

= Love Kraft =

Love Kraft is the seventh studio album by Welsh indie rock band Super Furry Animals, released on 22 August 2005 through Epic Records in the United Kingdom. The album was recorded in Spain with producer Mario Caldato Jr and was something of a departure for the band, with all members contributing songs and lead vocals alongside Gruff Rhys who had been main songwriter for the Super Furies until this point. In selecting tracks for Love Kraft a conscious effort was made by the band not to choose songs on their individual merit but rather to pick those which went well together in order to create as cohesive an album as possible. The album's name was taken from a sex shop, Love Craft, near the Cardiff offices of the Super Furies' management team and is also a nod to American horror writer H. P. Lovecraft.

Critical response was generally positive with some reviews claiming the album was the best of the group's career. However, a few reviewers expressed reservations that Love Kraft was "merely a very good Super Furry Animals effort" and was not as impressive as the band's previous records. The track "Lazer Beam" was released as a single and reached # 28 in the UK Singles Chart.

= = Recording = =

Love Kraft was recorded in Figueres, a small city in Catalonia, Spain. According to Rhys the band found themselves in the "unusual" position of recording their seventh album together and began looking at groups who had made lots of records, such as Fleetwood Mac and The Beach Boys. These bands had made "foreign records" (Tusk and Holland respectively) so the Super Furies decided to do the same although on "a much tighter budget." Leaving their usual Cardiff studio behind had an effect on the songs according to Rhys:

The band did a lot of experimenting and arranging in Cardiff before going into the studio, as a result of which Love Kraft was recorded in just three weeks. Drummer Dafydd Iwan also attributes the album sessions' speedy conclusion to producer Mario Caldato Jr. who was very good at keeping the group together and on the right track.

The album represented a departure from the band's previous working methods: although all five members had always contributed to the development of the songs, Gruff Rhys had been the main songwriter. On Love Kraft this was no longer the case, as Rhys, Huw Bunford, Dafydd Iwan and Cian Ciaran all contributed songs and lead vocals. The group also abandoned their usual practise of picking songs on their individual merit, instead choosing tracks that would work well together and "create a sound that was as cohesive as possible". Of the "30 @-@ 40" songs written by band members the group chose "the more introspective ones" which meant that some of Rhys's tracks were left off the album as they were "energetic and poppy" and "didn't really fit in with everybody else's work".

Several 'found sounds' were recorded and used on the album including the buzzing of a Brazilian electrical substation, the sound of pool balls being rubbed against each other and a recording of Huw Bunford jumping into a swimming pool. The latter opens the album, preceding the intro to "Zoom!".

Love Kraft was mixed in a suburb of Rio de Janeiro at the request of Brazilian born Caldato. According to Rhys the band toyed with the idea of using Latin musical elements and had fantasies of "Marcos Valle doing backing vocals, and getting Rogerio Duprat to arrange the strings" but ultimately thought it would be a "bit too embarrassing" and actively tried not to make a "Brazilian sounding" record. This point was echoed by Guto Pryce in an interview with Birmingham's Metro although he conceded that "in Rio music is everywhere. The beats and rhythms are non @-@ stop so that probably seeped into our minds as a subconscious influence."

The album is named after a sex shop, Lovecraft Limited, near the Ankst Management offices on Cowbridge Road, Cardiff and is also a reference to American horror writer H. P. Lovecraft. In a 2005 interview with The Daily Telegraph, Gruff Rhys explained that the name also stems from the fact that the record has "a general warm glow of love" and that it was originally conceived as a "love record" before "some of the lyrics went completely off the rails".

= = Release = =

Love Kraft was released on CD , SACD , vinyl and as a digital download on 22 August 2005 in the United Kingdom and was the band 's last release for Sony 's Epic imprint before they moved to independent label Rough Trade . The album reached # 19 in the UK Albums Chart . In America the album was released on 13 September 2005 by Beggars Banquet US . " Lazer Beam " was the only track to be released as a single from the album , reaching # 28 in the UK Singles Chart .

= = Critical response = =

The album received a generally positive reaction from critics . British newspaper The Guardian described Love Kraft as the band 's " best album yet " and musicOMH claimed it to be " the greatest realisation of the Super Furry vision to date " . Uncut was similarly impressed calling the album " perhaps the defining record of [the band 's] career " while Yahoo Music UK thought Love Kraft was " perfect pop " .

The NME had reservations however , stating that although the album is " easily as engaging and full of the wild possibilities of pop music as anything else in their peerless canon " it is " not quite up there with Radiator due to its brace of shonky ballad filler (" Cloudberries " and " Cabin Fever ") " . Writing for Allmusic , Stephen Thomas Erlewine was largely impressed with Love Kraft but admitted to being disappointed that it is " merely a very good Super Furry Animals effort , with few surprises outside of its alluring sleek " . The band 's singer , Gruff Rhys , has described the album as " the most beautiful record we 've made ... really orchestral and fairly timeless " .

= = = Accolades = = =

= = Tour = =

The Super Furry Animals played numerous festivals in Great Britain prior to Love Kraft 's release including Scotland 's T in the Park , Oxegen , the Secret Garden Party in Cambridge and the V Festival , warming up for these dates with a small show at Barry Memorial Hall on 22 July 2005 . A gig at Somerset House in London on 8 July 2005 went ahead despite coming just one day after the 7 / 7 bombings caused Queens of the Stone Age to cancel their show at the venue .

Following the release of Love Kraft in the United Kingdom the Super Furry Animals played Bestival on the Isle of Wight before embarking on an 11 date tour of the UK and Ireland , beginning at the University of East Anglia in Norwich on 14 September 2005 and ending on 27 September at Dublin 's Olympia Theatre venue . A month long tour of Canada and the United States followed , starting on 1 November in Montreal and ending in San Diego on 1 December .

The band experienced a " very different atmosphere " at initial shows on the Love Kraft tour , when they played the " slow " songs from the album . This contributed to their decision to make follow up Hey Venus ! a " rowdy pop record " .

= = Track listing = =

All songs written and composed by Super Furry Animals .

= = Personnel = =

The following people contributed to Love Kraft :

= = = Band = = =

Gruff Rhys ? vocals , guitar

Huw Bunford ? guitar , backing vocals , lead vocals on " The Horn " , " Oi Frango " , and " Back on a Roll "

Guto Pryce ? bass guitar

Cian Ciaran ? keyboards , backing vocals , lead vocals on " Walk You Home " and " Cabin Fever "

Dafydd Ieuan ? drums , backing vocals , lead vocals on " Atomik Lust " and " Cabin Fever "

= = = Additional musicians = = =

= = = Recording personnel = = =

Mario Caldato Jr . ? production , mixing , engineering

Super Furry Animals ? production , mixing , surround sound mix

Richard Jackson ? engineering (Stir Studios)

Greg Jackman ? engineering (The Dairy)

Jordi ? recording assistant (Musician)

Jordan ? recording assistant (Musician)

Luizao Dantas ? recording assistant (AR Studios)

Leo Moreira ? recording assistant (AR Studios)

Sam Wetmore ? surround sound mix

= = = Artwork = = =

Pete Fowler ? artwork

Mark James ? artwork

Alexis West ? photography

Leon West ? photography

= = Album chart positions = =