



# The Rapture

## Siouxsie Sioux

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**Congratulations on *The Rapture*. It sounds stronger after every play.**

**"I've been talking to a lot of people who have maybe only played it one or two times, and I said: 'Well, it'll get better the more you play it.'"**

What was John Cale's involvement?

He produced half the tracks. When we finished touring after *Lollapalooza* and then a tour on our own, up to March 92, I uprooted myself and moved to France. I got the band down to the house and we wrote and demoed there. It was great to be in an environment that wasn't hired or part of the business. [There were] not even any roadies there, so we were just self-sufficient. It was a real reaction to the way we had approached the album before that, *Superstition*. It was recorded in a place called Leon, a town north of Biarritz in the south-west of France. That's the region where I live. We had nine songs at that point. We finished that, then had a great time playing some festivals and going to Australia in October.

"Before that, I went to see the Velvet Underground at the Paris Olympia show — the one used for the live recording of the video. It was just great to see one of your all-time favourite bands, as we were all too young to catch them when they were actually playing first time around. I think they only came to England once, and that was without John Cale, so that was a great event. When we got back from touring, we listened to what we had recorded. It sounded great, and we'd already recorded *The Rapture* at that point, but I felt it wasn't finished and I wanted to write some more material. A couple of songs I wasn't sure about and was thinking of dropping, so that December we wrote two or three more songs.

"Because of living in France, we have a few connections in Paris, and found out a friend of ours managed John Cale. We'd felt, on the songs we'd produced ourselves, that

we'd reached a logical conclusion. We knew we wanted a producer, and that had been the real despairing moment of mine with this album. We didn't want that Stephen Hague [an earlier producer] situation again. We had approached it very much as a live unit, very organically, and didn't want any technology to intrude. So there wasn't anyone we wanted to work with, and the record company was batting over ridiculous ideas and we were batting them back.

"When this friend mentioned John was coming over to work on an album he was finishing, me and Budgie looked at each other and said: 'Why didn't we think of that before?' He has certainly produced some landmark albums, like *The Stooges*, Patti Smith's *Horses* and the *Modern Lovers*. To me, those are real landmark albums, so we thought: 'Why not ask? He can only say no.' We kind of struck up a correspondence. He sounded interested, but obviously wanted to hear what we were doing. I think he's a very fussy man. He doesn't work with stuff he can't believe in. He was very complimentary, and said: 'Right, when can we do it?'

"We found a period in March that year where we all met in London, had a rehearsal room, worked on the new songs, and got into a recording studio in May. Within about a week, we had recorded five new songs, then mixed in New York in June, so it's been ready for a while. But the record company — Christmas arrives earlier and earlier! It takes longer and longer to put a record out once you've finished it."

Had you met Cale back in the late 70s punk days?

"No, we hadn't, and it's crazy we hadn't. Maybe because the connection was too obvious and we shied away from it. Myself, I'd bought a John Cale album before I'd heard of the Velvet Underground — *Fear* then *Slow Dazzle*.

Do you think it's important to have an outside voice involved in your music?

"We achieved so much on our own, but knew we took it to the conclusion. We did need someone else, but that someone else was a big question mark as far as what kind of producers are out there. They're very expensive and have such inflated opinions of themselves — and the reality is that they rarely mic up real guitars and real drum kits. We're sick of going into a studio and having some apprentice come in and fumble away in the dark.

"The fact we had someone the stature of John Cale meant we didn't really have to worry about watching him to make sure he didn't fuck up. Also, there was little we needed to explain to him. He's very intuitive and quick-witted. [He] has a great sense of humour as well, which is always important."

Never a dull moment with him, I'm sure.

"I think he has mellowed out, but he still has that glint in his eye, which you cannot mistake. [He] still has a good wicked glint. He's no Florence Nightingale, believe me. And, yes, we're twinkling away wickedly, still."

Tell us about the title track. It's arguably the longest, most daring song you've done.

"It's probably the most ambitious idea we've had, not just because of the length of it [11.32], but

because of how I wanted it to flow and be a journey. I didn't want to, and we wouldn't and couldn't, have it be some kind of musical virtuoso show-off — a big wank. We're self taught musicians, so we don't know how to wank off like that. But it was ambitious — an idea we'd had for so long, and we had

the title. We'd actually written the middle section as a band in France, in rehearsals. The front and ending came when we were in a recording state. That's when we tend to open up a lot more. It's a lot more relaxed, less frenetic, so things happen. It's always great to go into the studio and have those things happen — when it works. When it doesn't, it's frustrating."

You have such a distinctive sound. Does that make it a real challenge to keep from repeating yourselves?

"I don't know. I think because our tastes and interests — not just musical, but with theatre, film and books — they're so diverse that it's kind of a challenge to reinterpret other areas. We'll never say: 'We need to do a jazz song now.' We might like something that sounds a little jazzy, but whenever we play it, it always has our edge to it. There are no rules as far as we're concerned. We have used technology, but we hate it when things use us."

Is the song 'The Rapture' at all inspired by the film of that name?

It's funny — in North America and Europe, people have been asking that, and I've tried to explain that it was a film title friends of

ours in America kept telling us to go and see —

'you'll love it' —

and I never actually did get to see it. But

the actual title and the word

acted as a spring-board for

so many ideas for me that maybe it's

good I didn't get to see the film. I asked

someone here today what

*"The fact we had someone [a producer] the stature of John Cale meant we didn't really have to worry about watching him to make sure he didn't fuck up."*