

# THE STATE OF

**There's not a lot of real hard rock music around anymore. No, The Darkness absolutely do not count. Bands just aren't making good honest heavy music with passion. Everything's either trying to be commercial, or it's heavy metal of some denomination or another. The middle-ground has become somewhat of a no-man's-land, and for this reason, amongst others, the return of Union is a momentous and much needed event. Not to mention the fact that they've never toured Europe and the UK before. Burn caught up with guitarist Bruce Kulick and frontman John Corabi on the London stop of the tour to get an update on all things rock.**

**Words: Andy Lye**

**W**e didn't stop because we didn't believe in ourselves, or we didn't get along," explains Bruce, wearing his woolly hat indoors, as many Americans tend to do when visiting London, "We stopped because it just kind of grinded to a halt without the label continuing on and supporting us. And music changed a lot then, so it was hard to carry on. I got involved in other things, and so did John and the guys."

Union, comprising ex-KISS guitarist Kulick, former Mötley Crüe frontman Corabi and Vince Neil's rhythm section of Jamie Hunting (bass) and Brent Fitz (drums), released their debut eponymous album in 1998 followed by a live album in 1999 and a second studio album in 2000 before stopping. With an excellent new live DVD out via Bruce's website ([www.kulick.net](http://www.kulick.net); which is now the only place

for official Union information following the demise of the official Union site some years ago) the desire to play the

went to Argentina. That was great. So we went to Japan earlier this year, and Eric Singer filled in on drums, which was very kind, and with that happening it made ESP (Eric Singer Project, also featuring Kulick and Corabi) want to tour again, and with that happening it made me and John say "well, let's do a Union tour", we'd talked about it, but hadn't, so let's do it! The way it was put together was very guerrilla. People were emailing me and saying "who do I contact" so I put them in touch with my tour manager guy and we were able to put these ten shows together."

"It's a lot of fun. If you have an enthusiastic crowd, you're happy. People normally ask the question, "What's the difference between arenas and clubs?" (why would anyone ask that question? Surely it's freakin' obvious?), but the point for us is just to have a good time and play, and we enjoy the music we play, so it means a lot, especially because we're certainly not over-exposed in Europe at all."

Now with Cinderella drummer Fred Coury and Alice Cooper bassist Chuck Garric in tow, the band is more flamboyant and entertaining than ever. John said on stage in London that he's never laughed so hard and had so much fun on tour before. And with Garric bringing his superb Gene Simmons impression ("Yeah, Chuck can do a great Gene, so we've picked some of the best songs for that") to the live show, the band's repertoire has expanded to include even more classic hard-rocking KISS songs like I Love It Loud, God of Thunder and Unholy to add to the already highly potent mixture of Union originals, KISS, Mötley Crüe and The Scream (John's pre-Crüe band).

However, unfortunately, we can't expect a brand new Union album to immediately follow this tour. That's not

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music has returned.

"About a year after [we did our other things] we got back together (with Hunting and Fitz) to do some warm-up shows which turn out to be the DVD, for which we

to say there won't be one, just not right away.

"It's possible. I mean, John and I have a great chemistry together, but it's not like we've made a plan yet. I don't want to lie to you and say "oh yeah, we're



recording later in the year”, you know? I’ve been writing stuff for another solo record of mine, I’ve done two so far, and I know John’s been working on one, so it’s all good. I have this other big commitment with Grand Funk Railroad, of course, where I’ve been playing guitar for five years. So that’s going to mean I have enough on my plate, so I can’t commit to doing an album with Union at this time.”

So, in the mean time, we’ve got the awesome (see review later in this very issue) live DVD, and we’re going to get new material from both Bruce and John sometime very soon. In fact, there’s new Corabi CDs to be had right now. They’re not

other one, I talked to Cleopatra Records and a bunch of these other labels that I’d done tribute stuff for and said ‘instead of people having to buy a bunch of different records, why not just give them one record.’ They just said ‘yeah, sure.’”

And it’s been a long time coming, but in the near future John will finally release his solo album.

“I’m just trying to put a new band together. It’s taking forever because I just want to make sure that it’s people I get along with and that are willing to go out and work hard and struggle, just like I’m gonna struggle. So it’s been a little bit of a chore, but it’s coming together. Even if I don’t

year. I think I can do that if I really start to focus.”

He’s even considering an album with his brother Bob, who shares the new instructional DVD with Bruce and will be joining ESP on their Japanese tour. Something that will excite guitar fans around the World, especially those who know how much uncredited work Bob did on the late 70s KISS albums when Ace Frehley was otherwise occupied (drunk) and enjoyed his exceptional work on W.A.S.P.’s *The Crimson Idol* concept record.

Union represent everything that’s good about hard rock. They make the music they want to make, and when they’re not allowed to make it,

**“Even if I don’t have a record label, I don’t give a fuck!” —John Corabi**

full-on commercial releases, they’re just CDRs that John’s put together himself, complete with his own artwork. One is a recording made for radio broadcast of *The Scream*, the other is a compilation of all the cover songs John has done for various tribute albums. John explains how they came to be:

“I’ve got this manager now and he’s always looking for my stuff. He calls me up one day and says I’ve found this *Scream* show, a bootleg CD. He bought it off eBay or something, I don’t know. I was like ‘really!?!’. He played it for me and I thought ‘wow, it is pretty good’. He goes ‘you should do this. Remaster it and put your own cover on it.’ I remember the show. It was the last show I did with *The Scream*, and three days later I was in *Mötley*. So somehow he found it, so I put a cover on it and did it myself. I thought if I don’t do it somebody else is only going to do it. The

have a record label, I don’t give a fuck. I just want to do a great record and just go out and play, and if I have to sell it at gigs, or sell it on the Internet, I’ll do it that way.”

Bruce, meanwhile, has a few things on the cards, including a second *Rock N Roll Fantasy Camp*, a new tour with Grand Funk Railroad, a new instructional DVD and a new album.

“So far I’ve written about half of it, I’m really excited about it. It’s a mixture of lots of different sounds that I like. I’m really jazzed about some of the material. I’ll probably do about half in an acoustic, mellow sort of sense then some real tough rock stuff. I want to have maybe a few more guests on it, singing wise, like John, and maybe I can get the guy from Grand Funk, Max. Terrific singer. Who knows, we’ll see. I haven’t figured it all out yet. I just pick it up in between everything else. I hope to get it out sometime next

they don’t make any, refusing to cater to the lowest common denominator, until such times as they can do their own thing again. Any band featuring the longest serving KISS guitarist to date (yes, he spent more years in KISS than Frehley) and one of the best front men in rock is deserving of your attention. Whether you’ve forgotten about Union since the last time they came around, or you’ve not heard of them yet, take the opportunity now to find out and become a fan, before they’re gone again.

*Next month, John will help us shed some light on the various projects he’s been involved in between stints with Union and we’ll talk about some of the other things he’s doing at the moment. This is the guy that fronted Mötley Crüe when they made the best album of the band’s career (there, I said it), so stay tuned!*