

= Surfacing (album) =

Surfacing is the fourth studio album by Canadian singer @-@ songwriter Sarah McLachlan . Released in 1997 , it was produced by McLachlan 's frequent collaborator , Pierre Marchand . McLachlan set about writing Surfacing in 1996 , after two and a half years touring for her previous album , 1994 's Fumbling Towards Ecstasy . Mentally exhausted , she found it difficult to concentrate on her new album and took six months off in Vancouver . After that she completed the ten songs for the album and went to Marchand 's Quebec studio to record .

Surfacing was released in July 1997 , coinciding with the start of McLachlan 's Lilith Fair tour . The album was a commercial success worldwide , reached the top position on the Canadian RPM 100 Albums chart and number two on the US Billboard 200 . Critical reviews were mixed ; some of the more positive reviews praised the songwriting , while the album 's detractors criticized it as banal and slow . The album spawned two Billboard Hot 100 top @-@ five hits , " Adia " and " Angel " , the top @-@ 15 hit " Building a Mystery " , and the top @-@ 30 hit " Sweet Surrender " . A radio @-@ only song , " I Love You " , was released in 2000 .

The album won four Juno Awards including for Album of the Year . " Building a Mystery " was awarded the Grammy Award for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance , while the instrumental @-@ only song " Last Dance " won the Grammy Award for Best Pop Instrumental Performance .

= = Background = =

Following the 1993 release of her third album , Fumbling Towards Ecstasy , McLachlan spent two and a half years touring . This long period on the road finished in January 1996 ; she was due to begin work on her fourth album in April of that year , but was mentally exhausted . She later said " When I got off the road , I thought Fumbling was my swan song , [and] I 'd never make another record ever again . I couldn 't imagine writing another song in my life . I had a huge psychological block for a long time . " She spent time working in the studio in Quebec but struggled to produce anything for her new album . At her manager 's suggestion , she returned home to Vancouver and took six months off . She said that after this break ? and some time spent in therapy ? she began to feel more in control of her creativity and started writing material for the album .

One of the first songs written for the album was " Angel " . McLachlan said that writing the song was easy , " a real joyous occasion . " It was inspired by articles that she read in Rolling Stone about musicians who turned to heroin to cope with the pressures of the music industry and subsequently overdosed . She said that she identified with the feelings that might lead someone to use heroin : " I 've been in that place where you 're so fucked up and you 're so lost that you don 't know who you are anymore , and you 're miserable ? and here 's this escape route . I 've never done heroin , but I 've done plenty of other things to escape . " She said that the song is about " trying not to take responsibility for other people 's shit and trying to love yourself at the same time . " Another song that she found easy to write was " Building a Mystery " , co @-@ written with her regular collaborator , Canadian musician and producer Pierre Marchand . Marchand heard her playing a guitar riff and suggested adding some lyrics that he had already written . They came up with the rest of the lyrics together , according to McLachlan , " pretty darn quickly . " When the album was finished , McLachlan commented , " I was so happy when I could let it go . I didn 't give it another thought when it was done . "

= = Recording and release = =

Like most of McLachlan 's albums , Surfacing was recorded at Marchand 's Wild Sky Studios in Morin @-@ Heights , Quebec . Marchand , who produced , engineered and mixed the album , recorded it on an Otari RADAR recorder and a Neumann 149 microphone . McLachlan played piano , acoustic guitar and electric guitar and Marchand played keyboards , bass and a drum machine as well as providing background vocals . The other musicians on the album were Jim Creeggan on upright bass , Yves Desrosiers on guitar , musical saw , lap steel guitar and slide bass , Brian

Minato on bass and electric guitar , Michel Pepin on electric guitar and Ashwin Sood (whom McLachlan married in 1997) on percussion and drums .

The album was released on July 15 , 1997 , on Nettwerk and Arista Records , reaching No. 1 on the Canadian RPM 100 Albums chart and No. 2 on the US Billboard 200 . The release of the album coincided with the inaugural tour of McLachlan 's Lilith Fair in mid @-@ 1997 . The first single from the album was " Building a Mystery " , released on August 19 ; it reached No. 1 on the Canadian singles chart and No. 13 on the US Billboard Hot 100 . " Sweet Surrender " was released March 10 , 1998 , and reached No. 2 on the Canadian chart and No. 28 on the Hot 100 . The third single released from the album was " Adia " on May 4 . It peaked at No. 3 on both the Canadian singles chart and the Billboard Hot 100 . " Angel " followed on November 24 , reaching No. 9 in Canada , and No. 4 on the Hot 100 . " I Love You " charted at No. 23 on the Billboard Hot Dance Club Songs in April 2000 .

= = Reception = =

= = = Critical = = =

Writing for The New York Times , Sia Michel called the album " lushly atmospheric " but also ambivalent . She said that while the album paints a " vivid emotional landscape " , it is at odds with McLachlan 's statement that the album was about " ' facing ugly things ' about herself " ; not revealing anything particularly dark . Michel also noted certain old @-@ fashioned ideas in the album , particularly in " Sweet Surrender " , that contrast with the work of contemporaries such as Ani DiFranco and PJ Harvey . She cited " Witness " as the highlight and said of the album , " [p] erhaps she hasn 't found what she 's looking for , but at least she 's trying . " Elysa Gardner of Los Angeles Times gave the album two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of four and said it " Showcases her considerable strengths--a shimmering soprano voice and a knack for intelligent , emotionally forthright lyrics but also suffers from a lack of compelling craftsmanship and textural daring . "

Music critic Robert Christgau gave the album a mixed review , with a C- rating . He said that although he had stayed away from McLachlan 's music in the past , " between her Lilith Fair counterpalooza and ' Building a Mystery ' bonanza , [he] had to dive in , and got less than [he 'd] bargained for . " He criticized McLachlan 's " monumental banality " and summed the album up as " renormalized pop at its most unnecessary . " A reviewer for Rolling Stone criticized the album 's slow tempo , commenting that " if you want a piece of her nirvana , you have to go along at her protracted , glacial pace . " They said that McLachlan is too " rigid in her introspection " and that they would like to hear her " work up a good head of steam " .

AllMusic 's Stephen Thomas Erlewine gave the album three stars out of five and compared it unfavorably to McLachlan 's previous album Fumbling Towards Ecstasy . He said that some of the songs were good , and praised " Building a Mystery " in particular , but said that the album offered nothing new . He also noted that the timing of the release , coinciding with the launch of Lilith Fair and the publicity that McLachlan received from that , helped sales of the album . Jom , a staff reviewer for Sputnikmusic , gave the album a positive review , calling it " one of [McLachlan 's] best albums " and praising her " tremendous growth as a songwriter and a musician " . In interviews , American hip hop artist Darryl McDaniels of Run @-@ D.M.C. has said that hearing " Angel " on the radio , and subsequently listening to more of McLachlan 's music , helped him through a period of depression .

= = = Starr report = = =

The album was mentioned in the Starr Report , the late @-@ 1990s account of Independent Counsel Ken Starr 's investigation of the Monica Lewinsky scandal . After a visit to the White House in November 1997 , Lewinsky wrote that she " noticed you (President Clinton) had the new Sarah

McLachlan CD " and that " whenever I listen to song # 5 (Do What You Have to Do) I think of you .
" . McLachlan 's representatives had no comment on the matter .

= = = Awards = = =

At the Juno Awards of 1998 , McLachlan won four awards : Best Female Vocalist , Songwriter of the Year (with Pierre Marchand , for " Building a Mystery ") , Best Album (for Surfacing) and Single of the Year (for " Building a Mystery ") . The following year , she did not win any awards , but was nominated for Single of the Year (for " Adia ") and Best Video (for " Sweet Surrender ") .

At the 40th Grammy Awards in 1998 , McLachlan was nominated for three awards ; she won the awards for Best Female Pop Vocal Performance (for " Building a Mystery ") and Best Pop Instrumental Performance (for " Last Dance ") . In 1999 , she received one more nomination for the album , Best Female Pop Vocal Performance (for " Adia ") ; she lost to Celine Dion .

= = Track listing = =

Early editions sold in the U.S. and Canada included a two @-@ song bonus disc containing an alternate mix of " Sweet Surrender " and a rendition of " The Prayer of St. Francis " . Both of these tracks appeared on the Japanese edition of the album as well .

" Full of Grace " previously appeared on the collection Rarities , B @-@ Sides and Other Stuff . Song was also featured in the final moments of the second season finale of Buffy the Vampire Slayer .

" I Love You " would later be covered by Ellen Greene of Little Shop of Horrors fame for her album In His Eyes .

= = Personnel = =

Jim Creeggan ? upright bass

Yves Desrosiers ? electric guitars , lapsteel , slide bass , saw

Pierre Marchand ? bass , drum machine , background vocals , keyboards

Sarah McLachlan ? vocals , acoustic and electric guitars , piano

Brian Minato ? bass , electric guitar

Michel Pepin ? electric guitars

Ashwin Sood ? drums , percussion , piano , background vocals

= = Charts = =

Album

Singles