

= Slay Tracks (1933 ? 1969) =

Slay Tracks (1933 ? 1969) (also referred to as Slay Tracks) is the debut extended play by the American indie rock band Pavement . Pavement , then consisting of founding members Stephen Malkmus (guitar , vocals) and Scott Kannberg (guitar) , recorded Slay Tracks with producer and future member Gary Young (drums) during a four @-@ hour session . The EP was released as a 7 " vinyl record on the band 's own record label Treble Kicker in 1989 . The music in Slay Tracks is influenced by indie and punk rock bands , including Swell Maps and The Fall , and many of the lyrics are inspired by life in the band 's hometown of Stockton , California .

Although only 1000 copies of Slay Tracks were pressed , the EP became an underground hit . It was met with generally positive reviews from critics , though most of its initial reviews were from independently produced zines . The songs on Slay Tracks would later appear on the 1993 compilation Westing (By Musket and Sextant) , reaching a wider audience than the EP 's limited initial release . The release of Slay Tracks was significant to Pavement 's signing to Drag City , and later to Matador Records .

= = Background and recording = =

Pavement was formed in 1989 in Stockton , California , by Stephen Malkmus and Scott Kannberg . Malkmus and Kannberg had previously performed together in the band Bag O ' Bones . Pavement had its start playing at open mike nights at clubs and bars . The songs the band played during this time were mostly covers , although they also performed many original songs that would later be released on Slay Tracks . Malkmus recalls , " It was pretty reasonable to be able to make a single for \$ 1 @,@ 000 , so we decided to go for it . We didn 't have any real plans because we weren 't a real band . " Two local studios existed in Stockton , the cheaper and less professionally minded of which was Gary Young 's Louder Than You Think Studio . The band decided to record at Young 's studio due to their admiration of other local punk bands who had recorded there , including The Young Pioneers and The Authorities . Kannberg reportedly borrowed \$ 800 from his father to record Slay Tracks .

Slay Tracks was recorded during a four @-@ hour session on January 17 , 1989 , at Young 's studio . Kannberg , describing the studio and the recording process , said , " You go into his house and it 's stuff everywhere , old dogs lying around , big pot plants everywhere , and Gary tells us that he got all his equipment by selling pot ! It was us going in and pretty much just laying down the songs with a glide guitar and a detuned guitar through a bass amp and then we 'd play drums over the top . " Young , though bewildered by the band 's sound , contributed by playing drums . He recalled , " [Malkmus and Kannberg] come in and they play this weird guitar noise and it just sounds like noise , with no background . My drums were in there so I said , ' Should I drum ? ' and they said ' Okay . ' " Kannberg said , " We did it really fast . We probably spent one day tracking and one day mixing it . " The title of the EP had been decided prior to its recording , and the pseudonyms S.M. and Spiral Stairs were used to credit Malkmus and Kannberg respectively .

= = Music = =

The music on Slay Tracks was written entirely by Malkmus , and he stated his influences on the record included Chrome , Swell Maps , and The Fall . The songs on the EP drew comparisons to the likes of R.E.M. , Pixies , and Sonic Youth by Stephen Thomas Erlewine and Heather Phares of AllMusic . Radio static and noise are prominently used on the EP , techniques which are characteristic of the lo @-@ fi and noise pop genres that Pavement are frequently associated with . According to Malkmus , " We decided to use static as the third instrument It was pretty exciting to be so experimental . " Young played drums on " Box Elder " and " Price Yeah ! " , and frequently improvised . Malkmus played drums on " Maybe Maybe " , while both Malkmus and Kannberg drummed on " She Believes " .

" You 're Killing Me " , the longest song on the EP at three minutes and 20 seconds , is an example

of the impact punk rock had on Pavement . The song features fuzz effects , repetitive lyrics , and no percussion or drums . " Box Elder " , an ironic song about someone wanting to move to Box Elder , Montana , was considered by Gerald Cosloy to be an example of Malkmus 's " honest , direct , and simplistic " lyrical style , and features greater influence from pop music than the rest of the EP . " Maybe Maybe " features distorted guitars and indiscernible vocals , and " Price Yeah ! " has a sound typical of hardcore punk . The band 's hometown of Stockton inspired the band 's lyrics and sound . Malkmus stated that " There 's something empty about Stockton . I wanted to convey that in our music . " Malkmus told Melody Maker in 1992 that " Pavement was originally a pathetic effort by us to do something to escape the terminal boredom we were experiencing in Stockton . "

= = Release = =

After recording was completed Kannberg was tasked with releasing the music himself , as Malkmus had left on a trip to parts of Europe , North Africa , and the Middle East . Kannberg designed the cover of the EP and sent copies to various independent labels , distributors , and zines . He recalled " I had no idea how to do it . I 'd send off these little notes to my favorite labels like SST and Twin Tone and ask , ' How do I do this ? ' " A representative from SST recommended that Kannberg use Erica Records , a Los Angeles 7 " manufacturer . Erica Records became the manufacturer of Slay Tracks ; however , Kannberg was unhappy with the master recording produced by the company : " It sounds like it sounds now ? it 's just a mess ? but being poor and not really caring I said , ' Okay , that 's cool , if it sounds like that ? whatever . ' " 1000 copies of Slay Tracks were pressed , and the first 50 included a green dinosaur stamp on the label . The EP was distributed on Kannberg 's own Treble Kicker Records in the United States and England , although Malkmus came across a copy in a record store while visiting Austria .

Slay Tracks found unexpected attention after the Leeds , England @-@ based band The Wedding Present covered " Box Elder " on their own 1990 EP , Brassneck . The Wedding Present 's bassist , Keith Gregory , had been introduced to Slay Tracks by future Pavement bassist Mark Ibold while visiting New York City . The Wedding Present cover is different from the original in that the line " that I had to get the fuck out of this town " was changed to " that I had to get right out of this town " . The " Box Elder " cover received radio airplay from influential English disc jockey John Peel , which generated publicity for both The Wedding Present and Pavement . Neither member of Pavement was aware of the cover until Kannberg was informed of it . Kannberg remembered " I was kind of mad . I had no idea that people could do that , so I was all offended . " However , his opinion of the cover and its significance later changed : " It was so cool that some band from the UK wanted to cover this obscure , horribly recorded song . At the time I probably never appreciated the full extent of how them covering the song helped Pavement , especially in the UK , but it really did , and I 'll always be grateful to them for that . "

Shortly after its release , Slay Tracks became a collector 's item . According to an April 1990 Drag City press release , copies were typically sold for \$ 500 ? \$ 600 . Malkmus and Kannberg each kept 100 copies of the EP , and Malkmus said " I used to sell them for fifty dollars . When I needed money I 'd go in and sell a couple to the store and they 'd sell for a hundred dollars each . I rarely meet anyone who bought it when it originally came out . " Malkmus also said that the pair " probably gave away about one @-@ hundred to friends and bands we later toured with . " The songs on Slay Tracks found airplay on several college radio stations , including University of Virginia 's WTJU and University of California , Berkeley 's KALX . Kannberg commented on the EP 's unanticipated popularity , saying " It was very surprising to find that people were into [Slay Tracks] . "

= = Reception = =

Slay Tracks received generally positive reviews . Much of the initial critical reception to Slay Tracks was from zines to whom Kannberg had sent the EP . A review in the San Francisco @-@ based zine Maximum RocknRoll said " Most of the tunes work by virtue of their eclecticism , freshness , and originality ? this is a good one . " The zine Conflict called the EP " absolutely perfect . " Slay

Tracks also received attention from mainstream publications . Robert Christgau of the Village Voice rated Slay Tracks an A- , and selected it as his fourth favorite EP of 1990 . Spin 's review said : " a long stream of noise water is omitted by Pavement What a party ! " A reviewer for Option praised the band 's lo @-@ fi characteristics and attitude , calling the EP " loose and intentionally lo @-@ fi , " and saying " let 's hope this Pavement stays cracked . " College Music Journal 's review was also favorable , noting " You 're Killing Me " and " She Believes " as highlights , and calling the EP a " deep , intoxicating breath of homemade music from people with tongues in their cheeks and hearts on their sleeves ... the twin engine feedback and fuzz hits dead center with naive [sic] melodic balance , and whether that is in spite of or because of the sloppy , one @-@ take feel is inconsequential . "

= = Legacy = =

Young 's drum performance on Slay Tracks eventually led to him joining Pavement as a full @-@ time member . Young produced the group 's 1990 EP Demolition Plot J @-@ 7 , but displayed hostility toward then @-@ current drummer Jason Fawkes . Fawkes left Pavement in 1991 due to animosity with Malkmus , allowing Young to drum on their third EP , Perfect Sound Forever . Young drummed on all Pavement releases from then on until 1992 's Watery , Domestic , after which he was fired for his increasingly erratic behavior and was replaced with Steve West . Young 's drumming on Slay Tracks was later recognized as an important turning point in Pavement 's history , and was considered to be " the opportunity of a lifetime " by C. Harris @-@ Nystrom of the News & Review .

Dan Koretzky , founder of Drag City , ordered 200 copies of the EP for the Chicago Reckless Records store he worked for at the time . Koretzky asked Kannberg if he would sign to Drag City during the same phone call that he ordered the EP . Kannberg remembered expressing reluctance to sign to any label , but Drag City producer and session musician Rian Murphy recalled that " We asked , they said yes . Lives didn 't seem to be on the line . " Chris Lombardi and Gerald Cosloy of Matador Records also first heard of Pavement after Kannberg sent a copy of Slay Tracks to their zine , Conflict . Matador signed Pavement in 1992 for the release of their debut studio album , Slanted and Enchanted .

The songs on Slay Tracks are all included on the 1993 compilation Westing (By Musket and Sextant) , along with several of Pavement 's other early material . Westing has sold 63 @,@ 000 copies , and was praised by Robert Christgau and Stephen Thomas Erlewine for making songs previously found exclusively on vinyl available on compact disc . All of the songs from Slay Tracks were played live throughout Pavement 's history , with " Box Elder " particularly cited as an " old favorite " for fans at concerts . Live performances of " Box Elder " has also been included on the compilation reissues Slanted and Enchanted : Luxe & Reduxe and Wowee Zowee : Sordid Sentinels Edition , with the version on the latter beginning with a short jam session . In a 1999 retrospective of the band 's career , Donna Freydkin of CNN.com called Slay Tracks " a quick underground favorite " , while John Hicks of the Planet Weekly wrote " Although Pavement was conceived as a studio @-@ only project , the underground success of Slay Tracks ensured that it was only a matter of time before the group became a full @-@ fledged performing entity . "

= = Track listing = =

All tracks were written by Stephen Malkmus .

" You 're Killing Me " ? 3 : 20

" Box Elder " ? 2 : 26

" Maybe Maybe " ? 2 : 14

" She Believes " ? 3 : 02

" Price Yeah ! " ? 3 : 00