

= Porcupine (album) =

Porcupine is the third studio album by the English post-punk band Echo & the Bunnymen . First released on 4 February 1983 , it became the band 's highest charting release when it reached number two on the UK Albums Chart despite initially receiving poor reviews . It also reached number 137 on the American Billboard 200 , number 85 on the Canadian RPM 100 Albums and number 24 on the Swedish chart . In 1984 the album was certified gold by the British Phonographic Industry . Porcupine included the singles " The Back of Love " and " The Cutter " .

The album was recorded at Trident Studios in London , Rockfield Studios in South Wales and Amazon Studios in Liverpool . It was produced by Ian Broudie , who was credited as " Kingbird " and who had co-produced the band 's first album , 1980 's Crocodiles , and their second single , " Rescue " . After being rejected by the band 's label , the album was re-recorded with Shankar providing strings . It was originally released as an LP in 1983 before being reissued on CD in 1988 . The album was again reissued on CD in 2003 , along with the other four of the band 's first five studio albums , having been remastered and expanded . A VHS video called Porcupine ? An Atlas Adventure was also released containing six promotional videos of tracks from the album .

= = Production = =

= = = Background and recording = = =

Following the release of Heaven Up Here in 1981 , Echo & the Bunnymen had difficulty writing new material for their next album despite rehearsing five days each week at The Ministry , their rehearsal room in Liverpool . While lead singer Ian McCulloch still wanted them to be the best band in the world , bass player Les Pattinson was expressing his weariness with the music industry , drummer Pete de Freitas produced and played drums on Liverpool band The Wild Swans ' debut single " Revolutionary Spirit " , and lead guitarist Will Sergeant recorded a solo album of instrumental music called Themes for ' Grind ' (1982) .

On 27 January 1982 Echo & the Bunnymen recorded their fourth session for British disc jockey John Peel 's radio show on BBC Radio 1 . Of the tracks recorded , " Smack in the Middle " was renamed and became " Higher Hell " on the album , while " Taking Advantage " was renamed " The Back of Love " and became the band 's third single which was also included on the album . Ian Broudie , who had co-produced 1980 's Crocodiles and who was Sergeant 's flat-mate , was chosen to produce " The Back of Love " and the band 's third album , whose working title was The Happy Loss . The single , which became the band 's first UK Top 20 hit single , was recorded in early 1982 at Trident Studios in Soho , London . This was unusual as the band 's manager , Bill Drummond , had previously been keen to keep the band away from the temptations of London . The recording session for " The Back of Love " went well , but the relationship between the band members was strained , with them either not speaking to each other or , when they did , arguing . Drummond was aware of the tensions within the band and so arranged a tour in Scotland for April 1982 . This was done in an effort to make the band work harder , write some songs , and to communicate with each other . Drummond 's plan failed to work as following the tour there was still tension between the band members . Two other album tracks ? " Clay " and " My White Devil " ? were first played during the tour of Scotland .

Following the release of " The Back of Love " on 21 May 1982 , the band spent the summer , first playing at the inaugural WOMAD festival , and then playing at various European music festivals . After the summer the band resumed recording the album at Rockfield Studios in South Wales ? which had been used for the band 's first two albums ? and also at Amazon Studios in Liverpool . Recording the album was a slow process , de Freitas said , " Porcupine was very hard to actually write and record [...] Heaven Up Here was pure confidence , we did it really quickly ; we had a great time doing it ? but this one was like we had to drag it out of ourselves . " McCulloch later said that when recording the album , the mood between the band members was " horrible " .

When presented with the finished album , WEA rejected it as " too uncommercial " . The band agreed to re-record the album , despite Sergeant 's complaints . Using the original version of the album as a blueprint , the follow up recording sessions went more smoothly . Drummond brought Shankar back to add strings to the other tracks on the album . It was these sessions that produced the band 's next single , " The Cutter " , which was released in January 1983 and went on to become the band 's first Top 10 hit .

= = = Porcupine ? An Atlas Adventure = = =

After Echo & the Bunnymen had finished recording Porcupine they played a free show in early November 1982 for 20 ,000 people at Sefton Park in Liverpool . Following this , WEA asked for three music videos and album art for the new album . The band 's lighting engineer Bill Butt was chosen to direct the videos and Brian Griffin was chosen to take the photographs for the album 's cover ? as he had done for the band 's two previous albums . With a budget of £ 16 ,000 Butt decided that it would be possible to get the photographs for the album cover and also to produce a half -hour film . Deciding that he wanted the videos to reflect the frigid feel of the music on the album , Butt chose to shoot the videos in Scotland . However , it was not certain that there would be enough snow in Scotland during November so Iceland was chosen as the location to shoot the videos .

Filming took place on and near the frozen Gullfoss waterfall near Reykjavík . Feeling it was a dangerous process , McCulloch said in 1993 , " If we had slipped there wasn 't anything for hundreds of feet below us . " In 2001 Griffin said , " [...] the sun barely appeared the whole time we were there . To walk , stand up , or just think seemed a massive effort . " Despite the danger the filming proved its worth when the British music magazine Q said in 2001 , " The Porcupine cover is the epitome of rock band as heroic archetype ? young men on some ill -defined but glorious mission , one easily as timeless as the stars and the sea . " The filming was finished in December 1982 with the band performing songs from the album at their rehearsal room at The Ministry . Butt interspersed this with clips from the 1929 Russian documentary The Man With the Movie Camera and he also projected psychedelic watercolour effects onto the band . A VHS video was subsequently released by Castle Hendring in 1983 called Porcupine ? An Atlas Adventure which contained the six music videos ? " In Bluer Skies " , " The Cutter " , " My White Devil " , " Porcupine " , " Heads Will Roll " and " The Back of Love " .

Describing the album cover , journalist Dave Rimmer wrote in British music magazine Smash Hits , " Iceland does seem an appropriate location for this group . It 's isolated , cold , bleak and fits perfectly with the moody image they 've attracted to themselves . "

= = = Musical content = = =

After WEA rejected the first version of the album , Shankar ? who had played strings on " The Back of Love " ? was brought back by Drummond to add strings to the remainder of the album in an effort to give it a brighter production and to build on the success of the strings used on the single . When recording " The Cutter " , Sergeant had asked Shankar if he could suggest the melody from Cat Stevens ' 1967 hit " Matthew and Son " .

In 1984 McCulloch said , " I think Porcupine was a classic autobiographical album , the most honest thing that I 'd ever written or sung . " Talking about how the album made him feel , he went on to say , " I found the material from it really heavy to play ? like , really oppressive . That 's the only reason why I didn 't like the album . The songs were great but it didn 't make me happy . " He also said , " A lot of songs are about coming to terms with the opposites in me . "

= = Releases = =

Porcupine was first released as an LP by Korova in the United Kingdom on 4 February 1983 . It was subsequently released in the United States by Sire Records on 23 February 1983 . The original

album had ten tracks with five tracks on each side . Like Echo & the Bunnymen 's previous album , the album cover was designed by Martyn Atkins and the photography was by Brian Griffin . The album was released on CD on 7 April 1988 .

Along with the other four of the band 's first five albums , Porcupine was remastered and reissued on CD in 2003 ? these releases were marketed as 25th anniversary editions . Seven bonus tracks were added to the album : " Fuel " was the second B @-@ side track on the 12 @-@ inch version of " The Back of Love " ; alternate versions of " The Cutter " , " My White Devil " , " Porcupine " , " Ripeness " and " Gods Will Be Gods " which were all early versions recorded during the album 's sessions ; and " Never Stop (Discotheque) " the 12 @-@ inch version of the non @-@ album single which was released after Porcupine . The alternate versions of " My White Devil " , " Porcupine " and " Ripeness " had all previously been unissued . The reissued album was produced by Andy Zax and Bill Inglot .

There were two tracks from the original Porcupine album which had been released as singles . The first of these was " The Back of Love " which had been released on 21 May 1982 . The second single was " The Cutter " which was released on 14 January 1983 . " Never Stop (Discotheque) " , which was originally a non @-@ album single when it was released on 8 July 1983 , was subsequently included on the 2003 remastered version of the album as a bonus track .

= = Reception = =

Following the release of Porcupine in 1983 , NME reviewer Barney Hoskyns gave the album a negative review . Hoskyns wrote , " Porcupine is the distressing occasion of an important and exciting rock group becoming ensnared by its own strongest points , a dynamic force striving fruitlessly to escape the brilliant track that trails behind it . " Hoskyns likened the sound of the album to the band " turning on their own greatest ' hits ' and savaging them " . Hoskyns also criticised McCulloch 's lyrics and the general mood of the album , noting , " Only on ' Porcupine ' itself do the various strains of despair coalesce " , and dismissed the entire second side of the album , saying it " horrifies the more for its uniform lack of inspiration , for the fact that every number cops direct from earlier songs without preserving anything of their energy or invention " . Record reviewer Wayne King similarly commented that the album reused many motifs , such as Ian McCullough 's octave jumps , from their previous albums . While he praised the opening tracks " The Cutter " and " Back of Love " , he remarked that Porcupine as a whole was not nearly as good an album as Echo and the Bunnymen 's live performances showed they were capable of .

In a review of the original release on Allmusic , Porcupine was described as a " solid outing " , a " noticeably better listen than its predecessor , Heaven Up Here " and " well worth hearing " . When reviewing the remastered 2003 version the review was expanded to add that new release was " a very well done expansion of an already fine album " . Blender magazine described the album in a review on their website as " impossibly exciting pop @-@ rock " and Pitchfork called the album " the band 's definitive statement " and described the track " The Back of Love " as " the astonishing highlight of the group 's career " . The album appeared in the 1983 end of year critics ' lists for both Melody Maker , where it was listed at number nine , and NME , where it was listed at number 32 . The album is also listed in the 2006 book 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die .

The album reached number 2 on the UK Albums Chart , number 137 on the American Billboard 200 , number 85 on the Canadian RPM 100 Albums , and number 24 on the Swedish albums chart . Having sold over 100 @, @ 000 copies of the album in the UK , Echo & they Bunnymen were awarded with a gold disc by the British Phonographic Industry . Of the singles from the album , " The Back of Love " reached number 19 on the UK Singles Chart and " The Cutter " reached number 8 . " The Back of Love " also became the band 's first single to make the Irish Singles Chart when it reached number 24 , while " The Cutter " reached number 10 . The single " Never Stop (Discotheque) " reached number 15 on the UK Singles Chart and number 8 on the Irish Singles Chart .

= = Track listing = =

All tracks written by Will Sergeant , Ian McCulloch , Les Pattinson and Pete de Freitas .

Side one

" The Cutter " ? 3 : 56

" The Back of Love " ? 3 : 14

" My White Devil " ? 4 : 41

" Clay " ? 4 : 15

" Porcupine " ? 6 : 01

Side two

" Heads Will Roll " ? 3 : 33

" Ripeness " ? 4 : 50

" Higher Hell " ? 5 : 01

" Gods Will Be Gods " ? 5 : 25

" In Bluer Skies " ? 4 : 33

2003 bonus tracks

" Fuel " ? 4 : 09

" The Cutter " (Alternate Version) ? 4 : 10

" My White Devil " (Alternate Version) ? 5 : 02

" Porcupine " (Alternate Version) ? 4 : 04

" Ripeness " (Alternate Version) ? 4 : 43

" Gods Will Be Gods " (Alternate Version) ? 5 : 31

" Never Stop (Discotheque) " ? 4 : 45

Porcupine ? An Atlas Adventure

" In Bluer Skies "

" The Cutter "

" My White Devil "

" Porcupine "

" Heads Will Roll "

" The Back of Love "

= = Personnel = =

Ian McCulloch ? vocals , guitar , piano

Will Sergeant ? lead guitar

Les Pattinson ? bass

Pete de Freitas ? drums

Shankar ? strings

Ian Broudie ? producer

Dave Bascombe ? engineer

Paul Cobald ? engineer

Colin Fairley ? engineer

Dave Woolley ? engineer

Steve Short ? engineer

Steve Presige ? engineer

Brian Griffin ? photography

Martyn Atkins ? cover design

Andy Zax ? producer (reissue)

Bill Inglot ? producer (reissue) , remastering (reissue)

Dan Hersch ? remastering (reissue)

Rachel Gutek ? cover design (reissue)