

= Being There (Wilco album) =

Being There is the second album by Chicago @-@ based rock band Wilco . Despite its release as a nineteen @-@ song double album , Being There was sold at a single album price due to a deal between lead singer Jeff Tweedy and Reprise Records . Released on October 29 , 1996 , the album was an improvement for the band in both sales and critical reception as compared with their first album , A.M ..

Taking its name from the 1979 film Being There , the self @-@ produced effort featured more surrealistic and introspective writing than their previous album . This was due in part to several significant changes in Tweedy 's life , including the birth of his first child . Musically , it juxtaposed the alternative country styles songs reminiscent of Uncle Tupelo with psychedelic , surreal songs . It was the only Wilco album with steel guitarist Bob Egan and the last with multi @-@ instrumentalist Max Johnston .

= = Context = =

Jeff Tweedy formed Wilco in 1994 after creative differences between Jay Farrar and Tweedy caused the breakup of Uncle Tupelo . The band entered the recording studio almost immediately afterwards to record and release A.M. in 1995 , which saw disappointing sales . Jay Farrar 's new band Son Volt released Trace in late 1995 to critical praise and good sales numbers . Trace also provided a college rock hit song in " Drown " , which entered the top ten of the Billboard Mainstream Rock Tracks chart , further increasing competition between the two bands .

Tweedy felt that Wilco was incomplete without a second guitarist due to the departure of Brian Henneman after the A.M. recording sessions . Wilco 's road manager Bob Andrews helped Tweedy get in contact with Jay Bennett , a multi @-@ instrumentalist who had been looking for a new band to join since his power pop band Titanic Love Affair had been dismissed from its record label . Bennett joined Wilco after Tweedy sent him a few Uncle Tupelo songs and a copy of A.M .. Tweedy was intrigued by the fact that Bennett could play keyboards , an instrument no other Wilco member played .

= = Production = =

The first conceptions of material for the album came during a particularly stressful time in Tweedy 's life . Tweedy had recently quit smoking marijuana , attendance at Wilco concerts was dwindling , and Tweedy was trying to manage his marriage , a mortgage , and the birth of his first child . He responded to these pressures :

For Being There , Tweedy wanted to blend the experiences he had making music with the ones he had listening to music . One of the first songs that Tweedy wrote was " Misunderstood " , a song about a tortured musical artist from the point of view of a fan . The song contains several overt references to the breakup of Uncle Tupelo , including the addition of insults that Farrar used against Tweedy ? specifically one calling him a " mama 's boy " . The song concludes with the artist lashing out against the listener with satirical self @-@ pity , a rebellion against the way that fans saw Uncle Tupelo as only an archetype of Gram Parsons inspired country rock . To induce a feeling of chaos on the track , the members of Wilco recorded a track where the members switched to novel instruments and placed sections of it into the song . The theme of a " tortured artist " is found in other songs as well ; the end of " Sunken Treasure " features Tweedy calling for the renewal of his youth as a punk rocker .

A dichotomy of musical styling was featured in the album 's songs . " Hotel Arizona " , " Sunken Treasure " , and " Misunderstood " featured personal language and more surrealism compared to alternative country songs such as " The Lonely 1 " and " Far , Far Away " . To enhance this dichotomy between simple and surreal , each song was practiced , recorded , and mixed in only one day . The album 's name was taken from the 1979 comedy Being There , because the band believed that Peter Sellers ' character Chance had an analogous mentality to the mindset of the

album . Wilco sought to incorporate influences from other bands , but not to an overbearing degree ; however , they were unable to accomplish this with songs like the Rolling Stones @-@ influenced " Monday " . Unlike radio @-@ friendly A.M. , the band had no preference about whether Being There could yield radio hits .

When the recording sessions were done , Wilco had originally recorded thirty songs , but were able to cut it down to nineteen songs covering a span of seventy @-@ seven minutes . Tweedy decided that he wanted to release all of the material as a double CD , but was concerned that consumers would be reluctant to purchase it . The purchasing price of a double album was at least \$ 30 , but single albums cost (at most) \$ 17 @-@ 98 . Tweedy approached record executive Joe McEwen , who had originally signed Uncle Tupelo to a Warner Brothers label , about selling Being There at a single album price . McEwen was reluctant at first , but was able to convince Reprise Records president Howie Klein to adhere to Tweedy 's request . To compensate for the financial loss that the label would take , Tweedy agreed to cut most of his royalties for the album . By 2003 , it was estimated that he lost nearly \$ 600 @-@ 000 because of this , but Tweedy remained satisfied by the deal .

Being There was the only Wilco album with Freakwater 's Bob Egan . Egan was invited to come to the studio after Freakwater opened for Wilco for a few shows . He only played on two tracks (" Far , Far Away " and " Dreamer in My Dreams ") , but accompanied the band on the support tour . It was the last album for multi @-@ instrumentalist Max Johnston , who left because he was undergoing marital problems and believed that Bennett was taking over his place in the band . Jeff Tweedy performed as the lead singer and secondary guitarist . Jay Bennett was the lead guitarist , and also played a variety of other instruments . John Stirratt played bass guitar and Ken Coomer played drums . All members of the band played a different instrument on " Misunderstood " .

= = Reception = =

Being There was received positively by critics . AllMusic editor Jason Ankeny gave the album a four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars and referred to it as " the group 's great leap forward . " He praised the band 's ability to juxtapose psychedelia and power pop with tracks that " wouldn 't sound at all out of place on Exile on Main Street " . Greg Kot , writing for Rolling Stone , gave the album four stars and lauded how it " venture [d] out into an anxiety @-@ ridden world sure thing ... the solace they continue to find in rock and roll . " Robert Christgau was more modest , writing " there 's no point in denying Jeff Tweedy 's achievement as long as you recognize its insularity . " Ryan Schreiber of Pitchfork Media called the album " massively improved as both a band and as songwriters " but also noted that " the two @-@ disc set seems a little more than a marketing scheme . " In 2003 , Pitchfork Media named it the 88th best album of the 1990s . Critics at The Village Voice named Being There the 14th best of the year on its Pazz & Jop critics poll for 1996 . In 2004 , Stylus Magazine placed 178th on their " Top 101 @-@ 200 Favorite Albums of All @-@ Time " list . The album was also included in the book 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die .

The album was a marked improvement over A.M. on the Billboard charts . It peaked at number 73 on the Billboard 200 , whereas A.M. failed to hit the chart at all . " Outtasite (Outta Mind) " was released as a single , and received moderate airplay on some college rock radio stations . As of 2003 , the album had sold over 300 @-@ 000 copies .

Valve Corporation used " Someone Else 's Song " as a basis for the opening theme for The Engineer in their first @-@ person shooter game Team Fortress 2 .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written by Jeff Tweedy .

= = Personnel = =

Wilco :

Jeff Tweedy ? lead and backing vocals , guitars , bass , radio

John Stirratt ? bass , piano , violin , backing vocals

Jay Bennett ? guitars , piano , organ , harmonica , lap steel , drums , accordion , backing vocals

Ken Coomer ? drums , percussion , guitars , backing vocals

Max Johnston ? dobro , fiddle , mandolin , banjo , backing vocals

Additional musicians :

Bob Egan ? pedal steel (D1 : T2) , national steel guitar (D2 : T9)

Greg Leisz ? pedal steel (D2 : T8)

Larry Williams ? tenor sax (D1 : T3)

Gary Grant , Jerry Hey ? trumpet (D1 : T3)

Jesse Green ? violin (D2 : T8)

Dan Higgins ? baritone sax , tenor sax (D1 : T3)

Jim Rondinelli , Chris Shepard ? engineering , mastering

Ron Lowe , Mike Scotella , Lou Whitney , Chris Shepard ? engineers

Bob Ludwig , Skip Saylor , Jim Scott ? mastering

Dahn Davis ? graphic design

Brad Miller ? photography