

icated to just music. I get together with the solo band and we write and play and have fun, and I will continue to put out new music all the time and hopefully one of these days that will be with Poison. We have a great touring relationship and we're still friends; it's just getting in to write new music has been a little tough... but hopefully in the future that will change. But for right now I think we're going to take it one tour and one album at a time and focus on this, and if we can get in next year and write a new record I'd love to do it.

In addition to festivals of 7,000-8,000 people or consecutive days at sold-out 1,200-seat venues, some of your solo shows were in clubs. I love that sweaty music-club vibe. It must be really different from an arena.

The reason that I've been able to tour successfully as a solo artist is that people want to come up close and personal and see you play "Every Rose." Part of that energy comes from the fact that it's up close and sweaty. There's 1,000 people shoved into an 800-seat bar, and it's fun. You're partying; you're having a great time.... The most important thing is making new music. [In clubs] I get to test out new songs, and as long as that stays exciting to me that's what matters.

This being Goldmine, you must tell us about your record collection.

I listen to all styles of music, my favorites being hard rock, Southern rock and metal. Those are my favorites, and country is up there too. Don't laugh, but I like country. {From his 2005 solo album, *Freedom Of Sound*, the first single, "All I Ever Needed," charted at #46 Country. — Ed.} I would say probably some of the biggest things, AC/DC, Aerosmith, Metallica, Skynyrd — I love Lynyrd Skynyrd. Those are my classic bands.

I like The Foo Fighters a lot; I like Staind. There are certain things I like from each genre of music. Even with Nirvana and Pearl Jam there are some songs that I really love. My record collection, it's vast. It's wide open, but for the most part I really like listening to good hard-rock music, any music with a great melody.

Were there any albums that as a kid you were so excited to buy?

One of my favorites was Aerosmith *Toys In The Attic* — and AC/DC's *Highway To Hell*.

Do you remember your first record?

I bought my first record at a garage sale. I bought two. I bought *Led Zeppelin II* and Lynyrd Skynyrd *Pronounced*. Those are the first two I purchased, and I happened to steal a Kiss record. I happened to borrow on a long-term basis a record that I could not afford and had to have. It fit nicely under my leather jacket. I don't encourage it, but I just couldn't afford it and I was so bummed out and no one was buying it for me, and I don't know what happened — it fell, it slipped under my jacket....

Did your parents flip out over the long-haired metal records that you were bringing home?

My dad was in the Navy and he was a big country music fan, and he didn't look big upon my career as a rock musician but he's learned to love and embrace it. Now he's talking with the Kiss guys and hanging out with Sammy Hagar, so now he loves it.

It's crazy to think nowadays about all the controversy that the "tongue cover" caused.

I was raised in a Roman Catholic family and my parents — I'm like, "You know I've never been a devil-worship-anything ever." I thought that cover looked freaky and cool. It was meant to shock you. Even if you didn't know who we were, you'd look at the record or listen to it.



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Poison played an energetic, sold-out show in Green Bay, Wis., in June.

Open Up And Say... Ahh!: *There's a tongue. It was funny.*

In my feeble little brain it was all self-explanatory.

Do you ever have young bands coming up and asking for advice?

This is my best advice. Play the music you want to play, love what you're doing and be always, always in charge of your life and your career. Don't assume shit.... Don't ever say, "This is my agent." This is a mediator. He works also for his promoter and 20 of his other bands.

I'm very brutal about this: Love what you do first. You've gotta love it, and then take charge of it. Don't stand around going, "What happened to my money, dude? What happened to my life, dude?" That plays great in a movie. It sucks in real life to be MC Hammer.

We've fortunately written all of our own stuff, kept

our own publishing, our records, our royalties. There's no shame in being in charge of what you do.

All that, "Hey, dude, I don't know what happened" when they woke up one day — all they've got to blame is themselves at that point.

And party hard. Don't forget to enjoy it.

The 1980s ripped-up jeans are in the stores again. Are guitar solos coming back too?

With us it's never left. I think they're going to get privvy to it again. They're going to get wise to the old guitar solo here real soon. Believe you me, it's coming back around. All these young kids come to see us — they're like, "What happened to a guitar riff?" They come see Poison and C.C.'s doing a solo and things are great — and I said, "Isn't that the reason you're supposed to play guitar in the first place? To play the guitar."