

= By Your Side ( The Black Crowes album ) =

By Your Side is the fifth studio album by American rock band The Black Crowes . It was released in early 1999 on Columbia Records , following the band 's move from American Recordings , after second guitarist Marc Ford and bassist Johnny Colt had left the band in 1997 . Audley Freed and Sven Pipien were hired as the new guitarist and bassist , respectively , although Rich Robinson played all the guitar parts on the album . By Your Side was recorded in New York City during the second quarter of 1998 and produced by Kevin Shirley . It comprised songs written in the studio , revised songs from pre @-@ production and re @-@ recorded songs from the abandoned 1997 album Band .

The Black Crowes promoted By Your Side by performing on numerous television programs in North America and Europe . The album debuted at its peak position of number 26 on the Billboard 200 and generally received positive reviews . While some critics depreciated By Your Side for its similarity to albums by Rod Stewart and The Rolling Stones , most reviewers lauded The Black Crowes ' return to the straightforward approach of their debut album , Shake Your Money Maker ( 1990 ) . Chris Robinson 's singing and Rich 's guitar playing also won praise from critics , though reviews of the lyrics were mixed .

Beginning in February 1999 , the band toured North American theaters for two months in support of the album . Setlists from the tour , known as the " Souled Out Tour " , typically included more than half the album 's songs . The concerts were followed by a short co @-@ headlining tour of US amphitheaters with Lenny Kravitz . The band spent the remainder of the summer opening for Aerosmith 's European tour .

= = Background = =

Personnel changes and label interference frustrated The Black Crowes ' attempts to follow up their 1996 album Three Snakes and One Charm . During May and June 1997 , they recorded an album called Band , but it was rejected by their label , American Recordings . Lead singer Chris Robinson said American " couldn 't go with the vibe " and wanted something more " safe " . In August , guitarist Marc Ford was fired due to a heroin habit that impaired his performances . Guitarist Rich Robinson said , " We would be onstage playing ' Remedy ' , and he would be playing a completely different song .... We told him to clean up or get out . We assumed , since he loved music and the band , that he would clean up . " Bassist Johnny Colt had been losing interest in the band since the recording of Three Snakes and One Charm ; his contributions to that album were minimal , as Rich played bass in his stead on all but one track . Colt quit in October to become a yoga instructor .

Sven Pipien was hired in December to replace Colt . Pipien had previously played with Mary My Hope and had been a housemate of Chris . Audley Freed was hired as the second guitarist before a 1998 tour in support of the band 's Sho ' Nuff box set . Recording sessions for By Your Side were well underway at this point , and continued after the tour , but Freed did not contribute to the album . Chris said of the new members , " It 's great . These guys want to be here ? and we feed off of that . And that will become obvious when you see us on the road . "

American Recordings was partially absorbed by Columbia Records in early 1998 . Though the arrangement preserved the American label , The Black Crowes transferred to Columbia after privately expressing their desire to disassociate themselves from American Recordings founder Rick Rubin . Despite working under a larger label , the band felt they had more freedom and support under Columbia ; Chris remarked , " At American , I never knew what a record company did . We never had an A & R guy . Now we have a product manager .... It 's like ... I didn 't know what the music business was . "

= = Writing and production = =

Pre @-@ production for By Your Side began in December 1997 with songs that later underwent substantial revision or were dropped altogether . Early versions of " HorseHead " and " It Must Be

Over " were recorded at this point , and a reworked riff from " Every Little Bit " and some lyrics from " Tickle Tickle " were later incorporated into " Heavy " . Some of the songs ultimately dropped , such as " Baby " and " Bled to Death " , were later rewritten by Rich for his debut solo album , Paper ( 2004 ) . More songs were introduced in January 1998 , including " Red Wine Stains " , which eventually became " Go Faster " , and an early version of " Virtue and Vice " . Some unused sections from this batch were borrowed for Paper , as well , including the main riffs of what became " Tomorrow Is Here " and " Thrown It All Away " .

Producer Kevin Shirley was brought in on the advice of Aerosmith guitarist Joe Perry . As Rich explained , " We really wanted to work with someone who can come in and say , ' That 's not good . ' ... If Kevin says something I disagree with , he 'll be the first one to say , ' Hey , it 's your song , ' but it 's healthy for me and Chris to have him come in and be as excited about our songs as we are and say , ' Okay , that 's cool , but what if we tried this ? ' " At his first meeting with the band , Shirley described the songs played for him as having " the same old jammy , shuffle feel of the last two records . I stopped them then and I said to them ... ' You 've got to feel like you 're teenagers again . You need a song like that . ' " Shirley 's prompting led the band to write " Kickin ' My Heart Around " on the spot , before he had signed on to produce . Rich agreed that Shirley shifted the focus to making " a rock record " that was " focused and concise " .

The band hired Shirley and agreed to his recording conditions , which meant recording in New York City at Avatar Studios , taking weekends off and recording from 1 : 00 ? 8 : 00 pm . Chris said of the rigid schedule , " We loved it .... We had lives other than just being in the studio 24 hours a day , seven days a week . Got a different vantage point on the whole thing . " Shirley 's laid @-@ back style also won praise from the band . " Kevin is the first guy that I 've worked with that just went with it ? especially my singing . A lot of this album is just my scratch vocals . It 's very loose , and Kevin let it go .... He 'd say , if we didn 't get it in two or three takes , ' We 'll come back tomorrow ' " , said Chris . Of the album 's lyrical bent , Chris said , " ... there is a lot of love on it , and I 've never written love songs . I do think having a muse in my life like the woman I 'm with now helped .... I think there 's also a lot of humor on this album , which is something we haven 't touched on before , except maybe on Shake Your Money Maker , which was a lighter time and a lighter mood . " There was also a conscious effort to " simplify the language " , which was inspired by Chris 's listening to music by Otis Redding , George Jones and Muddy Waters . " I realized how direct and honest those records were ? and I wanted that here " , said Chris .

For the first time on a Black Crowes album , Rich was the only guitarist involved in the recording . He said recording that way was not a challenge because he recorded most of the guitar parts on Three Snakes and One Charm , as well . Rich also noted that having only one guitarist gives the band " a different dynamic " because it affords Pipien and keyboardist Eddie Harsch " a lot of space " . Chris praised his brother 's performance , saying , " It sounds like there 's two guitarists , two distinct personalities . "

Fifteen songs were recorded in the second quarter of 1998 during the main recording session with Kevin Shirley . Some were updated versions of songs from pre @-@ production ; a few were totally new ; others combined newly written music with parts from older , shelved songs . The main riff of a Three Snakes and One Charm leftover called " Pastoral " , for example , was used for the B @-@ side " You Don 't Have to Go " , while its chorus riff was borrowed for " Then She Said My Name " . Four of the songs were holdovers from the Band sessions : " Only a Fool " and " If It Ever Stops Raining " were included on the album ( the latter with new chorus lyrics as " By Your Side " ) , while " Peace Anyway " and " Smile " were released as B @-@ sides . One cover song , Bob Dylan 's " When the Night Comes Falling from the Sky " , was recorded during the session and later released as a B @-@ side .

While touring in support of Sho ' Nuff , Chris and Rich finished writing " Diamond Ring " and " Go Tell the Congregation " . The two songs were recorded after the tour during a planned session for putting finishing touches on By Your Side , though the decision delayed the album 's release from November 17 to January 12 . Rich said , " It 's cool that Columbia Records is backing us on an artistic level and they 're being open to all the hassles that come with moving an album into the new year . I know we 're driving them insane with these last @-@ minute changes , but we know it 's all

for the right reasons . " After finishing the album , Chris noted that it " has the same sort of energy " as Shake Your Money Maker , " ... but there is much more to it . There are a lot of subtleties in these songs . These are rock ' n ' roll songs with subversive pop hooks . "

= = Promotion and release = =

The Black Crowes began promoting *By Your Side* in September 1998 when they performed at the Hard Rock Cafe in New York City for an episode of the VH1 show *Hard Rock Live* ; the episode aired on December 12 . The first noticeable instance of promotion was Columbia 's release of " Kickin ' My Heart Around " as the album 's first single on November 2 , 1998 . The track spent ten weeks at its peak position of number 3 on the Billboard Mainstream Rock Tracks chart starting on November 28 ; it also charted in Canada and the UK . The band 's next promotional event was a performance and interview for a live album premiere radio broadcast on January 6 . On January 11 , the Crowes performed " Kickin ' My Heart Around " on the Late Show with David Letterman .

*By Your Side* was released on January 12 , 1999 . The album 's cover art is a blue @-@ tinted nighttime photograph of the band , all dressed in white and standing in front of a lake . The band name is rendered in tiny white lights above their heads , and other small white lights are scattered at their feet . In keeping with the tiny lights theme , the back of the booklet shows a satellite image of the United States at night , in which densely populated areas can be discerned by light pollution , and the booklet contains drawings of constellations . The album 's disc artwork is designed after a centaur with a crow 's head in place of the man 's head .

On the day the album was released , the band appeared at a Tower Records store in Manhattan to sign autographs and give away 1 @,@ 000 tickets to that night 's private show at Irving Plaza . *By Your Side* debuted at its peak position of number 26 on the Billboard 200 on January 30 . The album has sold 271 @,@ 000 copies in the US as of January 2002 . The next two weeks were filled with radio and television appearances in Canada , Belgium , France , Sweden , and Italy . The Black Crowes returned to the US to perform during pre @-@ game festivities at Joe Robbie Stadium before Super Bowl XXXIII on January 31 . While on tour in support of the album in February , the band performed the second single , " Only a Fool " , on Late Night with Conan O'Brien . The single was released in mid @-@ February and peaked at number 7 on the Billboard Mainstream Rock Tracks chart . The accompanying promotional video was directed by " Weird Al " Yankovic . After an early April stop at an Atlanta radio station where the band played a half @-@ hour acoustic set , The Black Crowes made a third late night television appearance at the end of that month , playing the album 's third single , " Go Faster " , on The Tonight Show with Jay Leno . " Go Faster " peaked at number 24 on the Mainstream Rock Tracks chart in July . Also in late April , Chris Robinson promoted *By Your Side* in an interview on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart .

= = Critical reception = =

*By Your Side* was generally well received by critics . Regarding the songwriting , most reviewers praised The Black Crowes for returning to the straightforwardness of *Shake Your Money Maker* ( 1990 ) following the more adventuresome *Amorica* ( 1994 ) and *Three Snakes and One Charm* . Gemma Tarlach of The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel welcomed the album " because it represents a great band 's return to what it does best " , calling it " 45 minutes of good , dirty fun " . Wall of Sound 's Russell Hall found that the band 's emergence from " the jam @-@ band haze that 's infected " their recent work resulted in a " laser @-@ sharp focus " . Mark Falkner of The Florida Times @-@ Union said that beyond the band 's mastery of their influences ' musical styles , what prevents them " from being just another tribute act is that they have ( also ) mastered the power , the passion and the fun that made the mix work " . Some critics , also noting the change in approach , derided the band for returning to mine the same influences perceived in their debut album . Jim Farber of the Daily News thus described *By Your Side* as " a copy @-@ of @-@ a @-@ copy @-@ of @-@ a @-@ copy " and marked " Go Faster " a sped @-@ up version of Humble Pie 's " Hot ' n ' Nasty " . The Times ' Nigel Williamson called " HorseHead " " Zeppelinesque " and labeled " By Your Side " "

a kicking boogie half way between [ the Faces ' ] ' Cindy Incidentally ' and [ The Rolling Stones ' ] ' Tumbling Dice ' " . Steve Dougherty of People summed up by commenting , " Purists will wonder why to buy this album when [ The Rolling Stones ' ] 1972 Exile on Main Street or [ Rod ] Stewart 's 1970 Gasoline Alley exist on CD . "

On some tracks , the influence of soul music was perceived . Richard Harrington of The Washington Post wrote that " Only a Fool " " conjures ' 60s @-@ era Stax @-@ Volt passions while Robinson 's jubilant vocals evoke Redding 's rough @-@ edged insistence " and compared " Diamond Ring " to Al Green 's work . The Dirty Dozen Brass Band 's playing on " Welcome to the Goodtimes " was called " infectious " by Wayne Bledsoe of The Knoxville News @-@ Sentinel .

The musical performances and sound of the album were frequently hailed by critics . Lorraine Ali of Rolling Stone identified Rich Robinson 's guitar playing as " brilliant in spots , letting it rip with Southern @-@ rock abandon or lazy , drawling slide guitar " . Allmusic 's Stephen Thomas Erlewine praised the band 's retention of the sonic detail from Amorica , and Jane Stevenson of the Toronto Sun appreciated the " soulful " backing vocals throughout . Echoing those sentiments was CMJ , which noted the " lazy slide @-@ guitar textures , harmonica moans and choirs of soulful singers " , but also stated " Chris Robinson 's gritty , cocksure vocals blaze the trail . " Stephen Thompson of The A.V. Club called Robinson 's vocal performance on " HorseHead " " an inflection @-@ for @-@ inflection imitation of ... Billy Squier " ; elsewhere on the album Robinson 's voice was compared to that of Rod Stewart . Stewart himself called the album " brilliant " and said it " absolutely knocked [ him ] out " . Robinson 's lyrics were alternately praised and panned . The Guardian 's Caroline Sullivan called " Go Faster " an amalgam of the band 's interests , " including drugs ... nubile wenchhood ... scrapes ... and touring " . The Washington Post 's Harrington , however , called Robinson " convincing when he sings [ in ' Virtue and Vice ' ] , ' I feel so alive today and that 's all I want to say / I hope it stays this way , ' adding , ' If not , I 'll be okay ' " .

= = Concert tours = =

The Black Crowes played a few shows in the eastern US in early January before the release of By Your Side , then spent the rest of the month promoting the album via television appearances in the US , Canada and Europe . A brief warm @-@ up show in Milwaukee , Wisconsin , on February 10 preceded a two @-@ month tour of North American theaters , called the Souled Out Tour , with Moke as the opening band . Every song from By Your Side was played at some point on this tour ? " Go Faster " , " Kickin ' My Heart Around " , " By Your Side " and " Virtue and Vice " were performed at most shows , but " Diamond Ring " was played only twice . A 1963 Fender Esquire guitar belonging to Rich was stolen from the backstage area at DeVos Performance Hall in Grand Rapids , Michigan , on February 16 . The band 's management waited six weeks before issuing a press release asking for its return , hoping the guitar would turn up in a local pawnshop . No update on the guitar was ever provided . After taking two weeks off , the band spent six weeks playing outdoor amphitheatres in the US on a co @-@ headlining tour with Lenny Kravitz ; opening acts were Everlast and Cree Summer .

Beginning in June , The Black Crowes toured Europe for six weeks , opening for Aerosmith in concert halls and at festivals . " Go Faster " and " Kickin ' My Heart Around " remained staples of the band 's 60- to 75 @-@ minute sets . Harsch required emergency surgery for a twisted intestine on June 24 and missed the band 's next eight shows . ( The crew continued to set up Harsch 's keyboards and placed a human @-@ sized inflatable green alien in his spot . ) One of the shows Harsch missed was a charity concert in London at which The Black Crowes played a 45 @-@ minute set of Led Zeppelin songs and blues covers with Jimmy Page . The band 's last show in support of By Your Side was a one @-@ off festival date in Niigata , Japan , on July 30 .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written by Chris Robinson and Rich Robinson .

= = Personnel = =

= = Chart positions = =

= = = Album = = =

= = = Singles = = =