

= Era Vulgaris (album) =

Era Vulgaris is the fifth full length studio album by American rock band Queens of the Stone Age . The album was completed in early April 2007 and released on June 8 , 2007 in some countries , June 11 , 2007 in the United Kingdom and June 12 , 2007 in the United States . The tracks " Sick , Sick , Sick " and " 3 's & 7 's " were released as singles in early June , with a third single " Make It Wit Chu " released around Halloween of 2007 .

The album debuted at # 14 on the US Billboard 200 charts selling 52 @, @ 000 copies in its first week , which was a decline in comparison to the previous album , which opened at # 5 with 91 @, @ 000 copies sold in its debut week . In other countries it has reached much loftier debut positions , mostly in the top ten , such as number five in Canada where it sold approximately 10 @, @ 000 copies in its opening week .

= = Overview and background = =

While 2002 's Songs for the Deaf was said to be inspired by Josh Homme 's tedious drive through the Southern Californian desert , the inspiration for Era Vulgaris came from Homme 's daily drive through Hollywood . He described the record as " dark , hard , and electrical , sort of like a construction worker , " " ? it 's like dirt , clearly seen . " The album 's title Era Vulgaris refers to the Latin term for Common Era . The title was chosen by Homme because he thought " it sounds like ' the Vulgar Era ' , which I like , because that sounds like something that I would like to be part of ? I mean I think we 're in it , and I 'm stoked " .

Two tracks from the album had previously been released or performed elsewhere . " Into the Hollow " had been performed by producers Josh Homme and Chris Goss as The 5 : 15ers , and " Make It Wit Chu " had been recorded as a Desert Sessions track , as well as appearing on the Queens ' live album Over the Years and Through the Woods .

= = Production = =

= = = Pre @-@ production speculation and contributors = = =

In June 2006 , in an interview on the Australian radio station Triple J , Jesse F. Keeler , the bassist from Death from Above 1979 , revealed that he would be playing bass on an upcoming Queens of the Stone Age album , but said that he would more than likely not be touring with the band due to his desire to spend more time with his girlfriend . Eventually on the DFA internet forum , Keeler revealed that due to conflicting schedules , he would not be appearing on the album . In a July interview with NME , Homme confirmed that the band was back in the studio , writing , but he remained unwilling to reveal who would appear in the band on the new record :

That 's not a healthy question . You 'll ruin the surprise . We 've gotta keep our cool .

The album was expected to include guest performances by Trent Reznor from Nine Inch Nails , Julian Casablancas from The Strokes , former band member Mark Lanegan , Billy Gibbons of ZZ Top , and (jokingly) deceased humorist Erma Bombeck . Of these , however , only Casablancas ' and Lanegan 's tracks appear on the U.S. release : Casablancas performed synth guitar and backing vocals on " Sick , Sick , Sick " , and Lanegan sang backing vocals on " River in the Road " . Ultimately , scheduling conflicts prevented Gibbons from appearing , while Reznor 's track " Era Vulgaris " was released separately on the You Know What You Did promotional CD and the UK edition of the album .

= = = Recording = = =

The album was recorded " with exactly zero input from [record label] Interscope Records " between July 2006 and April 2007 at Cherokee Studios , Hollywood , Steakhouse Studios , Los

Angeles and Sound City Studios , Van Nuys and mixed at Bay 7 Studios , North Hollywood , California . The album was recorded and mixed by Alain Johannes , while it was produced by Josh Homme and Chris Goss as the Fififf Teeners . The primary contributors to the recording were Homme , Troy van Leeuwen , Joey Castillo , Johannes and Goss .

We basically started a year ago . And like I said , we didn't really have anything written . So it was a long process . It was the longest I've ever taken to make a record , frankly . I've made records over the process of a year but this was the first time it's ever been my total focus for that long . This was the first time I've ever done that ... total focus for 10 months .

Goss and Johannes were replaced by Dean Fertita (keyboard) and Michael Shuman (bass) for later bonus track recordings and the subsequent supporting tour . Regarding the band's line @-@ up changes for Era Vulgaris , Homme commented , " I like combinations that no one would expect ? It's the cool part of any surprise party . "

= = Musical style and influences = =

Era Vulgaris displays influences from many different genres . The album departs from the softer , hollowbody guitar sound of their previous album Lullabies to Paralyze with heavy , crunchy guitars and adding in some electronic influences . Rolling Stone noted the influence of " New Wave synth geek Gary Numan ? all over this record . " Musically , the album has been described as " brand new retro " , a fusion of " punk , rock , blues and southern grit " (FHM) , and slower , moodier , and groggier than the band's previous efforts .

= = Marketing and promotion = =

= = Behind the scenes and promotional contest = = =

Shortly after the album's announcement in February 2007 , a video was posted on the band's official website showing Homme , Castillo and Van Leeuwen jamming . Along with brief footage of the recording session for " Misfit Love " , the last 6 ? 7 seconds of the video contained footage of the recording of " 3 's & 7 's " accompanied by studio @-@ mastered audio . A second video of the recording of the album surfaced subsequently on YouTube , depicting the band (this time including Alain Johannes) recording a new track , " Turning on the Screw " in studio .

In early April , the official band website was updated with a 37 second excerpt from " Sick , Sick , Sick " . This was replaced by the complete song , " 3 's and 7 's " , which was later removed . QOTSA fansite thefade.net announced a promotional contest for fans to win " a special package " from the band , confirmed as legitimate by the band's webmaster . On April 13 , packages were sent to selected winners containing a CD entitled You Know What You Did with the sole track " Era Vulgaris " , which Homme separately confirmed would not be appearing on the record , although it was included as a bonus track on the UK edition . The CD was accompanied by a handwritten letter asking fans to share the song in any way possible :

Hello friend -

Thank you for accepting this gift . Included you will find the will to dance & the song ERA VULGARIS . It was pulled from the new album (of the same name) so that it could be to you and become an example of how we think " from now on " should be . As in - We do for you , you do for us .

So to start this relationship off , we have done for you . Now we ask this in return . Share this with friends you think we (you & us) would enjoy . Upload it and spray it like time released graffiti (sic) on the websites of places it does not belong .

Is it a new recipe on Rachel Ray's site ? Is it a new Nickelback song on their board ? A secret Gov't document ? Video game cheats ? Sex site password ? Fuckin' whatever ? You decide . Then tell us how you shoved this song into the guts of the internet & we (both) can smile wide with pride at our new relationship .

OH , but not till after midnight tonight ... from now till then , is just for us . Can we trust you to wait ? Relationships are built on trust . Enjoy !

= = = Bulby , Xfm and soundtracks = = =

The full track " Sick , Sick , Sick " was leaked onto the Internet , countered by the posting of a promotional video to the official site featuring a " sales pitch " for Era Vulgaris by two talking lightbulbs , followed by a streaming of " Sick , Sick , Sick " with official lyrics displayed in the background .

On May 2 , 2007 , Homme , Van Leeuwen and new band member Dean Fertita appeared on London radio station Xfm , performing an acoustic set that included the tracks " 3 's & 7 's " , " Into the Hollow " and " Suture Up Your Future " .

It was announced that tracks from the band would appear in the video games Madden NFL 08 , Guitar Hero III : Legends of Rock and Rock Band , specifically that the track " 3 's & 7 's " would be featured in Madden NFL 08 and Guitar Hero III : Legends of Rock . Both " 3 's & 7 's " and " Sick , Sick , Sick " are available as downloadable content on Rock Band and Rock Band 2 , as they share the same Music Store . In addition , " Make It Wit Chu " was later included in the tracklist of Guitar Hero 5 .

= = Artwork = =

The album 's cover features the two lightbulbs from the promotional video , Bulby and his pirate accomplice (pictured right) , marking a change from the plainer designs of the bands ' previous albums . According to Homme , the light bulb represented " ? what you perceive to be a great idea that really is not that great of an idea " . The cover was a slip of paper , with a simplified credits page on the back side , marked with the outline of the record . The typography follows an Old English style font ; Blackmoor , with the ' Spermy Q ' seen on their album Songs for the Deaf .

An art booklet was also included , featuring " Bulby " and several other characters which unfolded to display a pin @-@ up advertisement for the album , following the 50 's advertising satire as the rest of the album art followed . The lack of liner notes for the album was remedied when the official website allowed users to view an e @-@ booklet , containing more detailed liner notes , lyrics , and previously unseen artwork . The green light bulb with the pirate hat , eye patch and peg leg is known as " Stumpy " .

Some copies of the album cover contain a red and yellow rectangle spoofing the Parental Advisory seal , reading " Rental Advisory : Freedom Not for Purchase " . Coincidentally , it was the first Queens of the Stone Age album since Rated R to not bear a genuine Parental Advisory seal .

The lightbulb characters were created by Morning Breath Inc. with overall art direction from Jason Noto and Doug Cunningham of Morning Breath Inc .

= = Reception = =

Reviews for the album were generally positive , earning a rating of 75 out of 100 on Metacritic , a decline from their previous two studio albums . Uncut and Allmusic 's reviews were particularly glowing , with the latter noting how Era Vulgaris is " as different from Lullabies as that was to their dramatic widescreen breakthrough , Songs for the Deaf " . Originally awarding the album with a four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half star rating , Allmusic changed this to a four @-@ star rating in 2013 , upon the release of the band 's follow @-@ up , ... Like Clockwork .

The Observer also commented on the album 's change in direction , commenting that the band had " turned its back on the mainstream " and that the album was " uneasy and brooding " and " Gripping stuff " . Rolling Stone gave the album four stars for the first time since the band 's self titled debut , commenting that " Era Vulgaris is Homme 's fifth Queens album , and like the others , it 's intricately crafted , meticulously polished and ruthlessly efficient in its pursuit of depraved rock thrills . " New York Times critic Jon Pareles selected the album as the 10th best release of 2007 .

A number of reviews were negative , however ; Q magazine gave the album two stars out of five , while The Village Voice criticized Homme for lack of originality , describing the record 's sound as " listless and drained of ideas " . The Guardian slated the record as lyrically clichéd and lacking the input of former bassist Nick Oliveri , and Entertainment Weekly delivered the closing indictment that " there isn 't a single song here that you 'll remember , or want to return to , two summers hence . "

Era Vulgaris had sold 198 @, @ 000 copies in the US , and 521 @, @ 000 copies worldwide before falling off the charts . The US sales are a decline from their previous album , as Lullabies to Paralyze , had sold 342 @, @ 000 copies in the US by March 2007 . Neither album achieved the commercial success of the band 's 2002 release , Songs for the Deaf , which had sold 986 @, @ 000 copies in the US alone as of June 2007 .

= = Track listing = =

All tracks were written by Joshua Homme , Troy Van Leeuwen and Joey Castillo , except for " Sick , Sick , Sick " (Homme , Goss , Van Leeuwen , Castillo) and " Make It wit Chu " (Homme , Johannes , Melchiondo) .

= = Personnel = =

According to the album liner notes , the contributors were as follows :

= = = Core line @-@ up = = =

Josh Homme ? lead vocals , guitar , backing vocals (" Make It wit Chu ") , lead guitar (tracks 1 @, @ 3 @, @ 7 @, @ 8) , acoustic guitar (" Battery Acid ") , percussion (" Turnin ' on the Screw ") , bass (tracks 4 @-@ 6 , 8 @-@ 11) , lap steel guitar (" Into the Hollow ") , keyboard (" Into the Hollow ") , electric piano (tracks 8 and 9) , rhodes piano (" Make It wit Chu ") , " badly tuned " piano (" Run , Pig , Run ") , organ (" River in the Road ") , " percussion ball " (" Run , Pig , Run ")

Troy Van Leeuwen ? keyboard (tracks 1 @, @ 2 @, @ 5 @, @ 6) , guitar (tracks 1 @-@ 4 @, @ 7 @, @ 8 @, @ 11) , lead guitar (tracks 5 @, @ 6 @, @ 9) , " crazy delay " guitar (" River in the Road ") , lap steel guitar (" 3 's & 7 's ") , backing vocals (tracks 1 @, @ 2 @, @ 6 @, @ 7) , bass (track 2 and 7) , " the percussion part that 's a bitch " (" Turnin ' on the Screw ") , Moog (" I 'm Designer ") , rhodes (" Into the Hollow ")

Joey Castillo ? drums , percussion (track 1 and 7) , " percussion ball " (" Run , Pig , Run ")

= = = Guest appearances = = =

Alain Johannes ? bass (tracks 1 and 3) , acoustic guitar (" Run , Pig , Run ") , counterpoint guitar (" Misfit Love ") , harmonic guitar (" Make It wit Chu ") , counterpoint fiddle (" Misfit Love ") , " cig " fiddle (" Run , Pig , Run ") , marxaphone (" Run , Pig , Run ") , backing vocals (" Run , Pig , Run ")

Chris Goss ? keyboard (" Into the Hollow ") , " the chicken pluckin guitar " (" Turnin ' on the Screw ") , " twinkley bits " (" Sick , Sick , Sick ") , organ (" Misfit Love ") , electric piano (" Suture Up Your Future ") , " eclectic " piano (" Battery Acid ") , bass (" River in the Road ") , backing vocals (tracks 7 and 11)

Julian Casablancas ? casio guitar and vocals (" Sick , Sick , Sick ")

Serrina Sims ? backing vocals (" Make It wit Chu ")

Brody Dalle @-@ Homme ? backing vocals (" Make It wit Chu ")

Liam Lynch ? backing vocals (" Make It wit Chu ")

Mark Lanegan ? harmony vocals (" River in the Road ")

This list is exhaustive of the core eleven tracks (see above) , but does not take into account contributions to bonus tracks .

= = = Technical = = =

Technical credits for the album are as follows :

Chris Goss & Josh Homme (as The Fififf Teeners) ? producers

Alain Johannes ? engineer

Alain Johannes & Joe Barresi ? mixing

Justin Smith ? mixing assistant

Stephen Marcussen ? mastering

Jason Noto ? design , illustrations

Dr. Mark A. Williams ? A & R

= = Chart positions = =

= = Album release history = =