

# Rebirth of Garage Rock: Foo Fighters *Wasting Light*

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[English 1010](#) - Essay 3 - Revision

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Album: Foo Fighters *Wasting Light*  
Released: April 12, 2011  
Studio: Dave Grohl's garage in Encino, Los Angeles, California  
Label: RCA  
Producer: Butch Vig  
# of Tracks: 11  
Time: 47:53  
Formats: CD, Double Vinyl Record, and Digital Download



It was mid-April of 2011; I was fully engulfed in a very difficult semester in college. It was a beautiful day outside, and I had been spending most of my time in various labs, studying physics and doing projects within my engineering major. The semester just seemed to linger on and the workload was not getting any easier. As I was leaving campus from a physics exam, I got into my 10-year-old BMW and found a sweet surprise from my wife; she had apparently driven around campus, located my parked car, and left this present for me on the front seat. She had ordered the new Foo Fighters record for me that I had talked about for weeks. It was a pre order from the band and even had a little bit of the tape they had used to record the album. *Wasting Light* was recorded entirely on old-school 2-inch analog tape. The first albums that were packaged had a two-inch piece from the original master tapes. They destroyed the master

reels and sent them out to the fans. Needless to say, I was happy as a little kid in a candy store with a wallet full of money. I couldn't wait to hear it.

I had spent the few prior months following the progress of the new album. The Foos had been kindly leaking sneak peeks of the record since wrapping up recording on December 21, 2010. Fans, such as myself, had the inside track on early publicity via twitter and the band's website. And I had caught a glimpse at what their new album was all about when they released a low budget video for their new song, "White Limo," and the title of the new album, *Wasting Light*. Shortly after, on February 23, 2011, I and other fans were able to get a second hint of what the album entailed when the Foos made "Rope" available for online streaming.

*Wasting Light* was not a record that I just wanted to download and listen to, through my iPod or on my computer. I wanted the physical copy. I wanted to see the packaging and the artwork. While sitting in my BMW and tearing into my new cd, I called my wife and thanked her profusely; then I hit the road with no destination in mind, just the goal to enjoy this album from front to back.

It did not take me long to realize that this was my new favorite record. The songs are magnificent and the production is raw and hit the soul like a mountain of sound. The intense emotion each song leaves its listeners with is like nothing short of a whirlwind love affair, with all of the ups, downs, and every feeling in between.



This album is no run of the mill rock record; this is the Foo Fighters in Dave Grohl's garage, in the suburbs of Los Angeles, recording to analog tape with the amazing and incomparable producer Butch Vig. Butch Vig produced Nirvana's 1991 album, *Nevermind*, which put Nirvana on the map. The Foo Fighters *Wasting Light* is a return to the big rock sound and a step back from the fancy studio giants that have become the norm in the recording industry

today. There is something extraordinary about a band that can reproduce such a fresh and unpolluted sound on analog tape, without having an army of people working postproduction to overhaul the raw material into a finished product. In recording directly to tape, as this record was recorded, musicians have to accept the mistakes and simply have to be ready to record and take it, warts and all.

Dave Grohl pulled out all the stops when enlisting talent for this record. Nirvana bassist, Krist Novoselic, plays on "I Should Have Known," a song that does not mention Nirvana's Cobain by name but you can hear the hurt that still lingers from the heartache of Cobain's death almost 20 years ago: *"Didn't hear your warning/Damn my heart gone deaf."* The album also marks the return of guitarist, Pat Smear, as a permanent member. Smear left the Foo Fighters after the release of *The Colour and The Shape*, (1997) but had remained a part of the touring band since 2006. Hardcore icon, Bob Mould of Hüsker Dü', sits in on the track "Dear Rosemary" to sing backing vocals.



The composition of the album is just as significant and powerful as the live sound itself. As I listen to the whole record, it is easy to capture the storyline of each of the song, feeling the strong emotional variation among each of them, while also feeling their connection to each other. Every song has been composed, not for the sake of just being "another pretty face" thrown on paper to mindlessly amuse the masses, but to make the listener stop and question what deeper meaning lies within the verses written.

The release of the song, "Rope," before the album debut, revealed what incredible promise the record had. Raw fuzz-tone, heavy guitars, and Taylor Hawkins's powerful drumming fused together into a lust worthy sound of passion and vigor. The video for "Rope" gives every impression that "Rope" had been recorded live, but rather, that was just how high

quality their recording was. The video provided just a taste of what was still yet to come, and it left its fans hungering for more.

“White Limo” really stands out as a desert rock style heavy rocker that goes back to Grohl’s days as a punk rock drummer. This song is really just a mosh-pit heavy kick in the teeth. Bits and pieces of the tortured songwriter become known in a few songs on the record. “*Use me up, spit me out/ Let me be your hand-me-down*” from “Arlandria.” and “*Though I cannot forgive you yet/You leave my heart in debt*” from “I Should Have Known” are both very powerful, intense, and well-crafted examples of Grohl’s talent and torment. As he has on every Foo Fighters album, Grohl seems to tap into some form of inner rage that only comes out in his music. Grohl and the other Foo Fighters are widely known as some of the most approachable rock stars of their time. Scores of articles articulate how nice Dave Grohl is. One 2012 SPIN magazine profile was even entitled “10 Reasons Why Dave Grohl Is The Nicest Dude in Rock.” Many editorial pieces include first-hand encounters with Grohl, elaborating greatly on his composure, sincerity, and generosity. Some critics and fans find this to be an ironic contradiction to his aggressive and passionate music style.

Mid album is time for a good breather, and the Foos let loose their signature power-pop sound that made them so popular with the first two records. “Back And Forth” is just that song with the doubled vocals and power chords. Chunky eighth notes, punchy drums, and harmony guitar solos really make this song formula Foo Fighters and arguably the best song on the record.

The tender verses of “These Days” and sunny vocals of mid-tempo gem “Matter of Time” offer moments of tranquility that recall the breezier points of their debut album, before swelling into roaring rockers. The last track on the record is a somewhat Cheap Trick style, kick ass rocker, “Walk”, the blustery guitars pushing it along with just enough control, then leaving you

hanging, wanting more. *Wasting Light* is the style of record that defines a band and who its members are as musicians. It is truly a snap shot in time. Ultimately, this is as great as Foo Fighters has ever sounded.

*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.