

= Sol @-@ Angel and the Hadley St. Dreams =

Sol @-@ Angel and the Hadley St. Dreams is the second studio album by American R & B singer Solange Knowles , released August 26 , 2008 , on Polydor Records and Music World . Recording during 2005 to 2008 , Knowles was heavily influenced by the " Motown Sound " of the 1960s and 1970s during the album 's conception , prompting her to work with several vintage @-@ style producers and songwriters such as Jack Splash , CeeLo Green , Mark Ronson , and former Holland ? Dozier ? Holland composer Lamont Dozier . Exploring the lyrical theme of independence , it also incorporates elements of downbeat and electronic music that she had familiarized herself with on previous trips to Europe .

Deviating from the R & B and dance @-@ pop of Knowles ' debut album , Solo Star (2002) , Sol @-@ Angel and the Hadley St. Dreams featured promotion that aimed at an " intellectual , backpacking , coffee shop , digital kid " audience . The album debuted at number nine on the US Billboard 200 chart , selling 46 @,@ 000 copies in its first week , and spawned three singles that attained chart success as number @-@ one Billboard Dance hits . Upon its release , Sol @-@ Angel and the Hadley St. Dreams received generally positive reviews from most music critics . As of April 2009 , it has sold 138 @,@ 000 copies in the United States .

= = Background = =

Knowles had been working on her second studio album on and off since 2005 following her return home to Houston , Texas , and her divorce from Daniel Smith , with whom she had lived following the birth of their son Daniel Julez in October 2004 . The follow @-@ up to the critical and commercial disappointment of 2003 's Solo Star was preceded by Knowles 's move from Columbia to Geffen Records in late 2007 . Knowles was heavily influenced by Motown girl groups such as The Supremes and The Marvelettes , and by her mother Tina , a one @-@ time member of the 1960s harmony group The Veltones , who used to play music by the likes of Dusty Springfield and Martha Reeves to her . Knowles decided to distance herself from the teen pop and dance @-@ pop @-@ oriented R & B sound mainly associated with her previous effort , Solo Star .

Willed to create a concept album revolving around her growth as a musical artist instead , she eventually got into the idea of a " sweet , soulful record [...] based around the Sixties and Seventies , telling stories of where I have been the last couple years . " Also borrowing elements from downbeat and electronic music she discovered on recent trips to Europe , her vision of the album eventually resulted in a mixture that Knowles has described as a " ' 60s / 70s vintage soul record with hints of electronica . " In an interview with Billboard magazine , Geffen Records chairman Ron Fair said of the album prior to release , " Her record is totally bananas ... It 's not what people would expect from her . The music is more electric and international . She 's in her own lane . "

= = Recording = =

Although Knowles had previously worked with a wide range of high @-@ profile producers and songwriters on earlier projects , she struggled to convince her wishlisted musicians to contribute to Sol @-@ Angel and the Hadley St. Dreams , production @-@ wise . This was due to no producer signing on to the project before hearing any material for the album . " I don 't think it was offensive , " Knowles admitted . " I understand that these are people that want to take on credible passionate projects . So before I would work with them I would schedule a meeting and play them the record . And then they were more convinced and willing to get on board . " Cee @-@ Lo Green and Mark Ronson were not consulted until late into the production of the album , both having been persuaded by Knowles at the 50th Grammy Awards ceremony : " I had to party with Cee @-@ Lo too to get him to work on the record [...] but once he did [listen to my music] he signed on immediately . "

Knowles collaborated with several studio personalities , including Jack Splash , Shea Taylor , Mr. Familiar , Lamont Dozier , production teams Soulshock & Karlin and Bama Boyz , as well as singers and rappers Pharrell Williams , Bilal , Q @-@ Tip and Lil Wayne respectively . In addition , Marsha

Ambrosius of Floetry lent vocals to the unreleased recording "Wanna Go Back", while Raphael Saadiq and British singer Estelle demoed the track "Same Song, Different Man", which didn't make it to the final track listing. In an interview with *Starpulse*, Knowles later said of the experience:

Inspired by the aspirations of Knowles's father Mathew, the album was titled after Hadley Street, a plot of land in downtown Houston: "My father took me there one day and told me he was going to build a studio," she said in an interview with the *Daily Mail*. "The title is a tribute to his vision. He had a plan and he saw it through. That was a real eye @-@ opener for me. It inspired me to dig out my old Marvin Gaye albums and start writing songs."

= = Commercial performance = =

In promoting the album, Geffen and Music World aimed at an "intellectual, backpacking, coffee shop, digital kid" audience. Leading up to its release, Sol @-@ Angel and the Hadley St. Dreams featured promotional photography of Knowles in an array of costumes and wigs that evoke late 1960s and early 1970s fashion styles. The album debuted at number three on the US Billboard Top R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Albums chart, and at number nine on the official Billboard 200, with moderately successful first week sales of 46 @,@ 000 copies, making it Knowles's first US top 10 album. Internationally, Sol @-@ Angel and the Hadley St. Dreams was a commercial disappointment, reaching a peak position of just 180 on the UK Albums Chart. As of April 2009, the album has sold 138 @,@ 000 copies in the US.

The album's lead single, "I Decided", debuted on the US Billboard Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs chart at number 44 in *Billboard*'s July 5, 2008 issue. The song also debuted at number one on the Hot Dance Singles Sales and Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Singles Sales charts and debuted at number two on the Hot Singles Sales chart. The single sold 300 @,@ 000 copies in the US. The album's last track, a remix entitled "I Decided (Part 2)", produced by Freemasons was released as the album's first single in Europe, where the song entered the top 30 of the UK Singles Chart. The track reached the number @-@ one spot on the US Billboard Hot Dance Singles Sales and Hot Dance Club Play, while peaking at number 44 on the Hot R & B / Hip @-@ Hop Songs chart. Four other songs were hits on the Hot Dance Club Play; "Sandcastle Disco" peaked at number 1, "T.O.N.Y." at number 1, "I Told You So" at number 5 and "Would've Been the One" at number 3.

= = Critical reception = =

Sol @-@ Angel and the Hadley St. Dreams received generally positive reviews from music critics. At Metacritic, which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics, the album received an average score of 72, based on 14 reviews. Rob Harvilla of *The Village Voice* called the album "bizarrely mesmerizing" and felt that some of the material's idiosyncratic and unconventional lyrics invite "inexplicable but highly favorable comparisons to Kate Bush. (Ethereal but powerful, unhinged but in total command.)" Ken Capobianco of *The Boston Globe* referred to the album as a "smartly executed, classy set of songs that's miles away from the hoochie pop being turned out by young female R & B vocalists these days". Pryia Elan of *The Times* declared the album "a modern classic". Dan LeRoy of *The Hartford Courant* compared her work to that of sister Beyoncé Knowles, stating "Solange combines retro warmth and current cool in ways her more commercially successful sibling probably can't." Jaimie Gill of Yahoo! Music called it a "fine, rich and extremely likeable record", and Francis Jones of *Hot Press* called Solange's singing "sassy and assured". Andy Kellman of *AllMusic* cited it as "one of the year's more entertaining and easily enjoyable R & B releases" and found it "fun, silly, slightly eccentric and, most importantly, fearless":

In a mixed review, Jody Rosen from *Rolling Stone* cited Knowles's attempts at Erykah Badu @-@ inspired psychedelic @-@ soul tracks such as "Cosmic Journey", as well as her vocal abilities, as "embarrassing", comparing the album's sound to "a woozy lava lamp glow." Caroline Sullivan of

The Guardian called its music " savvy R & B with a gloss you can check your reflection in " , but ultimately observed " a lack of both memorable tunes and the steely spined ardour that makes Beyoncé so compelling . " Sal Cinquemani from Slant Magazine was ambivalent towards its use of sampling on certain songs , but praised " the mix of organic , old @-@ school instrumentation and more electronic elements " , which he felt make it " a loose , fun and reverent record . " Writing for MSN Music , Robert Christgau gave the album a two @-@ star honorable mention () , indicating a " likable effort consumers attuned to its overriding aesthetic or individual vision may well enjoy . " He cited " Would 've Been the One " and " I Decided , Pt . 1 " as highlights and quipped , " Frothily , defiantly , privilege 's child runs through her options " . Vibe 's Keith Murphy cited it as one of the R & B best albums of the year .

= = Track listing = =

Sample credits

" God Given Name " contains a sample of Thievery Corporation 's " A Gentle Dissolve "
" Dancing in the Dark " contains a sample of Heinz Kiessling 's " Feeling Young "
" I Decided , Part 1 " contains a sample of The Supremes ' " Where Did Our Love Go "
" 6 O 'clock Blues " contains a sample of Sharon Jones & the Dap Kings ' " Summer of Sound "
" Ode to Marvin " contains a sample of the percussion in Marvin Gaye 's " What 's Going On "
" This Bird " contains a sample of Boards of Canada 's " Slow This Bird Down "

= = Personnel = =

= = = Musicians = = =

Sean Hurley ? guitar , keyboards , bass instrument
John " Jabb " Broussard ? guitar , bass instrument (Track 7)
Phillip Todd ? saxophone
Noel Langley ? trumpet , flugelhorn
Neil Sidwell ? trombone
Manny Patino ? drums

= = = Production = = =

Arrangers : Jack Splash , Karlin , Simon Hale , Soulshock
Engineers : Rommel Nino Villanueva , Andres Bermudez , Gelly Kusuma , Christian Plata , Ryan Gilligan , Shinnosuke Miyazawa , Robert " LB " Dorsey , Patrick Magee , Andrew Coleman
Mixing : Ben H. Allen (Track 9) , Neal H. Pogue (2 , 6 , 8 , 13) , Jack Splash (4) , Manny Marroquin (3 , 5) , Dave Pensado (1 , 7 , 10 , 12) , Soulshock (11)
Mastering : Tom Coyne , Chris Gehringer
Art direction : Fusako Chubachi , Erwin Gorostiza

= = Charts = =

= = Release history = =