



SWEET REVENGE

Alice Cooper has gone back to his roots on new album 'The Revenge Of Alice Cooper', joining forces with his original band members on a complete album for the first time since 1973. *Howard Johnson* talks to the rock ringmaster about why now is the perfect time to return...

IT MAY BE 111 degrees Fahrenheit outside his home in Phoenix, Arizona – 44 degrees Celsius in new money – but Alice Cooper is chilled. And it may be one in the morning where I am – I've definitely got the matchsticks at the ready to keep my eyes open – but Alice is both relaxed and genial. We're here for a catch-up to discuss 'The Revenge Of Alice Cooper', the 30th studio album to bear his name and the eighth that's been delivered by Alice Cooper the band, rather than Alice Cooper the singer. What's most remarkable about this collection of 14 songs (16 if you include two bonus tracks, 'Return Of The Spiders 2025' and 'Titanic Overunderture', that you can access via a limited-edition box set) is that it's the

first album from the original band (minus guitarist Glen Buxton, who died in 1997 at the age of 49) since 1973's 'Muscle Of Love' more than 50 years ago. Listening to 'The Revenge Of Alice Cooper' is a spooky experience. It's like the band – Alice, guitarist Michael Bruce, bassist Dennis Dunaway, and drummer Neal Smith – has never been away. Seemingly without trying, they've been able to lock straight back into that weird, slightly disconcerting groove that made them one of the most original and successful rock bands of the early '70s.

"We didn't deliberately try to make it that way," says Alice, who seems both genuinely puzzled and pleasantly surprised by the manner in which the music has come together. "But the album really sounds like it belongs in 1975."

He's not wrong. There's some weird voodoo magic at work here, because songs like 'Blood On The Sun', 'Black Mamba', and 'See You On The Other Side' are eerily reminiscent of the band's glory days and signature sound.

"Most bands of this age don't rock," says Alice as

he tries to analyse why there's such chemistry in this particular line-up. "I can't describe it any other way than telling you that this band just *kills* it..."

ALICE, WHY WAS NOW THE RIGHT TIME TO MAKE AN ALBUM WITH A GROUP THAT HASN'T RECORDED A LONG PLAYER TOGETHER IN OVER 50 YEARS?

"I can't give you a definitive answer on that. Things just happen sometimes. We've always been very loose like that, but Michael, Dennis, and Neal have all been in my world for a while already. They've all played on my recent albums. But we hadn't thought about making a full

album together until one day it just dawned on me like it was the most natural thing in the world. 'Why don't we just do an album?'"

WAS IT A DAUNTING PROSPECT WHEN YOU FINALLY DECIDED TO ACTUALLY JUMP IN AND DO IT?

"Probably not as much as you might think. [Longstanding producer] Bob Ezrin thought it was a great idea and wanted to be involved, which was really important because Bob was always the glue that held the band together back in the day. And the most important thing was that the guys had never quit writing and neither had I. So we all got together, listened to all of the ideas that everyone brought to the table, then started the process of picking out the ones we thought best represented the band, and then began making songs out of those ideas while also coming up with completely new stuff. We honestly didn't try to have a particular sound or a particular style, but it immediately came out with that authentic '70s feel."

"WHILE WE WERE RECORDING THE NEW ALBUM, I WAS ALWAYS LISTENING TO THE SONGS WITH A HYPER-CRITICAL EAR. IF THINGS HADN'T BEEN UP TO SCRATCH, I WOULD HAVE BEEN THE FIRST ONE TO SAY, 'OK, GOOD TRY. BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE THE MAGIC AND WE'RE NOT GOING TO PUT IT OUT.'"

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