

= Reality Killed the Video Star =

Reality Killed the Video Star is the eighth solo studio album by English singer @-@ songwriter Robbie Williams , released in November 2009 . The album was produced by Trevor Horn and recorded between September 2008 and August 2009 in London and Los Angeles . It debuted in the top ten of 22 national album charts worldwide , and has received varying reviews from music critics . It incorporates elements of pop rock , dance @-@ rock , alternative rock and adult contemporary music . Reality Killed the Video Star was viewed by critics and fans as being Williams ' " comeback album " after the relative failure of his 2006 release , Rudebox .

The album was preceded by lead single " Bodies " released in October 2009 . Other single releases include " You Know Me " and " Morning Sun " . The album has been certified platinum in Europe for sales of over one million copies , including 900 @,@ 000 copies sold in the UK alone . Despite this , it was Williams ' first studio album not to reach number one on the UK Albums Chart , beaten to the top spot by a margin of less than 1 % by JLS 's self @-@ titled debut album .

= = Background = =

Reality Killed the Video Star was Williams ' first studio album in three years . In that period , he worked with many producers , including Guy Chambers , Soul Mekanik , Mark Ronson , and Trevor Horn . However , the British singer confirmed in August 2009 on his official website that the entire album was produced by Trevor Horn , and added that it was recorded in London .

Rumours of a new studio album co @-@ written with Chambers had surfaced in early 2007 , along with known commitments required by Williams to complete his EMI contract . British singer @-@ songwriter Laura Critchley commented that she had sung vocals for three songs , and said that the LP would not be released until 2009 . At first it was believed that Williams had reunited with Chambers , but it was later confirmed that the song " Blasphemy " was co @-@ written by the pair during the recording sessions of Williams ' 2002 album Escapology .

In February 2009 , it was confirmed that Williams had written material with Soul Mekanik , Chambers and Ronson . The singer 's spokesman , Tim Clark , said that the artist was planning to begin recording sessions in March and that the new album would be released in late 2009 . The album was mostly written in Williams ' home studio and was recorded in London . Amongst those who collaborated in the songwriting were Danny Spencer and Kelvin Andrews , Brandon Christy , Craig Russo , Richard Scott and Scott Ralph , Chas Jankel and Fil Eisler .

On his official website , Williams wrote that he was working with producer Trevor Horn on his new album ; he described himself as " buzzing " and went on to call the album 's sound " Very , very big " . Williams revealed that the new album would be titled Reality Killed the Video Star , a reference to the song " Video Killed the Radio Star " by Horn 's former band The Buggles . The album was originally planned to be named Il Protagonista ( Italian for The Protagonist ) until Williams ' management told him to change the title as it was " too pretentious " . In July 2009 Williams wrote on his official blog about the album : " My album 's a killer : old Robbie , new Robbie and a Robbie that neither of us have met ... " . The A.V. Club has also reported that during 2007 , Williams had recorded an unreleased experimental album that , he later said , would have amounted to " career suicide " .

Before the album 's release , Williams spoke about his hopes for the album : " I want people to feel elated , I want them to dance , I want them to forget about who they are and where they are for 50 minutes ? and , within those 50 minutes of forgetting who they are , I also hope people relate to the songs . This is a record that I ? m very proud of ? I think it ? s fucking brilliant . I want it to be the record that , if people think of Robbie Williams , they go , Yeah , Reality Killed the Video Star . " He also talked about his collaboration with producer Trevor Horn : " He ? s added something to the record that I haven ? t had on previous records ? his genius " .

In the wake of Michael Jackson 's death on 25 June 2009 , Williams was reported to have written and recorded a last minute tribute song to Jackson that would be included on the album . The track , " Morning Sun " , was co @-@ written by James Bond lyricist Don Black . During his BBC Electric

Proms concert at The Roundhouse in London on 20 October 2009 Williams said about the song : " I thought it was about Michael Jackson [ ... ] but it 's actually about me again . "

= = Musical style = =

The British singer @-@ songwriter unveiled the album at an industry playback in London , where EMI UK and Ireland president Andria Vidler hosted the event . Mark Sutherland from Billboard said that the album " marks a return to Williams ' trademark pop sound after 2006 's more experimental ? and commercially under @-@ performing ? Rudebox " . Sutherland felt that even though the lead single ' Bodies ' , " features a refinement of the more electronic sound debuted on Rudebox , much of the album returns to the fertile , adult pop ground of Williams ' previous smash hit albums Escapology and Intensive Care " . He felt that the album highlights are the " lush ballads ' Morning Sun ' and ' You Know Me ' , the intricate wordplay of ' Blasphemy ' and the 1980s sound of ' Last Days of Disco ' " , while also noting that " a confident @-@ sounding Williams also experiments with some light psychedelia on ' Deceptacon ' and electronic dance music on the anthemic ' Starstruck ' and ' Difficult for Weirdos ' . " Jude Rogers from The Quietus said that the song " Do You Mind ? " " puts Status Quo , Slade and a gallon of glam @-@ rock in a bottle , shakes it up , and make an interesting , if rather peculiar , froth . " Rogers said that on the track " Starstruck " " Goldfrapp 's Felt Mountain , The Ipcress File soundtrack and the shadow of Broadcast fall over the first ten seconds of this song about our obsession with celebrity " . " Deceptacon " contains a " peculiar set of lyrics , floating on waves of reverb , sad strings and icy keyboards " Rogers said that " It 's an unshowy meditation the shallowness of fame , with a fantastic , mournful outro . " Mike Diver from BBC Music said that " Bodies " is " A strange brew of string flourishes , rumbling low end , oriental undertones and even an Enigma @-@ style break into Gregorian territory " , Diver also said that " Last Days of Disco " is " reminiscent of Eurythmics " .

= = Release and promotion = =

A special CD called Songbook was given away free with 11 October 2009 issue of British newspaper The Mail on Sunday . The CD featured twelve classic Robbie Williams tracks , including live recordings from Slane Castle , Cologne , London 's The Forum and Knebworth , and also contained six 30 @-@ second clips of tracks from Reality Killed the Video Star . The singer appeared on The X Factor on 11 October 2009 to perform " Bodies " live . He was featured on the November 2009 cover of GQ magazine UK , where he also gave an interview about the album . Williams performed some material from Reality Killed the Video Star on the BBC Electric Proms at The Roundhouse in London on 20 October 2009 . It was Williams ' first live performance in over three years and was broadcast live in nearly 200 cinemas across Europe on 20 October and a few weeks later in Australia , South Africa and Mexico . The show featured a full band conducted by Trevor Horn . The concert received many positive reviews , and Williams also set a new Guinness World Record for " the most simultaneous cinematic screenings of a live concert " . Initially , Williams was set to perform on 5 November 2009 at the MTV Europe Music Awards 2009 in Berlin at the O2 World , however , due to a scheduling conflict , he did not perform .

On 6 November 2009 , Williams gave an interview and also performed on Friday Night with Jonathan Ross . On the release day of the album in the UK , 9 November 2009 , Williams appeared on Loose Women for a special edition of the show as the only guest . A special intimate live show at The Metro Theatre took place in Sydney on 25 November 2009 where Williams performed material from the new album and some of his classic hits . He performed his single " Bodies " in Australia at the ARIA Music Awards on 26 November 2009 which was held at the Acer Arena . On Tuesday , 8 December 2009 , Williams performed an intimate show in London to less than 200 people at the Radio Theatre in Broadcasting House . An exclusive show was performed by Williams for a limited number of fans at the Melkweg in Amsterdam on 9 December 2009 . Williams performed his hit " Angels " on 12 December 2009 as a duet with Olly Murs on the live final of The X Factor , also performing the second single from the album , " You Know Me " .

Williams performed " Morning Sun " , the third single from Reality Killed the Video Star , on 23 January 2010 at the NRJ Music Awards where he also received two awards for " International Male Artist of the Year " and the " NRJ Award of Honour " . " Morning Sun " was also performed on 13 February 2010 ( Williams ' 36th birthday ) on the UK TV show So You Think You Can Dance . He performed a medley of his greatest hits , including the three singles from Reality Killed the Video Star , on 16 February at the 2010 BRIT Awards where Williams won the " Outstanding Contribution to Music Award " . He won the award for " Best International Male Artist " at the 2010 ECHO Awards in Berlin on 4 March , making it his seventh Echo Award for this category since 2002 . Williams also performed " Morning Sun " at the show .

= = Singles = =

The song " Bodies " was released as the album 's first official single . It premiered on BBC Radio 1 on 4 September 2009 . It was released on 12 October 2009 , reaching number two in the UK Singles Chart , and has since been certified Silver for sales in excess of 200 @,@ 000 copies . It has since reached the top 5 and top 10 in several charts across Europe as well as in Australia . The song was also named one of the best singles of 2009 by the music website Popjustice . Jennifer Cooke from PopMatters said that " Bodies " is " vintage Williams , and his strongest single since ' Feel ' ( 2002 ) . Featuring his two favorite subjects , God and sex ( not necessarily in that order ) " .

" You Know Me " was the second single to be taken from the album . It was released on 7 December 2009 in the UK , where it peaked at number six on the singles chart and was also certified Silver for sales of over 200 @,@ 000 copies . The song managed to peak inside the top 20 and top 30 on many European charts and in Australia . PopMatters ' Jennifer Cooke felt that " You Know Me " had " a Motown flavor reminiscent of Escapology 's ' Something Beautiful ' . " Jude Rogers from The Quietus said that the song is " Nonsensical and brilliant " .

" Morning Sun " was issued as the third single from the record . In the UK , it was released as the official Sport Relief Single on 8 March 2010 . The music video for the single was directed by Vaughan Arnell and filmed at Universal Studios Hollywood . " Morning Sun " peaked at number 45 on the UK Singles Chart , making it Williams ' first single not to enter the top 40 . Jude Rogers from The Quietus said that the song features a vocal " that shows what his voice really can do " and that " Even a middle @-@ eight that nods towards the trippy oompah of ' I Am the Walrus ' can 't change a mood that is both grand but melancholy , epic but reflective . "

" Last Days of Disco " was released as a promotional single in the United States on 5 October 2010 . The single featured several remixes by the artists including Roger Sanchez , Still Going , Black Van and Mighty Mouse . As of January 2011 , the song has peaked at number seven on the Billboard Hot Dance Club Songs chart .

= = Critical reception = =

Reality Killed the Video Star received a varied response from music critics . One review aggregator , Metacritic , gave it an average score of 64 / 100 based on its sample of 17 reviews . John Bush from AllMusic gave the album two stars out of five . He praised songs like " Bodies " and " Morning Sun " but felt that many songs " sound rushed and the performances lackluster " . He concluded that the album is " not decidedly worse than 2002 's Escapology , it 's just bad in a different way . Whereas Escapology found Robbie disappearing into his own neuroses , this one is a hopeless mélange of satire and sincerity where , from song to song , neither can immediately be distinguished . " Chris Mincher from The A.V. Club gave the album a C rating stating that : " Neurotically examining his personality quirks through decidedly unoriginal , un @-@ quirky pop songs , Williams apparently wants to express his individuality with classic @-@ rock reference points and frustratingly nonsensical novelty tracks . "

Mark Sutherland from Billboard gave the album a favourable review . He said that it offers " string @-@ drenched ballads , slick George Michael @-@ style electronic dance @-@ pop , Elvis Costello @-@ esque clever wordplay and the slightly cheesy , supremely catchy MOR pop he made his

name with . " Sutherland said that " The end result may not be enough to convince America it 's missing out , but expect this album to bring the already @-@ converted back onboard in droves . " Dave Karger from Entertainment Weekly gave it a B + rating . Karger felt that , although the album " contains fewer knockout potential hits than past efforts " , it does feature " the two strongest soul @-@ flecked tracks of Williams ' career " , in " You Know Me " and " Won 't Do That " , and that the singer " simply sounds fantastic with a horn section " . Ben Hogwood from MusicOMH gave the album a mixed review , awarding it with three stars ( out of five ) . He said that the " new songs reflect [ a ] safer maturity " . Hogwood said that the album is " more like a big band version of George Michael 's ' Older ' than a funky @-@ up ' Faith ' " and that , although it has " a killer tune or two " , the album is not exhibit the " same vitality of years ago . " Talking about the production , he felt that " the orchestrations are layered on thickly in an attempt to bring some brightness to the grey . " Hogwood concluded that Williams ' " new found maturity suits his voice on one hand , but given his musical past it makes him a far safer proposition than he used to be . "

Los Angeles Times music critic Ann Powers gave the album three stars ( out of four ) stating that the album is " bullishly diverse " . She said that the album is " a full @-@ body flex matching buttery ballads with laser @-@ flecked dance tracks and arch updates from the music hall ; " . Powers felt that the songs " showcase the nasally soulful Williams as an irresistibly smart , cosmopolitan manchild of the overly wired world . " Regarding the lyrics , Powers said that Williams " focuses hard on the out @-@ of @-@ body experience of the everyday . " She said that the production on the album is " gorgeous " and that " Williams benefits greatly from the gifts of the producer 's longtime team , including the arranger Anne Dudley . " Mikael Wood from Spin gave the album a 7 / 10 rating . He said that the album includes " cowbell @-@ enhanced rave @-@ up , a bit of Lady Gaga ? ish electro @-@ pop , and one track named after Transformers " and went on to call the record " a charm offensive with stars and stripes " .

Slant Magazine music critic Jonathan Keefe gave the album a mixed review , rating it with two and a half stars ( out of five ) and talked about Williams ' lack of success in the United States , calling him " one of the U.S. pop market 's biggest missed opportunities " . Keefe felt that the album featured the sort of " heavy balladry and slick adult @-@ pop " that made Williams ' earlier records unappealing to American audiences and suggested that by " downplaying [ his ] formerly irrepressible charm " , Reality Killed the Video Star doesn 't do enough to reintroduce the singer to the US pop market . Andy Gill of The Independent gave the album three stars out of five , commenting that " Williams ' albums have increasingly come to focus upon the singer himself , which has consequently made them less and less appealing to those not entirely smitten with his charms . " This sentiment was echoed by Rosie Swash from The Observer who also gave the album three stars out of five . She said that " Reality Killed the Video Star is littered with references to his fall from grace , most of which hinge on the premise that someone or something else is truly responsible for his diminishing popularity . " Swash said that " If there 's a theme here it 's not obvious , but it turns out Williams can be quite interesting when he moves off the topic of himself . " Swash concluded that the album swings between " mawkish strings and piano overproduction " and " flashes of genuine pop frivolity " .

= = Commercial performance = =

In the United Kingdom , the album sold over 85 @, @ 000 copies in its first day on sale and 238 @, @ 125 copies in its first week , around 1 @, @ 500 less than the self @-@ titled debut album from JLS , which debuted at number one . The album had the third highest first week sales of 2009 in the UK , behind JLS and Susan Boyle 's debut album I Dreamed a Dream , the latter of which debuted with 410 @, @ 000 copies sold . In 2010 it was certified triple platinum by the British Phonographic Industry for sales of over 900 @, @ 000 copies . Reality Killed the Video Star 's sales last week were the highest for a number @-@ two album since James Blunt 's Back to Bedlam sold 273 @, @ 183 copies to claim the runners @-@ up spot behind Eminem 's Curtain Call : The Hits in December 2005 .

Though it missed the top spot in the UK , the album debuted at number one on the European Top

100 Albums chart and spent two weeks at this position . It was certified platinum for sales of more than 1 million copies throughout Europe ( which includes UK sales ) by the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry . In continental Europe , the album was certified double platinum in Germany for sales of over 400 @,@ 000 copies . In France , the album has sold over 100 @,@ 000 copies , earning a platinum certification from the Syndicat National de l'Édition Phonographique . In Italy , the album sold over 70 @,@ 000 copies and was awarded a platinum certification by the Federation of the Italian Music Industry . The album has also reached the top ten in Portugal , Spain , Denmark , Norway , Finland , Sweden , and Austria .

Outside of Europe , the album reached number one in Australia and was certified platinum by the Australian Recording Industry Association for sales of 70 @,@ 000 units . It also reached the top ten in New Zealand , where it was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of New Zealand for selling more than 7 @,@ 500 copies . In Latin America , the album reached the top ten in Mexico and was certified gold for shipments of 30 @,@ 000 units . The album also earned a gold disc in Argentina for shipments of over 20 @,@ 000 units .

= = Track listing = =

All physical copies of the album contain an enhanced section with links to download " Bodies ? Cahill Remix " ( audio ) and " Cover Photoshoot " ( video ) .

= = Personnel = =

Performers on the album include :

= = Charts = =

= = = Weekly charts = = =

= = = Chart procession and succession = = =

= = Certifications = =

= = Release history = =

Reality Killed the Video Star was released in three different formats : a standard 13 @-@ track CD , deluxe edition and digital download . In addition to the standard version , the deluxe edition features premium packaging and a behind @-@ the @-@ scenes DVD .