

= In Rainbows =

In Rainbows is the seventh studio album by the English rock band Radiohead , first self @-@ released on 10 October 2007 as a pay @-@ what @-@ you @-@ want download , followed by a physical release internationally by XL Recordings starting on 3 December 2007 and in the United States on 1 January 2008 by TBD Records . In Rainbows was Radiohead 's first release after the end of their contract with EMI labels Parlophone and Capitol Records . Recording with their longtime producer Nigel Godrich , Radiohead worked on the album for more than two years , beginning in early 2005 . Between recording , the band toured Europe and North America for three months during mid @-@ 2006 , performing many new songs from the album . The songwriting of the songs on In Rainbows is more personal than other Radiohead albums , with the band 's lead singer Thom Yorke describing most of the songs as his versions of " seduction songs " . With this album Radiohead also incorporated a variety of musical styles and instruments , using electronic music , string arrangements , pianos , and the ondes Martenot .

The pay @-@ what @-@ you @-@ want release , which was the first for a major act , made headline news all around the world and sparked debate about the implications for the music industry . Time called it " easily the most important release in the recent history of the music business " . Upon its physical release , In Rainbows entered the UK Albums Chart and the US Billboard 200 at number one . By October 2008 , it had sold more than three million copies worldwide in both digital and physical formats . The album received critical acclaim and was ranked one of the best of 2007 and of the decade by several publications . In 2009 , it won two Grammy Awards for Best Alternative Music Album and Best Special Limited Edition Package . In 2012 , Rolling Stone magazine ranked the album number 336 on their updated version of The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time .

= = Background = =

In 2004 , after finishing the world tour in support of their sixth studio album Hail to the Thief ( 2003 ) , Radiohead went on hiatus . As Hail to the Thief was the last album released on Radiohead 's six @-@ album contract with Parlophone and Capitol Records , the band had no contractual obligation to release new material . Drummer Phil Selway said : " It was definitely time to take a break . There was still a desire amongst us to make music , but also a realisation that other aspects of our lives were being neglected . And we ? d come to the end of our contract , which gives you a natural point to look back over at what you 've achieved as a band . " Singer and songwriter Thom Yorke worked on his first solo album , The Eraser ( 2006 ) , and multi @-@ instrumentalist Jonny Greenwood worked on soundtracks for the films Bodysong ( 2004 ) and There Will Be Blood ( 2007 ) .

= = Recording = =

In March 2005 , Radiohead entered their Oxfordshire studio and began writing and recording new music . In an effort to " get out of the comfort zone " , they decided against involving producer Nigel Godrich , with whom they had recorded five albums . Regular recording sessions began in August 2005 , with the band updating fans on their progress intermittently on their new blog , Dead Air Space . The sessions were slow , and the band struggled to regain confidence ; according to Yorke , " we spent a long time in the studio just not going anywhere , wasting our time , and that was really , really frustrating . " Guitarist Ed O 'Brien said the band considered splitting up , but kept working " because when you got beyond all the shit and the bollocks , the core of these songs were really good . " They attributed their slow progress to a lack of momentum after their break and the lack of deadline and producer .

In December 2005 , Radiohead asked producer Spike Stent , who had worked with artists including U2 and Björk , to help them work through their material . O 'Brien told Mojo : " Spike listened to the stuff we 'd been self @-@ producing . These weren 't demos , they ? d been recorded in proper studios , and he said , ' The sounds aren 't good enough . ' " The collaboration with Stent was unsuccessful and ended in April 2006 . In an effort to break the deadlock , Radiohead decided to

tour for the first time since 2004 ; according to Yorke , " We basically had all these half @-@ formed songs , and we just had to get it together . And rather than it being a nightmare , it was really , really good fun , because suddenly everyone is being spontaneous and no one 's self @-@ conscious because you 're not in the studio ... It felt like being 16 again . " In May and June 2006 , Radiohead toured major cities in Europe and North America and returned to Europe for several festivals in August , performing many new songs .

After the tour , Radiohead re @-@ enlisted Godrich , who , according to Yorke , " gave us a walloping kick up the arse " . In October 2006 , recording started at Tottenham House in Marlborough , Wiltshire , a country house scouted by Godrich where Radiohead worked for three weeks . The band members lived in caravans , as the building was in a state of disrepair ; Yorke described it as " derelict in the stricter sense of the word , where there 's holes in the floor , rain coming through the ceilings , half the window panes missing ... There were places you just basically didn 't go . It definitely had an effect . It had some pretty strange vibes . " The sessions were productive , and the band recorded " Jigsaw Falling into Place " and " Bodysnatchers " . In October , Yorke wrote on Dead Air Space that Radiohead had " started the record properly now ... starting to get somewhere I think . Finally . "

In December 2006 , further sessions took place at Halswell House , Taunton and Godrich 's Hospital Studios in Covent Garden , where the band recorded " Videotape " and " Nude " . In January 2007 , Radiohead resumed recording in their Oxfordshire studio and started to post photos , lyrics , videos and samples of new songs on Dead Air Space . In June , having wrapped up recording , Godrich posted clips of songs on Dead Air Space .

Not including " Last Flowers " , which Yorke recorded in the Eraser sessions , the In Rainbows sessions produced 16 songs . After the 56 @-@ minute , 14 @-@ track Hail to the Thief , Radiohead wanted their seventh album to be concise ; they settled on ten songs , saving a further six tracks ( not counting short instrumentals ) for the limited edition " discbox " release . The album was mastered by Bob Ludwig in July 2007 at Gateway Mastering , New York City .

= = Music and lyrics = =

In Rainbows features many tracks debuted on Radiohead 's 2006 tour , including " 15 Step " , " Bodysnatchers " , " All I Need " , " Videotape " , " Arpeggi " ( retitled " Weird Fishes / Arpeggi " ) and " Open Pick " ( retitled " Jigsaw Falling Into Place " ) . Radiohead first performed " Nude " during the OK Computer world tour in a different arrangement . The band performed a song with the working title of " Reckoner " in 2001 ; working on the song in the In Rainbows sessions , they abandoned the original material and created a new song with the same name . Yorke released the song originally known as " Reckoner " as a solo single , " Feeling Pulled Apart by Horses " , in 2009 .

On the opening track " 15 Step " , the band enlisted the help of a group of children from the Matrix Music School & Arts Centre in Oxford . Colin Greenwood and Godrich originally set out to record handclaps for the song , but when the clapping proved " not quite good enough " , they decided to record the children cheering instead . " Bodysnatchers " , a song Yorke described as sounding like Wolfmother and " Neu ! meets dodgy hippy rock " , was recorded when he was in a period of " hyperactive mania " . On " All I Need " , Jonny Greenwood wanted to recapture the white noise generated by a band playing loudly in a room , a sound which never occurs in the studio . His solution was to have a string section play every note of the scale , blanketing the frequencies . Yorke described the process of composing " Videotape " as " absolute agony " , stating that the song " went through every possible parameter " . One day , Yorke left the studio , returning to find that Godrich and Jonny Greenwood had stripped the song down to the version found on the album , a minimal piano ballad .

Yorke has said that the album 's lyrics are based on " that anonymous fear thing , sitting in traffic , thinking , ' I 'm sure I 'm supposed to be doing something else ' ... it 's similar to OK Computer in a way . It 's much more terrifying . " At the same time , Yorke felt " there 's very little anger in In Rainbows . It 's in no way political , or , at least , doesn 't feel that way to me . It very much explores the ideas of transience . It starts in one place and ends somewhere completely different . " In

another interview , Yorke said the album was " about the fucking panic of realising you 're going to die ! And that any time soon [ I could ] possibly [ have ] a heart attack when I next go for a run . "

Ed O'Brien described the lyrics , saying " They were universal . There wasn 't a political agenda . It 's being human . " The song " Bodysnatchers " is inspired by Victorian ghost stories , the 1972 novel *The Stepford Wives* and Yorke 's feeling of " your physical consciousness trapped without being able to connect fully with anything else . " " Jigsaw Falling into Place " is about a set of observations and different experiences , partly of the chaos witnessed by Yorke when he used to go out on the weekend in Oxford . Yorke said " The lyrics are quite caustic ? the idea of ' before you 're comatose ' or whatever , drinking yourself into oblivion and getting fucked @-@ up to forget ... [ there ] is partly this elation . But there 's a much darker side . "

= = Artwork = =

The *In Rainbows* artwork was designed by Stanley Donwood , who has worked with Yorke in designing Radiohead 's album art since 1994 . Donwood worked in the studio as Radiohead were working on the album , which allowed the mood of the music to be conveyed in the album artwork , and regularly put up images in the studio and on the studio computer for the band to interact with and comment on . He also posted images daily on the band 's website , though none of the images were used in the final album artwork . Donwood experimented with a photographic etching technique , putting prints into acid baths with various results , and throwing wax at paper , creating images influenced by NASA 's space photographs . Donwood originally planned to explore suburban life , but realised it did not fit the album 's sound , saying " it 's a sensual record and I wanted to do something more organic . " Describing the album cover , Donwood said : " It 's very colourful ? I 've finally embraced colour ! It 's a rainbow but it is very toxic , it 's more like the sort of one you 'd see in a puddle . " The band decided not to release the cover for the digital release of the album , preferring to hold it back for the physical release . The " discbox " release of the album includes a booklet containing additional artwork by Donwood .

= = Release = =

As Radiohead 's six @-@ album record contract with EMI ended after the 2003 release of *Hail to the Thief* , Radiohead recorded *In Rainbows* without a record contract . In 2005 , Yorke told *Time* : " I like the people at our record company , but the time is at hand when you have to ask why anyone needs one . And , yes , it probably would give us some perverse pleasure to say ' Fuck you ' to this decaying business model . " In 2006 , the *New York Times* described Radiohead as " by far the world 's most popular unsigned band " .

In August 2007 , as Radiohead were finishing *In Rainbows* , EMI was acquired by the private equity firm Terra Firma in a \$ 6 @.@ 4 billion ( £ 4 @.@ 7 billion ) public @-@ to @-@ private buyout transaction . Radiohead were still negotiating with EMI , but were critical of the new Terra Firma management and no agreement was reached . O'Brien said : " It was really sad to leave all the people [ we 'd worked with ] ... But Terra Firma don 't understand the music industry . "

On 1 October 2007 , Jonny Greenwood announced Radiohead 's seventh album on Radiohead 's blog , *Dead Air Space* , writing : " Well , the new album is finished , and it 's coming out in 10 days . . . We 've called it *In Rainbows* . " The post contained a link to [inrainbows.com](http://inrainbows.com) , where users could pre @-@ order an MP3 version of the album for any amount they wanted , including £ 0 ? a landmark use of the pay @-@ what @-@ you @-@ want model for music sales . Colin Greenwood explained the internet release as a way of avoiding the " regulated playlists " and " straitened formats " of radio and TV , ensuring listeners around the world would experience the music at the same time , and preventing leaks in advance of a physical release . In a *Wired* interview with David Byrne , Yorke said :

We were trying to avoid that whole game of who gets in first with the reviews . These days there 's so much paper to fill , or digital paper to fill , that whoever writes the first few things gets cut and pasted . Whoever gets their opinion in first has all that power . Especially for a band like ours , it 's

totally the luck of the draw whether that person is into us or not . It just seems wildly unfair , I think .

= = = Reaction = = =

The pay @-@ what @-@ you @-@ want release , the first for a major act , made headlines worldwide and sparked debate about the implications for the music industry . According to Mojo , the release was " hailed as a revolution in the way major bands sell their music " , and the media 's reaction was " almost overwhelmingly positive " . Time called it " easily the most important release in the recent history of the music business " and Jon Pareles of The New York Times wrote that " for the beleaguered recording business Radiohead has put in motion the most audacious experiment in years . " The NME wrote that " the music world seemed to judder several times off its axis " , and praised the fact that everyone , from fans to critics , had access to the album at the same time on release day : " the kind of moment of togetherness you don 't get very often . " Singer Bono of U2 praised Radiohead as " courageous and imaginative in trying to figure out some new relationship with their audience " .

The release also drew criticism . Trent Reznor of Nine Inch Nails , who independently released his sixth album *Ghosts I @-@ IV* under a Creative Commons licence the following year , thought it did not go far enough , calling it " very much a bait and switch , to get you to pay for a MySpace quality stream as a way to promote a very traditional record sale . " Singer Lily Allen called it " arrogant " , saying : " [ Radiohead have ] millions of pounds . It sends a weird message to younger bands who haven 't done as well . You don 't choose how to pay for eggs . Why should it be different for music ? " In the Guardian , journalist Will Hodgkinson wrote : " Spare a thought for the thousands upon thousands of bands and singers who , nowhere near Radiohead 's levels of fame and fortune , now have pretty much no chance of ever making a living from their music . " Kim Gordon of Sonic Youth told the Guardian the release " seemed really community @-@ oriented , but it wasn 't catered towards their musician brothers and sisters , who don 't sell as many records as them . It makes everyone else look bad for not offering their music for whatever . " Radiohead 's managers defended the release as " a solution for Radiohead , not the industry " , and doubted " it would work the same way [ for Radiohead ] ever again . " Radiohead did not repeat the pay @-@ what @-@ you @-@ want release for subsequent releases .

= = = Formats and distribution = = =

For the *In Rainbows* download release , Radiohead employed the network provider PacketExchange to bypass public internet servers , using a less @-@ trafficked private network . The download was packaged as a ZIP file containing the album 's ten tracks encoded in 160 kbit / s DRM @-@ free MP3 format . The staggered online release began at about 5 : 30am GMT on 10 October 2007 . On 10 December , the download was removed .

Fans could also order a limited " discbox " edition from [inrainbows.com](http://inrainbows.com) , containing the album on CD and two 12 " heavyweight 45 rpm vinyl records with artwork and lyric booklets , plus an enhanced CD with eight additional tracks , digital photos and artwork , packaged in a hardcover book and slipcase . The " discbox " edition was shipped on 3 December 2007 . In June 2009 , Radiohead made the second *In Rainbows* disc available for download on their website for £ 6 .

Radiohead ruled out an internet @-@ only distribution for fear that some fans would not have internet access . *In Rainbows* was released on CD and vinyl in Japan by BMG on 26 December 2007 , in Australia on 29 December 2007 by Remote Control Records , and in the United States and Canada on 1 January 2008 by ATO imprint TBD Records and MapleMusic / Fontana respectively . Elsewhere , the album was released on 31 December 2007 by independent record label XL Recordings . The CD release came in a cardboard package containing the CD , lyric booklet , and several stickers that could be placed on the blank jewel case to create cover art . *In Rainbows* was the first Radiohead album available for download in several digital music stores , such as the iTunes Store and Amazon MP3 . On 10 June 2016 , it was added to the free streaming service Spotify .

Radiohead retained ownership of the recordings and compositions for *In Rainbows* . The download

and " discbox " versions of the album were self @-@ released ; for the physical release , Radiohead licensed the music to record labels . Licensing agreements for all releases were managed by the band 's publisher , Warner Chappell Music Publishing .

= = = Promotion = = =

On New Year 's Eve 2007 , Current TV streamed a webcast performance filmed at Radiohead 's Oxford studios featuring In Rainbows songs , poetry and additional footage . In March 2008 , Radiohead partnered with animation site Aniboom to create a contest whereby entrants submitted storyboards for an animated music video for an In Rainbows song . The winner , who would receive \$ 10 @,@ 000 to create a full @-@ length music video , was chosen by AniBOOM , Radiohead , TBD Records , and Adult Swim ; Adult Swim aired the winning video . The band awarded \$ 10 @,@ 000 each to four different winners , plus \$ 1 @,@ 000 to each of ten semifinalists to create a one @-@ minute clip . Radiohead toured North America , Europe , South America and Japan in support of In Rainbows from May 2008 until March 2009 .

= = = Commercial performance = = =

In early October 2007 , a Radiohead spokesperson reported that most downloaders paid " a normal retail price " for the download version , and that most fans had pre @-@ ordered the " discbox " edition . Citing a source close to the band , Gigwise.com reported that the album had sold 1 @.@ 2 million digital copies before its retail release ; however , this was dismissed by Radiohead manager Bryce Edge as " exaggerated " . In December 2007 , Yorke stated that Radiohead had made more money from digital sales of In Rainbows than the digital sales of all previous Radiohead albums combined .

In October 2008 , one year after the album 's release , Warner Chappell reported that although most people paid nothing for the download , pre @-@ release sales for In Rainbows were more profitable than the total sales of Hail to the Thief , and that the " discbox " had sold 100 @,@ 000 copies . In 2009 , Wired reported that Radiohead had made an " instantaneous " £ 3 million from the album . In 2016 , Pitchfork wrote this " proved Radiohead could release a record on the most secretive terms , basically for free , and still be wildly successful , even as industry profits continued to plummet . They were able to take that risk partly due to the fan sites and their communities , which offered a solid bedrock of support . "

Because inrainbows.com is not a chart @-@ registered retailer , In Rainbows download and " discbox " sales were not eligible for inclusion in the UK Albums Chart . On the week of its retail release , In Rainbows peaked at number one on the UK Album Chart , with first week sales of 44 @,@ 602 copies . After some record stores broke street date agreements , the album entered the Billboard 200 at number 156 , but in the first week of its official release reached number one and sold 122 @,@ 000 copies in the United States , making it the 10th independently distributed album to reach number 1 on the Billboard 200 . In October 2008 , Warner Chappell Music Publishing reported that In Rainbows had sold three million copies ( 1 @.@ 75 million of which were physical format sales ) since its physical release in January . The vinyl edition of In Rainbows was the best @-@ selling vinyl album of 2008 .

In the US , " Nude " reached number 35 on the Billboard Hot 100 , and was also Radiohead 's first single to appear on the Billboard Pop 100 chart . " Bodysnatchers " reached number eight on the US Hot Modern Rock Tracks chart . " Jigsaw Falling into Place " peaked at number 69 in airplay on alternative rock @-@ oriented stations . " All I Need " was serviced to US adult album alternative radio by TBD Records on 5 January 2009 .

= = Critical reception = =

In Rainbows received widespread critical acclaim , earning a rating of 88 out of 100 on Metacritic , which indicates " universal acclaim " . Rob Sheffield of Rolling Stone felt that the album contained "

no wasted moments , no weak tracks : just primo Radiohead . " A review by NME described the album as " Radiohead reconnecting with their human sides , realising you [ can ] embrace pop melodies and proper instruments while still sounding like paranoid androids ... this [ is ] otherworldly music , alright . " Will Hermes , writing in Entertainment Weekly , called the album " the gentlest , prettiest Radiohead set yet " and stated that it " uses the full musical and emotional spectra to conjure breathtaking beauty " . Andy Kellman of AllMusic , in a positive review , wrote that the album " will hopefully be remembered as Radiohead 's most stimulating synthesis of accessible songs and abstract sounds , rather than their first pick @-@ your @-@ price download . " Robert Christgau , writing for MSN Music , gave it a two @-@ star " honourable mention " and noted that the album , having been developed in concert , was " more jammy , less songy and less Yorkey , which is good . "

Various reviewers , such as The Guardian 's Alexis Petridis , attributed the album 's quality to Radiohead 's performance in the studio and that the band sounded like they were enjoying themselves . Others , such as Billboard 's Jonathan Cohen , commended the album for not being overshadowed by its marketing hype .

Blender 's review , although mostly positive , felt the album seemed " to be primarily composed of love songs ... that are starving for human connection but generate all the interpersonal warmth of a GPS system " . The Wire was also critical , finding " a sense here of a group magisterially marking time , shying away ... from any grand , rhetorical , countercultural purpose . "

= = = Awards and " best @-@ of " lists = = =

In Rainbows was ranked one of the best albums of 2007 by many music publications . It was ranked number one by Billboard , Mojo and PopMatters ; NME and The A.V. Club ranked it third , Pitchfork Media and Q fourth , and Rolling Stone and Spin sixth . It was also ranked one of the best albums of the decade by several publications : the NME ranked it 10th , Paste ranked it 45th , Rolling Stone ranked it 30th , and the Guardian ranked it 22nd . Newsweek ranked the album fifth on its list of the ten best albums of the decade . In 2012 , Rolling Stone ranked the album number 336 on their updated version of The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time . The album was also included in the book 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die .

In Rainbows was nominated for the short list of the 2008 Mercury Music Prize and was nominated for several awards at the 51st Annual Grammy Awards : Album of the Year , Best Alternative Music Album , Producer of the Year , Non @-@ Classical and Best Boxed or Special Limited Edition Package . Three Grammy nominations also went to " House of Cards " and its video . In Rainbows won awards for Best Alternative Music Album and Best Special Limited Edition Package .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Radiohead .

" 15 Step " ? 3 : 58

" Bodysnatchers " ? 4 : 02

" Nude " ? 4 : 15

" Weird Fishes / Arpeggi " ? 5 : 18

" All I Need " ? 3 : 48

" Faust Arp " ? 2 : 09

" Reckoner " ? 4 : 50

" House of Cards " ? 5 : 28

" Jigsaw Falling into Place " ? 4 : 09

" Videotape " ? 4 : 42

= = = Bonus disc = = =

The original discbox release of the album included a second disc , which contains eight additional

tracks . On 9 June 2009 , Radiohead made the tracks from this disc available for download at their " w.a.s.t.e. " online store , and a pressing released contains both CDs without the original box .

" MK 1 " ? 1 : 03

" Down Is the New Up " ? 4 : 59

" Go Slowly " ? 3 : 48

" MK 2 " ? 0 : 53

" Last Flowers " ? 4 : 26

" Up on the Ladder " ? 4 : 17

" Bangers + Mash " ? 3 : 19

" 4 Minute Warning " ? 4 : 04

= = Personnel = =

Radiohead

Colin Greenwood

Jonny Greenwood

Ed O'Brien

Phil Selway

Thom Yorke ( also credited for artwork as ' Dr. Tchock ' )

Additional personnel

Stanley Donwood ? cover art

Nigel Godrich ? production , mixing , engineering

Dan Grech @-@ Marguerat ? engineering

Bob Ludwig ? mastering

Matrix Music School children 's choir ? choir on " 15 Step "

The Millennia Ensemble ? strings ( on tracks 3 , 5 , 6 , 7 , 9 )

Hugo Nicolson ? engineering

Graeme Stewart ? preproduction

Richard Woodcraft ? engineering

= = Charts = =