought the album 's US sales to 1 @. @ 3 million after 17 days of release , positioning it as the eighth best @-@ selling album of the year , and the first to enter the year @-@ end top 10 based on just three weeks of sales availability in the Nielsen SoundScan era . In its fourth week , sales reached 1 @. @ 43 million , surpassing the total sales of Beyoncé 's previous album , 4 , which was released in 2011 and had sold 1 @. @ 39 million in total in the two years since its release . Following Beyoncé performing at the 2014 MTV Video Music Awards , sales of the album in the US increased by 181 % . The record sold 878 @, @ 000 copies in the US in 2014 alone , becoming the sixth best @-@ selling album of the year. As of December 2015 , Beyoncé has sold 2 @. @ 3 million copies in the US and has been certified double platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America ( RIAA ) .

On December 16 , Apple announced that Beyoncé is the fastest selling album in the history of the iTunes Store , both in the US and worldwide . It sold 828 @, @ 773 digital copies worldwide in its first three days , and topped the iTunes Store charts in 104 countries . Six days after its release , the album had sold one million digital copies on iTunes Stores worldwide . Beyoncé debuted at number five on the UK Albums Chart on December 15 , with two @-@ day sales of 67 @, @ 858 digital copies . The Official Charts Company 's chief executive Martin Talbot noted that " few ( if any ) albums have sold as many digital copies in such a short space of time . " In its fifth week , the album climbed to a new peak of number two . It was certified platinum by the British Phonographic Industry ( BPI ) on February 7 , 2014 denoting shipments of 300 @, @ 000 copies . As of November 2014 , Beyoncé has sold 418 @, @ 000 copies in the UK .

The album entered the Canadian Albums Chart at number one , with 35 @, @ 000 digital copies sold . It debuted at number 24 on the French Albums Chart with two @-@ days sales of 12 @, @ 100 digital copies , and peaked at number 13 in its fifth week . In New Zealand , Beyoncé debuted at number two and was certified gold by Recorded Music NZ for sales of 7 @, @ 500 copies ; it was later certified platinum . The album debuted atop the Netherlands ' Dutch Albums Chart , giving Beyoncé her first number @-@ one album in the country . In Australia , Beyoncé entered the ARIA Albums Chart at number two , with first @-@ week sales of 31 @, @ 102 digital copies . The album topped the chart in its third week , becoming Beyoncé 's first number @-@ one album in Australia . It spent three consecutive weeks at number one and was certified platinum by the Australian Recording Industry Association ( ARIA ) for shipping 70 @, @ 000 copies . According to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry ( IFPI ) , in the last 19 days of 2013 , the album sold 2 @. @ 3 million units worldwide , becoming the tenth best @-@ selling album of 2013 . The album also went on to become the twentieth best @-@ selling album of 2014 . As of November



2014 , Beyoncé has sold 3 million copies worldwide , with shipments of 5 million and has generated over 1 billion streams , as of March 2015 .

= = Track listing = =

Credits adapted from the liner notes of Beyoncé .

Notes

^ [ a ] signifies a co @-@ producer

^ [ b ] signifies an additional producer

^ [ c ] signifies a vocal producer

" Haunted " contains two parts - " Ghost " and " Haunted . " Though presented as one song on audio , it is split into two separate videos .

" No Angel " is stylized as " Angel " on the back of CD editions .

" Partition " contains two parts - " Yoncé " and " Partition . " Though presented as one song on audio , it is split into two separate videos .

" Flawless " is stylized as " \* \* \* Flawless "

" Flawless " contains two parts - " Bow Down " and " Flawless , " which are presented as one song , and one video . " Bow Down " was initially part of a previously recorded song entitled " Bow Down / I Been On . "

" Grown Woman " is presented after the credits on DVD while it is presented before the credits in digital format .

" Grown Woman " is written by Mosley , Kelly Sheehan , Knowles , Nash , Chris Godbey , Harmon , Darryl Pearson , and Garland Mosley . It is produced by Timbaland , with co @-@ production by Harmon .

Sampling credits

" Partition " contains an interpolation of the French @-@ dubbed version of the 1998 film The Big Lebowski , performed by Hajiba Fahmy .

" Flawless " contains portions of the speech " We should all be feminists " , written and delivered by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie .

" Heaven " contains portions of " The Lord 's Prayer " in Spanish , recited by Melissa Vargas .

= = Credits and personnel = =

Credits adapted from Beyoncé 's website .

Performers and musicians

Technical personnel

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications and sales = =

= = Release history = =