

Ψ PRIEST IN PIX!

OAKLAND COLISEUM, 23 JULY 1977

VOCALIST ROB HALFORD: "That was a very special day for Judas Priest. We'd just finished an extensive US tour planting the seeds of British heavy metal and were just about to go back to the UK. We got a call from Robert Plant saying that Led Zeppelin were about to play the Oakland Coliseum and that they wanted Judas Priest on the bill."



Well, even though we were dead road dogs at that point, we weren't about to turn that opportunity down! "We had to stay on an extra two weeks in this cesspit of a motel, but it was definitely worth it to play that show. There was some mad curfew that meant the Coliseum had to close by something like four in the afternoon, so we went on pretty early. It was well before midday and at that time there was still a load of fog rolling in off the bay. We couldn't really see the crowd, but then while we were playing the sun suddenly broke through and the place was packed, absolutely packed, with 80,000 metal maniacs. Led Zeppelin was the biggest band in the world at the time and everybody wanted to see them, so to be given that opportunity by Rob and the Zeppelin boys was really special. It definitely helped us crack California."

"Do you like the clothes I'm wearing? I'm a big fan of *The Witcher* fantasy TV series that came out a couple of year ago, and it looks like I'm kind of pre-dating the look of that series here. I'm a heavy metal minstrel, going from place to place, singing my songs, and telling my stories! The outfit was made by a girl called Fid, who was a designer who lived in Chelsea. She made stuff for Elton and she made stuff for Rod. I made a connection with her, and we became best mates. I used to go down to London for long weekends and we'd go shopping together, visiting all the boutiques up and down Carnaby Street. We'd talk about stage gear, and I told her about my heavy metal minstrel idea. We got a pad of paper and a pencil, sketched a few ideas, and that was what she made me. I had the black top you can see in the photo, and I also had a red one just like it. I think my sister still has the red one, actually! We've always tried to leave all the metal maniacs with a visual memory, and this picture really portrays that. That was a brilliant time, a very special time for metal and for music in general. Extraordinary things were happening... and extraordinary things were being worn!"

TO HELP JUDAS PRIEST CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF A DECIDEDLY METAL CAREER, WE ASKED THE BAND MEMBERS TO GIVE US THEIR PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF THIS SELECTION OF CLASSIC IMAGES...
 JUDAS PRIEST INTERVIEWS BY HOWARD JOHNSON

PHOTO SESSION, LONDON, 1977



BASSIST IAN HILL: "I think this was taken around the time we were recording the 'Stained Class' album, sometime in late 1977. We were still wearing paisley and Sgt Pepper-type stuff, and I doubt the heavy metal tag had come into vogue at that point, because of all the velvet and satin you can see here. [Drummer] Les [Binks] loved his cowboy shirts, but we clearly weren't very successful at making him cover it up here!"

"We all had different musical influences and I think that was reflected in the way each of us was dressing. Ken was a big Hendrix fan. I was into Jack Bruce and Cream. Glenn liked Deep Purple and blues rock bands like ZZ Top, and Les was into progressive rock. Rob's the only one wearing leather there, but his taste was always very eclectic. There was clearly no great plan for our image at that time. We all just turned up in what we felt comfortable wearing. I was just happy being able to play music for a living, and I don't think my thought processes went any further than that!"

GUITARIST GLENN TIPTON: "My mum made that top I'm wearing out of some old living room curtains! I don't think we had any particular plan about how we were going to become successful at this point. But I do remember that we had a burning desire to be successful playing heavy metal music."

Photos: Getty Images/Richard McCaffrey/Michael Ochs Archive; Sony Music Archive via Getty Images/Tom Sheehan