

= Yankee Hotel Foxtrot =

Yankee Hotel Foxtrot is the fourth album by Chicago @-@ based rock band Wilco . The album was completed in 2001 , but Reprise Records , a Warner Music Group label , refused to release it . Wilco acquired the rights to the album when they subsequently left the label . In September 2001 , Wilco streamed the entire album for free on their website . Wilco signed with Nonesuch Records ( another Warner label ) in November of that year , and the album was officially released on April 23 , 2002 .

Yankee Hotel Foxtrot was a critical and commercial success , and is their best selling album , with over 500 @,@ 000 copies sold in the U.S. and topping the Pazz and Jop critics ' poll for 2002 . The album reached number 13 on the Billboard top 200 chart . Critical success ensued , and the album was widely listed among the greatest albums of the 2000s in many popular publications , including 3rd place in Rolling Stone 's 100 Best Albums of the 2000s . It was Wilco 's first album with drummer Glenn Kotche , and the last with multi @-@ instrumentalist and songwriter Jay Bennett .

In 2012 , Rolling Stone ranked the album at number 493 on its list of The 500 Greatest Albums of All Time .

= = Context = =

Wilco was touring to promote Mermaid Avenue Vol . II in May 2000 when Jeff Tweedy was invited to play at the Noise Pop festival in Chicago . The festival promoter offered to pair Tweedy with a collaborator of his choosing , and Tweedy decided to perform with Jim O 'Rourke . Tweedy frequently played O 'Rourke 's album Bad Timing in his car while he traveled during the previous winter . O 'Rourke was an accomplished producer as well as a musician , and had produced over 200 albums by the time that Tweedy requested the collaboration . O 'Rourke offered the services of drummer Glenn Kotche , and the trio performed at Double Door for the festival on May 14 , 2000 . Tweedy enjoyed the performance so much that he suggested that the trio record an album together . They chose the name Loose Fur , and recorded six songs during the following summer .

By the end of the year , Wilco had recorded enough demo tracks to release a fourth studio album ( the working title was Here Comes Everybody ) , but the band was unhappy with some of the takes of the songs . This was attributed to the inflexibility of Ken Coomer 's drumming . According to American Songwriter Magazine , " Virtually every attempt the singer made to steer Coomer toward the percussive sound he had envisioned for the record sparked a fight . " The band decided to bring Glenn Kotche into the studio to record with the band . Wilco officially replaced Coomer with Kotche in January 2001 , a decision originally proposed by Tweedy and almost immediately approved by the rest of the band .

Wilco guitarist Jay Bennett recorded the entire album with Chris Brickley , and agreed with Tweedy that O 'Rourke would be a good choice to mix the album , after a failed attempt by Bennett and Brickley to mix a few of the songs at CRC and after hearing O 'Rourke 's " audition mix " . One of the conflicts , exhibited in the film I Am Trying to Break Your Heart : A Film About Wilco , was over the ten @-@ second transition between " Ashes of American Flags " and " Heavy Metal Drummer " . Bennett attempted to explain to Tweedy that there were several slightly different ways to approach the transition , each of which would yield slightly different results , but Tweedy explained that he just wanted the problem fixed , and was not concerned with understanding the different approaches . Bennett focused on the individual songs , while Tweedy focused on larger conceptual and thematic issues ? a tried and true division of labor that had worked well on the four releases on which they co @-@ wrote the material . In order to achieve the band 's musical goals , Tweedy invited Jim O 'Rourke into the studio to mix " I Am Trying to Break Your Heart " ( sample ) , and the results impressed the band members . O 'Rourke was then asked to mix the rest of the album .

The cover of the album is a picture of Marina City in the band 's adopted hometown of Chicago . The album was named after a series of letters in the phonetic alphabet that Tweedy had heard on the Irdial box set The Conet Project : Recordings of Shortwave Numbers Stations . On the fourth track of the album Phonetic Alphabet - Nato , a woman repeats the words " Yankee Hotel Foxtrot " numerous times ; a clip from this Numbers Station transmission was placed in the Yankee Hotel

Foxtrot song " Poor Places " . Irdial sued Wilco for copyright infringement , and a settlement was reached out of court .

After the album 's completion , Tweedy decided to remove Bennett from the band . The album was completed in 2001 , and Tweedy believed it to be ready for release .

= = I Am Trying to Break Your Heart = =

Los Angeles photographer Sam Jones contacted Wilco in 2000 about producing a documentary film about the creation of Yankee Hotel Foxtrot . Jones shot over 80 hours of footage for I Am Trying to Break Your Heart ( named after the opening song of Yankee Hotel Foxtrot ) beginning on the day that Coomer was dismissed from the band . The footage was edited down to 92 minutes , and the film was released to theaters in 2002 . The documentary has received generally positive reviews .

= = Dismissal from Reprise Records = =

In 2001 , AOL merged with Time Warner to form AOL Time Warner . Time Warner 's market share of the music industry had dropped by almost five percent from the mid @-@ 1990s , and the new executives ordered the termination of 600 jobs . One of those jobs was Reprise Records president Howie Klein , who had been a big supporter of Wilco on the label . Klein 's dismissal placed head A & R representative David Kahne in charge of the decision whether to release Yankee Hotel Foxtrot .

Josh Grier , Wilco 's lawyer , was able to negotiate a buy @-@ out of the band from Reprise . The band would keep the rights to the album if they paid Reprise \$ 50 @,@ 000 . Before Wilco could accept the deal , Reprise called the band and changed their offer to give the band the rights to Yankee Hotel Foxtrot for free . Despite Reprise 's efforts to accommodate Wilco 's departure , the process marred public relations after an article in the Chicago Tribune described what had happened .

Wilco had planned on releasing Yankee Hotel Foxtrot on September 11 , 2001 , but Tweedy did not want a change in record labels to significantly delay the release of the album . Within weeks of being released from the label and Jay Bennett leaving the band , MP3s of all tracks from the album began to appear on file sharing networks . In a decision aimed at discouraging the downloading of lower quality unlicensed MP3s and having some control over how the album was distributed , on September 18 , 2001 , Wilco began streaming the entirety of the album on their official website . The wilcoworld.net website registered over 50 @,@ 000 hits that day , eight times as much as typical daily traffic . Traffic to the website quadrupled the normal traffic over the next few months . The following tour was a success financially , and members of Wilco observed that fans sang along with unreleased songs from the album .

= = Release on Nonesuch Records = =

Both independent and major record labels bid for the right to release Yankee Hotel Foxtrot , including Artemis Records and Nonesuch Records . Tweedy denied the bids of record labels that did not have a roster of signed artists that matched his liking . He also decided to ignore small independent companies because he wanted to be able to put the album out for a large audience and felt that they would be unable to produce more than 100 @,@ 000 records . Wilco decided to sign with AOL Time Warner subsidiary Nonesuch Records in November 2001 , basing the decision on the label 's small size and artist @-@ friendly atmosphere . In the end , Wilco recorded and produced Yankee Hotel Foxtrot with Reprise , received the rights to the album for free , and then sold it back to a different AOL Time Warner affiliate .

Yankee Hotel Foxtrot was commercially released by Nonesuch Records on April 23 , 2002 . The album sold 55 @,@ 573 copies during its first week of release , peaking on the Billboard 200 album chart at number 13 . The album was certified Gold by the Recording Industry Association of America and has sold over 590 @,@ 000 units .

The More Like the Moon EP ( also called Bridge and Australian EP ) was originally released as a bonus disc to the Australian version of Yankee Hotel Foxtrot . The EP comprised six songs that were recorded but not released during the Yankee Hotel Foxtrot sessions including a re @-@ working of " Kamera " . On the one @-@ year anniversary of the release of Yankee Hotel Foxtrot , Wilco uploaded the EP onto their official website , and offered it for free to anyone who purchased the album . The band would later allow anyone to download the EP for free off the website , regardless of whether they had purchased the full @-@ length album .

= = Reception = =

The album received widespread acclaim upon release , including positive reviews from media outlets such as Rolling Stone and BBC Music . Yankee Hotel Foxtrot was voted as the best album of the year in The Village Voice Pazz & Jop critics poll . Brent Sirote of Pitchfork Media gave the album a perfect 10 rating , noting that the album was " simply a masterpiece . " David Fricke of Rolling Stone praised its resemblance to psychedelia while Allmusic writer Zac Johnson lauded its musical complexity .

There are more favorable reviews : E ! Online gave the album an A and said that its " rich , exotic flavor gets more intense the longer you chew on it . " Stylus Magazine called it " a great album , and an outstanding place for prospective new Wilco fans to start . " Neumu.net gave it nine stars out of ten and called it " a fierce record " . Almost Cool gave it a score of 8 @. @ 75 out of ten and said , " I 'm not sure if it 's the work by O 'Rourke or the progression of the group ( or a little of both ) , but this disc is so multi @-@ layered that it 's easy to hear new things many many times after the first listen . " Billboard gave it a favorable review and called it " a more adventurous and rewarding release " . The Austin Chronicle gave it four stars out of five and said that " After a while -- a familiarity period if you will -- it becomes clear that these songs are not only fully realized , they 're damn near brilliant . " Playloder gave it four stars out of five and called it " The most worth @-@ the @-@ wait long @-@ awaited album in the world ... ever ? Could be ... " Uncut also gave the album four stars out of five and said , " The most common description of this much @-@ discussed album over the past few months is that YHF is Americana 's Kid A. In truth , it 's more successful than that . " Blender likewise gave it four stars out of five and stated : " Tweedy whittles down the arrangements and drops in enough experimental nuances to make the whole thing sound refreshingly lo @-@ fi . " Q likewise gave it four stars and called it " battered , bonkers and bewitching in equal parts " and that it " at last finds Wilco 's ' interesting ' phase become downright fascinating . " Yahoo ! Music UK gave it eight stars out of ten and said , " Tweedy takes conventional songforms birthed on his acoustic guitar and scrambles them completely , reassembled into fractured , dissonant epics with the help of the reliably brilliant Jim O 'Rourke . "

Shortly after its online release , Peter Buck of R.E.M. acclaimed the album as " their best yet . "

Trouser Press was one of the few major media outlets that did not give the album a good review , instead giving it an average review and stating that " more time spent in the songwriting lab might have yielded material more suitable to the evident studio effort invested and brought Wilco closer to making a truly great album . " Robert Christgau gave the album a one @-@ star honorable mention rating , describing the music as " purty " but stating that he found the lyrics and vocals in general to be boring .

Though Yankee Hotel Foxtrot was recorded before the September 11 , 2001 attacks , critics perceived references in the album to the attacks . For example , Jeff Gordinier of Entertainment Weekly compared the two towers of Marina City to the World Trade Center towers . Also containing similar themes are the songs " War on War " and " Ashes of American Flags " which contains the line " I would like to salute the ashes of American flags . " The song " Jesus , Etc . " also contains these lyrics : " Tall buildings shake , Voices escape singing sad sad songs ... Voices whine , Skyscrapers are scraping together , your voice is smoking . "

The album was voted as the 100th " Greatest Album Ever " in a 2006 Q Magazine poll . In 2008 , Rolling Stone critic Tom Moon listed Yankee Hotel Foxtrot among the 1 @, @ 000 Recordings to Hear Before You Die . The album was also included in the book 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before

You Die .

Yankee Hotel Foxtrot found a place on many lists of the greatest albums of the 2000s . Rolling Stone ranked the album at number three on its list of the 100 Best Albums of the Decade . Pitchfork Media put the album at number four on the Top 200 Albums of the 2000s . The alternative music website also named " Poor Places " and " Jesus , Etc . " as the 147th and 61st best songs of the decade , respectively . Paste named the album the second @-@ best album of the decade .

= = Track listing = =

All lyrics written by Jeff Tweedy , all music composed by Jeff Tweedy and Jay Bennett except where noted .

= = Personnel = =

Credits according to liner notes .

= = = Wilco = = =

Jeff Tweedy - vocals , guitar , programming , harmonica

Jay Bennett ? programming , guitar , piano , keyboards , synthesizers , organ , bass , drums , percussion , lap steel , glockenspiel , vibraphone , bells , vocals

John Stirratt ? bass , vocals

Leroy Bach - piano , guitar , organ , glockenspiel , vibraphone , bass , percussion , horns

Glenn Kotche - drums , percussion , hammered dulcimer , siren , chimes

Horns and strings arranged by Jeff Tweedy and John Stirratt

= = = Additional personnel = = =

Ken Coomer - additional drums and percussion

Fred Lonberg @-@ Holm ? cello

Craig Christiansen - programming , keyboards , synthesizers , percussion , autoharp , harmonium

Jessy Greene - violin , viola

Steve Rooke ? mastering

Chris Brickley ? engineering , mixing

Jim O 'Rourke ? acoustic guitar , electric guitar , piano , keyboards , toy piano , stylophone , engineering , mixing

Wilco ? producer

Sam Jones ? photography