

= The Pale Emperor =

The Pale Emperor is the ninth studio album by American rock band Marilyn Manson . It was released on January 15 , 2015 through Marilyn Manson 's Hell , etc. label , and was distributed in the US by Loma Vista Recordings , Canada by Dine Alone Records , Japan by Victor Entertainment and internationally by Cooking Vinyl . The album was released in standard and deluxe editions on CD and 2 × LP vinyl , as well as a box set . The standard version of the album contains ten tracks , while the deluxe edition includes three acoustic versions as bonus tracks .

Produced by Manson and newcomer Tyler Bates , who met through their mutual involvement in the TV series Californication , The Pale Emperor eschews the band 's usual industrial rock genre in favor of a more sparse , blues rock @-@ influenced sound . The album also features drummer Gil Sharone , formerly of The Dillinger Escape Plan , and is the first release since his return in 2008 to not feature writing and performance contributions from bassist Twiggy . The album is dedicated to Manson 's mother , who died during production after an eight @-@ year battle with Alzheimer 's disease and dementia .

The album was released to generally positive reviews from contemporary music critics , with several writers referring to it as his best album in over a decade , and was ranked by several publications as one of the best albums of 2015 . The album was also a commercial success , debuting at number eight on the Billboard 200 with the band 's highest opening week sales since Eat Me , Drink Me (2007) . It also topped the national albums chart in Switzerland , as well as Billboard 's Top Hard Rock Albums chart . It went on to peak within the top ten in fifteen other countries .

It spawned three official singles , " Third Day of a Seven Day Binge " , " Cupid Carries a Gun " and " Deep Six " , with the latter going on to become the band 's highest @-@ peaking single on Billboard 's Mainstream Rock Chart ; " The Mephistopheles of Los Angeles " and " The Devil Beneath My Feet " have been released as promotional singles . The album is being supported by The Hell Not Hallelujah Tour , which was interspersed by two co @-@ headlining tours , The End Times with The Smashing Pumpkins , and a summer 2016 co @-@ headlining tour with Slipknot .

= = Background and recording = =

In April 2013 , it was announced that Manson was to feature in an episode of the sixth season of TV series Californication , while the following month he also confirmed that production had started on the band 's ninth studio album . At Californication 's wrap party , Manson met the series ' score composer , Tyler Bates , and the two discussed a potential collaboration . They held their first writing session in a small rehearsal space , accompanied by former Slayer drummer Dave Lombardo . This session ultimately proved unsuccessful , with the pair failing to write any substantial material . Bates later suggested that they hold further writing sessions at his home studio , which resulted in them composing " Birds of Hell Awaiting " in " one spontaneous exchange " .

This was quickly followed by " Third Day of a Seven Day Binge " , with Manson saying that the recording of the album " just became a rhythm . This was something I was excited to do . " This is in stark contrast to the recording of previous albums The High End of Low (2009) and Born Villain (2012) , where he was frequently " dragged into the studio at 3am " to record vocals . He later credited this enthusiasm to the collaborative process between him and Bates , saying that he realized after the first performance of " Birds of Hell Awaiting " that " [I] just sang it . I didn 't even know where the music was going to go and I just went with it and it was very organic . And then it opened up a whole different part of my mind . "

Bates called the recording process " seamless " , attributing this to an unconventional studio environment . Manson , who would be isolated in a vocal booth with no more than three people in the control room at any one time , was free to improvise or develop lyrics and vocal melodies at a high speed . Bates explained that , through his use of Pro Tools , he was able to " manipulate the music in a way that would allow [Manson] to just keep working on it without causing [a delay] . If he had an idea , he could just throw it down without there being a lot to explain . " The majority of the album was recorded over a three @-@ month period . The band 's manager , Tony Ciulla , only

became aware that Manson had been recording new material when he was invited to Bates ' home recording studio , where he was played final cuts of nine of the album 's ten tracks for the first time , with " Cupid Carries a Gun " being the final track recorded for The Pale Emperor . Further overdubbing took place over the following six months , in between Manson 's acting commitments on Sons of Anarchy and Bates scoring the 2014 television series Salem .

Gil Sharone , of The Dillinger Escape Plan and Stolen Babies , performed live drums on the album . Sharone was first contacted by Bates about the project three days before he was due to begin a tour with Stolen Babies . Expanding over the album 's embryonic drum programming , he developed and recorded his drum work over a three @-@ day period at Igloo Studios in Burbank , California . On February 1 , Sons of Anarchy creator Kurt Sutter confirmed Manson 's acting involvement in the show . Sutter went on to say that he had written a song with Shooter Jennings , which was to appear in the final season of the show and feature vocals from Manson . He also suggested that Jennings was involved in the recording of The Pale Emperor , although Jennings ' work does not appear on the album . On June 25 , bassist Fred Sablan confirmed that he had left the band on good terms . Long @-@ time band member Twiggy did not take part in the writing and recording process , as he was busy recording his own material . Manson 's Sons of Anarchy co @-@ star Walton Goggins , Jr. appears as a preacher on album track " Slave Only Dreams to Be King " , where he recites two verses from James Allen 's early twentieth @-@ century essay As a Man Thinketh .

During The Pale Emperor sessions , Manson and Bates recorded a cover of David Bowie 's " Moonage Daydream " for inclusion on the Guardians of the Galaxy OST , a soundtrack which Bates scored . This recording was not utilized in the soundtrack as , according to Manson , Hollywood Records " didn 't want it . " The original album version by Bowie was used instead . On September 3 , Manson confirmed that the new album is " prepared for landing " , indicating that production had been completed . The Pale Emperor is dedicated to Manson 's late mother , Barbara Warner , who died on May 13 , 2014 after an eight @-@ year battle with Alzheimer 's disease and dementia .

= = Composition and style = =

In a January 2014 interview with Kerrang ! magazine , Manson described the sound of the new album as being " very cinematic " , saying that the " redneck in me comes out in my voice " due to the album 's inclusion of " old blues " influences , while still retaining the " harder elements " of previous work . In a later interview with The Fader , Manson stated that he no longer " dresses [his] feelings in characters and extended metaphors " , saying that he instead " lets melody lead " the album . He elaborated that he is " a man of few words on the record . What I hadn 't ever found , till now , is the blues . The blues changed the way that I sang [on the album] . And the music has a melody and a language in and of itself " , while lead editor Naomi Zeichner went on to compare the album to the work of Interpol and " the retro biker bar rock that soundtracks Sons of Anarchy " .

The Pale Emperor is a departure from the band 's usual style , leaning away from the industrial , electronic , and heavy metal @-@ influenced production that appeared on much of the band 's previous work , towards a sparser blues rock , alternative country and hard rock @-@ influenced sound , with Manson citing the music of Muddy Waters , The Rolling Stones , and The Doors as inspiration . Steven Hyden of Grantland expanded on several parallels between The Pale Emperor and the Doors ' 1971 album L.A. Woman , noting how the album " echoes how [the Doors] reformulated its juju in the latter part of its career " , likening both Manson and Jim Morrison to " rambling barstool vamp [s] that career darkly between camp and druggy majesty " . He went on to compare Manson 's vocals on " Warship My Wreck " to Morrison 's " debauched howls " , and said that Morrison 's " self @-@ destructive self @-@ aggrandizement " can be found in tracks such as " The Mephistopheles of Los Angeles " and " Third Day of a Seven Day Binge " .

The album 's title is inspired by Constantius I ? also known as " Constantius the Pale " ? who was the first Roman emperor to deny the existence of a God . Manson has said that the meaning of the album 's title can have several interpretations : " complexion or Goth music or ' beyond the pale ' or [...] everything pales in comparison to it " . Lyrically , the album deals with subjects ranging from

mortality , war , violence , slavery and religion , as well as containing references to Greek mythology and German folklore , specifically the story of Faust and Mephistopheles . " The Mephistopheles of Los Angeles " was the original title track and , according to Manson , " the album 's heart " . The album makes use of an extended metaphor , in which Manson compares his own career to the life of Faust , explaining to The Philadelphia Inquirer that he " sold [his] soul to become a rock star , and [The Pale Emperor is] payment in full ? with interest , considering the last few bills I didn 't pay , " explaining that he considered The High End of Low and Born Villain to " lack focus " . He elaborated to Classic Rock Magazine :

The lyrics for several tracks are intentionally sparse , with Manson explaining that he " [left] holes in these stories so [the album could] become your story . It becomes more cinematic . For example in the film Rosemary 's Baby , you don 't see the baby but in your mind you do " . The lyrics were all derived from a single notebook , with Manson admitting that the lyrical content of previous work was " often too scattered " , as they were composed of material taken from " about 20 " different notebooks . Vocally , Manson sings in a different key than on any of his previous releases . Manson has claimed that his voice can emit five different tones simultaneously , which mixing engineer Robert Carranza discovered can form a pentagram when imported in to a phrasal analyzer . Bates has said that the vocals on the album are " stripped down " , saying that he considered the vocals on previous records to be " overproduced at times " .

= = Release and artwork = =

The Pale Emperor was announced for release on the band 's official website on November 9 , 2014 . It was released in various formats worldwide from January 15 , 2015 , including standard and deluxe edition CDs ; a heavyweight 180 @-@ gram 2 x LP vinyl album , available in black , white and a limited edition grey marble @-@ effect , the latter of which was exclusive to Hot Topic ; and as a digital download , including " full @-@ bandwidth 24 @-@ bit " AIFF and WAV format files , which were made available on Qobuz . The vinyl discs were manufactured at Record Technology , Inc. in Camarillo , California using the pressing plant 's HQ @-@ 180 ? system . A digital download of the album was packaged with all LP editions . The standard version of the album contains ten tracks , while the deluxe edition adds three acoustic versions as bonus tracks . Editions of the album sold at Walmart stores in North America feature a heavily censored version of " The Devil Beneath My Feet " , and all US versions of the album were manufactured using black polycarbonate discs . The discs were sourced by Brian Schuman of Concord Music directly from the same plant where Sony manufactured their first PlayStation discs , and are identical to the kind used by the company in the early 90s . A heat @-@ sensitive thermal texture was also added to the CD , appearing black when first opened but revealing a white pattern when exposed to the heat from a CD player .

The album was also released as a limited edition " Definitive Box " set , which was sold exclusively at Manson 's webstore . Designed by Manson with Willo Perron and Hassan Rahim , the set included the deluxe CD and white vinyl editions of the album , as well as several exclusive items including : a grey cloth @-@ bound individually numbered collectors box , five lithographs designed by artist Nicholas Cope , a fold @-@ out 24 " poster , album sleeves printed on full @-@ color UV @-@ coated stock and a Pale Emperor T @-@ shirt . A special edition containing a bonus DVD of music videos was released exclusively in Japan on July 29 .

= = Promotion and singles = =

The album was first previewed almost nine months before it 's official release , when " Cupid Carries a Gun " appeared as the opening theme to the television series Salem from April 27 , 2014 onwards . Following this , a large portion of album track " Killing Strangers " was featured in the Keanu Reeves film John Wick , which was released in cinemas on October 24 . On October 26 , " Third Day of a Seven Day Binge " was premiered on BBC Radio 1 's Rock Show by Daniel P. Carter . Immediately after the broadcast , the song was released for free download on the band 's official website , and was later released as a one @-@ track single via music download services on

November 10 . The band performed several new songs live for the first time in October and early November , when they played a handful of concerts around southern California . On Halloween night , the band was joined on stage by Johnny Depp and Ninja from Die Antwoord for a performance of " The Beautiful People " at the Roxy Theatre . On December 5 , Manson settled a fifteen @-@ year rift with The Smashing Pumpkins frontman Billy Corgan , by performing " Third Day of a Seven Day Binge " and " Ava Adore " with the band at the Camden Palace Theatre in London .

" Deep Six " was released as the album 's official lead single on December 16 . A music video for the song , directed by Bart Hess , was released on to YouTube three days later . The song debuted at number thirty @-@ three on Billboard 's Mainstream Rock Chart on the issue dated December 23 , 2014 , as the " greatest gainer " that week , before eventually rising to number eight on the chart dated March 14 , 2015 , becoming the band 's highest peaking single ever on the chart . In response to the album leaking online , it was released on streaming site Genius eight days ahead of its official release in the US , while " Cupid Carries a Gun " was released as a digital single on January 7 , 2015 . The band began their Hell Not Hallelujah Tour on January 21 , 2015 , and were also confirmed to perform at several music festivals throughout the year , including dates at Soundwave Festival in Australia , Rock am Ring and Rock im Park in Germany , the Download Festival in the UK and Hellfest in France .

Manson and his father , Hugh Warner , appeared together in the February issue of Paper magazine . Taken by photographer Terry Richardson , the shoot featured the pair wearing identical make @-@ up and contained an explicit image in which Hugh Warner can be seen fondling his own genitalia . On April 12 , Tyler Bates announced that he had amicably retired from the band 's touring line @-@ up , stating that he helped put the band together with the intention that it could function without him when " pre @-@ existing commitments in the film and television industry would be too demanding to handle responsibly from the road " . Rhythm guitarist Paul Wiley replaced Bates on lead guitar for the duration of the tour . The band also revealed details of a co @-@ headlining tour of the US with The Smashing Pumpkins . The End Times Tour began in Concord on July 7 and featured the return of original Pumpkins drummer Jimmy Chamberlin .

A music video for " The Mephistopheles of Los Angeles " , directed by Francesco Carrozzini and featuring a cameo from The Wire and Boardwalk Empire actor Michael K. Williams , was released on May 11 on the band 's official YouTube channel . On June 11 , Manson was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2015 Kerrang ! Awards . Two days later , Manson was the keynote speaker at the 2015 Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity . A music video for " Third Day of a Seven Day Binge " was released on July 10 . Manson appeared on a tribute album to Giorgio Moroder curated by Shooter Jennings , contributing vocals to a version of David Bowie 's " Cat People (Putting Out Fire) " . Countach (For Giorgio) was released on February 26 , 2016 . Manson has also revealed his intentions of collaborating with Korn frontman Jonathan Davis on " Southern @-@ sounding , acoustic " material in the near future , and also stated that there is a " strong possibility of doing something with Billy Corgan , while we 're out on the road together . " In February 2016 , it was announced that the band would embark on a co @-@ headlining tour with Slipknot . The tour will see the two bands performing dates in 34 American cities throughout the summer of 2016 , with support coming from Of Mice & Men .

= = Critical reception = =

The Pale Emperor received generally positive reviews from music critics . At Metacritic , which assigns a weighted mean rating out of 100 to reviews from music critics , the album received an average score of 71 , indicating " generally favorable reviews " , based on 19 publications .

Dean Brown of The Quietus referred to The Pale Emperor as the band 's best album since Holy Wood , saying that by writing " memorable , mature songs full of devilishly addictive hooks without trying to relive the past , [the album] breathes new life into Manson 's career . " Similarly , Corey Deiterman of Houston Press wrote that the album " stands as a triumphant return to the songwriting principles that made him famous in the first place " , before summarizing that Manson 's persona

has " finally given way to the superior musician that always lived within . " In a review for Yahoo ! Music , Allan Raible was similarly positive , highlighting the album 's focus on songcraft instead of shock value , while Kerrang ! said that Manson " trades shock @-@ tastic thrills for something even darker . " Fred Thomas of AllMusic noted the album 's inclusion of blues influences , and opined that this shift in musical direction has resulted in The Pale Emperor sounding more sinister than any of the band 's previous albums . J.C. Maçek III of PopMatters praised the scope of musical variety found on the album , with particular acclaim given for its incorporation of alternative country elements . Jeff Miers of The Buffalo News praised the album 's lyrical content , saying that Manson sounds " both inspired and disgusted [throughout] , which is usually the tightrope he walks when he 's doing his best work . " In another positive review , Mark Orton of Otago Daily Times compared the album to Mechanical Animals , stating that the music has " definitely supplanted the image " , awarding the album four and a half stars out of five . Drowned in Sound critic Dave Hanratty praised the album 's consistency as focused , saying " damned if the devil didn 't bring his best tunes to this dance . " He also praised Bates ' production , awarding the album a score of eight out of ten . Alec Chillingworth of Stereoboard wrote that The Pale Emperor is Manson " climbing back to the creative summit he fell from following Holy Wood . He 's never going to top those early albums , but by expanding his palette and finally getting it right , The Pale Emperor reinstates Marilyn Manson as a relevant musical force and an elder statesman of the industrial scene " , awarding the album four stars out of five .

Louis Pattison , reviewing for NME , stated that " it 's no classic , but perhaps the surprise here is that Manson 's music can work without the shock shtick " . He also wrote that " the biggest surprise on the new album from the ' God Of Fuck ' is that we see more of the real Manson than before . " Dan Bogosian of Consequence of Sound was more mixed in his assessment , stating : " A lack of ' oomph ' prevents the album from landing a gut punch that would cover all of its flaws . Like an aging boxer , Manson lands jabs and the occasional uppercut , but he never topples his opponent . " Similarly , Daniel Sylvester of Exclaim ! complimented the album 's ambitiousness , but said that The Pale Emperor is " lazy when it can get away with it . "

== = Year @-@ end lists == =

= = Commercial performance = =

Industry forecasters predicted that The Pale Emperor was on course for a top ten debut on the Billboard 200 , with first week sales of around 42 @,@ 000 units . The album debuted at number eight on the chart with over 51 @,@ 000 copies sold , including 49 @,@ 000 in " pure " album sales , making it the band 's highest opening week figure since Eat Me , Drink Me debuted at the same position with 88 @,@ 000 copies in 2007 . It became the band 's eighth top ten album , and sixth title in a row to reach the region . It also debuted at number six on Billboard 's Top Albums Chart ? the current equivalent of the previous sales @-@ based Billboard 200 ? as well as number three on Top Rock Albums and number one on the Top Hard Rock Albums charts . On its second week , the album dropped to number twenty @-@ four on the Top Albums Chart , selling an additional 12 @,@ 275 " pure " copies . As of December 2015 , The Pale Emperor has sold more than 136 @,@ 000 " pure " copies in the US . The album also debuted at number four on the Canadian Albums Chart with sales of over 5 @,@ 000 copies on its first week , according to Nielsen SoundScan .

In Eurasia , the album first debuted on the Russian Albums Chart at number ten on the chart dated January 18 , 2015 , based on three days of sale on the Russian iTunes . The album rose to number two the following week , on its first full week of release in the country . The album debuted and peaked at number one on the Swiss Albums Chart , becoming the band 's first since The Golden Age of Grotesque (2003) to do so . In the United Kingdom , it debuted at number sixteen with sales of 5 @,@ 984 copies , making it the band 's seventh top 20 album . The album peaked at number four on the German Albums Chart , their highest peaking album in the territory since Eat Me , Drink Me . The Pale Emperor became Manson 's fifth top @-@ ten album in France , where it debuted at

number five with sales of over 6 @, @ 700 copies , and has gone on to sell over 30 @, @ 000 copies there . In Japan , the album debuted at number twenty @-@ five on the Oricon albums chart with sales of 3 @, @ 610 copies .

The album also debuted at number six on the ARIA Albums Chart as the highest new entry that week , and his highest peaking album in the region since The Golden Age of Grotesque . In New Zealand , the album debuted at number five , making it the band 's highest peaking album in the country since Mechanical Animals peaked at number three in 1998 .

= = Track listing = =

All lyrics written by Marilyn Manson , all music composed by Tyler Bates .

= = Credits and personnel = =

Recorded at Abattoir Studios , Studio City , California

Drums recorded by Gustavo Borner at Igloo Studios , Burbank , California

Mixed by Robert Carranza and Wolfgang Matthes at SPPP , Los Angeles , California

Mastering by Brian Lucey at Magic Garden Mastering , Los Angeles , California

Credits adapted from the liner notes of the deluxe edition of The Pale Emperor .

= = Charts = =

= = Release history = =