

## PREPARE FOR NIGHTMARE

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**Abstract:** Cooper recently finished his international Psycho-Drama tour at the end of July before starting his North American tour July 31, two days after his 25th studio album, "Along Came A Spider," was released. The album incorporates a range of feeling from "Killed by Love" to "Vengeance is Mine," with a notable metal guitar solo by Slash.

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**Full text:** A DARK BUT THRILLING NIGHTMARE, THAT IS. ALICE COOPER IS BACK ON STAGE FOR PSYCHO-DRAMA TOUR, AND THIS FAMILY MAN'S STILL GOT IT  
BY BRYANN BECKER

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With Alice Cooper, you never really know what he'll be doing next. And really, what hasn't he done?

The inventor of shock-rock and theater on the rock stage has spawned a generation of rockers from Motley Crue to KISS.

Cooper recently finished his international Psycho-Drama tour at the end of July before starting his North American tour July 31, two days after his 25th studio album, "Along Came A Spider," was released. He plays at the Sioux City (Iowa) Orpheum Theatre on Sunday, following an Aug. 3 show at the Sturgis Rally.

The album contains the typical Cooper elements of thematic display in an unusual way. He bases the album off a serial killer named Spider, and the album tracks his plottings and actions.

Cooper still manages to captivate in the album, showing once again that he can still be original, even after years of hits, including "No More Mr. Nice Guy" and "School's Out."

"I try to get on things that are universal. When you say nightmare, you don't have to explain it in China. Or you don't have to explain it in Toledo either," he says in a phone interview while on tour in Sweden.

Yet Cooper admits that when he gets on stage, he becomes Alice Cooper. Alice Cooper, the one with attitude - not the real-life Cooper, who has sworn off alcohol for 25 years, been married for 32 and has a family.

"The lights go on, the curtains go open; when I turn to face the audience, I become Alice. My posture is different. My attitude is different. I think Alice should be this arrogant villain. I love playing this character. He looks down on everybody. He thinks, 'It's my audience, it's my show,' " he says.

It's that theatrical aspect that still draws Cooper to the stage. Putting on the mask that is Alice Cooper appeals to him, and he doesn't appear to be slowing down. He usually plays a 28-song set.

Cooper's intentions on stage have changed a little since his earlier days. He no longer expects to shock audiences the way he did before.

"It was so easy in the '70s ... Every kid in the country was looking at their parents, and the parents were going, 'I hate this guy,' and the kids were saying, 'I love this guy.' It was really based on shock. I looked around and said, 'Look at all the Peter Pans. Where's Captain Hook?' I will gladly be Captain Hook. I think with all the villains still in rock and roll, I still think I'm the oldest vampire around," he says.

Cooper still gives his audience an unforgettable show.

"The thing about it is I always take my shows to the extreme. We're very thorough. When we say, 'Welcome to my nightmare,' we're going to give you a nightmare production-wise," he says.

The creative elements in "Along Came A Spider" are readily there. The album incorporates a range of feeling from "Killed by Love" to "Vengeance is Mine," with a notable metal guitar solo by Slash.

Hints of what the concert season that starts next spring may be like come through in his newly redesigned Web site. Cooper has access to the bag with all the tricks.

Cooper, unlike some would expect, seems grounded in reality. He realizes that idolizing real-life serial killers is not normal - it's the TV and movie characters that we root for and gravitate toward.

"I don't think anyone can back a real serial killer, but I don't think anyone has a problem watching Dexter or Hannibal Lecter or anything invented, such as a fictional character like Jason Voorhees," he says. "When it comes to someone like a Hitler or Charles Manson, there's a universal kind of 'yick' about that.

"We can actually get behind a character and want to see what happens when you get a serial killer, especially one that's interesting. All of us are kind of minor league psychologists."

Reach reporter BryAnn Becker at 977-3908.

What: Alice Cooper

When: 7 p.m. Sunday

Where: Orpheum Theatre, Sioux City, Iowa

Tickets: Cost is \$32.50, \$42.40, \$52.50; purchase at Tyson Events Center Box office in Sioux City, Iowa; visit [www.ticketmaster.com](http://www.ticketmaster.com); or charge by phone at 712-252-3434

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