

# RAVEN

An early and influential band in the New Wave of British Heavy Metal movement, Raven are a group whose lean, tough sound helped anticipate the rise of thrash metal, though they preferred to describe their energetic and physical sound as "athletic rock," inspired in part by their habit of wearing sports gear on-stage. Emerging in the late 1970s, Raven played with the raw energy and reckless power that epitomized the NWBHM, and rode the crest of that movement with their 1981 album *Rock Until You Drop*, which is still considered a classic of the genre. The band struggled to adapt to the '80s pop-metal scene, and eventually returned to the no-frills, high-energy denim and leather sound that first won them favor. Despite experiencing injuries, lineup changes, and shifting popular music tastes, the group endured well into the next century, issuing their 13th studio LP, *ExtermiNation*, in 2015, maintaining their reputation as a dynamic and vital live act.

Raven were formed in Newcastle, England in 1974 by brothers Mark Gallagher (guitar, backing vocals) and John Gallagher (bass, lead vocals). Teaming with guitarist Paul Bowden, the three musicians spent months working out songs before they recruited drummer Paul Sherrif and began playing out. In 1976, Mike "Mick" Kenworthy replaced Sherrif behind the drums, and a year later Sean Taylor was the group's new timekeeper. Pete Shore signed on as Raven's new guitarist in 1979 after Bowden left the group, and Rob "Wacko" Hunter took over on drums after Taylor left the same year.

By this time, the group had become a frequent attraction at rock clubs in the North of England, and Neat Records, an upstart independent metal label in Newcastle, approached the band about making a record. Released in 1981, *Rock Until You Drop* was not only Raven's debut album, it was the first single-artist LP from Neat, and by the time it was released, Raven had returned to power trio status after the departure of Pete Shore. After releasing *Wiped Out* in 1982, Raven signed an American record deal with Megaforce Records, and in support of their first release for the label, 1983's *All for One*, they toured the U.S. for the first time; their opening act was a young thrash metal group from California called Metallica.

In 1985, Raven relocated to New York City and landed a new recording contract with Atlantic Records. Their first album for the label, *Stay Hard*, was a commercial success, but many fans felt that the album (as well as its follow-up, 1986's *The Pack Is Back*) was too polished and lacked the impact of their early work. Released in 1987, *Life's a Bitch* was widely seen as a return to form, but it was also Raven's last album for Atlantic. *Nothing Exceeds Like Excess* was released by the independent Combat label in 1988, and also introduced Raven's new drummer, Joe Hasselvander, formerly of Pentagram. While Combat soon went under, Raven had struck up a strong relationship with the German label SPV, and they continued to

record and tour throughout the '90s, releasing three albums (1991's *Architect of Fear*, 1994's *Glow*, and 1997's *Everything Louder*) and touring frequently through Europe, Japan, and the United States.

Raven continued to tour and released *One for All* in 2000, but the group was forced to take several years off when Mark Gallagher's legs were crushed after a wall collapsed on him. Determined to keep playing, Gallagher and his bandmates staged an American tour in 2004, and Mark played in a wheelchair. By 2006, Gallagher had recovered, and the band was back on the road. A studio album, *Walk Through Fire*, appeared in 2009, and in 2014 the hard-touring Raven crossed paths with their old friends Metallica, opening for the metal stars at a show in São Paulo, Brazil in front of a crowd of 70,000. In 2015, Raven once again emerged from the studio with a new album, *ExtermiNation*, and in 2018 they announced that a new studio LP and live album would arrive the following year.