



KISSTROYER

WRITTEN BY TEX MILLER

Kisstroyer's explosive stageshow is set to rock Motor City Music Festival in March. Together as a band for the last thirteen years, the band has achieved some remarkable milestones. Having toured all around the world and played for Kiss's own Paul Stanley, I recently got the opportunity to sit down with guitarist Andrew Kyriacou in the lead up to MCMF to chat about their illustrious career.

At the time of our chat, Kisstroyer has just finished playing at the Monsters of Rock show, which sadly was recently held for the last time. Constantly on the road between concerts, to make sure that the band could still play gigs and not get entirely burnt out, a deliberate decision was made last year to get involved with other business ventures.

"For years we played gig after gig, and having been out on the road for the best part of 13 years, we decided that each of us should get involved with another project, and I think one of the most interesting results is, we enjoy playing gigs a lot more now because we have something to look forward to than performing every week.

"It's sad to see that the Monsters of Rock enterprise has dissolved because it was a brand that we developed and invested in heavily in the early years. The after parties became infamous, and as much as I'd like to tell you some of the tour stories, you know the old saying...," Kyriacou laughs as I try and get some anecdotes suitable for print out of him.

2013 saw Kisstroyer tackle the massive Qingdao Beer Festival, which is one of the biggest music

festivals in China. As they are a household name in Australia, how did the band get such an elusive opportunity to play at the event? From researching the festival, I think that it can best be described as a mix between the Great Australian Beer Festival and Big Day Out. Take a moment to think about this combination and you'll soon realise why the Qingdao festival is, to date, one of the best shows the band has ever played.

"It's pretty surreal to look back on the experience of playing that festival, man. In Australia, our big metropolitan shows attract around 500 people, and although things do get a little crazy, nothing gets too out of hand. The capacity of the Qingdao festival was the size of Etihad Stadium filled up. Before we flew over to the gig, nobody really knew what to expect.

"In a way playing this festival was an act of fate. One of the organisers of this festival was looking for fresh talent from Australia and saw one of the posters promoting Kisstroyer for another gig. He got in touch and things went from there. The Chinese know how to put on a party though. One of the wildest shows in our history, for sure," Kyriacou said.

Kisstroyer started when Andrew and his brother arrived back in Australia after years of travel throughout Europe; at that point nobody knew that it would evolve to be as big as it did today. "We just saw it as a vehicle to have some fun. There were no prerequisites about where it should go or what it should be, and so we have never really been disappointed or frustrated and everybody has really enjoyed the ride.

"We always grew up listening to music and loved the harder-edged rock and roll. I've seen Kiss about 12 times, and every time is just as good as the last. The stage show is what gets me, and that is something we really try and capture. The atmosphere and experience is something that we want people to walk away from telling their friends and reminiscing on the night for years to come. Although we have poured stupid amounts of money into this project, it definitely has been worth it. We never in our wildest dreams ever thought that we would be going into our thirteenth year together though."

As one of the headline tribute acts at Motor City, I can assure you the Kisstroyer set will not disappoint. If you've seen Kiss live before, you'll have an inkling of what you're in for, but for the uninitiated, it's going to be nothing but a fantastic time, as Andrew relates. "The crowd can expect quintessential Kiss – and to say that we're excited is a huge understatement. Fire breathing, pyrotechnics, blood spitting, smoking guitars and everything we can cram into our allocated set time is just a small part of what to expect. It will be energetic and we really can't wait to get down there, mate!"

Playing in Kisstroyer has taken Andrew and the band to some cool places all around the world, but one of the coolest opportunities was meeting the one, the only, the legendary, Bert Newton.

"Bert was honestly one of the most amazingly kind and wonderful people that we have had the honour to meet in our time in Kisstroyer. I never realised just how tall he is. Playing on GMA (his breakfast show at the time) was a fun yet odd experience.



WHEN&WHERE: Motor City Music Festival, Geelong – March 7 through 9

The audience kept telling us to turn down and we were like, "Ummm, compared to our other shows, this is quiet," Andrew jests about their live TV appearance.

As expected, performing as Kisstroyer would take a hell of a lot of time – so what does a day in their life include? "On the day of a gig, we usually start getting ready at 11 a.m. – sound checking and making sure all the pyrotechnics are working correctly takes a while. The makeup and costume ritual takes around two hours, and I'm there most steps of the way ... unlike some of our fancier members that show up just before sound check!"

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