Alice Cooper

Alice Cooper, 1972, Photo by Hunter Desportes

As the first performer to introduce horror-movie imagery to Hard Rock, pioneering shock rocker Alice Cooper mined social outrage and parental disapproval into transgressive stardom in his 1970s heyday. Cooper's ghoulish appearance and catchy teen-rebellion anthems—not to mention elaborate his concerts incorporating guillotines, boa constrictors, decapitated baby dolls, and gallons of stage blood—held considerable appeal to middle American teens looking for a musical subculture they could claim entirely as their own.

A minister's son born Vincent Damon Furnier, Cooper was a Detroit native who moved with his family to Phoenix. While in high school there, he formed the Spiders, who cultivated a macabre image and by 1968 had evolved into a band called Alice Cooper. The band was fronted by Furnier, who eventually took the same name as his own. The band moved to Los Angeles before relocating to Detroit, where the band's increasingly outrageous concerts began to generate notoriety. A mainstream breakthrough arrived with the hit 1971 anthem "I'm Eighteen" from the third Alice Cooper album, *Love It to Death*.

The popularity of *Love It to Death,* and a wildly successful U.K. tour, earned the band a bigger record deal with Warner Bros., who released *Killer* in late 1971. "School's Out," from the 1972 album of the same name, became Alice's biggest hit to date, while the follow-up, 1973's *Billion Dollar Babies*, which included the hit "No More Mr. Nice Guy," marked the band's commercial peak. Cooper broke up the band in 1974 and made his official solo debut the following year with the concept LP *Welcome to My Nightmare*.

Not everyone loved Cooper, who became a magnet for controversy with his gory antics outraging parents and moral watchdogs. He managed to defuse some of the controversy, however, with a self-effacing, down-to-earth attitude that belied his onstage persona and made him a popular presence on talk shows and mainstream TV shows.

"I'm Eighteen" (1971)
Written by Alice Cooper, Michael Bruce, Glen Buxton, Dennis Dunaway, and Neal Smith

Lines form on my face and hands
Lines form from the ups and downs
I'm in the middle without any plans
I'm a boy and I'm a man

I'm eighteen
And I don't know what I want
Eighteen
I just don't know what I want
Eighteen
I gotta get away
I gotta get out of this place
I'll go runnin' in outer space
Oh yeah

I got a baby's brain and an old man's heart
Took eighteen years to get this far
Don't always know what I'm talkin' about
Feels like I'm livin' in the middle of doubt
'Cause I'm

Eighteen
I get confused every day
Eighteen
I just don't know what to say
Eighteen
I gotta get away