

## Dokken

### "Bio"

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"If the group Dokken ever heard the famous quote by Andy Warhol that everybody gets 15 minutes of fame, it seems someone forgot to tell them. After 20 years the group continues to have a major recording contract as well as a loyal fan base allowing them to "still follow their bliss and make a living at it" as singer and founder of the group Don Dokken puts it.

"I used to think if you had talent that's all you needed to survive the music business. After all these years I've come to realize you need an equal amount of luck!" says Don. The group kicks off yet another world tour in 2004 to promote their new CD Hell to Pay "and have some fun" as drummer "Wild" Mick Brown puts it. Unlike some of their peers, the group has survived member changes, drugs, alcohol and egos, almost! Qualities that seemed to be almost mandatory during the '80s and '90s for a rock band. They have been often lumped under the title of hair band, even though the group had already been established as a multi-platinum arena act by 1983. Their videos were a staple in the early days of the then fledgling MTV and continued on into the late '80s.

"We've always taken our music very seriously. But I think it's healthy when you can be self-deprecating," says Don, commenting about a recent show. "We were headlining a concert last summer with a lot of other '80s bands. When we arrived in town we heard [on] a radio commercial that the show was being promoted as a hairball fest. We bought a can of extra-hold Aqua Net and put our hair as high as we could get it. When we hit the stage we were laughing so hard at each other we barely made it through the first song. We've never considered ourselves a pop band, we've had commercial hits but we've always prided ourselves for our heavy edge."

Dokken has shared the stage with rock acts such as AC/DC, Metallica, Aerosmith, Judas Priest, Van Halen, Kiss, Scorpions, as well as Bon Jovi, just to name a few.

"When people ask us who we've toured with we just say EVERYBODY!" says Don.

The band hit stadium status in 1988, playing in front of over a million fans in just five weeks. Their current LP at the time, *Back For the Attack*, had sold over 1 million copies in just 21 days. It seemed Dokken was on the verge of superstardom. But like so many other bands that have come before and after them, Dokken broke up in 1989. "It's tough to go from nothing to everything and no one to guide you or say stop. We made millions and spent millions, but none of it on therapy," says Don dryly.

In 1994 the legendary A&R man John Kalodner moved to Sony Music. Kalodner has been credited for reviving many groups' careers with similar breakup problems, most notably Aerosmith. Even though it was at the height of the Seattle grunge sound phase and groups like Dokken were out of vogue, Kalodner offered Dokken a recording contract on the condition the group had to be original members.

"We hadn't spoken since the breakup but I figured we had five years to grow up," says Don laughingly. "So I put in the call." The group released the appropriately titled *Dysfunctional* in 1995, selling 250,000 copies which by the mid '90s was considered by industry standards very respectable. Dokken was really happy and excited, but just as they were on the verge of releasing a second single, filming a video, starting a world tour and "taking it all the way," as Don puts it, the baggage from their past reared its ugly head, and again the group began to unravel. Soon after guitarist George Lynch again left the group. "It was really a shame," says "Wild" Mick Brown. "We were on a roll! It seems lead singers and guitarists are always at odds, it's been going on since before the Beatles."

The group signed to CMC International/Sanctuary Records in 1995 and continued to forge forward. With new guitar wizard Jon Levin on board the group has "gone back to their roots," as he puts it, with *Hell to Pay*, their sixth CD for Sanctuary. "We just recorded what we liked not what's in fashion musically this week," says Levin.

In the last year between recording their new CD, Dokken has performed with a crop of new groups such as Sevendust, Trapt, Eve 6 and Staind. "It's really a trip when a new generation of fans knows all the words to

your songs even though some of them were written 15 years ago or more. It puts a big smile on your face and reminds us that good songs can stand the test of time," says Dokken bassist Barry Sparks on performing with Staind to a soldout audience of 10,000.

Dokken exploded out of the boiling hard rock/heavy metal scene in Los Angeles in the early 1980s. 1983's *Breaking the Chains*, with its catchy title track, set the stage for Dokken becoming the most dominant creative and commercial force in the world of melodic hard rock. *Tooth and Nail*, *Under Lock and Key* and *Back For the Attack* all became platinum selling smashes and the live *Beast From the East* went gold. Songs like "Alone Again," "Just Got Lucky," "Into the Fire," "In My Dreams," "Unchain the Night," "Dream Warriors," "Burning Like a Flame" and "Heaven Sent" are among the genre's finest.

Not only has Dokken survived and kept their loyal fans in a time when people's tastes change as fast as Britney Spears' wardrobe, they have been embraced by a whole new generation of rock fans. They say a cat has nine lives and it seems Dokken is enjoying more than a few as well.yrics here"

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