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The most dangerous album in the world: Appetite for Destruction at 30

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Last Friday, *Appetite For Destruction* Guns N' Roses' genre-defining classic debut turned 30 years old.

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By 1987, rock n roll, in it's classic sense, was beginning to get a bit cliched. To quote 'Pretty Tied Up', a track on GN'R's 1991 release *Use Your Illusion II*: "Once there was this this rock n roll band rollin' on the streets/ Time went by and it became a joke".

The popular hard rock bands of the day were the 'glam' acts like Motley Crue and Bon Jovi, and for many the genre had lost its edge.

Appetite for Destruction changed that dragging the filthy rock underground in to the mainstream. This album was gritty and dark. It was anecdotal - Axl Rose and Izzy Stradlin had grown in up in small Indiana towns and had moved as young men to Los Angeles - a big city with hustle and bustle - where reality was a cold, dark place.

The sound of the individual musicians tells you all you need to know. Axl Rose's voice - with an unbelievable vocal range - he sounds like he's been in the battles and got through it.

Slash's unique tone of guitar playing with his signature Gibson Les Paul and Marshall amp, combining hard rock with blues riffs. Izzy Stradlin, the quiet rhythm guitarist is much the same. Duff McKagan's pulsating bass playing with punk influences is there too - this is a man who would later write a song referring to the whole of the City of Los Angeles as a "fucking whore". On drums was the young Steven Adler, who could play drums like a machine, playing hard and fast but also soft and slow.

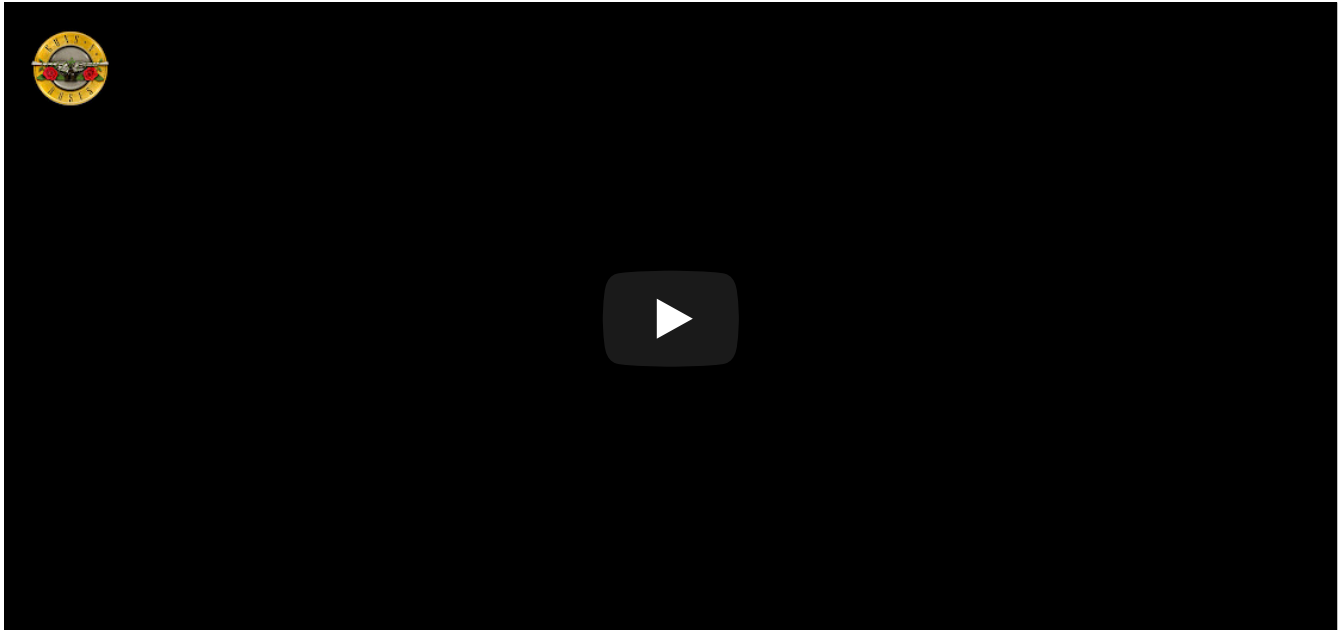
This classic line-up would only play together for a few years and produce one album, but it is an album that through the combination of these talents and being in the right place at the right time, defined a generation for rock fans.

Everything about this album was gritty.

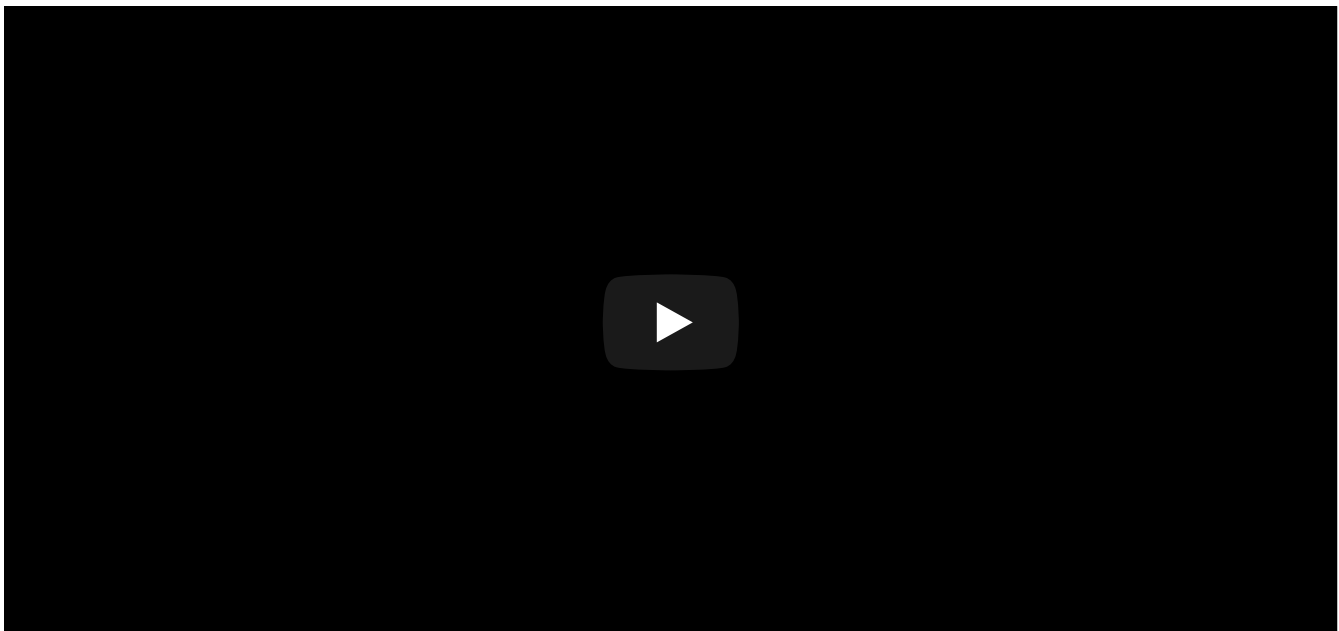
The opening track, 'Welcome to the Jungle' written by Axl Rose after a chance encounter with a homeless man in New York City, illustrates the bands connection with real-life. The urb



city is like a jungle, one where you have to fight for yourself, the song starts slowly before building up to a loud explosion, electrifying the listener.



'It's So Easy' was, on its release, controversial. Co-written with West Arkeen - it told of the band's experiences after hitting big in the LA club scene - everyone wants to know them, but it feels empty. The controversial lyrics were: "Turn around bitch I got a use for you/Besides you ain't got nothin' better to do/And I'm bored". Guns N' Roses were famed for controversial lyrics, their response was always that this is what the world is like and this is what people think and how they behave. Essentially, the truth hurts, deal with it.



'Nightrain' is another song written describing a booze inspired sexual encounter, filled with more fast riffs and harsh vocals. 'Out ta Get Me' sees Rose sing about his issues with authorities back home in Indiana. 'Mr. Brownstone' meanwhile is another fast, hair raising song, that deals with drug taking and the issues it causes. You start by doing a little and it isn't enough after a while, then it gets too much.

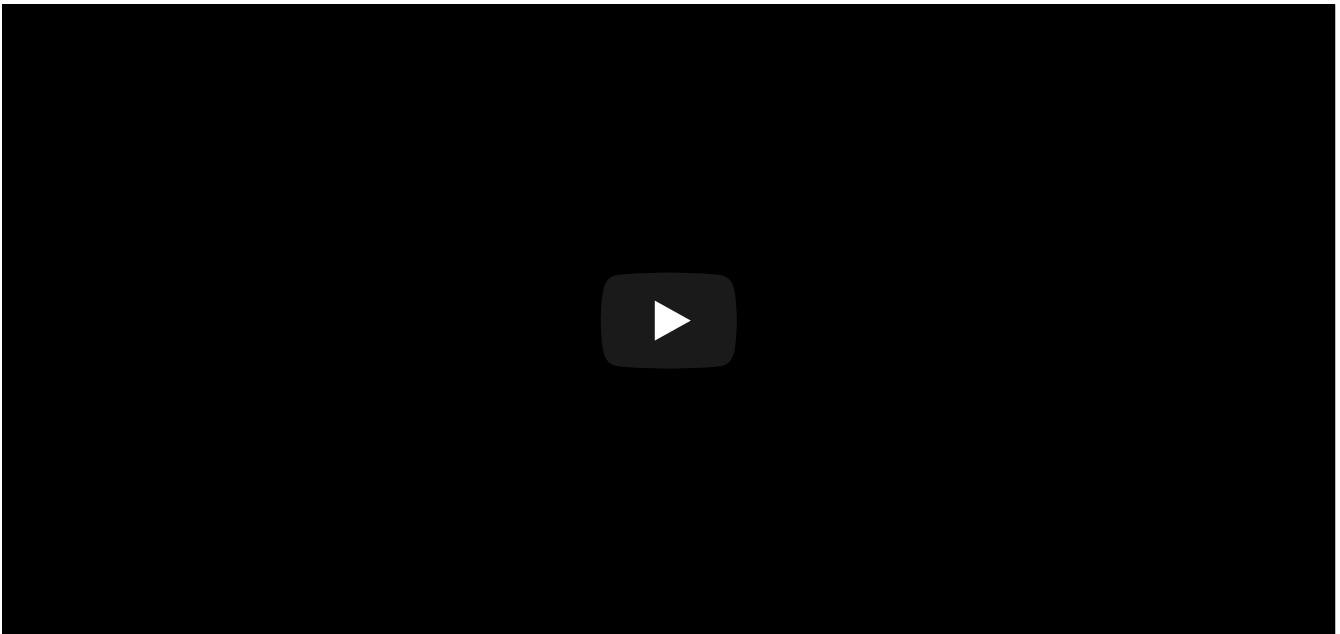




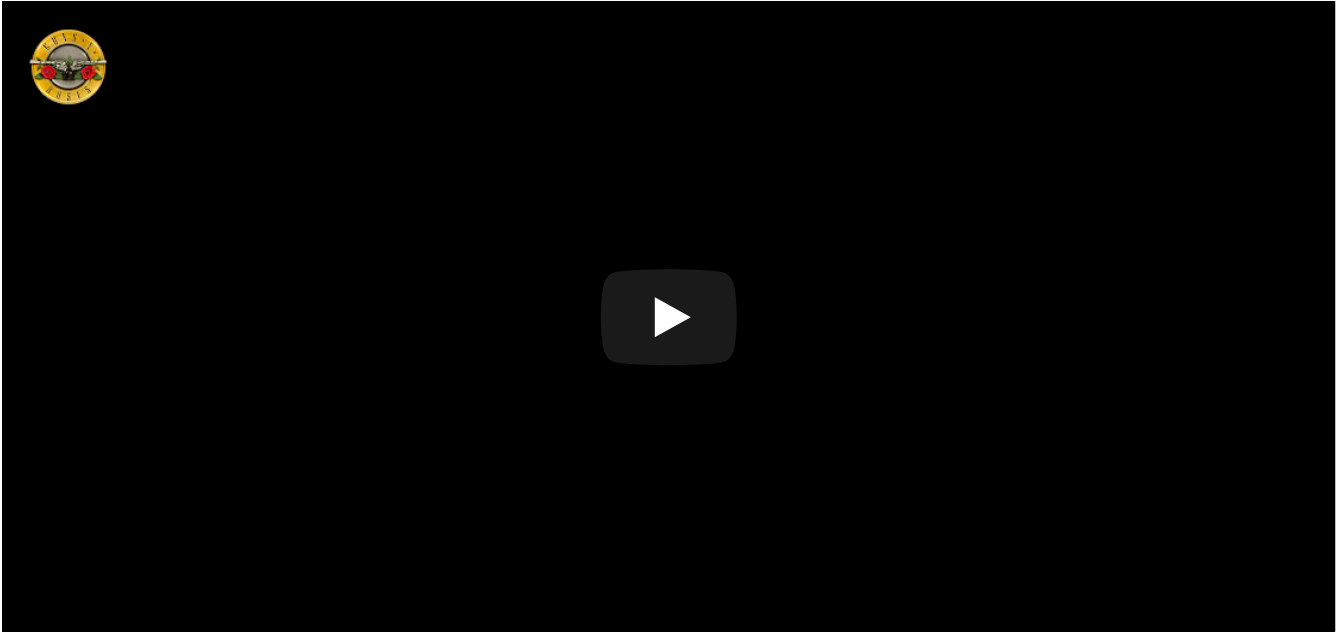
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'My Michelle' is was written about Michelle Young, who is a friend of Axl Rose and Slash and was thanked in the album's sleeve. The band was hesitant about showing it to Young, the song dealt with her drug addiction, her mother's death and father's work in porn. It was quite brutal, criticising her lifestyle and telling her she has to change. Young liked the song, though. She praised it's honesty and was able to get clean.





Guns N' Roses weren't afraid to be honest about the vices of themselves and their friends and this allowed them to produce beautiful, heartfelt music that had a harsh realism that the 'party' rock glam acts were lacking and much of the metal acts ignored in favour of dark fantasy.



'Sweet Child O' Mine' and 'Paradise City' are two songs that are a testimony to this. The former mentions being scared as a child and feeling inadequate when seeing a loved one in pain, the second, Rose once said: "the verses are more about being in the jungle; the chorus is like being back in the Midwest or somewhere."





It's about wanting to return home after feeling homesick.

Lastly, the album features 'Rocket Queen'. This song featured the unedited orgasms of Adriana Smith, Steven Adler's on-off girlfriend, while she slept with Rose. They can be heard around two and a half minutes in. This is just one of the factors that added to the albums controversy and 'dangerousness'.



The original album cover was banned, it featured a woman who had just been raped by a robot. The robot was being punished by a metal avenger. This was replaced by the now recognised 'classic' cover of skulls on a cross.

The band dressed to look hard. They wore tattoos, sometimes went topless and wore biker outfits on occasion. A lot of bands would mimic this in future.

By the time, 1991's *Use Your Illusion* double albums were released, Adler had left the band due to drug addiction. *Use Your Illusion I* and *II* both had great tunes, but the tour was full of fallouts, tardiness and even riots.

It would be 17 years before the band produced new material, by then only Axl remained. *Chinese Democracy* was a good album, but it didn't have the same grit and was packed w



ideas from rock history over those 17 years. The band were now followers rather than leaders.

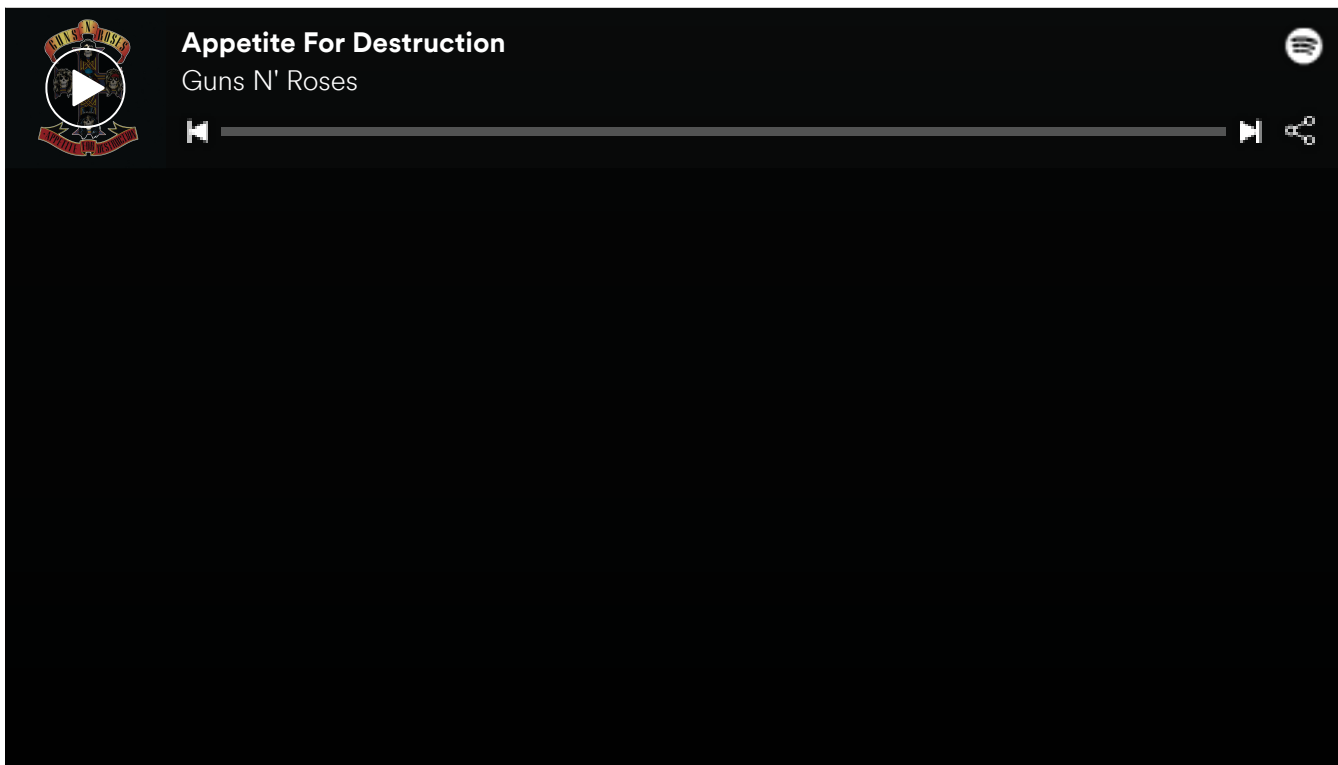
Chances of a reunion were looking impossible with Slash refusing to discuss Axl and Axl calling Slash a "cancer".

The nostalgia for *Appetite* still lingered on and the band returned in 2016 with Slash and McKagan finally re-joining Axl. Joined by Dizzy Reed, Richard Fortus, Frank Ferrer and Melissa Reece, many fans speculated the tour would be a cash cow and doomed to fail.

But Axl and Slash have not fallen out, they sound good as ever and Stradlin, who hates the limelight, has appeared as a guest as has Adler who in 1996 suffered a stroke. The band actually sound fresh, but a lot of fans still hold out for original material from the classic five.

It might just be impossible to live up to *Appetite*, but the fact that all members of the band have performed songs from it on tour just goes to show how popular and great it was.

This is why *Appetite for Destruction* is one of the greatest albums of all time.



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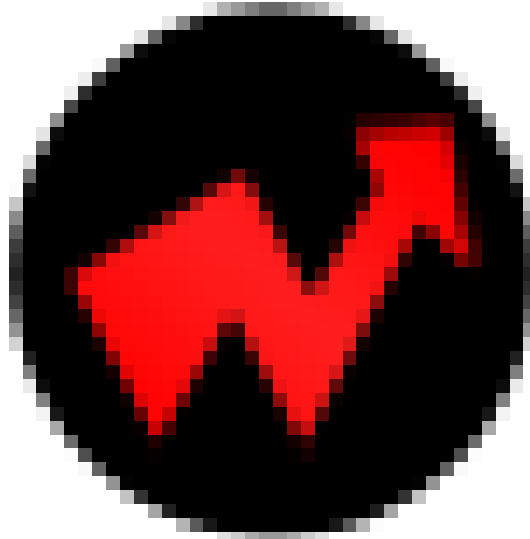




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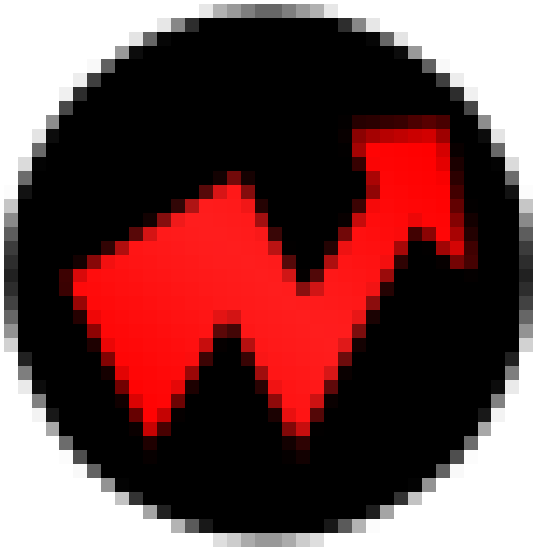
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