



Skindred

The music world may be in a permanent state of panic and flux, but one basic principle of rock'n'roll remains true: the key to longevity is to always deliver the goods. No band has better encapsulated this ethos of integrity and determination over the last decade than Skindred.

Widely acknowledged as one of the most devastating and enthralling live bands on the planet, the Newport destroyers have been a perennial force for musical invention and remorseless positivity since emerging from the ashes of frontman Benji Webbe's former band Dub War back in 1998. Over the course of four universally praised studio albums – Babylon (2002), Roots Rock Riot (2007), Shark Bites And Dog Fights (2009) and Union Black (2011) – Skindred's reputation for producing the ultimate spark-spraying state-of-the-art soundclash, combining all manner of seemingly disparate musical elements into an irresistibly exhilarating explosion of energy and cross-pollinated cultural fervour has rightly earned them a reputation as a band capable of uniting people from all corners of the globe and making every last one of them tear up the dancefloor with a giant shit-eating grin plastered across their faces.

With the toughest and most infectious metal riffs colliding with the biggest, phattest hip hop and reggae grooves, cutting edge electronics and a razor-sharp pop sensibility guaranteed to encourage even the most curmudgeonly music fans bellow along with rabid enthusiasm, Skindred are both the ultimate thinking man's party band. And now, with the release of their fifth studio album Kill The Power, Benji Webbe and his loyal henchmen – bassist Dan Pugsley, guitarist Mikey Demus and drummer Arya Goggins – are poised to spread their gospel of good times and badass tunes to an even bigger global audience.

"We know that everyone recognises us as one of the best live bands around," says Arya. "We're really proud of all of the albums we've made, but we all felt that we needed to make an album that would be as powerful and effective as the live show. That's what Kill The Power is all about. This time, we want everyone to sit up and listen and join in the party."

"I started DJ-ing a little while ago and it's taught me a lot," adds Benji. "Now I feel like I wanted to make an album where every intro to every song makes kids think 'Fucking hell, they're playing that song!' Every middle eight on this album is a banger. Every chorus is massive. On this album, the lyrics are deep and the songs are just bigger than ever."

In keeping with their tradition of making people move while singing about universal issues and spreading a message of positive action and social unity, Kill The Power is an album bulging with fury at the state of the modern world. Never afraid to tackle important topics head on, while never forgetting his band's mission to entertain and leave the world in a sweaty, sated heap, Benji's notoriously insane energy levels seem to be creeping up with

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every album and Kill The Power showcases his most furious and impactful performances to date.

“The world’s getting worse so how can I get more mellow?” he laughs. “Of course I’m getting angrier! People normally stay in a bag when it comes to lyrics. Stephen King stays with horror and he’s brilliant at it, you know? With Skindred, it’s always about encouraging an uplift. It’s about a sense of unity. Lyrics can change people’s lives, you know? You can be going down one road and hear a song and have a Road To Damascus experience and become someone else.”

On an album that has no shortage of invigorating highlights, Kill The Power takes Skindred to new extremes at both ends of the lyrical spectrum, reaching a new level of fiery intensity on the lethal cautionary tale of “Playin’ With The Devil” and the euphoric end-of-the-working-week celebration of “Saturday”: both songs proving that this band’s ability to touch the heart and fire the blood remains as incisive and potent as ever. As if to enhance their songwriting chops more than ever, Kill The Power also features several songs written in collaboration with legendary songwriting guru Russ Ballard, the man behind such immortal rock staples as Since You’ve Been Gone and God Gave Rock & Roll To You, and this seemingly perverse team-up has led to Skindred’s finest set of lyrics and melodies to date.

“Basically, I try to write songs that people can interpret however they like,” says Benji. “When I wrote ‘Playin’ With The Devil’, I originally wrote some words down on a piece of paper thinking about friends I’ve had who smoke crack and live on the pipe, you know? I wrote the song about that kind of thing, but then a couple of days later the riots happened in London and so it became about that as well. When you shit on your own doorstep, your house is going to smell of shit. You’ve got to clean that up! With ‘Saturday’, it’s not a typical Skindred song; it’s a big celebration. We got Russ Ballard involved on that one and he helped me structure the lyrics in the right way so when the chorus hits, it hits like a hammer. It’s an upbeat song but when you listen to the lyrics it goes on about how people all have different reasons to be out and partying. Some people are celebrating, some people are drowning their sorrows, and we all come together on a Saturday. When this record comes out and people go to a club on a Saturday, that’s when it’s gonna go off! The chorus is huge!”

While Skindred’s previous album Union Black was dominated by the bleeps, booms and squelches of British electronic dance music, albeit balanced out by Mikey Demus’ trademark riffs, the new album sees the band return to a more organic sound that amounts to the most accurate representation of the Skindred live experience yet committed to tape. From the huge beats and stuttering samples of the opening title track and the laudably demented Ninja through to the insistent melodies and rampaging choruses of “The Kids Are Right Now” and “Saturday” and on to the thunderous, metallic throwdowns of “Proceed With Caution” and “Ruling Force” and the cool acoustic breeze of the closing More Fire, Kill The Power is Skindred cranked up to full throttle and revelling in their own febrile creativity like never before.

“It’s all about making an album that moves people in the same way that our live shows do,” says Arya. “We love what we achieved on Union Black and we still used a lot of those basic ideas on Kill The Power, but this time it’s a more organic sound. All the drum loops you hear were originally played by me before we started chopping them up, and there are

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a lot more guitars on this record too. We love combining all the music that we love in Skindred but we all love heavy music and we're a rock band at heart and that really comes across this time."

"We've delivered an album that's gonna make people rock for the next few years," states Benji. "You know what? I can't do anything about record sales, but if people come to a Skindred show they're gonna know they've been there, you know? Ha ha! The music we make is not about Christians or Muslims, straight people or gay people, black or white or any of that shit. When people are in that room together it's just Skindred, one unity and one strength!"

Having conquered numerous countries around the world, Skindred could easily be taking a breather and resting on their laurels at this point. Instead, this most dedicated and hard-working of modern bands are preparing to launch their most exuberant assault on the world ever when Kill The Power hits the streets. Anyone that has ever seen the band live before will confirm that it is impossible not to get fired up and drawn into the joyous abandon of a Skindred show and with their greatest album to date primed and ready to explode, the best live band on the planet simply cannot fail to conquer the entire world this time round. Wherever and whoever you are, Skindred are coming. Open your ears and get your dancing feet ready...

"There's nothing better than being on stage with these guys," says Arya. "Skindred is my favourite band and I'm so lucky to be part of this thing we've created. We've been all over the world but there are always new places to visit and new crowds to play for. We just want to keep getting bigger and better."

"We're a global band. We've played in Colombia and India and everywhere and it's the same energy," Benji concludes. "I get letters from people in Hawaii and people in Turkey. It's all the same. We resonate globally and it's the greatest thing ever. It seems funny to us sometimes because we're always kicking each other's heads in and saying 'You're a wanker!' to each other before we go on stage, but as soon as it's time to play the show the oneness this band creates together and the unity we bring is unique. I've never experienced anything like it and we can't wait to get back on the road and do it all again."

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