

= Casting Crowns (album) =

Casting Crowns is the first studio album by the American Christian rock band Casting Crowns . Produced by Mark A. Miller and Steven Curtis Chapman , the album was released on October 30 , 2003 , by Beach Street Records . It incorporates a pop rock and rock sound , with the main instruments used in the album being guitar , keyboard and violin . Casting Crowns received positive reviews from music critics , many of whom praised the album 's lyrics and production quality . It was nominated for Pop / Contemporary Album of the Year at the 35th GMA Dove Awards , while its singles were nominated for and received various awards .

Preceded by a lead single , " If We Are the Body " , which peaked at number one on the Radio & Records Christian AC and Christian CHR charts in the US , Casting Crowns debuted at number 198 on the Billboard 200 . The album eventually peaked at number 59 on that chart , also peaking at number 2 on the Billboard Christian Albums chart and at number 1 on the Billboard Heatseekers Albums chart . Two other singles , " Who Am I " and " Voice of Truth " , also went to number 1 . The album ranked as one of the best @-@ selling Christian albums of 2004 and 2005 in the United States and was the 11th best @-@ selling Christian album of the 2000s in the United States . Casting Crowns ' has sold more than 1 @.@ 9 million copies since its release and has been certified 2 × Platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) , one of 8 Christian albums to reach that milestone .

= = Background and recording = =

Casting Crowns was formed in 1999 by Mark Hall (lead vocals) , Hector Cervantes (guitar , vocals) , Juan DeVevo (guitar , vocals) , and Melodee DeVevo (violin , vocals) as a student worship band . The band is originally from Daytona Beach , Florida but relocated to Eagle 's Landing First Baptist Church in McDonough , Georgia in 2001 , where they recruited Megan Garrett (piano / vocals) , Andy Williams (drums) , and Chris Huffman (bass guitar) as members . One of their independent records was discovered by Mark A. Miller , the lead vocalist for country band Sawyer Brown . Although Casting Crowns had not released their independent records with intentions of receiving a record deal , Miller offered the band the opportunity to become the first artists signed to his record label . The band agreed to join and signed with the as @-@ yet @-@ unnamed record label , an imprint of Provident Label Group , and began work on their debut album . As a group , Casting Crowns was unusual in several ways , such as having seven members , never having toured before , and their producer (Miller) having no history in the Christian music industry . However , Christian singer and songwriter Steven Curtis Chapman was brought in to co @-@ produce the album with Miller , giving the project a greater amount of support in the Christian music industry . Terry Hemmings , Provident Label Group CEO / President and a personal friend of Miller , openly predicted success for Casting Crowns and made them one of his top priorities at the label . While most artists in a similar situation would have received nine months for artist development , Hemmings gave the band four months and sped up the album 's release . Casting Crowns was recorded at Glow in the Dark Studio in Decatur , Georgia and Zoo Studio in Franklin , Tennessee . The album was engineered by Matt Goldman and Sam Hewitt .

= = Release and promotion = =

To promote the album prior to its release , lead single " If We Are the Body " was released to Christian AC and Christian CHR radio on July 26 , 2003 . The single was a significant hit at Christian radio stations , peaking at number 1 on the Radio & Records Christian AC and Christian CHR charts and at number 3 on the Billboard Hot Christian Songs and Hot Christian AC charts . Casting Crowns was released on October 7 , 2003 and debuted at number 198 on the Billboard 200 selling 6 @,@ 000 units ; it also debuted at number 11 on the Christian Albums chart and number 9 on the Heatseekers Albums chart . By March 2004 , the album had sold 168 @,@ 000 copies in the United States , in large part due to the success of " If We Are the Body " . For the chart week of March 6 ,

2004 , Casting Crowns reached its peak position of number 2 on the Christian Albums chart . The following week , the album reached the number 1 position on the Heatseekers Albums chart . " Who Am I " , the album 's 2nd single , was released on February 22 , 2004 to Christian AC , Christian CHR , and Soft AC / Inspirational radio . The song topped the Radio & Records Christian AC , Christian CHR , and Soft AC / Inspirational charts as well as the Billboard Hot Christian Songs and Hot Christian AC charts . In May 2004 the album reached its peak position of number 59 on the Billboard 200 . " American Dream " was serviced to Christian Rock radio on June 24 , 2004 while " Voice of Truth " , the album 's 3rd single , was released to Christian AC , Christian CHR , and Soft AC / Inspirational radio on September 18 , 2004 . " Voice of Truth " peaked atop the Radio & Records Christian AC and Soft AC / Inspirational charts as well as the Billboard Hot Christian Songs and Hot Christian AC charts .

By the end of 2004 , Casting Crowns had sold over 710 @,@ 000 copies . It ranked as the 2nd best @-@ selling Christian album and the 126th best @-@ selling album of 2004 in the United States . Casting Crowns ranked as the 5th best @-@ selling Christian album and the 179th best @-@ selling album of 2005 in the United States . By September 10 , 2005 the album had sold over 1 million copies . Casting Crowns received re @-@ releases in 2006 and 2007 , both of them featuring bonus DVD content . After first charting on the Billboard Catalog Albums chart in 2005 the album reached a peak position of number 7 on the chart for the chart week of September 5 , 2009 . The album ranked as the 11th best @-@ selling Christian album of the 2000s decade and had sold around 1 @.@ 7 million copies in the United States by December 5 , 2009 . The album received a 2 x Platinum certification from the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) in 2012 , signifying shipments of over 2 @,@ 000 @,@ 000 units . It is one of only 8 Christian albums to reach that certification . As of March 2014 , the album has sold more than 1 @.@ 9 million copies .

= = Musical style = =

Casting Crowns is noted as having a Christian rock , pop rock and rock sound . Some critics noted that the album sounds somewhat similar to the work of Chapman . The album 's main instrumentation consists of guitar , keyboard , and violin . The album 's lyrics , which have been described by music critics as " bold " and " straightforward " , take an approach which was described by Russ Breimeier of Christianity Today as " no @-@ nonsense ... tell [ing] it like it is , simply and with conviction " .

Album opener " What If His People Prayed " , described as a pop song challenges the listener ; the couplet " What if the church , for heaven 's sake / Finally stepped up to the plate / Took a stand upon God 's promise / And stormed hell 's rusty gates ? " has been cited as an example . " If We Are the Body " , an acoustic rock song , features the mandolin , violin , and accordion in its arrangement . Inspired by a verse in the second chapter of James where the writer " admonishes the church for giving preferential treatment to any one particular group over another " , the song questions why the church does not minister impartially to everyone . The song 's chorus , which references the Christian concept of the body of Christ , asks " If we are the body / why aren 't his arms reaching ? / Why aren 't his hands healing ? / Why aren 't his words teaching ? / And if we are the body / Why aren 't his feet going ? / Why is his love not showing them there is a way ? "

" Voice of Truth " was written around Hall 's struggles with dyslexia and learning issues as a child . Co @-@ written by Chapman , the track is a pop rock ballad , encouraging listeners to tackle their personal fears and replace them with faith . The song " Who Am I " has been described as a pop rock , adult contemporary and pop country song . The ballad incorporates orchestral sounds and lyrically explains emptiness without Christ .

" American Dream " , considered a rock anthem , features an arena rock sound . Cited as an example of Hall 's " in @-@ your @-@ face " approach to songwriting by Breimeier , the track challenges the fixation of society with wealth , even at the cost of personal relationships . It encourages listeners to not neglect their families in pursuit of their careers and challenges fathers to spend a greater amount of their time with their families .

" Here I Go Again " relates the story of a Christian , who instead of " sharing the gospel " with a

friend , engages in " mindless conversation " . The song encourages listeners to overcome their fear of spreading the gospel in the chorus . The album 's final 4 songs are all worship songs , with folk instruments incorporated in several of them . " Praise You with the Dance " , sung by the female members of the band , has been described as a country rock song . The song also incorporates a violin solo of " Lord of the Dance " . " Glory " , described as a worship song , has been noted as displaying the " distinctive production touch " of Chapman . The album closes with a cover of Darrell Evans ' song " Your Love Is Extravagant " ; it features harmony vocals from the band .

= = Critical reception and accolades = =

Casting Crowns received positive reviews from music critics . Particular praise was given to the album 's lyrical content and production quality . Ashleigh Kittle of Allmusic gave it 3 out of 5 stars , comparing the album 's overall sound to that of Chapman , Caedmon 's Call , and Phillips , Craig & Dean . Andy Argyrakis of CCM Magazine gave the album a B grade , praising the album as a " promising freshman effort " but critiquing its " tendency to occasionally reflect its primary muse a bit too liberally " . Belinda S. Ayers of Christian Broadcasting Network praised the album 's lyrics and sound . Steve Best of Cross Rhythms gave Casting Crowns ten out of ten squares , saying , " The passion of lead vocalist and youth pastor Hall jumps out of each set of lyrics , while Chapman 's distinctive production touch ... makes this a must listen album " . While praising the album 's overall production and lyrical content , Breimeier said the album " too readily recalls the work of its producers , leaving us to wonder how much of it is really Casting Crowns " ? he gave the album 3 @.@ 5 out of 5 stars . The album received positive reviews from Brian Mansfield of USA Today , Robin Parrish of CMCentral.com , and Michael Herman of Christianity Today .

Casting Crowns was nominated for Pop / Contemporary Album of the Year at the 35th GMA Dove Awards . " If We Are the Body " was nominated for the Song of the Year and Pop / Contemporary Recorded Song of the Year at the same event . At the 36th GMA Dove Awards , " American Dream " was nominated for Rock / Contemporary Recorded Song of the Year and " Who Am I " was nominated for Worship Song of the Year . " Who Am I " won the awards for Song of the Year and Pop / Contemporary Recorded Song of the Year while " Voice of Truth " won the award for Inspirational Recorded Song of the Year . " Voice of Truth " was nominated for Song of the Year at the 37th GMA Dove Awards .

= = Track listing = =

All lyrics are written by Hall except where noted , and all music is composed by Casting Crowns .

= = Personnel = =

Credits taken from Allmusic

= = Charts and certifications = =

= = = Album charts = = =

= = = Single charts = = =

= = = Certifications = = =