

# ALTER BRIDGE

Back in 2004, four lifelong musicians got together down in Florida. Even though they had traveled separate paths prior, similar lessons learned, wisdom earned, and dues paid united these gentlemen—Myles Kennedy [vocals, guitar], Mark Tremonti [guitar, vocals], Brian Marshall [bass], and Scott Phillips [drums]—as Alter Bridge. Over the ensuing two decades, the band endured countless trials and tribulations, defied every odd, and rose to the head of the pack as a hard rock juggernaut, cementing a singular legacy by selling out arenas, gathering nearly 1 billion streams, inciting international acclaim, and quietly attracting a diehard audience. Channeling the same hunger, they continue to push themselves on their self-titled eighth full-length offering, *Alter Bridge* [Napalm Records]. It embodies everything they're known for. The riffs cut with the same precision and poise. The hooks tower with the expected infectiousness and intensity, and the solos practically break guitar strings as they burst through the clouds.

"You can't ever rest on your past success," observes Myles. "We've never allowed ourselves to get too comfortable. The only way to stay at a certain level is to be very dedicated to what you're doing. We've crossed the 20-year mark. We've proven we can do this for the duration. We worked hard to get to a place where we can plant our flag. We're still around as the four original members, so it felt appropriate to call the album *Alter Bridge*."

"I think this record earns that title," agrees Mark. "The material felt strong enough, so we're letting the music speak for itself."

It's the apex of an unbelievable journey so far. Beginning with the Top 5 entry of 2004's gold-certified *One Day Remains*, the band have scored six consecutive Top 20 debuts on the *Billboard* 200. Among a myriad of highlights, *Guitarist Magazine* applauded "Blackbird" for the "Greatest Guitar Solo of All Time," the *ABIII* single "Isolation" vaulted to #1 on the *Billboard* Mainstream Rock Chart, 2013's *Fortress* received rare perfect scores from *KERRANG!* and *Total Guitar*, and *Walk The Sky* shook the Top Rock Albums Chart at #1. Beyond packing legendary venues a la O2 Arena and Royal Albert Hall, *Classic Rock* hailed 2022's *Pawns & Kings* as "the Rolls-Royce of Alter Bridge records" in a 4.5-out-of-5 star review. The latter LP garnered praise from *American Songwriter*, *Guitar World*, and *Loudwire*, while *Billboard* christened them "one of America's premiere hard rock quartets."

In order to craft *Alter Bridge*, the band approached the process differently. Joined by longtime producer Michael "Elvis" Baskette, they decamped to Eddie Van Halen's 5150 Studios in Los Angeles by way of longtime friend Wolfgang Van Halen for writing sessions and pre-production. Scott laid down his drums, and the guys shored up ideas during their month-long stay in L.A. "It gives you the confidence like, 'We must be doing something right if we're allowed to be here on this hallowed ground of rock 'n' roll,'" smiles Mark. "After working for hours, you almost fall into a daydream and forget where you are. Every now and then, you'll look at the wall, snap out of it, and think, 'I can't believe we're here'. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and a dream come true."

"5150 had a profound influence, and it would be a different record without it," concurs Myles. "It motivated us to put our best foot forward. Knowing what had been created in the studio and who created it was humbling. Those legacies are hanging around there, so you don't want to go in and taint the room," he laughs.

Returning to Florida, they tracked the rest of the music at Studio Barbarosa, putting the finishing touches on this body of work. Now, Alter Bridge kick down the door with the opener and single "Silent Divide." A punchy and pummeling palm-muted riff shifts the tune into high gear, setting the tempo. The hook soars until crash-landing back into the embrace of the core riff as Myles warns, "Remember rage is blind."

"It explores the concept of using silence as an effective way to deal with toxicity," notes Myles. "Sometimes, the best thing to do is say nothing when people throw negativity your way. Put your head down, smile, and build a *'Silent Divide'* instead of getting roped into drama when someone tries to provoke you."

"The biggest draw is the original riff, which Myles came up with," Mark grins. "It's a classic thrash metal riff, and it pulls you right in. We had to get the rest of the song to live up to it!"

Elsewhere, upbeat riffing volleys across a propulsive drumbeat on "Playing Aces." The momentum crescendos towards a chantable chorus, "*And if I risk it all, I hope you'll understand that I had to play my hand...Bad luck, be damned!*"

"The term *'Playing Aces'* ties in with the gambling analogy of risking everything regardless of how many times you've failed in life," Myles elaborates. "It's a last ditch effort to come out on top."

"The chorus came together with all of us in the room," recalls Mark. "We had layered our guitar parts, and it sounded right. It has a lot of energy. It's definitely going to be great to play live."

Meanwhile, "Scales Are Falling" opens with classically-inspired clean guitar, giving way to tense and anxious picking. Myles sets the scene, "*This is a tale so dark and dim,*" and a hypnotic harmony transfixes above an unpredictable rhythm. "It's when you realize the reality of a situation where you've been deceived," Myles continues. "You see the truth and how harsh it is."

"I was excited for this one," adds Mark. "It has an atmospheric vibe with a lot of peaks, valleys, and moods. I solo over the bridge, and Myles plays the outro."

"What Lies Within" revolves around another driving and stomping groove and massive refrain. "This one started with a Mark riff," Myles goes on. "A lot of people will invent a false façade. They present themselves a certain way online, which is often far from the reality of who they are. The virtual mask is different from what's lurking below the surface."

Mark's vocals take the spotlight on the verses of "Tested and Able," and Myles carries the refrain. They top off the track with a chugging barrage of distortion. "It's an anthem," states Myles. "There's a Journey-esque element, so you could call it our tip of the hat to Neil Schon. It blossomed in the room at 5150. We captured lightning in a bottle."

Exceeding nine minutes, "Slave To Master" stands out as the longest composition in the band's catalog. This epic takes a series of unexpected twists and turns through magnetic vocals, shuddering grooves, and a mind-blowing guitar solo call-and-response led by Myles and answered by Mark. "It's a big song," says Mark. "I did my lead, and Myles ended up matching the same length. It's an almost three-minute guitar solo, which is by far the longest on any Alter Bridge album."

"The solo is the same approach we used on *'Blackbird'*," Myles elaborates. "I started it, and Mark finished. We had fun with the improvisational aspect. As for the lyrics, I'm very interested in A.I. and what is happening with it. This isn't going to end well if we don't put guardrails on this technology. It's like *Terminator*. It's probably listening right now!"

In the end, Alter Bridge make a statement by doing what they've always done for all of these years. "The whole band feels very strongly about this," Mark leaves off. "To us, it's very special. This is Alter Bridge."

"When you put it in perspective, it was hard for us initially and we overcame so much to get here," Myles concludes. "I don't know if it was determination or just stubbornness, but we came out of it all still breathing. If we

can get to this point, we can keep going a lot longer. I don't think we're going to hang it up anytime soon. To quote a line from 'Come To Life' on *Blackbird*, 'Don't forget, we're here to stay'." – Rick Florino, July 2025

## BOILER

Back in 2004, four lifelong musicians got together down in Florida. Even though they had traveled separate paths, similar lessons learned, wisdom earned, and dues paid united these gentlemen—Myles Kennedy [vocals, guitar], Mark Tremonti [guitar, vocals], Brian Marshall [bass], and Scott Phillips [drums]—as Alter Bridge. Over the ensuing two decades, the band endured countless trials and tribulations, defied every odd, and rose to the head of the pack as a hard rock juggernaut, cementing a singular legacy by selling out arenas, gathering nearly 1 billion streams, inciting international acclaim, and quietly attracting a diehard audience. Beginning with the Top 5 entry of 2004's gold-certified *One Day Remains*, the band have scored six consecutive Top 20 debuts on the *Billboard* 200. Among a myriad of highlights, *Guitarist Magazine* applauded "Blackbird" for the "Greatest Guitar Solo of All Time," the *ABIII* single "Isolation" vaulted to #1 on the *Billboard* Mainstream Rock Chart, 2013's *Fortress* received rare perfect scores from *KERRANG!* and *Total Guitar*, and *Walk The Sky* shook the Top Rock Albums Chart at #1. Beyond packing O2 Arena and Royal Albert Hall, *Classic Rock* hailed 2022's *Pawns & Kings* as "the Rolls-Royce of Alter Bridge records" in a 4.5-out-of-5 star review. Plus, the latter LP garnered praise from *American Songwriter*, *Guitar World*, and *Loudwire*, while *Billboard* christened them "one of America's premiere hard rock quartets." Channeling the same hunger, the band continue to push themselves on their self-titled eighth full-length offering, *Alter Bridge* [Napalm Records]. It embodies everything they're known for such as the precise riffs, towering hooks, and solos that practically break guitar strings as they burst through the clouds.