

= Running with Scissors (" Weird Al " Yankovic album) =

Running with Scissors is the tenth studio album by " Weird Al " Yankovic , released on June 29 , 1999 . It was the fourth studio album self @-@ produced by Yankovic . It was the first of four albums to be released by Volcano Records . The musical styles on the album are built around parodies and pastiches of pop and rock music of the late @-@ 1990s , largely targeting alternative rock and hip @-@ hop . The album 's lead single , " The Saga Begins " , however , was a parody of the 1971 single " American Pie " by Don McLean , and it recounts the plot of the film Star Wars : Episode I ? The Phantom Menace , which was released around the same time . None of the album 's singles charted domestically , although " Pretty Fly for a Rabbi " charted at number 67 in Australia .

The album featured five parodies . Aside from the aforementioned " The Saga Begins " and " Pretty Fly for a Rabbi " , the album also contains lampoons of " One Week " by Barenaked Ladies , " It 's All About the Benjamins " by Puff Daddy , and " Zoot Suit Riot " by Cherry Poppin ' Daddies . The other half of the album is original material , featuring many " style parodies , " or musical imitations of existing artists . These style parodies include imitations of specific artists like Nine Inch Nails and The Rugburns , as well as imitations of different musical genres like zydeco , third @-@ wave ska , and truck @-@ driving country .

Running with Scissors was met with mostly positive reviews , with many critics praising " The Saga Begins " ; some , however , felt that the album was rushed . The album peaked at number 16 on the Billboard 200 . " The Saga Begins " went on to become one of Yankovic 's best @-@ known singles , although it never charted on the Billboard Hot 100 . Running with Scissors was Yankovic 's seventh Gold record in the United States , and went on to be certified Platinum for sales of over one million copies in the US . The album also was certified Gold in both Australia and Canada .

= = Production = =

= = = Recording = = =

In June 1997 , Yankovic entered the studio to begin the first of the Running with Scissors sessions , which Yankovic produced himself . Recording with Yankovic were Jon " Bermuda " Schwartz on drums , Steve Jay on bass , and Jim West on guitar . The album was recorded in six sessions . The first session started on June 29 , 1997 , in which Yankovic recorded the theme song to his television show , The Weird Al Show . The second session , which occurred on October 7 , 1998 , produced the original song " Germs " , and eight days later , on October 15 , Yankovic started the third session and recorded three more originals , " Albuquerque " , " My Baby 's in Love with Eddie Vedder " , and " Truck Driving Song " . The next day , the fourth session resulted in the song " Your Horoscope For Today " . On April 19 of the following year , Yankovic recorded four parodies during the fifth session , " Pretty Fly for a Rabbi " , " Jerry Springer " , " It 's All About the Pentiums " , and " Grapefruit Diet " . The album 's sixth and final session occurred on April 20 , and resulted in " The Saga Begins " , and the album 's polka medley , " Polka Power ! " .

= = = Originals = = =

The album includes " The Weird Al Show Theme " , which is the theme song to Yankovic 's short @-@ lived television series . " Germs " , a style parody of industrial rock band Nine Inch Nails that tells of the narrator 's germophobia . " Your Horoscope for Today " , is a style parody of third wave ska , features Reel Big Fish members Tavis Werts on trumpet and Dan Regan on trombone , and has lyrics about ridiculous horoscopes . Yankovic attributes the lyrics ' inspiration to the satirical newspaper The Onion . After Ophiuchus was touted by some papers as the " 13th zodiac sign " , Yankovic released new lyrics on his Twitter for the sign .

" Albuquerque " , an eleven @-@ minute " hard @-@ driving rock narrative " , is a style parody of The Rugburns , and tells the fictional life of Yankovic and his various adventures in the town of

Albuquerque , New Mexico . Yankovic originally wrote the song to " annoy people for 12 minutes " . He felt that it would be an " odyssey " for fans to successfully sit through it , and so it was placed at the end of the album . Instead , to Yankovic 's surprise , the song has become a fan favorite . " My Baby 's in Love with Eddie Vedder " is a style parody of zydeco about a man 's frustration that his girlfriend is obsessed with Eddie Vedder , the lead singer for the grunge band Pearl Jam . Musically , the song is in the style of zydeco . " Truck Driving Song " , a detailed account of a truck @-@ driver working , while at the same time worrying about their clothing and makeup , is a style parody of truck @-@ driving country . While writing the song , Yankovic listened to C.W. McCall for inspiration .

= = = Parodies and polka = = =

The first parody recorded for the album was " Pretty Fly for a Rabbi " , a parody of the Offspring 's 1998 single " Pretty Fly (For a White Guy) " , about a hip rabbi . " In order to accurately write the song , Yankovic consulted several of his Jewish friends as well as several English @-@ to @-@ Yiddish dictionaries . The song 's opening line ? " Veren zol fun dir a blintsa " ? is a Yiddish curse that roughly means " May you turn into a blintz . " Originally , Yankovic had wanted voice actress Mary Kay Bergman to sing the song as her South Park character Sheila Broflovski . However , due to legal restrictions , she was only able to say a few lines in the finished product . Yankovic then approached actress Fran Drescher to lend her voice to the song , but this was also unsuccessful . Finally , Yankovic was able to get actress Tress MacNeille ? who had been featured in his 1983 parody " Ricky " ? to appear in the song .

The second parody recorded for the album was " Jerry Springer " , a parody of Barenaked Ladies 1998 hit " One Week " . The song is about The Jerry Springer Show , hosted by the eponymous Jerry Springer . To write the song , Yankovic watched " a couple shows " until he understood the " basic formula " for how the episodes unfolded . Originally , there were plans to shoot a video for the song , and an inquiry was sent to Springer to see if he would have liked to be in the video . Before hearing the song , Springer was interested in the possibility of appearing in a video , but after hearing the lyrics , he " balked " and declined , saying that the song was too " negative " towards his show . The third parody recorded for the album was " It 's All About the Pentiums " , a parody of the rock remix of the track " It 's All About the Benjamins " by Sean " Puff Daddy " Combs . Yankovic spoke to Combs personally on the phone to make sure that the parody would not emulate the 1996 Coolio incident . Due to time constraints , Yankovic was forced to write the song a few days before the entire album had to be mastered , as Yankovic had still been waiting for Combs ' approval . By the time Combs responded to him , Yankovic was recording the last session for the album . To give him time to write the lyrics , Yankovic 's band recorded the music first . Yankovic noted that " we were mixing the last few songs on the album by the time I finished writing the lyrics to ' Pentiums , ' and I wound up recording the lead vocals just a couple days before the album had to be mastered . " The fourth parody recorded for the album was " Grapefruit Diet " , a pastiche of " Zoot Suit Riot " by the Cherry Poppin ' Daddies about an obese man going on such a diet . The song 's writer , Steve Perry , called the opportunity to be parodied " an honor " but noted that " Why Weird Al is such an icon is a mystery to me though " .

The final parody recorded for the album was " The Saga Begins " , which recounts the plot of Star Wars : Episode I ? The Phantom Menace from the point of view of Obi @-@ Wan Kenobi to the tune of the 1971 single " American Pie " by Don McLean . Yankovic , who often bases his albums around significant moments in pop culture , felt that the album should have a song centered on the release of The Phantom Menace . Yankovic first considered writing his parody of " Pretty Fly (For a White Guy) " about the film and calling it " Pretty Fly for a Jedi " , but he quickly dismissed this idea ; he wanted to parody a classic song to commemorate how important the new movie was considered . Yankovic then chose to write a parody of " American Pie " about the film . Because Yankovic wanted the song to be topical , he began writing the lyrics in December 1998 , many months before the film was released , gleaning all of the information about the movie 's plot entirely from Internet spoilers . The song was completed two months before The Phantom Menace was released to theaters ; Yankovic had approached Lucasfilm about the prospect of an advanced screening to ensure that his

lyrics were accurate , but the company declined . However , Yankovic later went to a charity screening , whose tickets cost US \$ 500 each . As a result , Yankovic only had to change one line ; " He 's probably gonna marry her someday " was originally " I hear he 's gonna marry her someday " . A video which Yankovic later jokingly dubbed " Star Wars Unplugged " was filmed for the song , after The Phantom Menace premiered in theaters .

Much like Yankovic 's previous albums , Running with Scissors features a polka medley of then @-@ current hit songs called " Polka Power ! " . The song was later released as a promotional single in Germany , where Yankovic 's recording label felt a polka song might have more success . This was the second time that one of Yankovic 's polka medleys was released as a single ; in 1985 , Scotti Brothers Records released " Hooked on Polkas " , from the album Dare to Be Stupid , in Japan .

= = = Booklet and disc = = =

Since the early 1980s , Yankovic had been known for his hairdo , glasses , and moustache . However , in 1998 , Yankovic shaved his mustache and underwent LASIK eye surgery to correct his vision , and no longer needed glasses . As such , this is his first album with his new style . On the cover , he is shown running on the track at Santa Monica City College . The CD booklet contains the complete lyrics to all but one of the album 's songs ; due to the length of the closing song " Albuquerque " , not all of its lyrics fit on the final page of the booklet . Instead of continuing with the " Albuquerque " lyrics , the end of the booklet breaks off mid @-@ sentence and concludes with an apology from Yankovic , in which he states that there was no way he could have fit the rest of the song 's lyrics on the existing booklet and that he " should have used a smaller font or a bigger piece of paper or something " . Yankovic later released the complete lyrics on the " Ask Al " feature on his website , and had them printed in Weird Al : The Book .

Running with Scissors is also the first of " Weird Al " Yankovic 's albums to feature multimedia content . After placing the CD in a CD @-@ ROM drive , one can browse through the files and play a QuickTime movie file containing fourteen minutes of footage from the Disney Channel concert special " Weird Al " Yankovic : (There 's No) Going Home .

= = Release = =

= = = Promotion = = =

Following the release of Running with Scissors , Yankovic undertook a two @-@ year @-@ long tour called " Touring With Scissors " . Starting on July 19 , 1999 , Yankovic played over 200 shows across the United States . A live video recording of one of the shows , called " Weird Al " Yankovic Live ! was released later in the year . To promote the album , two promotional websites were launched for the singles " It 's All About the Pentiums " and " The Saga Begins " : " thepentiums.com " and " sagabegins.com " respectively . Each site featured the respective song 's music video , as well as additional information such as behind @-@ the @-@ scenes notes and lyrics .

= = = Reviews = = =

The album was met with mostly positive reviews from critics . J.D. Considine of Entertainment Weekly gave the album a " B " rating and felt that , while many comedians are unable to translate jokes onto CD , " Yankovic 's jokes are eminently listenable . " He concluded that " compared with most comedy recordings these days , Running with Scissors is a cut above . " Melissa Ruggieri of the Richmond Times @-@ Dispatch graded the album a " B + " , writing , " Now on his 10th album , the weird and wacky Al tackles gems such as Don McLean 's ' American Pie , ' The Offspring 's ' Pretty Fly (For a White Guy) ' and Barenaked Ladies ' ' One Week . ' Most of the results are priceless . " Warren Rhodes of the Anchorage Daily News named the album the fifth best release of

1999 , writing that , " Leaving his long @-@ time label [Scotti Brothers] has inspired the parody king ; even his originals are pretty good this time . " He also wrote that " the intellect 's still there , and his wide @-@ ranging chameleon band has no equal . " In The Rolling Stone Album Guide , Running with Scissors was given 3 @.@ 5 stars out of 5 , which denoted that the album averaged between good and excellent . The book wrote that Yankovic 's " nasal whine has never been put to more appropriate use than [on] ' Pretty Fly for a Rabbi ' . "

Not all reviews were positive . Steve Huey of Allmusic gave the album two and a half stars out of five and called it " a mixed bag " . Huey felt that both " The Saga Begins " and " Jerry Springer " were clever parodies , whereas " Pretty Fly for a Rabbi " and " It 's All About the Pentiums " were not " quite up to his usual standards . " Robert Johnson of the San Antonio Express @-@ News was critical of the album , giving it one @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars , noting that " in his haste to stay up to the minute , [Yankovic] forgot to make [' The Saga Begins '] funny . " He wrote that the album " features recycled ideas (fat jokes , alt @-@ rock hits redone as polkas) , tunes that sound better than they play (' Pretty Fly for a Rabbi ') and weirdness for its own sake (the 11 @-@ minute ' Albuquerque ') . "

= = = Commercial performance = = =

Running with Scissors was released on June 29 , 1999 . The album entered the Billboard 200 chart at number 35 on July 17 , and went up to its peak position of 16 the following week . The album also charted on the Top Internet Albums , a first for Yankovic , entering at number 7 , and eventually peaking at number 3 . The album was consecutively certified both Gold and Platinum by Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) for shipments of over 1 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 copies in the United States .

= = Track listing = =

The following is adapted from the album liner notes .

= = Charts and certifications = =

= = = Singles = = =

= = Credits and personnel = =