

= Loveless (album) =

Loveless is the second studio album by Anglo @-@ Irish rock band My Bloody Valentine . Released on 4 November 1991 , the album was recorded over a two @-@ year period between 1989 and 1991 . The group cycled through nineteen studios and a larger number of engineers during the album 's two @-@ year creation , with total recording costs rumoured to have reached £ 250 @,@ 000 . Vocalist and guitarist Kevin Shields dominated the arduous recording process , intent on achieving a particular sound ; he experimented with guitar tremolo and tuning systems , unorthodox production techniques , obscured vocals , and sampled feedback and percussion .

While Loveless did not achieve great commercial success upon its release , it received enthusiastic reviews from critics , who praised its sonic innovations . Following the record 's release , My Bloody Valentine were removed from their record label Creation Records due to the difficulty and expense of working with Shields , a factor that was alleged to have contributed to the bankruptcy of the label . In the subsequent years , the group struggled to record a follow @-@ up album and would eventually break up in 1997 . Loveless would be their last full @-@ length release for over two decades .

Since its release , Loveless has been widely proclaimed as among the best albums of the 1990s by critics , as a landmark work of the shoegazing genre , and as an influence on various subsequent artists . The album was reissued as a two @-@ disc CD set on Sony in May 2012 , containing remastered editions of the original digital tape and a previously unreleased ½ -inch analogue tape . The reissues placed in several international charts and in July 2013 , Loveless was certified Silver in the United Kingdom by the British Phonographic Industry .

= = Recording and production = =

My Bloody Valentine were scheduled to record at Blackwing Studios in Southwark , London for the month of February 1989 , and intended to use the time to conceptualise a new , more studio @-@ based sound for their second album . Shields said that Creation first believed the album could be recorded " in five days " . According to Shields " when it became clear that wasn 't going to happen , they [Creation] freaked . " After several unproductive months , the band relocated in September to the basement studio The Elephant and Wapping , where they spent eight unproductive weeks . In @-@ house engineer Nick Robbins said Shields made it clear from the outset that he (Robbins) " was just there to press the buttons . " Robbins was quickly replaced by Harold Burgon , but according to Shields , Burgon 's main contribution was to show the group how to use the in @-@ studio computer . Burgon and Shields spent three weeks at the Woodcray studio in Berkshire working on the Glider EP , which Shields and Creation owner Alan McGee agreed would be released in advance of the album . Alan Moulder was hired to mix the Glider song " Soon " at Trident 2 studio in Victoria (the song would reappear as the closing track on Loveless) . Shields said of Moulder , " As soon as we worked with him we realized we 'd love to some more ! " When the group returned to work on the album Moulder was the sole engineer Shields trusted enough to perform tasks such as miking the amplifiers ; all the other credited engineers were told " We 're so on top of this you don 't even have to come to work . " Shields has since stated that " these engineers ? with the exception of Alan Moulder and later Anjali Dutt ? were all just the people who came with the studio ... everything we wanted to do was wrong , according to them , " although the band did give credit on the album sleeve to anyone who was present during the recordings , " even if all they did was fix tea " , according to Shields .

During the spring of 1990 , Anjali Dutt was hired to replace Moulder , who had left to work with the bands Shakespears Sister and Ride . Dutt assisted in the recording of vocals and several guitar tracks . During this period , the band recorded in various studios , often spending just a single day at a studio before deciding that it was unsuitable . In May 1990 , My Bloody Valentine settled on Protocol in Holloway as their primary location , and work began in earnest on the album , as well as a second EP , Tremolo . Like Glider , Tremolo contained a song ? " To Here Knows When " ? that would later appear on Loveless . The band stopped recording during the summer of 1990 in order to

tour in support of the release of Glider . When Moulder returned to the project in August , he was surprised by how little work had been completed . By that point Creation Records was concerned at how much the album was costing . Moulder left again in March 1991 to work for the noise pop band The Jesus and Mary Chain .

In an interview with Select , Shields explained the stop @-@ start nature of his recording , using " When You Sleep " as an example :

" We recorded the drums in September ' 89 . The guitar was done in December . The bass was done in ? er ? April . 1990 we 're in , now . Then nothing happens for a year really . " So it doesn 't have vocals at this stage ? " No . " Does it have words ? " No . " Does it even have a title ? " No . It has a song number . ' Song 12 ' it was called . And ? I 'm trying to remember ? the melody line was done in ' 91 . The vocals were ' 91 . There were huge gaps though . Months and months of not touching songs . Years . I used to forget what tunings I 'd used . "

The vocal tracks were taped in Britannia Row and Protocol studios between May and June 1991 . This was the first time vocalist Bilinda Butcher was involved in the recording . Shields and Butcher hung curtains on the window between the studio control room and the vocal booth , and only communicated with the engineers when they would acknowledge a good take by opening the curtain and waving . According to engineer Guy Fixsen , " We weren 't allowed to listen while either of them were doing a vocal . You 'd have to watch the meters on the tape machine to see if anyone was singing . If it stopped , you knew you had to stop the tape and take it back to the top . " On most days , the couple arrived without having written the lyrics for the song they were to record . Dutt recalled : " Kevin would sing a track , and then Bilinda would get the tape and write down words she thought he might have sung " .

In July 1991 , Creation agreed to relocate the production to Eastcote studio , following unexplained complaints from Shields . However , the cash @-@ poor Creation Records was unable to pay the bill for their time at Britannia Row , and the studio refused to return the band 's equipment . Dutt recalled , " I don 't know what excuse Kevin gave them for leaving . He had to raise the money himself to get the gear out . " Shields ' unexpected and random behaviour , the constant delays , and studio changes were having a material effect both on Creation 's finances and the health of their staff . Dutt later admitted being desperate to leave the project , while Creation 's second @-@ in @-@ command Dick Green had a nervous breakdown around this time . Green later recalled , " It was two years into the album , and I phoned Shields up in tears . I was going ' You have to deliver me this record ' . " During this time , both Shields and Butcher became affected with tinnitus , and had to delay recording for a further number of weeks while they recovered . Concerned friends and band members suggested this was a result of the unusually loud volumes the group played at their shows . Shields dismissed these concerns as " Ill @-@ informed hysteria " . Although Alan McGee was still upbeat and positive about his investment , the 29 @-@ year @-@ old Green , who by this time was opening the label 's morning post " shaking with fear " , became a concern to his co @-@ workers . Publicist Laurence Verfaillie , aware of the label 's inability to cover further studio bills , recalled Green 's hair turning grey overnight . " He would have not gone grey if it was not for that album " , Verfaillie said .

With the vocal tracks completed , a final mix of the album was undertaken with engineer Dick Meaney at the Church in Crouch End during the autumn of 1991 ; it was the nineteenth studio in which Loveless had been worked on . The album was edited on an aged machine that had previously been used to cut together dialog for movies in the 1970s . Its computer threw the entire album out of phase . Shields was able to put it back together from memory , yet when it came to mastering the album , to Creation 's dismay , he needed 13 days , rather than the usual one day .

As the previously prolific band were unusually quiet , the UK music press began to speculate . Melody Maker calculated that the total recording cost had come close to £ 250 @,@ 000 ; however , McGee , Green , and Shields dispute this . Shields argued that that estimated cost (and Creation 's near @-@ bankruptcy) was a myth exaggerated by McGee because the Creation owner " thought it would be cool . " According to Shields , " The amount we spent nobody knows because we never counted . But we worked it out ourselves just by working out how much the studios cost and how much all the engineers cost . 160 thousand pounds was the most we could come to as the actual

money that was spent . " In Green 's opinion , the Melody Maker 's estimate erred on the low side , by £ 20 @,@ 000 . He said , " Once you 'd even got it recorded and mixed , the very act of compiling , EQ @-@ ing , etcetera took weeks on its own . " In a December 1991 interview , Shields said that most of the money claimed to have been spent on the album was simply " money to live on " over three years , with the album itself only costing " a few thousand " . He also claimed that the album represented only four months work over two years . Shields later said that most of the money spent was the band 's own money , and that " Creation probably spent fifteen to twenty thousand pounds of their own money on it , and that 's it . They never showed us any accounts , and then they got bought out by Sony . "

= = Music = =

While Butcher contributed about a third of the album 's lyrics , most of the music on Loveless was written and performed by Shields . Shields stated , " I 'm actually the only musician on the record except for the Colm song [' Touched '] . " Shields assumed Butcher 's guitarist duties during the recording process ; Butcher admitted that she had not minded because she felt she " was never a great guitarist " . Bassist Debbie Googe did not perform on the album , though she received a credit on the album sleeve . Googe said , " At the beginning I used to go down [to the studio] most days but after a while I began to feel pretty superfluous so I went down less . " Butcher explained , " for Kevin to actually translate to Debbie what he had in his head and play it right would have been an agonizing process . " " It wasn 't collaborative at all " , Alan Moulder said of the album 's recording . " Kevin had a clear view of what he wanted , but he never explained it . "

Taking influence from the Wall of Sound practices established by the likes of Phil Spector and Brian Wilson , Loveless was largely recorded in mono sound , as Shields felt it important that the album 's sound consisted of " the guitar smack bang in the middle and no chorus , no modulation effect " . Shields wavers his guitar 's tremolo bar as he strums , which contributes , in part , to the band 's distinctive sound . This technique ? nicknamed " Glide guitar " ? causes the guitar strings to bend slightly in and out of tune . Shields said that due to his use of the tremolo bar , " People were thinking it 's hundreds of guitars , when it 's actually got less guitar tracks than most people 's demo tapes have . " The guitarist asserted that unlike other bands of the shoegazing movement of the early 1990s , My Bloody Valentine did not use chorus or flanger pedals . He insisted , " No other band played that guitar like me [...] We did everything solely with the tremolo arm " . Shields aimed to use " very simple minimal effects " which often were the result of involved studio work . He stated , " The songs are really simply structured . A lot of them are purposely like that . That way you can get away with a lot more when you mess around with the contents " . In a 1992 Guitar World interview , Shields described how he achieved a sound akin to a wah @-@ wah pedal on " I Only Said " by playing his guitar through an amplifier with a graphic equaliser preamp . After recording the track , he then bounced it to another track through a parametric equaliser while he adjusted the EQ levels manually . The interviewer asked if Shields could have achieved the same effect more easily by simply using a wah @-@ wah pedal , to which the guitarist replied , " In attitude toward sound , yes . But not in approach . "

All but two of the drum tracks are composed of samples performed by drummer Colm Ó Cíosóig . Because Ó Cíosóig was suffering from physical and personal problems during the album 's recording , samples of various drum patterns that he was able to perform in his condition were recorded . According to Shields , " [i] t 's exactly what Colm would have done , it just took longer to do . " Ó Cíosóig recovered enough to play live on two of the album 's songs , " Only Shallow " and " Touched " , the latter of which was composed and performed entirely by the drummer . Shields believes that listeners are unable to tell the difference between Ó Cíosóig 's live drumming and the drum loops aside from the tracks intended to have an obviously " sampled " sound , like the dance @-@ oriented " Soon " . The album makes extensive use of samples , with Shields stating , " Most of the samples are feedback . We learnt from guitar feedback , with lots of distortion , that you can make any instrument , any one that you can imagine " .

The vocals , handled jointly by Shields and Butcher , are kept relatively low in the mix , and are for

the most part highly pitched . On occasion Shields sang the higher register and Butcher the lower one . According to Shields , because the band had spent so long working on the album 's vocals , he " couldn 't tolerate really clear vocals , where you just hear one voice " , thus " it had to be more like a sound . " Butcher explained her " dreamy , sensual " style vocals , saying , " Often when we do vocals , it 's 7 : 30 in the morning ; I 've usually just fallen asleep and have to be woken up to sing . " To aid this effect , Shields and Ó Cíosóig even sampled Butcher 's voice and reused it as instrumentation . The layered vocals on " When You Sleep " were born out of frustration with trying to get the right take . Shields commented that " The vocals sound like that because it became boring and too destructive trying to get the right vocal . So I decided to put all the vocals in . (It had been sung 12 or 13 times) . " He explained :

" On ' When You Sleep ' it sounds like me and Bilinda singing together , but it 's just me ? me slowed down and me speeded up at the same time . Some songs we sang over and over until we got bored ? usually between 12 and 18 times . I started sorting through the tapes and it did my head in , so I just played them all together and it was really good ? like one , vaguely distinct voice . "

The lyrics are deliberately obscure ; Shields joked that he once considered rating various attempts to decipher the words on the band 's website according to a percentage of accuracy . He claims that he and Butcher " spent way more time on the lyrics than ever on the music " . The words were often written in late @-@ night eight- to ten @-@ hour @-@ long sessions before the pair were due to record the vocals . The pair worked diligently to ensure the lyrics were not lackluster , even though few changes actually resulted ; Shields said , " There 's nothing worse than bad lyrics . " Nonetheless , pressed by Select 's David Cavanagh to reveal just the first line of " Loomer " , Butcher refused , and Shields claimed to have " absolutely no idea " what she was singing .

= = Release = =

Following the album 's low @-@ budget release , Shields boasted , " We know more about how the record industry works than our record company half the time . We do . I 'm not joking . " That winter the band toured Europe , an event music critic David Cavanagh described as a " unique chapter in live music " . To recreate the higher tones from Loveless , Shields employed American flautist Anna Quimby . According to a friend of the band , " She had a little skirt on , black tights ... she was a little indie girl . But when she blew into the flute , it was like fucking Woodstock " . NME editor Danny Kelly attended a show he described as " more like torture than entertainment , I had a half pint of lager ; they hit their first note and it was so loud that it sent the glass hurtling " . A U.S. spring tour followed , during which Shields and Butcher tested their audiences ' ability to sustain noise played at high volumes . Critic Mark Kemp said of the American tour , " After about thirty seconds the adrenaline set in , people are screaming and shaking their fists . After a minute you wonder what 's going on . After another minute it 's total confusion . The noise starts hurting . The noise continues . After three minutes you begin to take deep breaths . After four minutes , a calm takes over . " The tour saw My Bloody Valentine accused of criminal negligence by the music press , who took exception to the long period of extreme noise played during " You Made Me Realise " , referring to it as " the holocaust " . In December 2000 Mojo magazine rated the tour as the second loudest in history .

= = Reception = =

Although Shields feared a critical panning , reviews of Loveless were almost unanimously favourable . " An album without parallel , " wrote Andrew Perry in Select . " Its creative inspiration defies belief . Though ' To Here Knows When ' is pretty well the weirdest track of the eleven , that glorious distortion gives a fair signal of what to expect ? the unexpected . Everything you hear confounds your idea of how a pop song should be played , arranged and produced . " " The instrumental ' Touched ' is especially startling , " noted Martin Aston in Q , " like a drunken fight between a syrupy Disney soundtrack and an Eastern mantra . All in all , Loveless amounts to a virtual reinvention of the guitar . "

NME awarded the album an eight out of ten score . Reviewer Dele Fadele saw My Bloody Valentine as the " blueprint " for the shoegaze genre , and wrote : " with ' Loveless ' you could 've expected the Irish / English partnership to succumb to self @-@ parody or mimic The Scene That 's Delighted To Eat Quiche [...] But no , ' Loveless ' fires a silver @-@ coated bullet into the future , daring all @-@ comers to try and recreate its mixture of moods , feelings , emotion , styles and , yes , innovations . " While Fadele expressed some disappointment that the group seemed to disassociate themselves from dance music and reggae basslines , he concluded " ' Loveless ' ups the ante , and , however decadent one might find the idea of elevating other human beings to deities , My Bloody Valentine , failings and all , deserve more than your respect . " Melody Maker writer Simon Reynolds praised the album , and wrote that Loveless " [reaffirms] how unique , how peerless MBV are . " He declared , " Along with Mercury Rev 's ' Yerself is Steam ' , ' Loveless ' is the outermost , innermost , uttermost rock record of 1991 . " Reynolds noted that his only criticism was that " while My Bloody Valentine have amplified and refined what they already were , they 've failed to mutate or leap into any kind of beyond . " Rolling Stone gave the album four out of five stars . In a review that also covered Chapterhouse and Creation labelmates Velvet Crush , reviewer Ira Robbins wrote , " Despite the record 's intense ability to disorient ? this is real do @-@ not @-@ adjust @-@ your @-@ set stuff ? the effect is strangely uplifting . Loveless oozes a sonic balm that first embraces and then softly pulverizes the frantic stress of life . " Spin gave Loveless a mixed review with writer Jim Greer noting that the album 's songs are " standard @-@ ish and dull " and concluded that he felt " The warped music is a cool idea and I recommend the album ? but not on the basis of the singing or the songs " .

While Creation were pleased with the final album , and the initial music press reviews were positive , the label soon realised that although , in the words of plugger James Kylo , " it was such a beautiful record , and it was wonderful to have it ... it just didn 't sound like a record that was going to recoup all the money that had been spent on it . " Alan McGee liked the record , but admitted , " It was quite clear that we couldn 't bear the idea of going through that again , because there was just nothing to say that [Shields] wouldn 't do exactly the same again . That 's enough . Lets step back " . Despite a severe shortage of money , Creation funded a short tour of the north of England late in 1991 . At the time the band were making the marketing of Loveless difficult ? there would be no singles , and the band 's name was forbidden to appear on the record sleeve . McGee was by now exhausted and frustrated . He recalled , " I thought : I went to the wall for you . If this record bombs , I 've stolen my father 's money . And they were so ... not understanding of anybody else 's position . " McGee dropped My Bloody Valentine from Creation soon after the album 's release because he could not bear working with Shields again ; " It was either him or me " , he told The Guardian in 2004 . Loveless peaked at number 24 on the UK Albums Chart , and failed to chart in the United States , where it was distributed by Sire Records . In 2003 Rolling Stone estimated the sales figures for Loveless as 225 @, @ 000 copies sold .

= = = Accolades = = =

Loveless has ranked highly on a number of critics ' lists . The album ranked number fourteen in the 1991 Village Voice Pazz & Jop critics ' poll . In 1999 , Pitchfork Media named Loveless the best album of the 1990s . However , in their 2003 revision of the list , it moved to number two , swapping places with Radiohead 's OK Computer . In 2003 , the album was ranked number 219 on Rolling Stone magazine 's list of the 500 greatest albums of all time . In 2004 The Observer ranked it at number 20 in its " 100 Greatest British Albums " list , declaring it " the last great extreme rock album " . In Spin 's entry for Loveless on its list of " 100 Greatest Albums 1985 ? 2005 " (where it was ranked at number 22) , Chuck Klosterman wrote , " Whenever anyone uses the phrase swirling guitars , this record is why . A testament to studio production and single @-@ minded perfectionism , Loveless has a layered , inverted thickness that makes harsh sounds soft and fragile moments vast . " In 2008 , Loveless topped The Irish Times ' " Top 40 Irish Albums of All Time " critics ' list , in 2013 , it placed third in the Irish Independent 's " Top 30 Irish Albums of All Time " list. and in 2014 , it placed ninth on the Alternative Nation site 's " Top 10 Underrated 90 's Alternative Rock Albums "

list . In 1999 , Ned Raggett ranked the album at number 1 on his list of " The Top 136 Or So Albums Of The Nineties " . In 2013 , NME ranked the album at number 18 on their " 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " list . The album was also included in the book 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die .

= = Legacy = =

Despite being poised for a " popular breakthrough " following Loveless ' critical favour , My Bloody Valentine recorded only sporadically in the two decades following the album 's release ? including the contribution of a cover of " We Have All the Time in the World " from the James Bond film On Her Majesty 's Secret Service to a charity compilation , and a cover of the Wire song " Map Ref . 41 Degrees N 93 Degrees W " for the tribute album Whore : Tribute to Wire . Unable to finalise a third album , Shields isolated himself and , in his own words , went " crazy " , drawing comparisons in the music press to the behavior of musicians such as Brian Wilson of The Beach Boys and Syd Barrett of Pink Floyd . The other band members went their own ways during the period of inactivity following Loveless : Butcher contributed vocals to Collapsed Lung 's 1996 single " Board Game " , and two tracks (" Ballad Night " and " Casino Kisschase ") from the band 's 1996 album Cooler , Gooze had been sighted working as a cab driver in London and formed the supergroup Snowpony in 1996 , Ó Cíosóig joined Hope Sandoval & the Warm Inventions , while Shields collaborated with Yo La Tengo , Primal Scream and Dinosaur Jr .

Reportedly , two separate albums of new music were recorded by Shields in his home studio , but were abandoned . According to sources , one was possibly influenced by jungle music . Shields later confirmed that at least one full album of new material was abandoned . He said , " We did an album 's worth of half @-@ finished stuff , and it did just get dumped , but it was worth dumping . It was dead . It hadn 't got that spirit , that life in it . " He later explained , " I just stopped making records myself , and I suppose that must just seem weird to people . ' Why 'd you do that ? ' The answer is , it wasn 't as good [as Loveless] . And I always promised myself I 'd never do that , put out a worse record . " Shields later said to Magnet magazine , " We are 100 per cent going to make another My Bloody Valentine record unless we die or something , " and attributed the band 's sparse output to a lack of inspiration . A third My Bloody Valentine album , MBV , was finally released in 2013 , 22 years after Loveless .

Loveless 's influence has grown with time , and the album has influenced a wide variety of other artists . Music critic Jim DeRogatis wrote in Turn On Your Mind : Four Decades of Great Psychedelic Rock that " the forward @-@ looking sounds of this unique disc have positioned the band as one of the most influential and inspiring bands since the Velvet Underground . " Authors Paul Hegarty and Martin Halliwell wrote that the album " might be so progressive that nothing else will ever match it . " Instrumental band Japancakes covered the album in its entirety on Loveless (2007) , replacing vocals with steel guitar and distortion with a clean sound . The whole album was also covered exclusively by Japanese artists for the tribute album , Yellow Loveless (2013) .

Brian Eno has praised the album and said , regarding the song " Soon " , that " [i] t set a new standard for pop . It 's the vaguest music ever to have been a hit . " Robert Smith of The Cure discovered Loveless after a period of almost exclusively listening to " disco , or Irish bands like the Dubliners " as a means of avoiding his contemporaries , and said , " [My Bloody Valentine] was the first band I heard who quite clearly pissed all over us , and their album Loveless is certainly one of my all @-@ time three favourite records . It 's the sound of someone [Shields] who is so driven that they 're demented . And the fact that they spent so much time and money on it is so excellent . " Billy Corgan of The Smashing Pumpkins told Spin , " It 's rare in guitar @-@ based music that somebody does something new [...] At the time , everybody was like , ' How the fuck are they doing this ? ' And , of course , it 's way simpler than anybody would imagine . " Trey Anastasio of jam band Phish believed that " Loveless [was] the best album recorded in the ' 90s " , and wanted his band to cover the album in its entirety for a Halloween show . Robert Pollard of indie rock band Guided by Voices acknowledged the album as a source of inspiration , noting , " Sometimes when I want to write lyrics , I 'll listen to Loveless . Because of the way the vocals are buried , you can almost listen

to the songs as if they 're instrumental pieces . " Loveless has also been said by Jim DeRogatis to have been a considerable influence on British band Radiohead .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Kevin Shields , unless otherwise noted .

= = Personnel = =

All personnel credits adapted from Loveless 's liner notes .

= = Charts = =

= = Certifications = =