

THE TENNESSEAN

Old Crow Medicine Show releases Ryman magic on new live record

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The sprawling, old-time twang of Old Crow Medicine Show grew from the street corners shadowed by Nashville's Ryman Auditorium.

The Grammy Award-winning outfit cut its teeth on the sidewalks between historic landmarks and honky tonks, busking for spare change and a chance to one day land on a stage as hallowed as the Mother Church.

"I came here when I was 18 years old," Old Crow frontman Ketch Secor said. "(In) 1996, my first year out of high school. I played in front of the Sbarro ... I walked out of here with \$60 cash in my pocket and, listening to WSM the whole ride home to North Carolina, swearing that I'd be back again."

Secor and the band busked its way from Music City streets to regular gigs at the Station Inn and, in 2000, landed a slot during a WSM show at the Ryman. The venue's since become home for Old Crow and its listeners, who take a pilgrimage to the pews annually for the band's New Year's Eve show.

Old Crow captures the magic of the Mother Church on a new album, "Live At The Ryman," which [debuts Friday via Columbia Records](#).



A poster for a 2013 Old Crow Medicine Show concert at the Ryman. (Photo: Hatch Show Print)

"I just feel right at home in that space," Secor said. "I feel like it's ... we didn't want to play Bridgestone. We hardly want to tour. We want to stay in Nashville, Tennessee, and play the Ryman Auditorium."

Old Crow has delivered more than 40 performances on the Ryman stage since its 2000 debut and the album pulls cuts from a number of previous appearances.

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It brings life to familiar Old Crow cuts the likes of “Shout Mountain Music” and “Wagon Wheel” while also showcasing the group’s commitment to tradition with covers of “Will The Circle Be Unbroken” and “Louisiana Woman, Mississippi Man.”

And it features the newfound “distant cousin” to the Old Crow family, Charlie Worsham. [An esteemed guitarist and songwriter](#), Worsham played about 40 gigs with the band this year, including the Ryman appearance heard of the live album cut of “Methamphetamine.”



Worsham shares a bluegrass kinship with the tenured band, he said. The group collaborated with Worsham on his warm new single, [“I Hope I’m Stoned \(When Jesus Take Me Home\).”](#)

“I like to think of it as the kind of relationship John Mayer has with The Grateful Dead or Vince (Gill) has with the Eagles,” Worsham said. “Is he a member of the Eagles? I don’t know. I don’t think that’s the right questions to ask someone in that position.”

“It’s an honor to get to help (something) so great continue their journey.”

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Old Crow Medicine Show (Photo: Crackerfarm/Special to the Tennessean)

Member or not, the opportunity offered a side stage view to one of the rowdiest shows in country music.

"Ketch has a raw energy that ... he's like a hillbilly Mick Jagger," Worsham said. "He does not stop. It's inspiring every night."

And the band doesn't plan to stop inspiring from the Ryman stage any time soon.

"We didn't feel much pressure (on this record) because, oh, this is just the first," Secor said. "We've been playing there for 18 years, or something, and God willing, we'll be playing there for another 20."