

= A Dramatic Turn of Events =

A Dramatic Turn of Events is the eleventh studio album by American progressive metal band Dream Theater , released worldwide on September 12 , 2011 and in the United States on September 13 through Roadrunner Records . It is the band 's first recording to feature drummer Mike Mangini following the departure of founding member Mike Portnoy in September 2010 . The album was written , recorded , mixed , and mastered between January and June 2011 at Cove City Sound Studios in Long Island , New York . It was produced by John Petrucci and mixed by Andy Wallace . Two singles , " On the Backs of Angels " and " Build Me Up , Break Me Down " , were released in promotion of the album .

For A Dramatic Turn of Events , Dream Theater underwent a self @-@ proclaimed musical change , reevaluating and restructuring themselves . The album has drawn stylistic comparisons to two of the band 's past albums , Images and Words and Metropolis Pt . 2 : Scenes from a Memory . Many songs on the album were written with a specific purpose in mind as Petrucci , one of the album 's primary composers , felt a sense of responsibility to fans following Portnoy 's departure . The album 's title was derived from its recurring lyrical themes of dramatic changes in history that have affected people 's lives , including contemporary uprisings such as the Libyan Civil War .

A commercial success , A Dramatic Turn of Events moved 36 @,@ 000 units in the United States in its debut week , charting at number eight on the US Billboard 200 . The album received mixed reviews from critics , but nonetheless earned Dream Theater their first @-@ ever Grammy nomination (for " On the Backs of Angels ") . From July 2011 until September 2012 , the band supported the album on the A Dramatic Turn of Events Tour .

= = Background = =

= = = Search for a new drummer = = =

On September 8 , 2010 , Mike Portnoy announced that he would be leaving Dream Theater , citing better relationships in other projects , burnout , and his desire for a break as reasons . Elaborating on the situation for MusicRadar , John Petrucci revealed that originally , Portnoy did not want to leave the band ; he only wanted to take a five @-@ year break . Only after the rest of the band rejected his proposal did Portnoy decide to quit .

Petrucci has called Portnoy 's departure one of the hardest things Dream Theater have had to face , and speaking of when he first heard the news , Jordan Rudess recounted , " You know , just to give you an idea of how deep this was to lose him , how difficult it was ... after we got off the phone with him ... I literally sat on the steps of my studio and cried . This is a guy who 's a friend of mine , who we all love and admire . We didn 't want to see it come crashing down . "

A little more than a month after Portnoy 's departure , Dream Theater began auditioning for a new drummer in New York City . The drummers invited to audition were Mike Mangini , Derek Roddy , Thomas Lang , Virgil Donati , Marco Minnemann , Aquiles Priester , and Peter Wildoer . In April 2011 , the band announced that Mangini was the drummer selected via a three part YouTube documentary series called The Spirit Carries On .

Shortly after Mangini joined Dream Theater , Portnoy e @-@ mailed the band asking to rejoin , but his attempt was rebuffed . Reflecting on his arrival to the band , Mangini told Noisecreep , " As I see it , as I look back , I really think what happened was that this band kind of started over . They were in a new place as they looked for a drummer , and I when got the news , after the shock wore off , I knew what I wanted to do ? which was just basically come in and try to support where they wanted to go . They had a vision , they had great ideas , and I just wanted to help them achieve those things . "

= = = Writing and recording = = =

On January 3 , 2011 , Dream Theater entered Cove City Sound Studios to begin working on a new album . Although John Petrucci brought in demos , riffs , and songs from home , the album was mostly written in the studio . Writing was completed on March 2 and done without Mike Mangini . The band made demos for all the songs with drums already programmed , then sent them to Mangini who learned the parts and " added his own stuff . " Reflecting on the writing process for Rock Your Life , Jordan Rudess explained that the band 's approach was more open to his keyboards than in the past , and that after Mike Portnoy 's departure , he and Petrucci " became , like , free . " James LaBrie and John Myung each contributed more to the writing than they had in recent years .

On April 14 , LaBrie began tracking vocals and the album 's mixing and mastering by Andy Wallace were finished by June 28 . LaBrie recorded all the album 's vocals in Canada with Richard Chycki . Originally , LaBrie planned to only record the album 's first two songs away from New York City , but after flying there to finish the remainder of the vocals , decided to go back to Canada because " it just didn 't feel right . "

= = Composition = =

Jordan Rudess has said that , for A Dramatic Turn of Events , the band underwent a musical change , re @-@ evaluating and restructuring " who we are and what we do . " Speaking in an interview for Der Spiegel and Roadrunner Germany , John Petrucci mentioned that the album " tells a story ... not literally but emotionally " and likened the experience to a " roller coaster ride . " In that same interview , James LaBrie emphasized that the album was melodically driven .

In his review of A Dramatic Turn of Events , Rich Wilson ? author of the official Dream Theater biography Lifting Shadows ? described the album 's material as veering toward progressive rock and being " spiritually reminiscent " of past albums like Images and Words (1992) and Scenes from a Memory (1999) . In a post on his forum , Mike Portnoy took these comparisons a step further , suggesting that the new songs were " desperate attempts to re @-@ write the past " .

In composing A Dramatic Turn of Events , Petrucci admitted to feeling a sense of responsibility to fans following Portnoy 's departure . He also explained that the majority of the songs on the album were written to prove to people that everything was grounded and intact with the band . Opener " On the Backs of Angels " was designed to reflect Dream Theater 's signature sound , the heavy " Build Me Up , Break Me Down " was written far into the making of the album to serve as a contrast to its progressive elements , " Outcry " was intended to be the anthem of the album , and " Breaking All Illusions " was used as an epic piece that would not bind the band to conventional songwriting arrangements . The final song written for the album was the ballad " Beneath the Surface " , which is also the album 's closing track . Petrucci wrote the song himself , demoed and recorded it , and then presented it to the band , who were open to including it on the album .

Amidst speculation that A Dramatic Turn of Events ' title was a vague reference to Portnoy 's departure , Petrucci stressed that it is in no way a reference to anyone ; rather , the title references the album 's recurring themes of dramatic changes in history that have affected peoples ' lives . All of the album 's lyrics were written by Petrucci except for " Far from Heaven " , written by LaBrie , and " Breaking All Illusions " , co @-@ written with John Myung .

= = Release = =

A Dramatic Turn of Events ' title , track listing , and United States release date were revealed on June 8 , 2011 . Its cover art , designed by longtime collaborator Hugh Syme , was revealed several days later . On June 29 , " On the Backs of Angels " was released as the album 's first single . Leading up to the release of the album , Dream Theater teased various one @-@ minute long snippets of new songs , including " Breaking All Illusions " , " Beneath the Surface " , and " This Is the Life " . On September 14 , a music video for " On the Backs of Angels " was released . On January 26 , 2012 , the band premiered a lyric video for their upcoming single , " Build Me Up , Break Me Down " , on Loudwire .

A Dramatic Turn of Events was released worldwide on September 12 , 2011 and in the United States on September 13 , debuting at number one in some countries and attaining the eighth position on the US Billboard 200 , Dream Theater 's second top ten debut position on that chart after their previous album , 2009 's Black Clouds & Silver Linings , which debuted at No. 6 . Alongside the standard edition of the album , a special edition and deluxe collector 's edition were also made available for purchase . The special edition featured different packaging and a bonus DVD containing The Spirit Carries On documentary , while the deluxe collector 's edition featured , among other bonus items , instrumental versions of all songs .

= = Critical reception = =

A Dramatic Turn of Events has received mixed reviews . At Metacritic , which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream publications , the album holds an average score of 55 , based on six reviews . Rich Wilson called it " fresh and frankly stunning " ; however , he warned that the album was not immediately gratifying and that it required several listens to fully appreciate . Critics were generally complimentary of Mike Mangini 's performance , with Drumhead elaborating , " [he] demonstrates the physical prowess and agility of a racehorse , stretching to play at the top of his talents and reining himself in to allow his bandmates to do the same . "

In a negative review for Popmatters , Chris Conaton expressed disappointment in the album 's predictability , noting , " At this point it 's pretty clear that the band is comfortably ensconced in their lifestyle and content to just keep doing things the way they have been for years . " In a lukewarm review for AllMusic , Thom Jurek observed , " there is something here for virtually every fan -- or detractor -- to grab hold of . " Sputnikmusic criticized Mangini 's drum parts , describing them as " bland " , as well as the decision to include three ballads , but ultimately gave the album a positive review .

A Dramatic Turn of Events has received several accolades . In their year @-@ end wrap up for 2011 , Burrrn ! awarded the album with their Best Album , Best Front Cover , Best Guitarist , and Best Keyboardist honors . At the 2012 Grammy Awards , " On the Backs of Angels " was nominated for Best Hard Rock / Metal Performance , representing the Dream Theater 's first @-@ ever Grammy nomination .

= = = Supporting tour = = =

Dream Theater began their tour in support of A Dramatic Turn of Events on July 4 , 2011 in Rome , Italy . The second leg of the tour took place in North America , where the band headlined with Trivium . After a short break to conclude 2011 , the band returned to Europe with Periphery , then to North America with Crimson Projekct before heading to South America for the final leg of the tour . On August 19 and 20 , they filmed two shows at Luna Park in Buenos Aires , Argentina for a live Blu @-@ ray release .

= = Track listing = =

All titles , writing credits , and song lengths taken from the A Dramatic Turn of Events liner notes . All lyrics written by John Petrucci except where noted .

= = Personnel = =

All credits taken from the A Dramatic Turn of Events liner notes .