

= Lazarus ( Travie McCoy album ) =

Lazarus is the debut album by Gym Class Heroes lead singer Travie McCoy , released on June 8 , 2010 . McCoy announced his plans to pursue a solo career in early 2010 , although he insisted that Gym Class Heroes had not broken up . After creating demos of melancholy and low @-@ tempo songs , McCoy decided to abandon his early material and start over , as he claimed the songs were " too personal " . He began to write more uptempo " party anthems " with lyrical themes of overcoming grief . Musically , McCoy draws from various influences on the record , including hip @-@ hop , reggae , and rock . The album contains collaborations from Bruno Mars , Cee Lo Green , and T @-@ Pain , among others .

Upon its release , Lazarus debuted at number 25 on the U.S. Billboard 200 chart with sales of 15 @, @ 000 copies . The lead single from the album was " Billionaire " , which peaked at number four on the Billboard Hot 100 . The songs " Need You " and " We 'll Be Alright " have also been released as singles . Critical response to the album has been mixed to positive , with most critics praising the album 's upbeat songs yet criticizing the overabundance of featured collaborations . Gregory Heaney of AllMusic opined that " Even though every track on the album isn ' t a keeper , it has some solid additions to any summer playlist and will definitely please fans of Gym Class Heroes . " The album has sold more than 74 @, @ 000 copies as of April 2012 .

= = Background = =

In early 2010 , Gym Class Heroes vocalist Travie McCoy announced that he would be pursuing a solo career . He denied rumors that Gym Class Heroes had broken up , asserting that " Since the inception of Gym Class in 1997 , every member has had another musical outlet , if not three or four . This is just another one of those . " McCoy began writing new material while Gym Class was on the road promoting The Quilt ( 2008 ) . He had originally prepared to record an introspective album of " sad and somber " acoustic songs reflective of his state of mind following his breakup with Katy Perry and his addiction to painkillers . However , he decided to scrap his early material and start over , calling it " too personal " and saying " I didn ' t want that to be my first look as a solo artist , " comparing the album to Kanye West 's 808s & Heartbreak ( 2008 ) . He relocated to Miami , Florida , to record new material and recover from his addiction , which helped him to create a more upbeat album because he " want [ ed ] to do something positive . " McCoy decided to officially call himself " Travie " on the album instead of Travis ; he explained that he has been called Travie by friends and family for " as long as [ he ] can remember . " He believes that the new name allows listeners to become " that much closer " to him and to " feel much more comfortable with calling [ him ] Travie and being part of the family . "

= = Recording and production = =

Lazarus was released after being in the works for a year and a half . McCoy calls the album " The longest , I think , I 've spent on a record in my whole career . " He wished to keep the number of collaborations on the album " kinda tight , " but he plans to work with other artists on remixes of the album . Producers on the album include Bruno Mars , T @-@ Pain , The Smeezingtons , The Stereotypes , Lucas Secon , Olgee and Josh Abraham ; Mars , T @-@ Pain and Cee Lo Green provide guest vocals . Lazarus is mainly influenced by hip @-@ hop , although " at the same time , [ his ] love for live instrumentation is still reflected on the record . " " Billionaire " , the album 's first single , was the first song McCoy began work on after abandoning the original material for the album . Working on more uptempo music helped put him in a " different headspace " . He also credits his " really awesome friends " and collaborators on the album for helping him recover from his depressed state during the recording process . McCoy felt uncomfortable with his singing voice as he was more accustomed to rapping ; however , T @-@ Pain encouraged him to sing more on the album and overcome his insecurities .

McCoy " took a lot of time " with the track listing of the album to make sure the album was cohesive

and felt like a " ride " . He said of the album 's writing process " With any project , I just go in and blindly start writing songs and then find out which way we want to go with it . This one took a bit longer to find the lane . " Despite the album 's long gestation period , McCoy was able to write some of the songs at a very rapid pace . The song " After Midnight " was written , recorded , and mixed in less than a half an hour . He began by recording himself humming the song 's melody and creating a constant loop that repeated throughout the song , and then recorded his verses over the track . McCoy also selected the guest appearances for the album quickly after writing individual parts of songs , choosing artists he felt would work best with the musical style he had in mind . The hook of " Dr. Feel Good " was written by Bruno Mars , and upon hearing Mars sing it , McCoy decided that Cee Lo Green would be a good candidate to sing the hook , as McCoy had idolized Green since his teenage years after listening to him on the song " Git Up , Git Out " from OutKast 's debut album Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik ( 1994 ) .

= = Composition = =

= = = Music = = =

With Lazarus , McCoy intended to create an album of mostly uptempo , positive songs . During his time in Miami , he was exposed to EDM genres , which influenced Lazarus ' sound . McCoy stated " If you 're looking for an introspective , in @-@ depth look into my personal life or my deepest emotions , this is definitely not the record . It 's just a record you can put on , turn up , roll the windows down , and drive around to . " He intended to save more personal themes for Gym Class Heroes ' subsequent release , The Papercut Chronicles II ( 2011 ) .

The album 's opening track , " Dr. Feel @-@ Good " , which features Cee Lo Green , has been referred to as a " top @-@ down summer anthem " and features hip @-@ hop beats and funk @-@ inspired guitar riffs . Emily Zemler of Alternative Press opined that " Superbad ( 11 : 34 ) " sounds like " T @-@ Pain covering Linkin Park " . The song was inspired by an inside joke between McCoy and a friend which involved superstition that looking at a digital clock at 11 : 34 is bad luck , as it reads " hell " upside down . He added , " To me , it 's really anthemic and it 's a confidence booster as well . When you listen to this song , it gets you prepared to do anything . " " Billionaire " , the album 's lead single , displays reggae influences ; Gregory Heaney of AllMusic compared the song to Sublime .

" Need You " has been described as an " R & B @-@ tinged pop rocker " comparable to the work of Justin Timberlake . McCoy noted the contrast between the song 's subject matter and musical style , as the song touches upon failed relationships in an uptempo manner and " explodes " as it reaches the chorus . In the same vein of " Need You " , McCoy described " Critical " , featuring Tim William , as " really personal , introspective subject matter put into an upbeat pop song . It 's kind of like a rock song , but at the same time , it has this really shimmery , cute vibe to it . " " Akidagain " features a children 's choir and samples Ahmad 's " Back in the Day " . " We 'll Be Alright " , which McCoy refers to as a " party anthem " , samples " Alright " by Supergrass . He described the album 's closer " Don 't Pretend " as " probably the most personal " song on the album ; during recording of the song , he suffered from allergies and had difficulty breathing , which " added to the emotional vibe of the song " .

= = = Lyrics = = =

McCoy drew from various lyrical inspirations on the album . The subject matter often deals with topics such as partying , personal insecurities , and overcoming grief . McCoy explained that the opening song " Dr. Feel Good " is about " escapism through music " and that it expresses how he felt about recovering from drug addiction and depression . " Superbad ( 11 : 34 ) " is about McCoy 's experiences on the road , considering the song to be his " theme song " . Bruno Mars came up with the lyrical concept for " Billionaire " during a trip to London in which he was given £ 250 ( \$ 350 ) by

his record label to spend for 11 days . He found the amount of money to be insufficient , and explained " We were like , ' Is this the biggest mistake we 've ever made ? We thought we were broke in California ; what are we going to do here ? ' So we 've got no money , and I 'm walking the streets and came up with , ' I wanna be a billionaire , so frickin ' bad . ' " With the song , McCoy intended to avoid " superficial " lyrics in the wake of an economic recession , and added " There ? s something to sing about here ; if I was in the position to have a ridiculous amount of money , would I be selfish or selfless ? ? I just took that concept and ran with it . " " Need You " describes a situation in which a person wants to start a new relationship , but still needs time to heal .

" Critical " is an apocalyptic @-@ themed song inspired by natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina . McCoy explained that the song discusses these subjects in " a tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek way . Basically , if the world was to end tonight , fuck it--lets have a beer and watch it all go down . " " Akidagain " is reflective of McCoy 's childhood and pop culture shifts that influenced his life , featuring three verses ; in the first verse , he discusses his early childhood , the second verse is about his teenage years , and the final verse meditates on his life as an adult . " We 'll Be Alright " shares lyrical themes with Michael Jackson 's " Off the Wall " . McCoy says that the song is about " not caring about what people think and just ignoring your insecurities . " McCoy was given the idea for " The Manual " after reading music blogs that were critical of his music . He explained " It 's so easy to get online and lose all your inhibitions and complain and nag about what 's wrong with music . But if you 're going to do that , offer some way to change things . Or make music . A lot of the people aren 't even artists . The title of ' The Manual ' is asking if there is a manual out there on how to do things the right way , then please show it to me and I 'll read it five times over . " " After Midnight " was inspired by the movie Gremlins , and the idea that seeing gremlins after midnight means " trouble " .

= = Packaging and title = =

McCoy chose the name for the album , which is also his middle name , after his experiences in charity work in HIV awareness in South Africa , India , and the Philippines in the summer of 2009 that " really changed [ his ] outlook on life . " Lazarus of Bethany is the subject of a miracle in the New Testament of the Bible in which Jesus restores him back to life after being dead for four days . McCoy said of the name " I never really thought about how synonymous it was with the biblical reference with the fact that my middle name is Lazarus . I feel like I ? ve been dead and resurrected on many occasions . I went public with a lot of dark things that people usually keep in the closet like drug addiction and what not . " The album was originally titled " The Lazarus Project " , but the name had to be changed due to the 2008 drama film of the same name .

The album 's artwork , designed by Brent Rollins and Alex R. Kirzhner , features a recurring theme of clouds and city skylines . Amber McDonald of The Daily Loaf felt that the artwork accurately portrayed the album 's key themes : " This convincingly fun record is filled with lyrical introspection and , in spite of all its hip @-@ hop , pop @-@ hook , pay @-@ it @-@ forward @-@ ness , there are gray clouds that work to keep the mood of the album realistic and relatable to the worlds of listeners . After all , the album cover art is of a gray backdrop with clouds , not sunshine and blue skies . "

= = Release and promotion = =

The album was released on June 8 , 2010 . McCoy aimed for a June release because he believes that summer is " when most of the memorable music drops . You want music to have a good time to , music to connect to . You wanna play it at the party . "

On April 28 , 2010 , McCoy embarked on the Too Fast For Love tour with Cobra Starship and 3OH ! 3 , featuring a backup band that includes Gym Class Heroes drummer Matt McGinley . He planned to tour extensively to promote the album in order to make the album " a household object ? and hopefully not a coaster . " Starting from October 18 , 2010 , McCoy set off on his first solo European headline tour along with Bruno Mars who supported the tour throughout . The majority of dates took

place at smaller venues throughout the United Kingdom . On March 17 , 2011 , he began performing throughout the United States and Canada on the Sgt. Schlepper 's Who Needs Hearts Club Band Tour featuring Black Cards .

= = = Chart performance = = =

In early May 2010 , McCoy released " Billionaire " as the album 's lead single , which debuted on the Billboard Hot 100 at 92 . The album , released a month later on June 8 , 2010 , debuted at number 25 on the U.S. Billboard 200 chart with sales of 15 @,@ 000 copies . On June 26 , 2010 , the album reached the apex of its sales , peaking at number 25 on the Billboard 200 and number 11 on the Billboard Digital Albums charts . On August 21 , 2010 Lazarus was released in Europe and entered the UK Album Charts , peaking at number 69 .

" Billionaire " continued to be successful , peaking at number four on the Billboard Hot 100 chart . The song was positioned at number six on the Billboard " Songs of Summer 2010 " chart . The next single , " Need You " , was released to mainstream radio on September 14 , 2010 , and peaked at number 36 on the Billboard Pop Songs chart . " We 'll Be Alright " was also released as a single by Pete Wentz on May 17 , 2010 on his blog . However , the single failed to make an impact on any of the Billboard charts .

= = Critical response = =

Reviews of the album were generally mixed to positive . Spin 's Mikael Wood gave the album 3 ½ out of 5 stars and commended its pop @-@ oriented sound , stating " most of Lazarus is so bright you 'll need ( designer ) shades " . Gregory Heaney of AllMusic called " Akidagain " the " real highlight of the album " and stated that " Even though every track on the album isn't a keeper , it has some solid additions to any summer playlist and will definitely please fans of Gym Class Heroes . " Jerry Shriver of USA Today praised the album 's " all @-@ night party gems " and referred to " The Manual " as the album 's " true keeper " and praised the song 's introspective lyrics . Melanie Bertoldi of Billboard agreed with Shriver about " The Manual " , and praised the album 's " relatable themes " further commenting that " The 10 @-@ track album 's inclusion of reggae @-@ influenced beats and dance jams may polarize listeners , but its snappy wordplay and deep introspection will appeal to a wide demographic of music lovers . " Emily Zemler of Alternative Press awarded the album four out of five stars and deemed McCoy 's singing to be " the most engaging thing " about the album : " Not only are the tracks incredibly catchy , but McCoy belts out his choruses like he 's just discovered his voice . "

Nathan Slavik of DJBooth.com called Lazarus a " smile @-@ inducing , high quality hip @-@ pop album from a distinctly creative and original voice " , praising the record 's uptempo yet dark songs . Entertainment Weekly 's Brad Wete gave the album a B + and commended McCoy for keeping with Gym Class 's hip @-@ hop / rock style , calling the album " a summery set that serves as a nice break from Class . " Drew Beringer of AbsolutePunk enjoyed the album 's upbeat songs and noted a departure from McCoy 's earlier work , commenting " Full of summer time jams , it 's hard to imagine this is the same guy who rapped about desolate times and experiences in his band 's second album The Papercut Chronicles ( 2005 ) ... This is not a world @-@ beater by any means , but it shows some growth in McCoy as an artist and lets him get out his ideas before recording and releasing the next Gym Class Heroes album . "

However , not all reviews were positive . Jon Dolan of Rolling Stone gave the album 2 ½ out of 5 stars , calling his crooning @-@ style rapping " more unctuous than charming " . Blare Magazine criticized the over @-@ abundance of guest appearances and likened the album to " a newborn child forced out of a hip @-@ hop womb by 13 different fathers " , while opining that McCoy still demonstrates musical potential . Mike Diver of the BBC was highly critical of the disc , noting that " McCoy employs too many disparate styles ... for Lazarus to hold any attention for more than a fleeting period . " Although Diver praised Cee Lo Green 's " spotlight @-@ stealing " contribution to " Dr. Feel Good " , he referred to " We 'll Be Alright " as " repulsive " and the reggae stylings of "

Billionaire " as " horribly dated " . Andy Gill of The Independent felt that although the disc had songs with potential to be hits such as " Dr. Feelgood " and " We 'll Be Alright " , the remainder of the songs " expose McCoy 's shortcomings " and the album is " unlikely to make him a household name " .

= = Track listing = =

Sample credits

" Akidagain " interpolates " Back in the Day " by Ahmad .

" We 'll Be Alright " contains a sample of " Alright " by Supergrass .

= = Personnel = =

Credits for Lazarus adapted from Allmusic .

= = Chart performance = =