

= Wasting Light =

Wasting Light is the seventh studio album by American rock band Foo Fighters . It was released on April 12 , 2011 on RCA Records , and is the first album to feature rhythm guitarist Pat Smear since The Colour and the Shape ( 1997 ) , making the band a five piece with the album . Wishing to capture the essence of the group 's earlier work and avoid the artificiality of digital recording , frontman Dave Grohl arranged for the band to record in his garage in Encino , California using only analog equipment . The sessions were supervised by producer Butch Vig , with whom Grohl had worked on Nirvana 's Nevermind . Since the old equipment did not allow for many mistakes to be corrected in post @-@ production , the band spent three weeks rehearsing the songs , and Vig had to relearn outdated editing techniques . The band went for a heavier and rawer sound to contrast with the musical experiments from their previous albums , and most of the lyrics were written as Grohl reflected upon his life and possible future . Guest musicians include Bob Mould , Krist Novoselic , Jessy Greene , Rami Jaffe and Fee Waybill .

The recording sessions were documented for fans on the band 's website and Twitter , and the album 's promotion included the documentary Back and Forth and a worldwide concert tour that included concerts played in fans ' garages . Wasting Light was preceded by the successful single " Rope " , which became only the second song ever to debut at number one on Billboard 's Rock Songs chart . The follow @-@ up single , " Walk " , also charted highly . The album was a commercial success , debuting at number one in eleven countries , and it received positive reviews from most music critics , who complimented its production and the band 's songwriting . In 2012 , Wasting Light and its songs earned Foo Fighters five Grammy Awards , including Best Rock Album .

= = Background = =

After the Echoes , Silence , Patience & Grace tour ended in 2008 , the Foo Fighters went to Grandmaster Recorders in Hollywood to record 14 compositions written during the tours so as to possibly release a new album without much promotion and touring . The band eventually decided to take a break instead of continuing to work on those recordings . Three songs from those sessions saw a later release : " Wheels " and " Word Forward " , were rerecorded for the band 's Greatest Hits album , and " Rope " became a part of Wasting Light . As " Wheels " and " Word Forward " were the reunion of frontman Dave Grohl with producer Butch Vig , who had previously worked with Nirvana on their breakthrough album Nevermind , Grohl thought it was finally time to bring Vig to produce the next Foo Fighters album .

The idea of a new album came back in 2010 , as frontman Dave Grohl was touring Australia with Them Crooked Vultures . Grohl decided that " we should make a documentary about the recording of this new album and make it a history of the band too . Rather than just record the album in the most expensive studio with the most state @-@ of @-@ the @-@ art equipment , what if Butch and I were to get back together after 20 years and dust off the tape machines and put them in my garage ? " Grohl later elaborated that Vig was brought in so the record could be " that one album that kinda defines the band : it might not be their best album , but it 's the one people identify the band with the most , like Back In Black or the Metallica Black Album . It 's like you take all of the things that people consider your band 's signature characteristics and just amplify them and make one simple album with that . And that 's sorta what I thought we could do with Butch , because Butch has a great way of trimming all the fat and making sense of it all . " Grohl also used the tour with the Vultures to turn song ideas into demos , which were then brought to drummer Taylor Hawkins to be further developed . The album would also mark the return of guitarist Pat Smear as a permanent member ; Smear left the Foo Fighters after the release of The Colour and the Shape , but had been part of the touring band since 2006 .

Unlike the band 's previous two albums , Wasting Light was recorded in Dave Grohl 's garage in Encino , California , as opposed to the band 's home @-@ built studio , Studio 606 . Regarding this decision , Grohl states : " There 's poetry in being the band that can sell out Wembley but also

makes a record in a garage . Why go into the most expensive studio with the biggest producer and use the best state @-@ of @-@ the @-@ art equipment ? Where 's the rock 'n'roll in that ? " Grohl added it was a way to " do something really primal sounding " , innovate , break people 's expectations and " make records the way we used to fucking make records " .

The album was recorded using entirely analogue equipment until post @-@ mastering . Grohl said it was done that way because he felt digital recording was getting out of control : " when I listen to music these days , and I hear Pro Tools and drums that sound like a machine- it kinda sucks the life out of music . " According to Grohl , the analog strategy would make the record " sound rawer and somewhat imperfect " , something which guitarist Chris Shiflett agreed was beneficial , declaring that " rock n 'roll is about flaws and imperfections " . Bassist Nate Mendel added that " we grew up making records on tape , which has a certain sound , certain limitations " , and drummer Taylor Hawkins said that the digital recording in contemporary rock n ' roll lead to an artificial sound : " they kinda played it and then how someone else manipulated it in a computer , to make them sound a certain way . " Hawkins believed an analog project would help the band reclaim its artistic freedom .

Once Vig learned about the analog project , at first he considered Grohl was joking , but then replied that " You guys have to play really well , because nothing is gonna be fixed " since mistakes are not as easily correctable as in a digital recording . With that in mind , the band spent three weeks doing pre @-@ production and rehearsals at Studio 606 , where the composition was completed , going " from forty songs to fourteen " , and said songs were rehearsed to be recorded live , while in previous records , as put by Mendel , " we 'd often come up with parts in the studio , and the songs would evolve " . Smear added that the band committed to not change what would end recorded : " Whatever we did , we didn 't change it . If a distorted vocal went through a pedal , that 's what it was going to be . ?

= = Recording = =

Grohl 's garage was equipped with microphones , sound baffles on the garage door and behind the drums to prevent sound leakings , and a carpet under the drum kit to make it sound less " loud and bright " . To reduce the cymbal bleed , the microphones were rearranged and the crash cymbal was traded for a " shorter @-@ decay Zildjian cymbal with holes drilled in it " . A room next to the study was turned into an isolation booth to record the vocals . For the recording itself a makeshift control room was built inside a tent on the backyard , and a system of two cameras and a television provided the communication between the garage and the control room . The equipment was the same the band employed to record the albums *There Is Nothing Left to Lose* and *One by One* at Grohl 's former house in Alexandria , Virginia .

Recording of the album began September 6 , 2010 , lasting for eleven weeks , each one focusing on a particular song , something Vig stated " was good because each song kinda had its own life " . The recordings started with Grohl 's rhythm guitar and Taylor Hawkins ' drumming to provide the foundations and see if both could " lock in " . Hawkins usually played for hours before he got " a drum track I 'd be proud of " . Click tracks were used , but Vig said that there was not a worry for the drums to follow it exactly as they " wanted it to groove " and " we realized that when everything is off just a few milliseconds , the sound gets wider and thicker . " After the guitar and drum track , Mendel would play his basslines , which were practiced enough for them to be recorded perfectly on the first take . The following day , Shiflett and Smear would play guitars , with the latter being the last and usually being given a baritone guitar to have a different sound from the other guitarists . After the instrumental backing was ready , Grohl did the vocals either on the control room or the isolation booth . As Grohl wanted the songs " to have maximum emotional potential " , the vocals were screamed to the point he had headaches ? " when the mic is picking up every tiny inconsistency , you really strain to make it sound right . "

Bob Mould of Hüsker Dü , one of Grohl 's idols , was brought in to do vocals in a song Grohl conceived as a duet with him , " Dear Rosemary " . Mould also played guitar on the track , even though Vig 's plans had him just singing . Grohl 's and Smear 's former Nirvana bandmate Krist Novoselic appeared in " I Should Have Known " as Grohl thought " it would be nice to have him

come down and share the experience " and that the song would be enhanced by his bass and accordion @-@ playing . " " Miss the Misery " features Fee Waybill of The Tubes , a personal friend of Grohl who said that the frontman invited him because " the background vocal sounded like him " . Other guest musicians included three members of the expanded touring band , keyboardist Rami Jaffee , violinist Jessy Greene and percussionist Drew Hester .

Vig started doubting it could be done fully analog once the tapes for the first song recorded , " Miss the Misery " , started falling apart , but Grohl reassured him " no , Butch , I don 't want any computer in this house at all . " The producer said that during recording he " had to force my brain to fire different synapses " to remember how to deal with the analog equipment and the lack of a digital display . One of the habits Vig had to call back was editing using a razor blade ? " I used to be able to do 20 edits in half an hour if need be . It took me about 20 minutes to do the first edit ! " ? a technique he employed for the first songs recorded . Eventually he gave up and decided to punch in and punch out tapes instead , as the process was time @-@ consuming and a more editable tape sent to Vig from Smart Studios was mostly ruined by one of Grohl 's daughters . While many recordings had inserts and some parts rerecorded , the only song that had to be redone from scratch was " I Should Have Known " , as Grohl felt Vig was " trying to make this into a radio single " when the singer wanted it " to sound really raw and primal " .

The mixing started at Chalice Recording Studios , but moved to Grohl 's house as engineer Alan Moulder said it was the way " to make it sound like your garage . " Since Grohl 's mixing console was not automated , at times four people ? Vig , Grohl , Moulder and engineer James Brown ? had to work simultaneously on the board , something Grohl found interesting because every song was done differently and " even the mixes sounded like performances " The mixes were tested out in the cars of the band members and Vig , as they felt that " if it sounds good on a lousy stereo , it will sound good anywhere " .

The recording of the album was filmed as part of a career @-@ spanning documentary called Back and Forth , which Grohl said was essential to make audiences understand the decision to record the album in his garage . The album name , taken from a lyric in " Miss the Misery " , was chosen by Grohl because " it seemed to resonate with me : ' OK , that 's what we 're here doing ' " , as the band always " recorded each album thinking it could be our last " and tried to take the most of their tenure together ? " we 're only here for a short time , we 're lucky to be alive , lucky to be a band ; I don 't take any of this for granted ; I don 't want to spend my time looking backwards , I want to look forwards " .

= = Composition = =

For Wasting Light , Grohl stated that they would go back to a rawer and heavier sound after " exploring new musical ground " on the previous records , adding that " with the last album we were too concerned with being musical , now it 's time for us to be a rock band again " . To contrast with the " seven or eight minute @-@ long songs , with seven or eight sections , and two or three time changes " Grohl played with Them Crooked Vultures , he instead tried to compose the " tightest , catchiest four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half @-@ minute ' softball bat to your face ' songs " . Hawkins added that he liked Wasting Light for being " straightforward , and that ? s a good thing for us right now . The last couple [ records ] had some big dynamic changes . " Grohl described the effort as their heaviest yet , later saying it was done because " I 'm 42 now . I don 't know if I 'm going to be able to make this record when I 'm 46 or 49 . It 's my last chance . " While the demos that prompted Grohl to say the album would be their heaviest yet were not used on the album , Vig took the declarations to heart , following three criteria while recording : " It 's got to be hooky , heavy , and we 're going analog all the way . "

For the guitar sound , the group tried to balance Grohl 's " playing the rhythm straight up the middle " , Shiflett 's " sharp and clean sense of melodic playing " , and Smear 's more aggressive sound , with Grohl declaring that " with three guitars , you have to be careful that it doesn 't become a huge fucking mess . But when everybody 's playing their thing really well , it sounds perfectly orchestrated . " Smear would usually play his parts on a baritone guitar , which would both contrast with Grohl

and Shiflett and add a heavier sound - as Grohl declared , " if we ever felt like a section wasn 't heavy enough , we put the fuckin ' baritone on it , and it became huge . " Hawkins added many buzz rolls to his drum fills at the suggestion of Vig , as buzz rolls were a trademark of one of the producer 's favorite drummers , Ian Paice .

The lyrics for Wasting Light were completed during the week each song was being recorded . Grohl said that the words were " what was on my mind each week " , most being " written from the perspective of who I was then and who I am now " , with references to the past , life and death , and " time , but questioning whether it matters at all . There 's so much focus on the before that people forget there 's an after . " The frontman said this was helped by the environment - " a lot of retrospection and introspection and nostalgia going back to the way we used to make records " - and working with Vig again , which " made me think a lot about starting over , and rebirth , and making your way through tragedy and coming out the other side . " An example was " I Should Have Known " , partially inspired by former Nirvana bandmate Kurt Cobain - " a song like ' I Should Have Known ' is about all the people I 've lost , not just Kurt " . Grohl still tried to do laid @-@ back songs such as " White Limo " , which had its lyrics written in just two minutes , specially after Mendel sent him an e @-@ mail saying , " I really like it when you write songs that are silly and mean nothing , too . You don 't have to try to write ' Imagine ' every time you sit down with a pen and paper " .

= = Packaging and versions = =

The first CD copies of the album contain a small section of the original analogue master tape . Grohl decided to it both for thinking it " would be an extraordinary move to destroy all the masters and give the pieces of the tapes to the fans " , as the digital recording does not allow for such a memento , and also due to every technician involved with Wasting Light being overtly worried about the tapes . The art direction was done by New York studio Morning Breath Inc . , and keeping with the album 's analog recording , the images did not use computer graphics , instead being created with " old tools of the trade " such as copy machines , transparent ink and X @-@ Acto blades , and the end result was not printed in CMYK .

The album was issued on CD , a double vinyl record and digital download . The pre @-@ orders had the option for both the CD and LP with a T @-@ shirt , and a Deluxe packaging that came with both the CD and LP , a T @-@ shirt , a beer coaster , an iron @-@ on patch , a wristband and a signed lithograph of the album cover. iTunes in turn issued a deluxe edition that included a remix of " Rope " made by Deadmau5 , the outtake " Better Off " , the video for " White Limo " and a live performance of " Walk " .

= = Release and promotion = =

Extensive updates on the production of Wasting Light were up on the band 's website and Twitter , because , as put by RCA Records executive Aaron Borns , " the band wanted to be more engaged with the fans earlier this time . " Along with images of the sessions themselves and both a whiteboard and papers that showed the progress in recording , a live feed of the tape machine would be put on the Foo Fighters website .

On December 21 , 2010 , the same day the album was finished , the band played a secret gig at the Tarzana , California bar Paladino ? s , on which four songs from the new record made their live debuts . The Wasting Light World Tour started in 2011 , with some concerts having the album played in its entirety along with other hit songs by the band . Given the album was recorded in a garage , the band held a contest for which some shows of the promotional tour would be performed in eight fans ' garages .

On January 17 , 2011 , the band released a 30 @-@ second teaser of the song " Bridge Burning " on their website , and on February 1 , the band revealed a teaser for " Miss the Misery " along with the album name and an April 12 release date . On February 12 , a music video was released for " White Limo " , featuring Lemmy of Motörhead . On February 23 , 2011 , " Rope " was made available for online stream . It debuted at # 1 on Billboard 's Rock Chart , making it only the second

single to do so since the chart 's advent in 2009 , and would later top the Alternative Songs chart as well . Another part of the promotional campaign was a contest held by Fuse TV where fans created their own videos for the Wasting Light tracks .

After " Rope " , four other songs were issued as singles : " Walk " , " Arlandria " , " These Days " , and " Bridge Burning " . The most successful was " Walk " , which also topped the Rock and Alternative charts . Five songs on the album were licensed for ESPN and two others were featured in movies , " Miss the Misery " in Real Steel and " Walk " in Thor . In addition , " Bridge Burning " appears in the video game Madden NFL 12 . " Walk " was also featured in a video package that was put together by the WWE to be included for Edge 's induction into the 2012 WWE Hall of Fame and it was played again after he said he wanted real rock n ' roll to close out the ceremony .

= = Commercial performance = =

The album debuted at number one in twelve countries . Wasting Light was the first Foo Fighters album to top the United States ' Billboard 200 chart , with first @-@ week sales of 235 @,@ 000 copies , their second @-@ highest sales week , following In Your Honor 's first @-@ week sales of 311 @,@ 000 copies in 2005 . In Canada , the album debuted at number one on the Canadian Albums Chart , selling 21 @,@ 000 copies in its first week . In the UK , the album 's 114 @,@ 000 units broke Adele 's 11 @-@ week run atop the UK Album Charts .

On the week of Wasting Light 's release , 6 different tracks from the album made the UK Top 40 Rock Chart . These were the iTunes bonus track " Better Off " at number 5 , " Bridge Burning " at number 14 , " Walk " at number 24 , " White Limo " at number 28 , " Arlandria " at number 35 and " These Days " at number 39 . In both Australia and New Zealand Wasting Light had the biggest first week digital album sales in their chart histories . The album also topped the charts in Germany , Austria , Switzerland , Sweden , Finland , Norway , New Zealand , and Singapore . Wasting Light has sold 663 @,@ 000 copies in the US as of January 6 , 2012 , and closed 2011 with 380 @,@ 000 units sold in the UK .

= = Critical reception = =

Wasting Light received generally positive reviews from music critics . At Metacritic , which assigns a normalized rating out of 100 to reviews from mainstream critics , the album received an average score of 78 , based on 37 reviews . Andrew Perry of The Daily Telegraph viewed it as by far the band 's best album and found it " tough but accessible , reliably catchy , yet also surprising at the last . " Allmusic editor Stephen Thomas Erlewine called its rock sound " untrammelled " and cited it as " the fiercest album they 've ever made ... the kind of record they 've always seemed on the verge of delivering but never have . " Mikael Wood of Spin observed a " back @-@ to @-@ basics aspiration " and dubbed the album " Grohl 's most memorable set of songs since 1997 's The Colour and the Shape . " Rob Parker of NME said that it " sounds phenomenal " on headphones or sound systems and is " both broad and focused enough to appeal to casuals and longhairs alike " . Paul Brannigan of Q praised Grohl 's lyrics and called Wasting Light " the most life @-@ affirming , positively @-@ charged album of his career . " David Fricke , writing for Rolling Stone , commended Grohl 's themes and Butch Vig 's " nuanced approach to weight and release . " Kyle Ryan of The A.V. Club said that , although it lacks recognizable hooks , the album also lacks the filler of the band 's previous albums and stated , " As a return to Foo Fighters ' specialty ? melodic , hard @-@ hitting rock with soaring choruses ? Wasting Light is a success . "

In a mixed review , Slant Magazine 's Kevin Liedel criticized the band 's " growing aversion to anthemic songs , " writing that " the obvious high points of Wasting Light are those that strive for stadium @-@ pleasing melodies . " Dave Simpson of The Guardian noted an " undue " arena influence and called the album " a typically supersized arena @-@ rock barrage , with lots of howling and wailing , every chorus tailored to imaginary walls of pyrotechnics and some tracks seemingly specifically constructed to accommodate a guitar spot or drum solo . " Greg Kot of the Chicago Tribune felt that , although it is " competently " performed , the songs are not innovative and

suffer from " clichés " , including " hardcore punk screed " , " streamlined rocker " , and " melodramatic power ballad " . Pitchfork Media 's David Bevan commented that " there just isn 't a melody or hook to really amplify . " Andy Gill of The Independent criticized its " bombastic level " and stated " the presumed desire for back @-@ to @-@ the @-@ roots simplicity ... jettisons the diversity of Echoes , Silence , Patience & Grace . "

= = = Accolades = = =

Wasting Light and its songs were nominated for five Grammy Awards , including Album of the Year . The record won the Best Rock Album award , while " White Limo " was chosen as the Best Hard Rock / Metal Performance and " Walk " won both Best Rock Performance and Best Rock Song . The album was chosen as the 4th best album of 2011 by Kerrang ! , and listed in three rankings of the 50 best albums of the year : 20th by Rolling Stone , 43rd by NME , and 46th by Spin . It was also listed among The Hollywood Reporter 's ten best albums of 2011 , and chosen as the album of the year by iTunes .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Dave Grohl , Taylor Hawkins , Nate Mendel , Chris Shiflett and Pat Smear .

= = Personnel = =

= = Charts = =

= = = Singles = = =

A ^ " Rope " and " These Days " charted only on the Belgian combined sales and airplay chart ( Ultratip ) . " Walk " charted on the Belgian singles sales chart ( Ultratop 50 ) .

B ^ " These Days " did not enter the Billboard Hot 100 but peaked on the Bubbling Under Hot 100 Singles chart at number 11 .

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