

THE PETER CRISS ALLIANCE

Ex-Kisser Peter Criss Restarts in Music City

By ROBERT K. OERMANN

The world-renowned Peter Criss is rebuilding his rock career in Nashville, beginning by introducing his new band at the "One For the Sun" 12-hour rock festival at Hermitage Landing Saturday.

Criss is still the same rock & roller who became a founding member of Kiss by placing the legendary ad in "Rolling Stone" reading: "Drummer will do anything to make it."

"Anything" turned out to be writing and performing the group's first, gold single *Beth* (1976). Of the four solo LPs subsequently released by the Kiss members, Criss' sold the best (Gold and Platinum). In all, he recorded 16 albums and sold over 40 million records as a Kiss member.

Now it's time to take off the famous "cat" makeup. And he's decided to do it in Music City.

"I got tired of the makeup and the pressure, and in Kiss there was always the frustration of not being able to do more of my own material," he says. "I'm not a sideman, man."

He and his longtime collaborator Doc Penridge have moved to Nashville, are recording here, and have put together an all-Nashville band.

"We share an apartment here. We've based all our management, publicity and booking here."

Adds Penridge, "This is a really important step for me. We've been trying to get this together on the East Coast for a long time, but it took Nashville to do it. There's a lot of soul in this town."

Criss emphasizes, "I'm not jivin' anybody. I'm over the prima donna rock stage. I've had the limousines and the Rolls-Royces. I've grown up. The music counts now. The rest is all secondary."

He could have retired comfortably after he quit Kiss in 1980, but Penridge inspired him to begin anew, he says. "I took three years off and went

nuts. He lit a fire under me again."

"In Kiss we gave the people the best rock & roll show in the world. I wanna give the public something different; because I don't wanna be behind the drum kit anymore."

"I wanna jump around. I wanna go wild out there. I'm a dancer! Look. And if they can make me fly on stage or whatever, I'll do that too. But I don't want to eat no bat heads or live chickens."

Kiss had a reputation for showmanship as well as for being the loudest heavy metal band on earth. "I was never really heavy metal," Criss maintains. "My roots go back to Motown and Sam Cooke. I'm more melody-based."

"Good music, good fun, is what you get from us now. The sound is very modern, very electric. It's guitar and jungle rhythm: 'rock & b.' It's a lot of rhythm."

That may be because the band has two percussionists. Besides Criss, there's drummer John Moss. The other Nashvillians in the band are Mike "Superman" Hutchins (guitar), Tony Crow (keyboards), and Alan Woody (bass). Criss will sing lead. Penridge will play lead guitar.

"We were going to call ourselves The Desperate Men," says Criss. "But then we decided we're not desperate any more. Now we're called The Criss-Penridge Alliance. Things have been going so well in the studio that we've already got a third of an LP done, and even Nashville labels are interested in us. I'm beginning to think we're just the 'babies' they need!"

"We'd love to be the act that breaks things wide open for Nashville rock & roll."

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SHOWCASE



Ready for a Day in the Sun—Peter Criss, left (formerly of the rock group Kiss), Cleon (of Carl P. Mayfield's special reports team on WKDF), in Kiss makeup, and Doc Penridge (who along with Criss heads up The Criss-Penridge Alliance) will be on hand for the "One For the Sun" concert at Hermitage Landing Saturday. Showtime is 10 a.m. Story on page 10.

The Fitness

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