

= Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy) =

Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy) is the second solo album by English musician Brian Eno . Produced by Eno , it was originally released by Island Records in November 1974 . Unlike his previous album Here Come the Warm Jets , Eno used a core band of five instrumentalists (keyboards , guitars , bass , drums and percussion) and used fewer guest musicians . Also participating was guitarist and co @-@ writer Phil Manzanera , who had played with Eno in Roxy Music . To help guide production of the album , Eno and Peter Schmidt developed instruction cards called Oblique Strategies to use through the creative process of the album .

Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy) is a loose concept album with topics ranging from espionage to the Chinese Communist revolution . The album 's music has an upbeat and bouncy sound but with dark lyrical themes . The album did not chart in the United Kingdom or United States , but received greater attention from the rock press . It was re @-@ issued in a remastered version in 2004 by Virgin Records . The album has received critical attention , with varying opinions on its style and quality compared to Here Come the Warm Jets .

= = Production = =

The album was inspired by a series of postcards of a Chinese revolutionary opera , titled Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy . Eno described his understanding of the title as referring to " the dichotomy between the archaic and the progressive . Half Taking Tiger Mountain ? that Middle Ages physical feel of storming a military position ? and half (By Strategy) ? that very , very 20th @-@ century mental concept of a tactical interaction of systems . "

To further explore the possibilities of the studio setting , Eno and his friend Peter Schmidt developed instruction cards , called Oblique Strategies . During recording of the album , he would allow the cards to dictate the next unconsidered action in the recording process . Describing the words on the album as an expression of " idiot glee " , Eno and Schmidt eventually expanded the Oblique Strategies set to over 100 " worthwhile dilemmas " , which would be used in nearly all his future recordings and productions . Schmidt also designed the album cover , which consists of four prints from an edition of fifteen hundred of his unique lithographs , as well as Polaroids of Eno , credited on the album sleeve to Lorenz Zatecky .

Phil Manzanera , Eno 's former bandmate in Roxy Music , spoke positively about the recording experience . Manzanera described the recording of the album as :

... just doing anything we felt like doing at the time . The engineer we used , Rhett Davies , also did Diamond Head and 801 Live and Quiet Sun , so it was like family . There was a lot of experimenting and a lot of hours spent with Brian Eno , me , and Rhett in the control room doing all the things that eventually evolved into those cards , the Oblique Strategies , and it was just a lot of fun .

Unlike his previous album Here Come the Warm Jets , Eno worked with a core group of musicians on Taking Tiger Mountain . The group consisted of Manzanera of Roxy Music , Brian Turrington and Freddie Smith of The Winkies and former Soft Machine vocalist Robert Wyatt . During the same period , Eno was producing Robert Calvert 's album Lucky Leif and the Longships , and the majority of the players on Taking Tiger Mountain were also involved in that project . Several guest musicians also played on select songs on the album , including Andy Mackay of Roxy Music and the Portsmouth Sinfonia , an orchestra in which Eno had once played clarinet . The orchestra 's philosophy allowed anybody to join as long as that person had no experience with the instrument to be played in the orchestra . For guest drummer Phil Collins , Eno called in a favour from Collins ' group Genesis . After Eno had helped with the production of Genesis ' album The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway , Genesis front man Peter Gabriel asked how they could reciprocate . Eno looked at Collins , stating that he needed a drummer , and Collins played drums on " Mother Whale Eyeless " .

= = Style = =

The sound of Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy) has been described as more upbeat and bouncy than Eno 's previous solo album while the lyrics have darker themes and subject matter . The lyrics of the album have been described as " remarkably literate and often humorous " with " quick @-@ fire rhymes , oddball couplets , abrupt demands and ruthless statements " . To create the lyrics , Eno later played these backing tracks , singing nonsense syllables to himself , then forming them into actual words , phrases and meanings . This lyric @-@ writing method was used for all his more vocal @-@ based recordings of the 1970s .

References to China appear in the album 's songs , including in " Burning Airlines Give You So Much More " , " China My China " and " Taking Tiger Mountain " . Steve Huey of AllMusic described these combined themes as a loose concept album that is " often inscrutable , but still playful ? about espionage , the Chinese Communist revolution , and dream associations . " On the political theme within the lyrics and album title , Eno explained that he is " not Maoist or anything like that ; if anything I 'm anti @-@ Maoist " . The album addresses several different esoteric topics . " Burning Airlines Give You So Much More " is inspired by a 1974 crash near Paris of a Turkish Airlines DC @-@ 10 , one of the worst air crashes in history . " The Fat Lady of Limbourg " , described by Eno as a " Burroughs @-@ type song " about an asylum in Limbourg , Belgium where the residents of it outnumber the population of the town . " The Great Pretender " describes the rape of a suburban housewife by a crazed machine . " Third Uncle " has been referred to as an early predecessor of punk music .

= = Release = =

Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy) was released in November 1974 in a gatefold sleeve . No singles were released from the album and it failed to chart in either the United Kingdom or the United States . (" Burning Airlines " was listed on a US Island singles list without a specified B side , but copies have not yet been seen .)

In 2004 , Taking Tiger Mountain was reissued by Virgin Records in remastered digipak form .

= = Reception = =

Like Eno 's previous album Here Come the Warm Jets , Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy) received a mostly very positive reception from critics . Writing for the Village Voice , Robert Christgau gave the album a rating of A ? , writing " Every cut on this clear , consistent , elusive album affords distinct present pleasure . Admittedly , when they 're over they 're over ? you don 't flash on them the way you do on " Cindy Tells Me " and " Baby 's on Fire " . But that 's just his way of being modest . " Wayne Robbins of Creem lauded Eno for the way he " grafts seemingly disparate elements in any way that might be useful to his flow " . Robbins explained , " It sounds like it might be pretentious ; it 's not , because Eno is comfortable with those pretensions " ; he concluded that " a man who can write songs like ' Burning Airlines Give You So Much More ' has seen the future , and the future is a sonic Disney named Eno , who makes music you can live with " . Circus magazine described the album as " Sick ! Sick ! Sick ! But , oh @-@ h @-@ h , it feels so good ! [...] guaranteed to be put on the ' Most Wanted ' list by psychopaths everywhere [...] [Eno] takes you on a dada @-@ ists tour @-@ de @-@ force , lampooning and integrating every type of music conceivable " . Critic Ed Naha , writing in Crawdaddy ! , gave the album a negative review , writing " Much of the Wonderlandish magic found on Eno 's first LP is lost on this rocky terrain , being replaced by a dull , repetitive aura that is annoying as all hell . " In 1975 Taking Tiger Mountain (By Strategy) was voted one of the best albums of the year in the Village Voice 's Pazz & Jop critics poll for 1975 .

Recent assessments of the album have been mostly positive , with AllMusic and Blender giving the album five stars , their highest ratings . AllMusic 's Steve Huey compared the album to Here Come the Warm Jets , writing " not quite as enthusiastic as Here Come the Warm Jets , Taking Tiger Mountain is made accessible through Eno 's mastery of pop song structure " . Douglas Wolk of Blender had rated it more highly than Here Come the Warm Jets , calling it " more immediately

likeable ". Select gave the album a four out of five rating , calling it " excellent " and described the songs " Mother Whale Eyeless " , " Put A Straw Under Baby " and " Third Uncle " as highlights .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Brian Eno , except where noted .

Early vinyl copies end with the sound of chirping crickets locked into the inner groove .

= = Personnel = =