



# BACK IN BLACK

BUCKCHERRY HITS THE COMEBACK TRAIL WITH A NEW CD

When Buckcherry decided to call it quits in the summer of 2002, Creed was still a credible rock band, Fall Out Boy was playing house parties, and 50 Cent was a little-known rap artist. Over the past few years, new bands have come and gone faster than Paris Hilton's boyfriends, which is why Buckcherry guitarist Keith Nelson was a little nervous when the band decided to reform in late 2005.

The music industry is arguably more volatile than ever, and Nelson worried that it would be difficult for the band to recapture its old fan base. So Nelson, along with vocalist Josh Todd, rhythm guitarist Stevie D., bassist Jimmy Ashhurst and drummer Xavier Muriel, decided to embrace the most basic methods for exposing their music to fans. They built pages on websites like Purevolume and MySpace, where fans could listen to new songs, and they embarked on a small club tour to promote the release of their new album, *15*.

Six months later, the album has been certified gold and produced a hit single, "Crazy Bitch," which hit #3 on the Billboard Mainstream Rock chart and has nearly four million plays on the band's MySpace page. Not only has the band recaptured the hearts of the loyal fans it left behind four years ago, but they've also attracted a new legion of fans that have helped the band amass more success than ever before.

**How did you feel the day that *15* was released?**

**Keith Nelson:** There wasn't really a lot of press leading up to the release. I was excited, but I also knew we had a lot to prove. Nobody had heard any new music from us for four years. All I knew is I wanted to make a better record than our previous two records, and I think we did that. We definitely went through a period when we didn't know what to expect. We didn't know if people forgot about us.

**What were some of the biggest changes you noticed in the music industry since the last album you had put out?**

I think that bands today have the capacity to rely less on major labels. It's always nice to have that support, but it's not necessary. There are so many other outlets to get music heard other than marketing from a major label. It's exciting, because it gives artists more control

over what they can do.

**What outlets did you use to promote your music?**

We used Purevolume and MySpace as a way to announce that our hiatus was over. "Crazy Bitch" wasn't even supposed to be the first single off the album, but rather a reintroduction to the band. First, satellite radio picked it up, and then WYYY in Baltimore started playing it on the air. It quickly became the number one most requested song, and then other stations started picking it up.

**Why did the band decide to take a break in 2002?**

The break wasn't really planned. It was the end of a series of circumstances that led to various band members quitting. It basically ended up being just Josh and me, and at that point we decided it was time to take a break.

**What did you do during your time off?**

I spent a lot of time in the studio learning about the recording process. I had the opportunity to work with My Chemical Romance, and they really stood out in my mind. We're still good friends now. It's interesting to see how guys a few years younger interpret music. They're into a lot of classic rock, and I had no idea that their record collection was so deep.

**What were the circumstances that led you to reform Buckcherry?**

I had gone through a lot of personal stuff. My father had passed away and Josh called me up, which was really sweet. I hadn't talked to him in a while, and it was those initial phone conversations that started the process. I didn't want the band to end, so we decided we'd pick up from where we left off.

**Do you have a favorite song on *15*?**

Right now it's "Everything," because that's a real left turn for us. "Crazy Bitch" is a typical Buckcherry song, but you can really hear the band expanding our musical horizons on "Everything."

**Your song lyrics and the image you convey might lead your fans to think it's a non-stop party when you're on tour. Any truth to that?**

At this point in our lives the most important thing is to make great music and put on great shows. We're definitely conscious of our partying and not letting it get out of control. I don't want to see anyone turning blue in the bathroom. Then again... it's not like we're hanging out and drinking chai lattes. —Jason Feirman