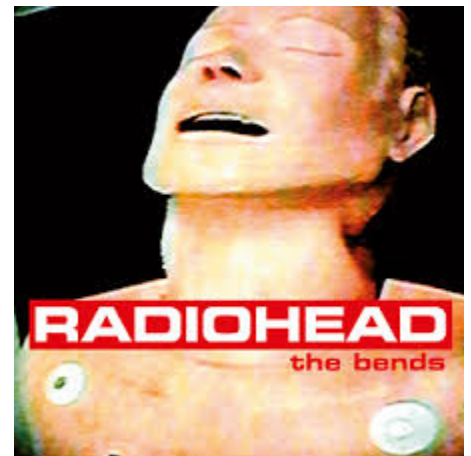


-The Bends-Album-Review-

By Lyndon W

The Bends is the second album made by the English rock band called Radiohead. The producers that worked on the album were: John Leckie, Nigel Godrich and Jim Warren. Work on the album began in rak studios 1994. The band was under very high pressure due to parlophone wanting them to beat their debut single 'Creep' in sales, but a recent tour by radiohead caused progress on the album to be slow. After the tour, work resumed in Abbey Road studio in London. The band released several singles before the album because the record company wanted to maximise sales. The singles they released in no particular order include: my iron lung, high and dry, high and dry on the a side and planet telex on the b side, fake plastic trees, the bends and finally street spirit (fade out). Street spirit (fade out) was the bands first top five entry on the uk singles chart. While making the album they used some weird and pretty unique instruments like a digitech whammy pedal that changes the pitch of the sound of the instrument, and they used it on songs "just" and "my iron lung". And an e-bow (electronic bow) which makes a magnetic field that vibrates the strings like a regular violin bow, and it was used on my iron lung. They released the album on March 13 1995.



Digitech Whammy pedal used on "My iron lung" and "just"



E-bow (electronic bow) used on "my iron lung"

-The-Band-Radiohead-

Radiohead is an English rock band from Oxfordshire. The band members are Thom Yorke (vocals, guitar keyboards) Jonny Greenwood (guitar, keyboards, other instruments) and Colin Greenwood who are brothers, ed o'brien (guitar and backing vocals) and last but not least philip selway (drums). Radiohead's biggest hit known as "OK Computer" released in 1997 and their first album is called pablo honey which includes radioheads debut single and first big hit "creep". Radiohead lately has been on a seven year hiatus but has just returned to touring this year (2025).



Ok Computer Album cover | Pablo Honey Album cover



Photo of the band from 1995.

-Background-of-the-album-

At the beginning of the album's creation the band felt pressured because of the success on their debut album Pablo Honey. Thom Yorke got quite ill after a tour causing radiohead to skip the 1993 reading festival. Thom Yorke told NME "physically im fucked and mentally ive had enough". And in response EMI their record company at the time gave them six months to "get sorted" or be dropped. The co producer was shown a demo tape of the bends by Thom Yorke the co producer said that they were "all better than anything on pablo honey". And the bends was the first album that the band collaborated with Stanley Donwood to make their album cover which they have worked with on every album since.

-Songs-

The album is standard length consisting of 12 songs those songs being:

1. Planet Telex ←
2. The Bends ←
3. High and Dry
4. Fake Plastic Trees
5. Bones
6. (Nice Dream) ←
7. Just ←
8. My Iron Lung ←
9. Bullet Proof ... I Wish I Was
10. Black Star
11. Sulk
12. Street Spirit (Fade Out) ←

Songs with ← are songs i reviewed

-Planet-Telex-

This song opens the album with an ominous echo into a weird alien almost keyboard and drum loop. Then the rest of the band comes in with Thom Yorke's vocals almost reaching out to something far away? It's hard to explain. This song is a little peep into what's to come later in the album. The song is about feeling disconnected from the world and the world seeming detached from you, people relationships and situations not feeling real, this is shown in the lyrics "everything is broken everyone is broken". I feel like it's the band explaining or expressing that they're overwhelmed by their sudden fame and that it doesn't really feel real and feels fake. About half way through the song the guitar comes in with a beautiful riff that feels almost alive and its repeating thom's lyrics back to him, it sounds very cool with the rest of the band in the background and i love this song.

8.5/10

-The-Bends-

The second song on the album "the bends" opens with very quiet bells then explodes into the guitar and not too long after Thom comes in with his vocals. The guitar slows down then stops to just drums bass and Thom's vocals for a bit then the guitar comes back in. The guitar is very rough like hard-rock and it sounds very cool. After the guitar comes back it continues to play through the vocals with the rest of the band. The song is about the pressure of emotion and social relationships, and the fear of losing oneself under that pressure. The lyrics show someone struggling with a very sudden change in fame and expectation. Similar to the previous song about the band's sudden fame. There's a mix of anger, confusion, and vulnerability as the narrator tries to figure out who they are while everything around them feels unstable. "The bends" is a sickness caused by sudden change in pressure. Divers experience this if they rise to the surface too quickly, the sickness is also called "decompression sickness" this is reflected in the song with the narrator being under pressure and then decompressing emotionally as the song goes on.

9/10 I really like this song.

-(Nice-Dream)-

Nice dream is the middle of the album and the transition into the second half of the album. It is very different from the previous songs in the album as it starts very happy sounding with almost joyful acoustic guitar but then the electric guitar and the vocals come in and it feels more sad and happy but like in between the two. The song isn't very musically complicated and the band mostly stays as a whole for most of the song. Then at the chorus Thom repeats the words "nice dream" and I don't really know how to describe it but he sounds free almost wishing for a perfect life but also thanking I have no idea this is just how I feel when I listen to the song. The song is like the narrator is asking, praying, maybe wishing for a better life and asking for things but indirectly. This one is a little confusing to me but I got it eventually.

6.5/10 I'm unsure about this one.

-Just-

"Just" is the first song after "(Nice Dream)" which is the center of the album and is a little bit of a style change in the album. It opens with a quick acoustic guitar riff and then blasts into the rest of the band playing. The electric guitar ascends in sound almost walking up stairs then stops and Thom's lyrics come in. There's a short part where it just Thom's lyrics drums and a little guitar doodle at some parts then it transitions into the chorus with everyone stopping except for Thom's lyrics then exploding with the rest of the band playing it sounds super cool and kind of strange and alien but also hard rock like most of the album. The song is about someone who constantly blames themselves and overthinks everything until it becomes self-destructive. The lyrics show a person trapped in their own head, obsessing over every action and trying to

control things they can't actually control. The lyrics are sung in an almost condescending tone like the narrator is speaking down on themselves or the person who is blaming themselves. 10/10 I love this song, it's such a heavy song and I love the way the guitar sounds.

-My-Iron-Lung-

My Iron lung opens with a very weird guitar sound that is impossible to explain, it waves and its sharp and very rough but high pitched and a little bit "twangy" it also has a droning constant sound in the background that adds onto the weird guitar riff. Once the lyrics start the guitar sound stops but the drone stops but is left to ring out. The vocals are very bitter, sarcastic, and sharp like a dagger. The song is about feeling trapped by something that's supposed to help you whether that's fame, expectations, or even a song that people latch onto too much. The lyrics show a mix of frustration and sarcasm, as if Thom Yorke is pointing at the thing keeping him alive and saying it's also slowly suffocating him.

8.5/10 im a fan of this one its very unique and the guitar is awesome

-Street-Spirit-(Fade-Out)-

Street spirit is the last song on the album and probably one of the best by radiohead, and a perfect song to close out the album. The song opens with an almost christmassy guitar loop, then thom's lyrics come in. They are a little bit melancholic and have a dark feel to them. The song slightly speeds up after a bit and then the chorus comes in, and Yorke is belting it out very emotionally and it is beautiful to listen too. Then after some other band members harmonized with Yorke and it's just so cool. And this order kind of repeats throughout the rest of the song. And at the end it fades out like the title. about despair, emotional exhaustion, and the feeling of being trapped by forces beyond your control. Thom Yorke has described it as one of the darkest things he's written, and that really shows in both the lyrics and the mood.

20/10 best song ever.

-Conclusion/Final-Thoughts-

In conclusion this is one of my favorite albums ever and I am a huge fan of radiohead, this album was a huge part of the band finding their style and it kinda reflects in some of their later albums which makes sense though. This album contains some of my favorite radiohead songs and it also has such an odd feeling when i listen to it but i just love it. Definitely top 3 Radiohead albums. 9.5/10

