

= Doolittle (album) =

Doolittle is the second studio album from the American alternative rock band Pixies , released in April 1989 on 4AD . The album 's offbeat and dark subject material , featuring references to surrealism , Biblical violence , torture and death , contrasts with the clean production sound achieved by the newly hired producer Gil Norton . Doolittle was the Pixies ' first international release , with Elektra Records as the album 's distributor in the United States and PolyGram in Canada .

Pixies released two singles from Doolittle , " Here Comes Your Man " and " Monkey Gone to Heaven " , both of which were chart successes on the US chart for Modern Rock Tracks . The album itself reached number eight on the UK Albums Chart , an unexpected success for the band . In retrospect , album tracks such as " Debaser " , " Wave of Mutilation " , " Monkey Gone to Heaven " , " Gouge Away " , and " Hey " are highly acclaimed by critics , while the album , along with debut LP Surfer Rosa , is often seen as the band 's strongest work .

Doolittle has continued to sell consistently well in the years since its release , and in 1995 was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America . The album has been cited as inspirational by many alternative artists , while numerous music publications have ranked it as one of the most influential albums ever . A 2003 poll of NME writers ranked Doolittle as the second @-@ greatest album of all time , and Rolling Stone placed the album at 226 on its list of " The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " .

= = Background = =

Following their highly regarded but commercially unsuccessful 1988 album Surfer Rosa , the band embarked on a European tour with fellow Bostonians Throwing Muses , before beginning a tour of North American states . During this time Black Francis , the group 's frontman and principal songwriter , began to write new material for a future album , with songs such as " Dead " , " Hey " , " Tame " , and " There Goes My Gun " emerging through the course of the year . Versions of the newly composed songs were recorded during several sessions for John Peel 's radio show in 1988 , while a live recording of " Hey " appeared on a free EP circulated with a 1988 edition of Sounds .

In mid @-@ 1988 , the Pixies began to record demo sessions while on breaks from touring . The band headed to the Boston recording studio Eden Sound , which at the time comprised a small room in the basement of a hair salon . They recorded at the studio for a week , in circumstances similar to the previous year 's the Purple Tape sessions . Francis gave the demo tape and upcoming album the provisional title of Whore , though he later claimed his natural father had originally suggested the name . Francis has clarified that he was thinking of the word " in the more traditional sense ... the operatic , biblical sense , ... as in the great whore of Babylon " . After completing the demo tape , band manager Ken Goss suggested two producers for the album ; Liverpudlian Gil Norton and American Ed Stasium . The band had previously worked with Norton while recording the single version of " Gigantic " in May 1988 . Francis had no preference , although Ivo Watts @-@ Russell , head of the band 's label 4AD , wanted Norton to produce the Pixies ' next album . He was hired as producer , with Stasium not even approached for the position .

Norton arrived in Boston on October 31 , 1988 , and first visited Francis ' apartment to review the album 's demos . The two talked about arrangements , and spent two days intensively analyzing the album 's songs . Norton learned to gauge Francis ' reaction to changing arrangements , and later observed that the frontman " doesn 't like to do anything twice " . Norton spent a further two weeks in pre @-@ production to familiarise himself with the Pixies ' sound .

= = Recording and production = =

Recording sessions for the album began on October 31 , 1988 , at Downtown Recorders in Boston , Massachusetts , at the time a professional 24 @-@ track studio . 4AD allowed the Pixies a budget of \$ 40 @,@ 000 , excluding producer 's fees . This was a modest sum for a 1980s major label album ; however , it quadrupled the amount spent on the band 's previous album , Surfer Rosa .

Along with Norton , two assistant recording engineers and two second assistants were assigned to the project . The sessions lasted three weeks , concluding on November 23 , with " nearly a song a day " being recorded .

Production and mixing began on November 28 . The band relocated to Carriage House Studios , a residential studio in Stamford , Connecticut , to oversee production and record further tracks . Norton recruited Steve Haigler as mixing engineer , whom he had worked with at Fort Apache Studios . During production , Haigler and Norton added layers of guitars and vocals to songs , including overdubbed guitars on " Debaser " and double tracking vocals on " Wave of Mutilation " . During the recordings , Norton advised Francis to alter several songs ; a noted example being " There Goes My Gun " which was originally intended as a much faster Hüsker Dü @-@ style song . However , at Norton 's advice , Francis slowed down the tempo .

Norton 's suggestions were not always welcome , and several instances of advice to add verses and increase track length contributed to the front man 's building frustration . Eventually , Francis took Norton to a record store , where he handed him a copy of Buddy Holly 's Greatest Hits , in which most of the songs are about two minutes long . He told Norton , " If it 's good enough for Buddy Holly ... " In a Rolling Stone interview , Francis later recalled that " this record is him trying to make us , shall I say , commercial , and us trying to remain somewhat grungy " . Production continued until December 12 , 1988 , with Norton and Haigler adding extra effects , including gated reverb to the mix . The master tapes were then sent for final post @-@ production later that month .

= = Music = =

Doolittle features an eclectic mix of musical styles . While tracks such as " Tame " and " Crackity Jones " are fast and aggressive , and incorporate the band 's trademark loud ? quiet dynamic , other songs such as " Silver " , " I Bleed " , and " Here Comes Your Man " reveal a quieter , slower and more melodic temperament . With Doolittle , the band began to incorporate further instruments into their sound ; for instance , " Monkey Gone to Heaven " features two violins and two cellos .

" Tame " is based on a three chord formula ; including Joey Santiago 's playing a " Hendrix chord " over the main bass progression . " I Bleed " is melodically simple , and is formed around a single rhythmical repetition . Some songs are influenced by other genres of music ; while " Crackity Jones " has a distinctly Spanish sound , and incorporates G ? and A triads over a C ? pedal , the song 's rhythm guitar , played by Francis , starts with an eighth @-@ note downstroke typical of punk rock music .

= = Lyrics = =

The lyrical themes explored on Doolittle range from the surrealism of " Debaser " , to the environmental catastrophe of " Monkey Gone to Heaven " . The women and whores of " Mr. Grieves " , " Tame " , and " Hey " share space with the Biblical analogies of " Dead " and " Gouge Away " . Black Francis often claimed that Doolittle 's lyrics were words which just " fit together nicely " , and that " the point [of the album] is to experience it , to enjoy it , to be entertained by it " . Francis wrote all the material for the album with the exception of " Silver " , which he co @-@ wrote with Kim Deal .

The album 's opening track " Debaser " references surrealism , a theme that runs throughout the album . " Debaser " alludes to Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí 's 1929 surrealist film Un Chien Andalou , and the lyric " slicing up eyeballs " refers to an early scene in the film . Surrealism heavily influenced Francis in his college years and throughout his career with the Pixies . In 1989 , Francis expressed his interest in surrealism and its influence on his songwriting method to the New York Times by stating " I got into avant @-@ garde movies and Surrealism as an escape from reality To me , Surrealism is totally artificial . I recently read an interview with the director David Lynch who said he had ideas and images but that he didn 't know exactly what they meant . That 's how I write . "

Another of the album 's main themes is environmental catastrophe . " Monkey Gone to Heaven "

deals with man 's destruction of the ocean and " confusion of man 's place in the universe " . As Francis put it : " On one hand , it 's this big organic toilet . Things get flushed and repurified or decomposed and it 's this big , dark , mysterious place . It 's also a very mythological place where there are octopus 's gardens , the Bermuda Triangle , Atlantis , and mermaids . " " Monkey Gone to Heaven " is concerned with man 's relationship to the divine , a theme shared with " Mr. Grieves " .

Two songs on Doolittle are fashioned after Biblical stories : the story of David and Bathsheba in " Dead " , and Samson and Delilah in " Gouge Away " . Francis ' fascination with Biblical themes can be traced back to his teenage years ; when he was twelve , he and his parents joined an evangelical church linked to the Assemblies of God . This background was to be an influence in Doolittle , where he referred to the Devil being " six " and God being " seven " in " Monkey Gone to Heaven " .

Other songs explored eccentric subjects , such as in " Wave of Mutilation " , which Francis described as being about " Japanese businessmen doing murder @-@ suicides with their families because they 'd failed in business , and they 're driving off a pier into the ocean . "

" Wave of Mutilation " ' s sea and underwater themes , which also feature in " Mr. Grieves " and " Monkey Gone to Heaven " , are explorations of one arena for man 's death and destruction . Ben Sisario points out that the album begins (" Debaser ") and ends (" Gouge Away ") with songs about violence being done to eyes . " Crackity Jones " covers another offbeat subject ; Francis ' roommate in his student exchange trip to San Juan , Puerto Rico , who he described as a " weird psycho gay roommate " .

Doolittle also references more ostensibly conventional subjects . " La La Love You " , sung by the band 's drummer David Lovering , is a love song ? though with its " first base , second base , third base , home run " break , it 's been referred to as " a dig at the very idea of a love song " . Francis gave it to Lovering as a song to sing , " like a Ringo thing " ; Lovering at first refused to sing , but Norton said that soon he was unable to " get him away from the microphone " . As well as lead vocals on " La La Love You " , Lovering played bass guitar on " Silver " , with Deal playing slide guitar ; this arrangement did not occur again .

= = Packaging and title = =

Doolittle was the first album where Simon Larbalestier , the Pixies ' cover photographer , and Vaughan Oliver , the band 's cover artist , had access to the lyrics . According to Larbalestier , this " made a fundamental difference " .

The surrealist and abstract images throughout the album booklet are linked to the album 's content . " Gouge Away " is represented by a picture of a spoon containing hair , laid across a woman 's torso ; a direct pictorial representation of heroin , with the spoon and the hair being horses . " I Bleed " is referenced with the image " As Loud As Hell " ; the image shows " a ringing bell " , with a set of teeth ; this references the line " it shakes my teeth " . " Walking with the Crustaceans " is a visual representation of " Wave of Mutilation " ' s lyrics . Larbalestier later commented that he was interested in " early Surrealist stuff " at this time .

During the recording sessions , Whore was discarded as a potential album title , after Oliver changed the cover artwork idea to a monkey and halo cover . Francis later explained his rationale for the move :

Francis then named the album Doolittle , from the " Mr. Grieves " lyric " Pray for a man in the middle / One that talks like Doolittle " .

= = Release = =

In the months following Surfer Rosa , the Pixies ' management fielded calls from a number of labels . Elektra Records A & R scout Peter Lubin first saw the band in October 1988 , when they opened for The Jesus and Mary Chain . He immediately sought to convince the band to sign to his label . Pixies contracted to Elektra Records during a UK spring tour in 1989 . Elektra followed by releasing a live promotional album , which contained two songs from their forthcoming album , " Debaser " and " Gouge Away " , along with a selection of earlier material .

However Elektra had not yet attained distribution rights to the band 's forthcoming album . 4AD , then a small British independent record label , held worldwide distribution rights to the Pixies , but did not have access to distribution outside of the United Kingdom ; the band had had to import all its previous records from Europe . The Pixies ' management sought international distribution ; and while negotiations with Elektra and other record companies began in the third quarter of 1988 , they were only completed just two weeks before Doolittle 's release on April 2 , 1989 . PolyGram had already secured Canadian distribution rights by that time .

Doolittle was released in the United Kingdom on April 17 , 1989 , and in the United States the following day . Throughout the States , helped by Elektra Records ' major label status , retail displays were constructed for the record , and " Monkey Gone to Heaven " , the first single from the album , was released to radio stations for inclusion on playlists . Doolittle 's chart performance in the United States was unremarkable ; the album entered the Billboard 200 at number 171 . However , with the help of college radio @-@ play of " Monkey Gone to Heaven " , Doolittle eventually rose to number 98 and spent two weeks in the Top 100 . In Britain , the record reached number eight on the UK Album Chart . This chart placing was an unexpected success for the band , as their previous two records , Come On Pilgrim and Surfer Rosa , had failed to make such an impact on the British charts .

In June 1989 , 4AD released " Here Comes Your Man " as the album 's second single . It reached number three on the US Modern Rock Tracks chart and number 56 in the UK Singles Chart . It was not the last single from the album : in 1997 , " Debaser " was released as a single to promote the Death to the Pixies compilation .

= = Reception = =

Following its release , Doolittle sold steadily in America , and broke sales of 100 @,@ 000 after six months . By early 1992 , while the band were supporting U2 on their Zoo TV Tour , the album was selling 1 @,@ 500 copies per week . The middle of 1993 , two years after the band 's last album , Trompe le Monde , saw sales average 1 @,@ 200 copies per week . Doolittle was certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America in 1995 . Ten years after the breakup , Doolittle was still selling between 500 and 1 @,@ 000 copies a week ; the reunion tour saw sales creep back up to 1 @,@ 200 copies per week . At the end of 2005 , best estimates put total sales in America at between 800 @,@ 000 and one million copies .

Reaction to Doolittle was positive in general , with the album garnering praise from several major music publications . NME commented that " the songs on Doolittle have the power to make you literally jump out of your skin with excitement " . Q , giving the album four stars out of five , said that Doolittle 's " carefully structured noise and straightforward rhythmic insistence makes perfect sense " . Tim Rolston , of the Daily Telegraph praised Doolittle as " a scintillating rock 'n'roll album " and the Pixies ' " finest half @-@ hour so far " . Other publications also awarded the album four out of five stars , including the British music weekly Record Mirror , The Philadelphia Inquirer , the Los Angeles Times , and the Chicago Tribune . The Village Voice 's Robert Christgau gave the album a B + rating , suggesting that " getting famous too fast could ruin them " .

However , Doolittle received mixed reviews from several music critics . Time Out said that " Gil Norton 's toy theatre production makes a drama out of what should have been a crisis " . Spin ran a hundred @-@ word review of the album , including critic Joe Levy 's comment " the insanity less surreal and more silly , and the songs themselves more like songs and less like adventures " . Rolling Stone , reviewing the album in July 1989 , gave the album three and a half stars . Doolittle appeared on several end @-@ of @-@ year " Best Album " lists ; both Rolling Stone and The Village Voice placed the album tenth , and independent music magazines Sounds and Melody Maker both ranked the album as the second @-@ best of the year . NME also ranked the album highly , placing it fourth in their end @-@ of @-@ year list .

= = Legacy = =

The sudden loud to quiet dynamic present on Doolittle , most notably in " Tame " , has been very influential on alternative rock . After writing " Smells Like Teen Spirit " , both Kurt Cobain and Krist Novoselic of Nirvana thought : " this really sounds like the Pixies . People are really going to nail us for this . " Producer Gil Norton usually receives much credit for the album 's dynamic , and is sought by bands seeking a similar sound . Former The Smashing Pumpkins guitarist James Iha described Doolittle as less raw than Surfer Rosa but " more listenable " and " Here Comes Your Man " as a " classic pop record " . Fellow alternative musician PJ Harvey was " in awe " of " I Bleed " and " Tame " , and described Francis ' writing as " amazing " . The album was also included in the book 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die .

= = = Band relationships = = =

During the recording of Doolittle , tensions between Francis and Deal became visible to band members and the production team . Bickering and standoffs between the two marred the recording sessions and led to increased stress among the band members . John Murphy , Deal 's husband at the time , later recalled that with Doolittle it " went from just all fun to work " . Exhaustion from touring and from releasing three records in two years contributed to the friction . This culminated at the end of the US post @-@ Doolittle " Fuck or Fight " tour , where they were too tired to attend the end @-@ of @-@ tour party . Soon afterwards the band announced that they were taking a break .

After they reconvened in 1990 , Francis began to limit Deal 's contributions to the band . He wrote and sang all the original material on the Pixies ' two subsequent albums ; 1990 's Bossanova and 1991 's Trompe le Monde (both produced by Norton and mixed by Haigler) . This breakdown in the relationship between Deal and Francis , first apparent during the recording of Doolittle , ultimately led to the band 's breakup in late 1992 and early 1993 .

= = = Accolades = = =

A range of music magazines have since acclaimed Doolittle as one of the quintessential alternative rock albums of the 1980s . Rolling Stone , reviewing Doolittle again in 2002 , gave the album a maximum score of five stars , remarking that it laid the " groundwork for Nineties rock " . Doolittle has received a number of international accolades and is consistently noted as one of the best albums of the 1980s in any genre .

The information regarding accolades attributed to Doolittle is taken from AcclaimedMusic.net.

(*) designates unordered lists .

= = = Doolittle 25 reissue = = =

The band announced that the album will be reissued January 12 , 2015 , with two additional discs of material .

= = Track listing = =

All tracks were written by Black Francis , except where noted .

" Debaser " ? 2 : 52

" Tame " ? 1 : 55

" Wave of Mutilation " ? 2 : 04

" I Bleed " ? 2 : 34

" Here Comes Your Man " ? 3 : 21

" Dead " ? 2 : 21

" Monkey Gone to Heaven " ? 2 : 56

" Mr. Grieves " ? 2 : 05

" Crackity Jones " ? 1 : 24

" La La Love You " ? 2 : 43

" No. 13 Baby " ? 3 : 51
" There Goes My Gun " ? 1 : 49
" Hey " ? 3 : 31
" Silver " (Francis / Deal) ? 2 : 25
" Gouge Away " ? 2 : 45

= = = Doolittle 25 bonus discs = = =

= = Personnel = =

Pixies

Black Francis ? vocals , rhythm guitar , acoustic guitar

Kim Deal ? bass guitar , vocals , slide guitar on " Silver "

Joey Santiago ? lead guitar , backing vocals

David Lovering ? Drums , lead vocals on " La La Love You " , bass guitar on " Silver "

Additional musicians

Arthur Fiacco ? cello on " Monkey Gone to Heaven "

Karen Karlsrud ? violin on " Monkey Gone to Heaven "

Corine Metter ? violin on " Monkey Gone to Heaven "

Ann Rorich ? cello on " Monkey Gone to Heaven "

Production

Steve Haigler ? mixing engineer

Matt Lane ? assistant engineer

Simon Larbalestier ? cover image , album booklet imagery

Gil Norton ? production , engineering

Vaughan Oliver ? album booklet imagery

Dave Snider ? assistant engineer

Burt Price ? second assistant

Rob Sylvain ? second assistant

Published by Rice ' n ' Beans Music BMI

= = Chart performance = =

Album

Singles