

= Bookends (album) =

Bookends is the fourth studio album by American music duo Simon & Garfunkel . Produced by Paul Simon , Roy Halee and Art Garfunkel , the album was released on April 3 , 1968 in the United States by Columbia Records . The duo had risen to fame two years prior with hit albums such as Sounds of Silence and Parsley , Sage , Rosemary and Thyme , radio singles , and touring colleges . In 1967 , Simon was approached by director Mike Nichols to write songs for his next film , The Graduate . Released several weeks prior to Bookends , the soundtrack album propelled the band further into stardom .

Bookends , in contrast to the soundtrack album , follows a unified concept , exploring a life journey from childhood to old age . Side one of the album marks successive stages in life , the theme serving as literal bookends to the life cycle . Side two largely consists of unused material for The Graduate soundtrack . Simon 's lyrics largely revolve around youth , disillusionment , relationships , old age , and mortality . Much of the material was crafted alongside producer John Simon , who joined the recording process when Paul Simon suffered from writer 's block . As a result , the album was recorded gradually over the period of a year , with production speeding up around the later months of 1967 .

Initial sales for Bookends were substantial in the US , and the album produced the number one hit single , " Mrs. Robinson " . The album was mainly a hit in the duo 's native country as well as the United Kingdom , where in both countries it peaked at number one . Bookends was considered a breakthrough for the group , placing them on the same level as artists such as The Beatles , Bob Dylan and The Rolling Stones at the forefront of the cultural movement in the 1960s . The album has continued to receive critical acclaim in recent years as one of the duo 's finest efforts .

= = Background = =

Simon & Garfunkel first burst onto the national scene when their hit single " The Sound of Silence " made waves on radio in 1965 , during a period in which the duo had broken up due to the failure of their debut release , Wednesday Morning , 3 AM (1964) . Following another release , Sounds of Silence (1965) , the duo recorded and released Parsley , Sage , Rosemary and Thyme (1966) , which brought new critical and commercial success to the duo . Simon , then 27 , felt he had finally " made it " into an upper echelon of rock and roll , while most importantly retaining artistic integrity (" making him spiritually closer to Bob Dylan than to , say , Bobby Darin " , wrote biographer Marc Eliot) . The duo chose William Morris as their booking agency after a recommendation from Wally Amos , a mutual friend through their producer , Tom Wilson .

During the sessions for Parsley , the duo cut " A Hazy Shade of Winter " and decided to release it as a single then , where it peaked at number 13 on the national charts . Similarly , they recorded " At the Zoo " for single release in early 1967 (it charted lower , at number 16) . Simon began work for Bookends around this time , noting to a writer at High Fidelity that " I 'm not interested in singles anymore " . He had hit a dry spell in his writing , which led to no Simon & Garfunkel album on the horizon for 1967 . Artists at the time were expected to release two , perhaps three albums each year and the lack of productivity from the duo worried executives at Columbia Records . Amid concerns for Simon 's idleness , Columbia Records chairman Clive Davis arranged for up @-@ and @-@ coming record producer John Simon to kick @-@ start the recording . Simon was distrustful of " suits " at the label ; on one occasion , he and Garfunkel brought a tape recorder into a meeting with Davis , who was giving a " fatherly talk " on speeding up production , in order to laugh at it later .

Meanwhile , director Mike Nichols , then filming The Graduate , had become fascinated with the duo 's past two efforts , listening to them nonstop before and after filming . After two weeks of this obsession , he met with Clive Davis to ask for permission to license Simon & Garfunkel music for his film . Davis viewed it as a perfect fit and envisioned a best @-@ selling soundtrack album . Simon was not as immediately receptive , viewing movies akin to " selling out " , creating a damper on his artistic integrity . However , after meeting Nichols and becoming impressed by his wit and the script , he agreed to write at least one or two new songs for the film . Leonard Hirshan , a powerful agent at

William Morris , negotiated a deal that paid Simon \$ 25 @, @ 000 to submit three songs to Nichols and producer Lawrence Turman . Several weeks later , Simon re @-@ emerged with two new tracks , " Punky 's Dilemma " and " Overs " , neither of which Nichols was particularly taken with . The duo offered another new song , which later became " Mrs. Robinson " , that was not as developed . Nichols loved it .

= = Recording and production = =

Bookends was recorded in fits and starts from 1966 to 1968 . John Simon 's first session with the group was for " Fakin ' It " in June 1967 . The duo were signed under an older contract that specified the label pay for sessions (" As a folk duo , how much could recording costs be ? " said John Simon) . Simon & Garfunkel took advantage of this indulgence , hiring viola and brass players , as well as percussionists . When the viola players arrived , the duo were so intrigued with the sound of the musicians tuning their instruments before recording that they spent nearly all night (at Columbia 's expense) trying to find the random sound .

The record 's brevity reflects its concise and perfectionistic production . The team spent over 50 studio hours recording " Punky 's Dilemma " , for example , and re @-@ recorded vocal parts , sometimes note by note , until they were satisfied . Simon payed close attention to his vocal takes , and he strived to get each line perfect . He took a bigger role in all aspects of production , and harmonies for which the band was famous gradually disappeared in favor of songs sung solo by each member . Although the album had been planned long in advance , work did not begin in earnest until the late months of 1967 .

John Simon 's work with the duo produced several tracks that ended up on Bookends , such as " Punky 's Dilemma " , " Save the Life of My Child " , and " Overs " . In October 1967 , Morgan Ames , writer for High Fidelity magazine , attended a recording session with the duo , Simon , Halee and an assistant engineer at Columbia 's recording studio on 52nd Street in New York City . Her observations were reported in the November edition of the magazine :

The team 's working relationship is built upon listening to each other , asking advice , taking it , building each other 's morale . Though it 's obvious they enjoy working with John Simon , the last word seems to come from one partner to the other [?] Ideas are tried , accepted , rejected . Time passes . Too much time . Too little headway [?] " Punky 's Dilemma " is put aside for the moment and Simon begins work on the title song for the new album , Bookends .

Work on Bookends slowed by the beginning of the new year , with John Simon 's departure from Columbia . The duo and Halee completed production themselves , recording " America " on February 1 , the final version of " Mrs. Robinson " on February 2 , and " Old Friends " and the closing " Bookends Theme " on March 8 . Simon felt the album " had the most use of the studio " of all of the duo 's albums .

= = Composition = =

= = = Music = = =

The " Bookends Theme " that opens and closes side one is played on the acoustic guitar , with no additional instruments . An audio sample of the band 's first hit , " The Sound of Silence " , softly plays during a cacophony of sounds near the end of the second track , " Save the Life of My Child " . John Simon , who was credited with production assistance on the song , created the bassline by playing a Moog synthesizer with help from Bob Moog himself . James Bennighof , author of The Words and Music of Paul Simon , finds that " textural elements are variously supported by a churning groove , percussive , and distorted electronic sounds " that complement the song 's subject matter , suicide suburban youth . " Overs " explores a more jazz @-@ oriented style , with a larger selection of chords and looser form than the group 's previous styles .

" Voices of Old People " is a sound collage , and was recorded on tape by Garfunkel at the United

Home for Aged Hebrews and the California Home for the Aged at Reseda . The collection of audio recordings of the elderly find them musing on treasured photographs , illness and living conditions . In " Old Friends " , the title generally conveys the introduction or ending of sections through repetition , and the song builds upon a " rather loose formal structure " that at first includes an acoustic guitar and soft mood . An additional element is introduced midway through the track : an orchestral arrangement conducted by Jimmie Haskell , dominated by strings and xylophone notes . Horns and other instruments are added when the duo cease singing , creating a turbulence that builds to a single high , sustained note on the strings . The song then segues into the final song of side one , the reprise of the " Bookends Theme " .

Side two consists of miscellaneous unrelated songs unused for The Graduate , with many possessing a more rock @-@ based sound than the unified folk songs that precede it . Simon felt the album 's second side were composed of throwaway tracks : " They didn 't mean a lot . They weren 't well recorded . " In " Fakin ' It " , melodies are occasionally deleted to suit lyrics , but the song generally follows a similar chord structure and melodic outline over a " funky rock beat " that sonically references the Beatles ' " Tomorrow Never Knows " . " Punky 's Dilemma " is breezy and minimal musically , with a soft jazz @-@ style percussion and seemingly improvised guitar lines dominated by seventh chords . " Mrs. Robinson " opens with an " instantly recognizable " pop rock guitar hook that carries throughout the track . The first verse consists only of syllables ? " dee @-@ dee @-@ dee " and " doo @-@ doo @-@ doo " ? that form stable harmonic foundation . The inclusion of the meaningless syllables arises from the unfinished nature of the song when pitched to director Mike Nichols , who particularly liked the verse . " A Hazy Shade of Winter " follows a more rock @-@ tinged sound , with a fairly straightforward verse @-@ refrain structure . " At the Zoo " uses a rock groove that settles into the key of G major .

= = = Lyrics = = =

According to disc jockey and author Pete Fornatale , the album perhaps shares thematic qualities with another concept album , the Beatles ' Sgt. Pepper 's Lonely Hearts Club Band , released ten months prior . He equates " At the Zoo " and " Old Friends " to " Being for the Benefit of Mr. Kite ! " and " When I 'm Sixty @-@ Four " , respectively . Fornatale notes , however , that while Sgt. Pepper was notable for sonically colorful , psychedelic shapes , Bookends is starkly contrasted by moody , " black @-@ and @-@ white and gray " sounds . While concept albums were fairly common among rock groups at this time ? such as The Rolling Stones ' Their Satanic Majesties Request , The Byrds ' Sweetheart of the Rodeo and Iron Butterfly 's In @-@ a @-@ Gadda @-@ Da @-@ Vida ? Bookends enjoyed massive success with the format not unlike the Beatles nearly one year before . Garfunkel confirmed the influence of Sgt. Pepper 's in a 2015 interview , commenting , " We were terribly impressed , and that shone a light on the path that led to Bookends . " Simon often smoked hashish when writing , and he was convinced he must be high to write . He felt the drug had a negative effect and caused him to " retreat more into myself . " He often found himself alone while on tour , and his thoughts grew dark during these times . He attributed " the pain that comes out in some of the songs is due to the exaggeration of being high . "

Bookends contains many of Paul Simon 's major themes , including " youth , alienation , life , love , disillusionment , relationships , old age , and mortality " . Simon 's work on Bookends is loosely autobiographical , designed to function as both a personal and artistic statement . Simon , " feeling especially auteurist in the Dylan style of the day " , had planned out the album 's concept before he began writing , telling Garfunkel " I 'm going to start writing a whole side of an album ? a cycle of songs . I want the early ones to be about youth and the last song to be about old age , and I want the feel of each song to fit . " Bookends , originally released primarily on the vinyl LP , opens and closes side one of the disc with the " Bookends Theme " , a brief acoustic piece (once compared to English rock band the Moody Blues) that evokes " a time of innocence " . " Save the Life of My Child " is a dramatic story involving drugs , violence and a mother and child relationship . According to James Bennighof , the song " deals with individual crises in crowded urban settings , along with references to larger societal forces and at least a hint of some transcendent perspective " . The

song crossfades into " America " , which follows two young lovers ? " an apparently impromptu romantic traveling alliance " ? as they board a Greyhound bus " to look for America " . It is a protest song that " creates a cinematic vista that tells of the singer 's search for a literal and physical America that seems to have disappeared , along with the country 's beauty and ideals " . " Overs " includes themes regarding the disintegration of love and marriage . " Old Friends " paints a portrait of two old men reminiscing on the years of their youth . The two men " sit on a park bench like bookends " , and ponder how strange it feels to be nearing their lifetime . The song is joined with the " Bookends Theme " , this time with vocal accompaniment from the duo . The piece closes the entire suite with the " resigned admonition " to " Preserve your memories / They 're all that 's left you " .

" Fakin ' It " opens side two and finds the protagonist mulling over his insecurities and shortcomings . It has been suggested that " Fakin ' It " may be an allegory for Simon 's relationship with Art Garfunkel . " Punky 's Dilemma " employs breakfast @-@ food images to lampoon Hollywood and the film industry . It improbably takes an " abrupt left turn " in its third verse , when the singer begins to fantasize himself an admired soldier . " Mrs. Robinson " collects wide @-@ ranging images to address social milieu , with a constant reassurance that Jesus loves the eponymous character , God will bless her , and heaven will welcome her . The song includes a famous reference to athlete Joe DiMaggio of the New York Yankees , one of Simon 's favorite baseball teams . It also features an explicit homage to the Beatles , with Simon uttering the meaningless phrase " coo @-@ coo @-@ ca @-@ choo " that John Lennon sings in " I Am the Walrus " . " A Hazy Shade of Winter " is an older track that dates back to Simon 's days in England in 1965 . The song follows a hopeless poet , with " manuscripts of unpublished rhyme " , unsure of his achievements in life . In sharp contrast , the whimsical , Orwellian " At the Zoo " both concludes the album and what Simon described as the " cycle of life " . The song indicates that the personalities of certain zoo animals may represent particular walks of people . The song was originally intended as a possible children 's book . According to rock journalist Bud Scoppa , " the record is a meditation on the passage of life and the psychological impact of life 's irreversible , ever @-@ accumulating losses " . The song cycle also describes the life and death of the romantic ideal of the American Dream .

= = Release and commercial performance = =

Prior to release , the band helped put together and performed at the Monterey Pop Festival , which signaled the beginning of the Summer of Love on the West Coast . " Fakin ' It " was issued as a single that summer and found only modest success on AM radio ; the duo were much more focused on the rising FM format , which played album cuts . In January 1968 , the duo appeared on a Kraft Music Hall special , Three for Tonight , performing ten songs largely culled from their third album . Richard Avedon , regarded then as one of the best photographers , was commissioned to shoot the album cover . When viewed up close , one can see Avedon 's reflection in Simon 's irises .

Bookends was released by Columbia Records on April 3 , 1968 . In a historical context , this was just 24 hours before the assassination of Civil Rights Movement activist Martin Luther King , Jr . , which spurred nationwide outrage and riots . Fornatale opines that the album served as " comfort food " during rather tumultuous times within the nation . The album debuted on the Billboard Pop Album Chart in the issue dated April 27 , 1968 , climbing to number one and staying at that position for seven non @-@ consecutive weeks ; it remained on the chart for a total of 66 weeks . Bookends received such heavy orders weeks in advance of its release that Columbia was able to apply for award certification before copies left the warehouse , a fact it touted in magazine ads . The record became the duo 's best @-@ selling album to date : it fed off the buzz created by the release of The Graduate soundtrack album ten weeks earlier , creating an initial combined sales figure of over five million units . In the United Kingdom , Bookends was a number one hit . Likewise , the album charted highly in both Australia and France , where it peaked in both countries at number three .

The duo held a complicated relationship with Davis ; Simon was particularly outraged when he suggested raising the list price of Bookends by one dollar to \$ 5 @. @ 79 , above the then standard retail price . Davis explained that by including the large poster with each copy , an extra dollar would be necessary to cover the cost . Simon instead scoffed and viewed it as charging a premium on "

what was sure to be that year 's best @-@ selling Columbia album " . According to biographer Marc Eliot , Davis was " offended by what he perceived as their lack of gratitude for what he believed was his role in turning them into superstars " . Rather than implement Davis ' price increase plan , Simon & Garfunkel signed a contract extension with Columbia that guaranteed them a higher royalty rate .

= = Critical reception = =

Reviews of Bookends upon its release in 1968 were largely positive . Allen Evans of the British publication New Musical Express (NME) gave the record four out of five stars and called it " inspiring , descriptive music , " while noting the album is " Imaginative and at times confusing to know what the composer is getting at , if anything . " Rival newspaper Melody Maker did not use a ratings system , but called Bookends a " thoughtful , clever and well @-@ produced album . " Reviewer Chris Welch criticized the songs as " not particularly tuneful , " but performed with " Beatles fervour and Beatles conviction , " praising the lyricism , opining that " The words capture part of America today , a lot of its sickness and tragedy . " In the US , Rolling Stone reviewer Arthur Schmidt wrote that " The music is , for me , questionable , but I 've always found their music questionable . It is nice enough , and I admit to liking it , but it exudes a sense of process , and it is slick , and nothing too much happens . "

Later reviews were more positive . " In just over 29 minutes , Bookends is stunning in its vision of a bewildered America in search of itself " , said AllMusic writer Thom Jurek , who gave it five stars out of five . Pitchfork Media 's Stephen M. Deusner called Bookends the moment in which the duo " were settling into themselves , losing their folk revival pretensions and emphasizing quirky production techniques to match their soaring vocals " . The A.V. Club called it the group 's " most musically and conceptually daring album " .

= = = Accolades = = =

" Mrs. Robinson " became the first rock and roll song to win Record of the Year at the 11th Annual Grammy Awards in 1969 ; it also nabbed the honor of Best Contemporary Pop Performance by a Duo or Group .

(*) designates unordered lists .

= = Legacy = =

The album , alongside The Graduate soundtrack , propelled Simon & Garfunkel to become the biggest rock duo in the world . Simon was approached by numerous film producers who desired for him to write music for their films or license a track ; he turned down Franco Zeffirelli , who was preparing to film Brother Sun , Sister Moon , and John Schlesinger , who likewise was readying to shoot Midnight Cowboy . In addition to Hollywood proposals , producers from the Broadway show Jimmy Shine (starring Simon 's friend Dustin Hoffman , also the lead in Midnight Cowboy) asked for two original songs and Simon declined . He eventually paired with Leonard Bernstein , with whom he collaborated for a short time on a sacred mass (he eventually withdrew from the project , " finding it perhaps too far afield from his comfort zone " .)

Disc jockey and author Pete Fornatale writes that Bookends represents " a once @-@ in @-@ a @-@ career convergence of musical , personal , and societal forces that placed Simon & Garfunkel squarely at the center of the cultural zeitgeist of the sixties " . Rolling Stone credited the record with striking a chord among lonely , adrift young adults near the end of the decade , writing that a lyric in " A Hazy Shade of Winter " ? " Time , time , time , see what ? s become of me ... " ? " defined the moment for a generation on the edge of adulthood " . Many viewed Bookends as the band 's most accomplished work at the time , a breakthrough in production and songwriting . " Bookends was our first serious piece of work , I 'd say " , said Simon in a 1984 interview with Playboy .

In 2010 , a line from the song " America " ? " All gone to look for America " ? began appearing spray @-@ painted on vacant buildings and abandoned factories in the town of Saginaw , Michigan ,

which is mentioned in the song . A loose group of artists , who eventually became known as " Paint Saginaw " , began duplicating the phrase after the city 's population had dwindled vastly , noting that the song now encapsulated a sense of nostalgia for a bygone era among the city 's residents .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Paul Simon , except where noted .

Tracks 1 , 3 , 5 @-@ 7 & 10 Produced by Paul Simon , Arthur Garfunkel & Roy Halee Tracks 2 , 4 , 8 & 9 Produced by John Simon Track 11 Produced by Bob Johnston Track 12 Produced by Paul Simon , Arthur Garfunkel & Bob Johnston

Track 13 Produced by John Simon Track 14 Produced by Paul Simon , Arthur Garfunkel , Roy Halee

= = Personnel = =

Credits for Bookends adapted from AllMusic .

= = Chart positions = =