



# SAXON

## **\*\*\*STORMING NEW 'THE INNER SANCTUM' STUDIO ALBUM UNLEASHED MARCH 5<sup>TH</sup>, UK & IRISH TOUR FEB. 28 – MARCH 9<sup>TH</sup>\*\*\***

Biff Byford - Vocals  
Paul Quinn - Guitar  
Doug Scarratt - Guitar  
Nibbs Carter - Bass  
Nigel Glockler - Drums

English hard rocking heavy metal legends Saxon release their excellent 18<sup>th</sup> studio album 'The Inner Sanctum' on SPV Records on March 5<sup>th</sup> and tour the UK and Ireland to coincide. 'The Inner Sanctum', a stunning, storming, monstrous beast of a hard rock album is, in the words of vocalist Biff Byford "the most powerful album we've ever recorded."

Biff explains how 'The Inner Sanctum' was written. "The past 12 months were undeniably the most successful year in our career to date, so we knew that it would be a good idea to start collecting ideas and write the songs early. All through the last summer, we used the weekdays between the festival weekends to concentrate on working on our album. We hired rehearsal rooms in Germany, Spain and England, where we ensconced ourselves for three days during the week, before travelling to the next festival. We'd never gone about things this way before, but as you can hear it worked."

Saxon, who are set to star in a one hour Channel 4 Documentary at the end of March - part of a six part series filmed with Harvey Goldsmith – set out on tour at the end of this month. Dates are:-

28<sup>th</sup> Feb. GLASGOW Garage (with Masterplan)  
2<sup>nd</sup> March BELFAST Spring & Airbrake (with Masterplan)  
3<sup>rd</sup> March DUBLIN The Village (with Masterplan)  
4<sup>th</sup> March MANCHESTER Academy 2 (with Masterplan)  
6<sup>th</sup> March WOLVERHAMPTON Civic Hall (with Rose Tattoo + Masterplan)  
7<sup>th</sup> March NOTTINGHAM Rock City (with Rose Tattoo + Masterplan)  
8<sup>th</sup> March CARDIFF Coal Exchange (with Rose Tattoo + Masterplan)  
9<sup>th</sup> March LONDON – Astoria (with Masterplan)

'The Inner Sanctum', which was produced by Charlie Bauerfeind, is, in Byford's own words "in the style of *Metalhead* and *Lionheart* with a little bit of *Solid Ball Of Rock*; a number of tracks have an Eighties feel, but at the same time the production is very modern."

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Formed in the north of England in the late 70s, Saxon were at the forefront of what became known as NWOBHM - the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal. Many young metal bands were emerging who challenged the supremacy of the old guard and Saxon were at the forefront, along with Iron Maiden, Judas Priest, Motörhead, Diamond Head and Def Leppard.

Saxon were originally known as Son Of A Bitch and spent their early days paying dues in clubs and small venues up and down the UK, building a strong live reputation. After changing their name to Saxon, they released their debut, self-titled album, a solid, if basic heavy rock outing, which merely hinted at the uncut diamond of a sound that the band would later polish, in 1979.

It was with the release of their second album 'Wheels Of Steel' in 1980, that Saxon's popularity soared, earning the band two UK Top 20 hit singles with 'Wheels Of Steel' and '747 (Strangers In The Night)'.

Saxon capitalized on this success with the release in the same year of 'Strong Arm Of The Law', another very heavy, surprisingly articulate, metal album. A further Top 20 hit arrived with 'And The Bands Played On', drawn from 1981's double platinum 'Denim And Leather' album, which also produced 'Never Surrender'. Saxon toured the USA to great acclaim and appeared at the 1981 Castle Donington 'Monsters Of Rock' festival.

1982's 'The Eagle Has Landed' live album reached the UK Top 5 and was described as "One of the best live releases of the decade" by the *Melody Maker*. 'Power And Glory' (1983) caused a major stir in the US market; "People tend to think that 'Crusader' was our big breakthrough, yet it was actually 'Power And The Glory' that enjoyed the most success in America," muses Byford.

'Crusader' (1984), flirted with a more US radio oriented sound and caused some critics to slam Saxon's orientation to the mainstream. The follow up, 'Innocence Is No Excuse' was a similarly deeply melodic offering – 'Our Def Leppard album' reflects Biff.

In the mid-eighties Saxon went through a reorientation phase, and their albums 'Rock The Nation'(1986) and 'Destiny' (1988) met with somewhat mixed reviews. "Our record company and management tried to gear us *even more* to the US market," remembers Biff of the Saxon sound in those days, "but what's the point in trying to sell Coca-Cola to the Americans?"

After a two year break Saxon emerged in 1990 with a new deal with SPV and the release of the 'Solid Ball Of Rock', an incredibly powerful album which received rave reviews. A massive European tour proved Saxon able to rely on an astonishingly faithful following, and the next two releases, 'Forever Free' (1993) and 'Dogs Of War' (1994) were similarly extremely well received. Saxon's excellent live cut, 'The Eagle Has Landed II', released in 1996, was a testament to the band's impressive live reputation, while 1997's studio album 'Unleash The Beast', even garnered begrudgingly good reviews back home in the UK.

In 1998 the band sold out their UK tour and the live reviews were ecstatic: "Terminally Enjoyable. 4/5" wrote Steve Beebee in Kerrang! on February 28th 1998. 1999's studio album, 'Metalhead', was hailed by Metal Hammer as "Arguably the best album in years from Biff and the boys. Slicker, meaner and harder, this 11 tracker sees Saxon rejuvenated". 2001's studio album 'Killing Ground' won KKKK in Kerrang! as did 2004's 'Lionheart' studio album, which Kerrang! proclaimed as "Easily the band's best album since their '80s heyday and a thoroughly modern slab of metal...this sounds like the spirited work of 20-somethings...riffs scythe, kick drums pummel and frontman Biff Byford delivers the performance of a lifetime".

Saxondrugsrocknroll - Roland Hyams on 020 8677 8466 / 020 8769 6713.

[www.saxon747.com](http://www.saxon747.com) [www.spv.de](http://www.spv.de)

February 7<sup>th</sup> 2007.



# SAXON

**\*\*\*NEW 'LIONHEART' STUDIO ALBUM RELEASED  
20/9/04 ON SPV + OCTOBER TOUR DATES\*\*\***

Saxon are set to release their first studio album for three years, 'Lionheart', on CD and limited edition 'digipak' - including an exclusive patch - on SPV on September 20<sup>th</sup>, prior to four major UK concerts in October. "Lionheart is the most powerful album we've ever recorded" states singer Biff Byford about this excellent British Hard Rock album on which the band display an energy that's almost physically perceptible.

There are several reasons for this metallic surge of adrenalin. For one thing, Saxon recorded in England again for the first time in almost 15 years. The band took a mere 50 days to record the eleven new *Lionheart* tracks at their own Gems 24 studio. "Things happened really fast," comments an incredulous Biff. "We went into the studio well prepared, having invested great care in our compositions, so we took relatively little time at the studio." Another important energy source is Saxon's new drummer, Joerg Michael. His predecessor, Fritz Randow, left the group at his own request (Biff: "He has a family, his own band, Victory, and didn't want to tour as much. We accept his decision completely"), so Saxon enlisted power house drummer Joerg Michael (ex-Stratovarius) to replace him.

Co-produced by Biff Byford and Charlie Bauerfeind (Motörhead, Rob Halford, Helloween and Blind Guardian) Saxon have managed to embrace a newer, fresher sound while staying true to their roots. Biff explains "The sound on *Lionheart* is a hybrid of analogue and digital recording. The drums, for example, were cut entirely on an analogue 24-track machine, vocals and guitars were recorded digitally and then gone over, analogue style. The album simply sounds fantastic. We wanted crystal clear fidelity and that's what Charlie's given us'.

The very British songs that sparkle on this album are power fodder in typical Saxon manner. The fast, dynamic opener 'Witchfinder General', a true story about a 17<sup>th</sup> century witch hunter, sets the pace of the record. The title track is about Richard The Lionheart, the English king who reigned at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. 'Man and Machine' and 'English Man'O'War' are also typical Saxon numbers, while 'Beyond The Grave' sounds a little unusual stylistically, combining interesting e-bow and tremolo guitar effects. "As far as I'm concerned, 'Beyond The Grave' is practically an updated version of tracks like '747/Strangers in the Night,'" says Biff. "Different in a way, and at the same time typical of Saxon."

Saxon promote *Lionheart*, the latest release by a band with the heart of a lion, at the following UK shows:-

2 <sup>nd</sup> October	London Astoria Theatre.
3 <sup>rd</sup> October	Cardiff Coal Exchange.
4 <sup>th</sup> October	Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall.
5 <sup>th</sup> October	Glasgow King Tuts.

2004 marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bands recording debut and besides a full European tour plans are afoot to mark the occasion with a follow-up to last years 'The Saxon Chronicles' DVD.

Lion in wait - Roland Hyams on 020 8677 8466 / 020 8769 6713. 12<sup>th</sup> August 2004.  
[www.saxon747.com](http://www.saxon747.com) [www.spv.de](http://www.spv.de)

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# SAXON

**NEW 'HEAVY METAL THUNDER' DOUBLE CD OUT 21ST  
OCTOBER, LONDON ASTORIA GIG WITH FULL 'EAGLE'  
PRODUCTION JANUARY 26TH 2003.**

UK heavy metal stalwarts Saxon return to the fray with a brand new double CD (for the price of one) - 'Heavy Metal Thunder', on SPV through Koch on October 21st. 'Heavy Metal Thunder' features thirteen re-recorded Saxon classics, from their eponymous debut through to '*Crusader*', on CD1, and an 'Official Live Bootleg' of 5 live tracks recorded in San Antonio, Texas, in 2002, plus a live video of the track 'Killing Ground', recorded at the Wacken festival in 2001, on CD2.

Front man Biff Byford notes that "We've frequently been asked by fans, and now we've fulfilled their wish. We've mostly stayed with the original arrangements; only a few solos have changed slightly, and the songs have been re-recorded with state-of-the-art studio technology."

Saxon garnered much critical acclaim for their most recent, (2001), studio album '*Killing Ground*'. "You've got to hand it to Saxon, when it comes to ballsy metal they are kings. Yes, they've had the odd hiccup here and there but they've stuck to their guns and continue to create tasty albums with genuine air-guitar appeal. Biff Byford still sings like he's got his left nut trapped in his leather strides and guitarists Doug Scarratt and Paul Quinn whip up a veritable storm - both 'Dragon's Lair' and 'Running For The Border' are especially feisty. The only oddment here is a strikingly unusual cover of King Crimson's classic 'Court Of The Crimson King', which works precisely because it's so unexpected. 'Rock Is Our Life!' shrieks Biff during the chorus of the rousing closer of the same title - you better bleedin' believe it mate!" KKKK - Essi Berelian, reviewing '*Killing Ground*' in Kerrang! September 29th 2001.

Saxon, featuring original vocalist Biff Byford, fellow remaining original member guitarist Paul Quinn, second guitarist Doug Scaratt, and the rhythm section of Nibbs Carter (bass) and drummer Fritz Randow (ex-Victory and Sinner) have also confirmed a short European tour, featuring the legendary Saxon 'Eagle' light show and production, culminating at the London Astoria Theatre on 26th January 2003.

"You could say without exaggerating that the current Saxon line-up is the best we've ever had" avers frontman Biff Byford, continuing that, "The good thing about Paul and Doug is the fact that they seem to get better with every year. They have always been fantastic guitarists, yet they've never rested on their laurels but continue to develop constantly."

Heavy Metal Biker - Roland Hyams on 020 8677 8466 or 020 8769 6713.  
6th September 2002. [www.saxon747.com](http://www.saxon747.com) [www.spv.de](http://www.spv.de) [www.workhardpr.com](http://www.workhardpr.com)

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Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> London LA2 £10 in advance, £11 on door  
Monday 29<sup>th</sup> May Dudley JB's, £9 adv £10 door

Saxon play live in London for the first time since the release of their last studio album 'METALHEAD' on SPV on 20.9.99, when they headline London's LA2 on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> May, the second of two nights at the LA2 celebrating the twentieth anniversary of NWOBHM (New Wave Of British Heavy Metal). (Tickets, priced £10.00 in advance (£11 on the door), are on sale now. Doors will open at 6.00pm.

Samson, Angelwych and Preying Mantis play the night before, Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May, when doors open at 7.00pm. While the ticket price is £10 for each night, a special discounted deal of £16 is available for both nights.

Saxon released their last studio album 'METALHEAD' on SPV through Koch UK on September 20th 1999. "METALHEAD" combines current influences with the traditional tried and tested elements of NWOBHM ("New Wave Of British Heavy Metal") and the distinct vocals of the band's frontman Biff Byford, who has defined Saxon's sound for well over 20 years now.

'METALHEAD', recorded at the Karo Studios in Brackel near Hamburg, was produced by Rainer Hänsel and mixed by Charlie Bauerfeind (Angra, Sisters Of Mercy). Byford, along with fellow remaining original member guitarist **Paul Quinn**, second guitarist **Doug Scaratt**, and the rhythm section of **Nibbs Carter** (bass) and drummer **Fritz Randow** (ex-Victory and Sinner) have created a monster sound on 'METALHEAD'.

Saxon still sound as fresh and the loud as they did 20 years ago, although as Biff now admits of early attempts; "**We were unbearably bad, there's probably never been as much noise again in the history of rock 'n' roll,**" on the subject of Saxon's former incarnation as Son Of A Bitch.

That Saxon still became famous was due to the arrival of the "New Wave Of British Heavy Metal", when bands like Iron Maiden Def Leppard and Saxon became regular items on Top Of The Pops. While their debut album merely hinted at the uncut diamond of a sound that the band would later polish, their second release became a mega-seller. 'WHEELS OF STEEL', the successor to 'STRONG ARM OF THE LAW' (both released in 1980), and in particular the double platinum release 'DENIM AND LEATHER' (1981) helped to establish Saxon at the forefront of NWOBHM.

Tours in the States, an appearance at the Monsters Of Rock festival in Castle Donington as well as the live album 'THE EAGLE HAS LANDED' (1982) followed. The latter was described as "One of the best live releases of the decade" by the *Melody Maker* and made it to No. 5 on the British album chart.

In the early Eighties the world just couldn't seem to get enough of Saxon. 'POWER AND GLORY' (1983) produced by Jeff Glixman (Kansas, Gary Moore, etc.) was another classic album that caused a major stir, particularly in the US market. "People tend to think that 'CRUSADER' was our big breakthrough, yet it was actually 'POWER AND THE GLORY' that enjoyed the most success in America," muses Byford.

'CRUSADER' (1984), produced by AOR authority Kevin Beamish (Lionheart, Cold Sweat, REO Speedwagon), flirted with a more US radio oriented sound and caused some critics to slam Saxon's orientation to the mainstream.

The follow up, 'INNOCENCE IS NO EXCUSE' which Biff once dubbed "Our Def Leppard album", was similarly a deeply melodic offering, but in those days thrash, an altogether tougher variety of metal, was becoming ever more popular.

In the mid-eighties Saxon went through a reorientation phase, and their albums 'ROCK THE NATION' and 'DESTINY' met with somewhat mixed reviews. "Our record company and management tried to gear us *even more* to the US market," remembers Biff of the Saxon sound in those days, "but what's the point in trying to sell Coca-Cola to the Americans?"

The days of group seemed numbered with the end of their recording contract and for the next two years things were quiet in the Saxon camp, until they emerged in 1991 with a new deal with SPV and the release of 'SOLID BALL OF ROCK'. A massive European tour proved Saxon able to rely on an astonishingly faithful following, particularly in Germany, where they have sold hundreds of thousands of albums recently.

The next two releases, 'FOREVER FREE' and 'DOGS OF WAR' were extremely well received on the continent, subsequent tours keeping the band constantly on the road. Saxon's reputation as an excellent live act was further augmented by the release of their 1996 live cut 'THE EAGLE HAS LANDED II' and interest in the group began to pick up again in Britain.

The release of 1997's studio album 'UNLEASH THE BEAST', marked something of a return to favour in the UK for the band; "Saxon still clout out a heavyweight monster to make a mockery of all those around them" wrote *Loaded* in November '97, while even Q conceded that "Like a favourite old family dog, Saxon remain daft but dependable" in the same month.

Then in February 1998 the band sold out their gigs at the LA2 in London and the Wolverhampton Wulfrun Hall and the live reviews were ecstatic: "Terminally Enjoyable. 4/5" wrote Steve Beebee in Kerrang! on February 28th 1998.

Metal Hammer's Essi Berellian awarded 9/10 in their May '98 issue, stating that Saxon "still sound simply awesome after all these years. This would have been termed a stunning comeback if, indeed, they'd ever gone away. Check 'em out, and see how it ought to be done."

Biff notes that "Our reputation in England has improved again over the last few years, probably because people have begun to realise that we have remained faithful to ourselves." And the band's fourteenth album, 'METALHEAD' is exactly that - totally faithful to the fiery Saxon blueprint.

March 2000

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