

Crows have arrived. *Reason Enough*, their third album, is the one the band have taken the longest to write – partly because they had to fit the exercise around working full-time jobs, but also because of the freedom that was afforded to them around this specific project, which takes the post-punk four piece’s historically adrenaline-fuelled sound into fresh territory.

For the occasion, James Cox (vocals), Steve Goddard (guitar), Jith Amarasinghe (bass) and Sam Lister (drums), swapped their usual rehearsal space, a small studio in Homerton, East London, for the cavernous walls of a “weird little studio” – as Goddard puts it – in Stroud, Gloucestershire. More specifically, a former Catholic church and convent. The band parked themselves up in the church’s crypt, which was more conducive to inspiring the foundations for *Reason Enough*. Armed with dozens of ideas, they returned to London in a bid to finesse them all.

“Having a more relaxed approach this time around meant we could explore different stuff,” Goddard says. “We don’t want to sound the same as we did before – this is our third album, we have to move on. And so we fucked around a bit more.”

The result: a concise, 10-track album which goes a long way to show Crows’ sonic versatility. Their 2019 debut, *Silver Tongues*, put them firmly on the map as a punk band with an indomitable spirit and a penchant for abrasion, which they performed across the UK in support of IDLES on their sold-out tour. 2022’s follow-up, *Beware Believers*, built on this mood and then some, as Crows fleshed out their high octane sound and laced it with sharp, political lyricism.

On *Reason Enough*, the band’s punk spirit remains intact. Sonically, though, they’re more refined and cohesive than ever; it’s the most mature Crows have ever sounded. The album’s title track sees Cox wrestle with making a decision while marred by shame and restlessness. Crescendos from taut guitar riffs into stretched out reverb and synths, *Reason Enough* climaxes into an explosion of drums – setting an appropriately dramatic scene for everything what’s to come.

“We wrote that one early on,” Goddard says. “Me and Jith were experimenting with different tunings, which we’ve never really done before as it sounds too heavy. But we really went for it this time.”

*Bored*, meanwhile, is Cox’s urgent plea for something more, something better, something to take the edge off and cure the monotony of ordinary life, set against a backdrop of thrilling guitar arpeggios. “*Is it better to love, or to live in fear of pain?*” he asks on *Is It Better*, before wrestling with his sense of self on *Vision of Me*. “*I need a break from this reality*”, Cox demands.

It’s more melodic work than what Crows have previously done, “rather than being all-out punk”, as Goddard puts it. The band worked with Mercury Prize-winning producer Andy Savours, who’s previously collaborated with the likes of Black Country, New Road and My Bloody Valentine, on the project. A master of the polished indie record, Savours put a glossy sheen onto *Reason Enough*, without compromising the record’s intrinsic grit. “It feels less lo-fi, cleaner and more well-rounded as a result,” Cox says.

Crows’ sonic inspirations here are free-wheeling. Having written many of the songs on the

album fresh off the back of time spent touring in America, the band were listening to plenty of self-described “indie bangers”.

“We never set out to achieve a specific type of sound,” Goddard says. “We preferred for things to take their natural course.” For Steve, guitar-wise, this meant experimenting with space and “being able to play picked out parts rather than full chords,” allowing for reverb, sound and instrumentation to play their own roles across the album, tying its songs together with subtle theatricality.

While political threads have long run through Crows’ music, *Land of the Rose* feels like an eruption, a logical conclusion to the band’s take on the state of the UK. “Again, it’s all about being bombarded by a shit, relentless news cycle,” James says. “*Every day is a struggle to feel any attention / In the land of the rose*” he sings with a tinge of shame, nodding to a sense of political disenfranchisement in his home country.

Lyrically, Cox drew heavily from a difficult year, both personally and in terms of facing up to a heavygoing news cycle. “I went pretty unhappy with the lyrics and vocals,” he says. “I wanted to moan a bit. If the last album was angrier, this one is definitely sadder.” Indeed, a general sense of malaise, isolation, unease and a desire for growth in spite of it all permeate *Reason Enough* – an album which strikes a satisfying balance between existentialism, soul-searching, and a discerning brand of indie-rock.

“We’re doing the same thing, but a lot better,” Cox says. “This is Crows in high definition.”