

The First Alice Cooper Band Album in 51 Years – Partially Recorded Here in Tempe

The Wall of Shame – A Feature About Clarke Rigsby and Michael Bruce

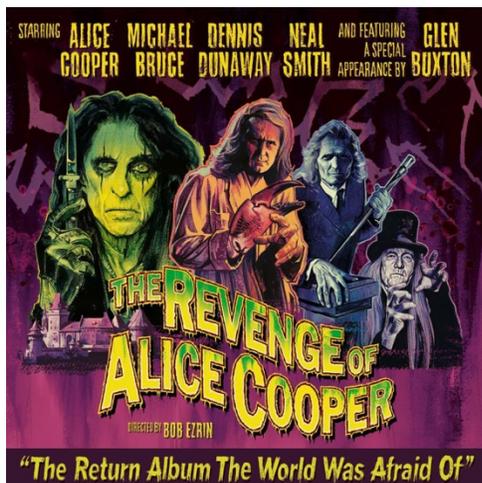
By Nicole Mitchell

At the front of Tempest Recording - a studio in Tempe, Arizona - there is a wall in the bathroom they call The Wall of Shame. The name is a joke, though the walls tell the story straight. Signed drumheads crowd the ceiling. Stickers climb the doorframe. Photographs - hundreds - cover the wood panels like scales. Faces mid-laugh. Autographs scrawled in sharpie. Lanyards from concerts that have long since ended. Clarke Rigsby laughs at the name. It stuck. He points to one frame, his younger self half-visible behind Paul McCartney.



Michael Bruce (left) with Clarke Rigsby at his Tempest Studio in Tempe.

Michael Bruce enters the story later. Founding guitarist of the original Alice Cooper band - co-writer of songs like “School’s Out”, “I’m Eighteen” and “No More Mr. Nice Guy”. He called Clarke first, wanting to see the place. Clarke was cautious. Wary of rock ‘n’ roll stars, of reputations that trailed them. What began as a visit softened into collaboration. Collaboration into friendship.



The album, *The Revenge of Alice Cooper*, released in London, July 25, 2025, and debuted at #1 in the UK’s Official Albums & Metal Albums chart. The first full studio record with the surviving original band members in over fifty years. Cooper, Bruce, Dennis Dunaway, Neal Smith. Glen Buxton, present in fragments, his posthumous contributions pulled in. In playback the signature edges were there - a feeling that comes only when the original players fold back into each other.

Michael chose to do his work at Tempest. Other studios, he explained, often felt more like party houses. Hot tubs. Drugs. Distractions stacked on distractions. Tempest was the opposite. Wood-paneled walls, amps lined like soldiers, a Hammond organ tucked into the corner. Flight cases balanced against one another. Cables curling across the carpet like loose handwriting. Even the clutter had an order. Michael seemed at home here. Hands slicing through the air as he spoke. Clarke leaned back, arms crossed, a half-smile at the corner of his mouth. They worked in spurts. Half an hour of takes, then three hours of stories. Humor underlined everything.



Members of the original Alice Cooper band from left: Neil Smith, Coop, Michael Bruce and Dennis Dunaway.

Friends were called in. Not only friends, but musicians with long careers of their own- Tom Booth, A.D. Adams, Ross Harwood. Each excited to work alongside Michael and Clarke, each not knowing what would survive in the final mix.

The process was deliberate. Album Producer, Bob Ezrin, sent stems ahead to Clarke- rough stereo parts for the rest of the tracks - then he went to work on Michael's pieces. Everything recorded at Tempest was shipped off for mixing. No one knew what would survive the cut. One track, *Famous Face*, almost didn't. Clarke and his team came back to it late, shaping Michael's vocals and adding musicians, not knowing it would land as a fan favorite. Michael grinned when I mentioned the chart numbers - asked whether it was the fifty-one years or simply that the album was that good.

Their partnership showed itself in the smaller things. Clarke unwilling to let the details slide. Michael pulled into that careful attention. I told them it sounded like they spoke the same language. Michael nodded. His wife Lynn told me that Clarke brought out the best in him. You could see it - not just in what was said, but in the way they sat together.

Michael called the reunion of the band a beginning, not a closing. He spoke with certainty about wanting to work with Clarke again, about carrying that momentum forward. Clarke smiled when he said it: musicians can't hide from each other. If you play music, if you work music, you know.



Michael Bruce, on right, with bandmate Dennis Dunaway on the September 2025 cover of Vintage Guitar magazine.



Michael Bruce with Johnny Depp in London.