



When *Rock Candy* Mag editor Howard Johnson finally got to interview **AC/DC** in 1990, he feared that the band's glory days were behind them. But the arrival of the brilliant 'Thunderstruck' had given him hope that they were finally recapturing their glory days. Here he recounts interviewing **Angus Young** for a *Kerrang!* cover story promoting 'The Razors Edge' and asking some tough questions...

IT WAS ONE OF the weirdest things. By 1990 I'd been writing for *Kerrang!* for almost 10 years already, yet in all that time I'd never been offered the chance to interview AC/DC, one of the bands that was responsible for me developing an interest in rock music in the first place. It's true that by this point in time my relationship with the band had become complicated. Here's the back story as to why...

AC/DC was one of the first bands I fell for in a big way when I was 14 years old, after my brother brought the live 'If You Want Blood...' album home one day in 1978.

They were raw and energetic, but more earthy, grubbier, and more relatable than the somewhat aloof and ethereal likes of Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple. Much of that was down to the fact that AC/DC were Australians – and Australians don't do pretentious. But most of all, it was down to bare-chested frontman Bon Scott. Bon couldn't hit the high notes like a Robert Plant or an Ian Gillan, but his voice had oodles of character, and his lyrics were down-to-earth, funny, and self-deprecating. So I was well aware of Bon's importance to the band. But the real reason why I became crazy about AC/DC was because

the riffs guitarist Malcolm Young wrote were so addictive. Bon died in London on 19 February 1980 aged just 33, and the band rebounded with what might seem indecent haste when they released 'Back In Black' on 25 July that same year. Former Geordie singer Brian Johnson was on vocals. Of course the album went on to become a true rock phenomenon, selling over 50 million copies worldwide. The credits on the album went to Malcolm, his younger brother and lead guitarist Angus, and Johnson. The word was that Brian had written most of the lyrics, but for me it felt like Bon's fingerprints were all over them.

Brian, Angus and Malcolm have addressed this matter more recently, with Angus explaining that "Bon never really got the chance" to write the lyrics for 'BIB' before he died.

But my problem with AC/DC developed over the four post-'Back In Black' studio albums the band released in the '80s. The thing was, all of a sudden I just couldn't find much to get excited about anymore. Whereas previously the band always had a super-high hit rate in terms of the quality of their tracks, suddenly there was a noticeable drop-off in the number of knockout songs ▶