

All Back to Vinyl with Richard Purden – Alice Cooper School's Out

It's that time of year again when we prepare for summer and the end of term. It begins when Alice Cooper's classic single is once again broadcast on radio waves bringing with it that feeling of euphoria and freedom.

Perhaps we are feeling it more than ever with our first summer free of restrictions since 2019. It's also 50 years since Schools Out topped the UK single charts in the summer of 1972 for three weeks.



Alice Cooper PHOTO Richard Purden

The original Alice Cooper band made a memorable appearance on Top of the Pops while the vinyl album of the same name was housed in a school desk sleeve that opened out. Either side of 1972 Alice Cooper released two stone cold classics in the form of Killer and Billion Dollar Babies. The singer, born Vincent Furnier, brings back a lot of childhood memories.

Visiting my gran's house in Edinburgh, I remember my uncle Terry's walls were covered in Cooper posters, he had every album and would buy me records while taking any opportunity to play the classic vinyls. With Alice appearing in Scotland last weekend, three generations of Alice fans in my family attended the Hydro gig.



Chuck Garric and Alice Cooper PHOTO Richard Purden

Along with Terry, my son Ryan now 11 is the family's newest fan. At 74, Alice Cooper remains one of the best showmen in rock music with a stack of killer hooks and singalong choruses that feature in his entertaining vaudeville show. The gothic character still gets his head chopped off by a guillotine while singing shock rock classics such as I Love The Dead, this time that 1973 cut is performed by his band, who remain an essential part of bargain.

Cooper appears on stage, part bogeyman, part circus ringmaster to perform Feed My Frankenstein. His exceptional band are a lively act including Chuck Garric on bass, who could pass for a member of the original Coopers with his chunky sideboards, he runs around the stage like a wild animal after being released from a cage.



Alice Cooper and Nita Strauss PHOTO Richard Purden

Cooper is no slouch when it comes to playing the harmonica giving us a bluesy blast on *Fallen in Love* from his 2017 album *Paranormal*. Arguably the best female guitarist of her generation Nita Strauss delivers a solo reminiscent of early Eddie Van Halen before *Roses On White Lace* which features Cooper's wife Sheryl Goddard as the corpse bride.

Ryan Roxie gets a classic garage rock sound and beautiful tone from his Gibson 335 on the likes of *I'm Eighteen* and *Billion Dollar Babies*. Alice appears straightjacketed when performing *Steven*, from his 1975 concept album *Welcome To My Nightmare*. It remains as strange, chilling and compelling as ever. The set is closed with what else but *Schools Out*, large balloons bounce around the crowd during the *Another Brick In The Wall* section.

Just as Alice introduced Ryan Roxie a large balloon bounced in front of the pair which Cooper immediately slayed with a sword, echoing his *Top of the Pops* performance all those years ago. Alice Cooper was a welcome escape to the real horrors of

this world, long may his rock n' roll pantomime nightmare continue.



Ryan (11) with "Alice Cooper" Terry Purden ALL PHOTOS Richard Purden