

EUROPE

HISTORY

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Just the Beginning

It all began in 1978 when the band WC was formed in Upplands Väsby, a suburb outside Stockholm. WC's first lineup consisted of guitarist and vocalist John "Jonta" Norum, drummer Tony "Pippi" Niemistö, guitarist Micke Kling and bassist Jan Erik Bäckström. Norum and Tony had previously played in Norum's first band, Dragonfly, in 1976. WC mainly played cover versions of Thin Lizzy and UFO songs. After a while Norum left to start a new band with bassist Peter Olsson and drummer "Werner". However, "Werner" left after a couple of weeks and was replaced by Tony Niemistö. The band decided to adopt the WC name, thus creating WC's second lineup. One time WC got an offer to appear on a TV show, on one condition: That they changed their band name. They refused.

One day another local musician, Joakim "Jocke" Larsson, went to see WC in concert and was particularly impressed by Norum's guitar playing. Joakim and Norum became good friends, much thanks to their shared interest for music and mopeds. In 1979 WC decided to get a fourth member. "We decided that we needed a singer," Norum said, "An awesome singer." At that time Joakim was the vocalist and bassist in another Upplands Väsby band, Roxanne, and Norum had seen them in concert. "I thought that he was really great. He had a charisma on stage and a beautiful pitch to his voice." One day Norum met up with Joakim and asked him to join WC. "We need a singer, but we already have a bass player," I said and then he just took on the job, ha ha! So that's how it started." At Joakim's suggestion, WC changed its name to FORCE, after the UFO album "Force It".

The first FORCE rehearsals took place at Centrumgården in Upplands Väsby. "It clicked right away," Norum said, "It was a special sort of chemistry." At the time they still played cover versions, but soon Joakim began to think about original material: "I remember when we started the band FORCE we were playing covers in the rehearsal room, because we just wanted to learn our instruments, like all bands. Then one day I said maybe we should do our own stuff. Nobody had any ideas, so I brought mine into the rehearsal room, and that is when we started writing our own stuff." Some of the first songs he wrote were "Rock On", "Strange", "Midnight Show" and "Black Rose". At that time FORCE got 100 Swedish Kronor (14 US dollars) for each concert. In 1980 they recorded their first demo tape, which included six songs. They sent the tape to several record companies, but didn't get much of a response. "Quite soon we met some record company people that seemed to like what we did," Joakim said, "But they said we had to cut our hair and stop singing in English. We told them to fuck off."

Early in 1981 Peter Olsson left FORCE. The official explanation has been that he left because Joakim got together with his ex-girlfriend Anita Katila shortly after they broke up, however Peter told the complete story in the unauthorized EUROPE biography "Only Young Twice" in 2011: "It was I who broke up with Anita after we had been together for seven years. And I already had a new girlfriend when I found out that she had gotten together with 'Jocke', and for some reason I got jealous. And later on there was a drinking race where we started bitching and then I called it quits because I would never cope. The whole thing was my fault. I had no reason to be jealous. But I was also dissatisfied with FORCE's development. I wanted to play harder and more guitar based music and hadn't quite gotten the concept of choruses. For the most part I was after guitar masturbation, but I didn't understand that you have to prostitute yourself a bit to get anywhere. It wasn't the kind of music I wanted to do and I don't think it was the kind of music 'Jonta' really wanted to do either. The way FORCE sounded in the beginning was just nonsense by today's standards. In a sense I regret leaving. But at the same time it would never have worked out between us in the long run. Furthermore I had a weak spot for beer already at that time, and I wouldn't have coped living the way that they would do. It would have crashed in every way. But at the same time I'm a bit proud of having been part of it and starting the band." After Peter left FORCE, he joined Rising Force, the band of guitarist Yngwie J. Malmsteen. In 1983 he joined the band Power, who released a couple of singles before splitting up in 1990.

While the band was searching for a new bassist, they recorded a second demo with Joakim on bass. The record companies remained indifferent. The consistent comment: "A Swedish hard rock band will never make it big." One rainy evening Norum visited his good friend John Levén, who was a guitarist at the time, and said, "You get the job in the band - if you'll play the bass." Levén accepted, admitting, "I realized that I was not that great of a guitarist, so I switched to bass and jumped into FORCE."

In the same year FORCE participated in a rock band contest at the rock club Underground in Stockholm. They didn't win and that was a big disappointment for the guys. In April 1981 Levén got an offer from Yngwie Malmsteen to join Rising Force. He was so flattered that he couldn't resist the offer, so he joined the band. "It wasn't that strange, really," Levén said, "Yngwie was already a big name in Stockholm and I was incredibly impressed by his guitar playing." At the same time Rising Force's former bassist, Marcel Jacob, joined FORCE. During that time, Marcel and Joakim co-wrote the song "Black Journey Through My Soul". Marcel only played two concerts with FORCE, at Centrumgården and Folkets Park in Upplands Väsby and left the band after three months. "It was too much for me to travel outside of Stockholm and not rehearse because John Norum didn't show," he said. Meanwhile, the single that Levén was going to record with Rising Force was never released. Levén also had issues with Malmsteen and decided to switch places with Marcel again.

Rock-SM

In 1982, the rock competition "Rock-SM" (Swedish rock championship) was held in Sweden. It was arranged by Thomas Erdtman, who was a former product manager at CBS Records, and his own, newly started record company Hot Records, as well as the Swedish newspaper "Aftonbladet". At first Erdtman asked another newspaper, "Expressen", about arranging "Rock-SM" together with him, but they declined the offer. So he teamed up with "Aftonbladet" instead. He had gotten the idea from Norway in 1980, where the contest "NM i rock" was arranged. Bands who didn't have a contract, could send in demo tapes. The best band won a record contract. Erdtman hoped that with his "Rock-SM" he could find a new Swedish band to make money on.

Actually FORCE didn't care so much about this competition, but Joakim's girlfriend, Anita Katila convinced them to record a demo tape with five songs: "The King Will Return", "Seven Doors Hotel", "Rock On", "Children of This Time" and "Paradize Bay". They didn't post the tape, though, because they didn't think the recordings were good enough. "It didn't sound good," Norum said. "We didn't care about sending the tape, and soon we forgot why we even recorded it." But only a couple of days before the deadline, Anita sent the tape to "Rock-SM" without telling Joakim or the band about it. The "Rock-SM" contest was a success. Thomas Erdtman received a total of 4000 tapes and listened to them all. After that, he and his family picked out the 485 best bands to participate in "Rock-SM". One of the bands who qualified for the contest was FORCE. They began practicing seriously because they now finally had the chance to make it big.

But some of the band members thought it was time to change the band name. Since Yngwie Malmsteen had a band called Rising Force, they thought the name FORCE was too similar. "We've got to change it, it's too close to that," Norum said, "We've got to come up with something better and stronger." Joakim had an idea. "I was traveling by train a lot. I had a cleaning job as a half-day job, cleaning factory floors. I was sitting on the train station waiting for a train, and I was going through Deep Purple albums in my head. There was 'Made in Japan', 'Made in Europe'... And I stopped and I thought, 'Hang on, Europe, that sounds pretty cool.' In my head I pictured somebody presenting us, saying, 'Tonight ladies and gentlemen, on stage: EUROPE.' Alright, that'll work." One day the band had a couple of beers at Joakim's house, and he decided to tell the other guys about his idea. "I said, 'How about EUROPE?' And it was quiet for two minutes. I felt really awkward!" Norum and Levén exchanged confused looks. "What is he thinking? Is he nuts?" Norum said, "I think it went pretty quick, though. After a couple of more beers, we really started liking it a lot!"

The same day that FORCE became EUROPE, they went to Solna to participate in the first part competition of "Rock-SM". One of the bands they met there was Trilogy, whose drummer was Jan Håkan Haugland from the suburb Märsta. Trilogy was defeated, while EUROPE went to the quarter finals. Erdtman was impressed by EUROPE, even though he originally was looking for a pop band, not a hard rock band. He was mostly impressed by Joakim's vocals.

At the same time that EUROPE participated in "Rock-SM", Levén was doing his military service. He didn't always get a day off to be at the competitions, so often he decided to go AWOL. "Guys who wanted time off to participate in sport contests could get it all the time, but I who was in a rock band, didn't!" Levén said. Between the competitions, Norum also took time to tour Sweden with Eddie Meduza, one of Sweden's most famous rockers. EUROPE won the quarter final in Uppsala, and now it was time for the semi final being held in Södertälje. They won easily and were then qualified for the

final.

That's when Joakim decided to take an artist name. If the band would ever become famous abroad, he would need a proper artist name. He wanted to have a name with a historical association. Finally he chose the name Joey Tempest. "I was in the USA when I was 12 years old," Joey said. "And the guys there couldn't pronounce Joakim properly, so they called me Joe instead. And one time when I was at a library, I saw a book with the title "The Tempest" on the cover. So I decided to put those two names together, and thought it sounded cool." "The Tempest" is a famous play written by William Shakespeare. "I haven't read it that much, but I saw a movie based on it on TV once," Joey admitted. Tony knew that his last name, Niemistö, would be hard to pronounce abroad, so he decided to take an artist name too. He chose the name Tony Reno, while John Norum and John Levén decided to stick with their real names.

The "Rock-SM" final was held on Sunday, December 12, 1982 at Gröna Lund in Stockholm. Now there were only eight bands left. The final was shown live on TV. EUROPE were the favorites. They played two songs: "In the Future to Come" and "The King Will Return". Some of the members of the jury were Thomas Erdtman, along with rock stars like Mikael Rickfors and Tomas Ledin. But Erdtman, who had become friends with the EUROPE members, didn't vote for them as best band. The first prize of the contest was a record contract with his record company Hot Records, and he didn't think that EUROPE, a Swedish hard rock band singing in English, would sell many albums in Sweden. Instead he voted for Joey as best vocalist and Norum as best guitarist, and voted for Café Midnatt as best band. But thanks to the rest of the jury, EUROPE won the contest with just one vote more than the second band. As if that wasn't enough, Joey and Norum won one award each, for best vocalist and best guitarist.

Even though Erdtman really liked EUROPE, he thought that they could do with a few changes to become more successful. He suggested that they could start singing in Swedish, maybe change to a more "poppy" music style and cut their hair. Joey considered it, but Norum didn't, so they didn't change anything at all. After that Norum never really liked Erdtman.

The first album

EUROPE recorded their debut album, "Europe", in December 1982, and it was released on March 14, 1983. New versions of all the songs from the "Rock-SM" demo tape were included on the album, as well as "In the Future to Come" and new songs like "Memories" and "Words of Wisdom". Both the lyrics and title of the song "Rock On" had been changed completely. Now it was called "Farewell". The music was melodious hard rock, and it's obvious that they borrowed a lot from bands like Thin Lizzy and Deep Purple. But EUROPE still had their own style, thanks to Joey's great skills as a songwriter. Most of the music was recorded live in the studio, and the album was recorded in just a couple of weeks. For example, they only used a half hour to record the instrumental song "Boyazont". John Norum and his former tour buddy Eddie Meduza co-wrote that song. Hot Records was a small record company, so there was a low budget: Just 100 000 Kronor (14 000 US Dollars). The sound quality wasn't that good either, mostly because Swedish hard rock was fairly untried earlier. So it was hard to find producers and technicians who were used to its sound. But EUROPE tried to produce the album themselves, and it turned out OK in the end. They also got a little help from Thomas Erdtman and engineer Erik Videgård.

The first cover for "Europe" was a band photo with the EUROPE logo - designed by Tony Reno's brother, Teijo Niemistö - on top. "Europe" became very popular in Sweden and reached number 8 on the album charts right after its release. 30 000 copies were sold in just a couple of weeks, which was very good for a Swedish hard rock band making their debut. Erdtman didn't make a penny on the album, even though it was successful. But he continued to work with EUROPE because he understood that they were going to make it big in the future. In total, one million copies of "Europe" have been sold all over the world.

An interview with EUROPE in the studio and a live performance of "Children of This Time" was shown on the popular TV show "Casablanca" during the spring of 1983, and boosted their popularity. Later that spring they went on a folk park tour, doing 25 concerts in total. That tour was very successful, with sold out concerts almost everywhere. At that time EUROPE had a scarce stage

equipment. Newspapers wrote about EUROPE all the time, and they were undoubtedly the most popular hard rock band in Sweden. Most of the other hard rock bands at that time, like Iron Maiden and Motörhead, were rawer, faster and more aggressive than EUROPE, and it was mostly boys who listened to them. Both girls and boys listened to EUROPE, who opened the musical boundaries between them. Joey used to have a moustache, but once he shaved it away, he became the girls' new idol. After a while he bleached his hair.

One day the Japanese rock journalist Masa Itoh visited an import store in London. There he found the "Europe" album and decided to buy it. He liked it so much that he played it for a good friend of his, T.T. Tsutsumi, director of the Japanese record company Victor Records, who liked it too. Then Erdtman got a phone call from Tsutsumi, who told him that Victor Records was interested in releasing the album in Japan. Erdtman started to think seriously about an abroad launching, but "Europe" wasn't released anywhere else at that time. The Japanese edition of the album was given a new cover, and it's the cover that has been used for most (if not all) editions of the album that have been released ever since. The castle-like building depicted on the new cover is the Karlskirche, a church in Vienna, Austria. The angel statue is the Angel with the Sponge, one of the statues situated on the Ponte Sant'Angelo in Rome, Italy. The statue was sculpted by Antonio Giorgetti. The album became a big success in Japan, reaching the Top 10, mostly thanks to the popular single "Seven Doors Hotel". The single was released in Sweden as well, but didn't sell quite as much there. It was the only single to be released from "Europe". At the same time the band decided to make their first music video, for the album's opening track, "In the Future to Come". The standard performance video featured the band playing in a desert area, mixed with clips of rocket launches and explosions. The video's budget was low, so it wasn't a big production. It was only shown once on Japanese TV in 1983, and nowadays the EUROPE members prefer that it stays that way. "You just laugh at that one," Joey said, "It's just us running around in snow, which was actually soap flakes! At one point, two of us knocked each other in the head and that part remained in the video."

Now Erdtman thought that EUROPE would have to get a new and prettier look and get their own image. But the band didn't care so much about that, because they thought that image bands didn't have any future. EUROPE cared more about the music, so they stayed with their straight, long hair and black denim clothes. EUROPE's victory in "Rock-SM" wasn't just a breakthrough for them, but also for Swedish hard rock. Now that EUROPE had done so well, CBS Records were quick in finding more Swedish hard rock bands to make money on. They found 220 Volt, who did become a big band in Sweden, but not nearly as big as EUROPE would become.

Wings of Tomorrow

Since "Europe" had been such a big success in Sweden, there was no doubt about recording a new album. Earlier on Thomas Erdtman had given Joey a portable studio, which was a multi-track recorder. Joey would spend a lot of his time with the portable studio at home in his apartment, recording demo tapes of songs he had written for the new EUROPE album. "When I was going to record a demo, I first recorded a drum beat, humming the song to myself," Joey said, "Then I recorded the guitars, keyboards and vocals. It took a long time, and often I played something wrong. Then I had to start all over again."

The recording sessions for the second album, "Wings of Tomorrow", began in late 1983. It was recorded in Polar Studios, a studio earlier used by bands like ABBA, Scorpions and Led Zeppelin. It was there that EUROPE had met Leif Mases, who would produce the album. He had earlier worked with Led Zeppelin. The budget for "Wings of Tomorrow" was about 400 000 Swedish Kronor (56 000 US Dollars). At that time Joey was very influenced by UFO guitarist Michael Schenker's solo band. This can especially be noticed in songs like "Wings of Tomorrow". Other songs Joey wrote then were the beautiful ballads "Dreamer" and "Open Your Heart". The sound quality on that album was much better than "Europe", but Joey wasn't completely satisfied with the production. "Their digital recording system gave us a lot of problems with the rhythm guitars," he recalls. "And that made a lot of the rock feeling disappear."

The cover art was great, one of the best covers ever made in Sweden. The painting of an iron-clad eagle flying in front of a big planet was painted by Peter Engberg. The album was released on February 24, 1984. Shortly after its release, 38 000 copies of the album were sold in Sweden, and in

total - just like "Europe" - one million copies have been sold all over the world.

Originally the first single from the album was going to be an early version of "Lyin' Eyes". But the day before its release, several copies of the single were taken back and destroyed. Instead EUROPE decided to release "Stormwind". Both the "Lyin' Eyes" and "Stormwind" singles have a high market value among collectors today. There are only 500 copies of "Lyin' Eyes" left in the whole world. The second single, "Open Your Heart", became the biggest hit from the album, reaching a number 2 spot on the Swedish radio charts. It also gained EUROPE some attention and interest from American record companies. The song "Black Journey Through My Soul", co-written by Joey and Marcel Jacob in 1981, was also included on the album, but the title had been changed to "Scream of Anger". "That song is a good example of the 'fire' between me and John Norum," Joey said.

Up until now, Thomas Erdtman had been EUROPE's friend and "Jack of all trades". But now the band felt that they needed a manager, so they offered Erdtman the job. After some consideration he accepted the offer. In late February Joey and Erdtman went on an international promotion trip to represent EUROPE. First they went to the USA to negotiate for an international record contract for the band. Erdtman had booked meeting with the big record companies Polygram, A&M, Warner Brothers and CBS. In New York Erdtman met an old CBS colleague who helped him into the A&R department at Epic Records. There he left a copy of "Wings of Tomorrow" and a note with the address of the hotel he stayed at. Soon he got a phone call from Lennie Petze, the manager of the A&R department at Epic. He was very excited after hearing the album, and wanted to meet Erdtman as soon as possible. But then Erdtman and Joey was on their way to Los Angeles to meet some people from another record company, A&M. Petze, who had planned to go to San Fransisco, decided to go to L.A. instead to have a meeting with them. Only one hour before the scheduled meeting with A&M, Joey and Erdtman had lunch with Petze, who had brought a suggestion for a record contract. They accepted it and dropped the meeting with A&M. But it would take some time before a final contract was ready. After the meeting with Petze, Joey and Erdtman went to Tokyo, Japan. For an entire week Joey did many interviews with newspapers, TV and radio stations.

Joey had played the keyboards on the first two albums and the first tour in order to give the music a broader sound, but by the time of "Wings of Tomorrow" he had grown tired of being stuck behind the keyboards. As he was the lead vocalist he wanted to concentrate on the singing and the stage performance. "Joey played keyboard live, but it didn't always work," Norum said, "The straw (that broke the camel's back) was probably when we played a gig in Upplands Väsby. The keyboard just howled during 'The King Will Return'." So they decided to find another keyboardist who could play on their tour. That's when Joey thought about Gunnar Michaeli, the keyboardist in the band Avalon. One evening Thomas Erdtman and the band hung out at the club Zamora in Upplands Väsby and Gunnar happened to show up. "When I came in, they waved me over to their table," Gunnar said, "Thomas introduced himself and explained that they needed a keyboardist for the upcoming tour." At that time he was supposed to record an album with the band Universe. "I walked up to Universe and said I wanted to borrow their keyboardist for a tour," Norum said, "'Sure, as long as we get him back,' they said. 'Forget it,' I thought to myself and in the back of my mind I counted on him becoming a permanent member of EUROPE."

"I was the only keyboardist they knew," Gunnar said. "That's why they asked me to join!" With Gunnar on keyboards, the band kicked off the first leg of the "Wings of Tomorrow" tour in Mjölby, Sweden on March 16, 1984. This time they had bigger light and sound equipment, so the concerts were bigger than on the first tour. But that wasn't the only change. Everyone in the band had gotten a perm and new stage clothes. But the new look took some getting used to. "The first time you get a perm, your hair looks like an... an acceleration pedal!" Joey said. EUROPE was becoming more and more famous, and there were fewer people who only associated them with "Rock-SM". Thousands of people came to their concerts, and they appeared often in newspapers and TV shows, like "Nöjesmaskinen", where they did a singback performance of "Dreamer". In late June EUROPE went to Finland to play their first concerts abroad, at Jyväskylä Rock in Jyväskylä on June 22 and Ahvenlampi Rock Festival in Saarijärvi on June 23. Everyone thought that it had worked out really well having Gunnar in the band on the tour, so on the boat home from Finland he was asked if he wanted to join the band officially. "He was the right guy for us," Joey said, "A great guy who's really talented on keyboards!" But Gunnar was hesitant at first. "I contemplated whether I should join since I had my own band. I also wrote songs. We were gonna make it and become really big! But in the end I came to the conclusion that I could give it a try. It wasn't my band, but I got into it really fast."

At the same time another major change happened to the band lineup, as the concert in Saarijärvi turned out to be the band's last concert with Tony Reno. Everyone in the band knew except for Tony himself. Already a month before that concert, the decision to fire him was made. The consensus was that he didn't practice hard enough and didn't seem to take the band's hard work seriously enough. "Tony never arrived on time for rehearsal," Norum said, "Half an hour would be okay, but not two, three hours. Every now and then he didn't show up at all. Then we got a little angry. He had a nonchalant attitude. He thought it was more important to be at home with his girlfriend than to rehearse. And when we told him so, he would just start laughing." Unbeknownst to the band, Thomas Erdtman sent Tony a letter telling him he was fired. "Tony called me up and cried," Norum said, "He was devastated and said that we could have at least said something. 'Then I would have pulled myself together,' he said. The worst thing was when his father started to phone terrorize me. He screamed that I was a fucking moron for doing this to my old friend. I had to take all the shit since I had played with Tony for six years. Still I was the last one to agree on firing Tony. But what could I do? With Thomas involved it was four against one. At the same time I felt the possibility to evolve as a guitarist with a more competent drummer." Tony claimed he had no idea why they fired him. "Suddenly I was just gone! And the other guys would slack off on rehearsals every now and then too." Nowadays Tony prefers not to be associated with EUROPE at all. "Today we're in touch again, but as soon as I mention EUROPE he won't talk about it," Norum said in a 2006 interview.

While the band was looking for a new drummer, John Norum found out that former Trilogy drummer Håkan Haugland was looking for a new band. At that time Håkan worked together with his father at the Stockholm-Arlanda Airport, but he still wanted to go on with his musical career: "Either I had to find a famous band in Sweden or I would have tried to do like Yngwie and move to America because I wanted to be a musician." One day when he came home from work, his father met him in the doorway and told him that there had been a phone call for him. "Some guy from a record company or management called up and asked for you and he left his phone number, so please call him up." Håkan did and found out that it was Thomas Erdtman, who told him that EUROPE was looking for a new drummer and wanted to try him out. Håkan met up with the band at their rehearsal place at Berns in Stockholm and received a tape with four songs to rehearse to: "Seven Doors Hotel", "Scream of Anger", "Wings of Tomorrow" and "Treated Bad Again". "Then there was nothing left to do but go home and rehearse like hell." After that, he hooked up with the band for the deciding rehearsal. "We just went for it and the guys said, 'Well, you're in!'" Håkan joined the band officially in August 1984 and met Tony a couple of times since then. "The first time I met him was when I just joined the band. It was kind of weird, because I came to the management office and Tony Reno was signing off all the papers and stuff that he was doing in order to leave the band. And I was coming there to sign on to the band, so it felt kind of weird. I greeted him and he looked at me and said, 'Hi man.' He didn't look all that happy and I totally understand him, obviously. Another time I met him was in the 90s when I was playing with Glenn Hughes. We were playing the same festival thing, I guess. I saw him and said hi to him. But that's it. I never really sat down and spoke to him. But I would like to do that, 'cause he seems like a nice guy. Maybe we can exchange experiences or whatever."

After Håkan joined the band, he decided to take an artist name, Ian Haugland. "Håkan was too hard to use internationally. 'å' would be difficult to use because it doesn't exist in English. I took Jan and made it to Ian. Mostly because of similarity and because of Ian Paice." The band rehearsed for a month before going out on the road again to start the second leg of the "Wings of Tomorrow" tour in Värmland. "I was nervous as hell before that first gig," Ian said. But after the gig it was a quite different story. "After his first gig with us, I remember him running naked in the corridor, screaming," John Norum said, "It was a good start. He was a real drummer. Crazy. But in a good way." An interesting side note about that leg of the tour is that Gunnar had also decided to take an artist name, Greg Michaeli. "I was stupid enough to try and find a name that sounded 'cool'. Now, a really cool name in English would be Gunnar." Later on he settled for Mic Michaeli. Two new songs, "Rock the Night" and "Ninja", had been added to the setlist and both were received warmly by the fans, something that certainly bode well for the next EUROPE album.

On the Loose

In the winter of 1985, the band went to the Soundtrade Studios in Solna to record the single "Rock the Night". This was the first EUROPE recording with Mic and Ian in the band. EUROPE produced this

single themselves together with sound engineer Ronnie "Thunder" Lahti. Originally they had asked Leif Mases to produce it, but he had turned down the offer. Then he changed his mind, only to never show up after all. The band also recorded a new version of "Seven Doors Hotel" there, which was going to be the B-side for the single. "We had an idea about recording new versions of all the songs from the first album," Joey said. "And then we would use them as B-sides for the singles from the next album." But because of lack of money, they couldn't afford to re-record any more songs than "Seven Doors Hotel". This meant that the plans they had about recording a new version of "The King Will Return" had to be dropped.

Right when EUROPE were hard at work with the "Rock the Night" single, Thomas Erdtman ran into the studio. The record contract with Epic Records was finally finished, and Erdtman had brought it along to be signed. It was a pretty big contract on more than 100 pages, so they didn't have time to read it all. But they decided to sign it anyway. This was, after all, their big chance. "You should never sign a paper without having your own lawyer look at it," John Levén said, "But we didn't."

Later that year EUROPE were approached by movie director Staffan Hildebrand. He asked them if they were interested in acting in his new movie "On the Loose", which was produced by LO, the Swedish Federation of Trade Unions. He also wondered if Joey would be interested in making the movie's soundtrack. "It sounded exciting," Joey said. "And I felt that I could do a good job." Joey decided to put "Rock the Night" on the soundtrack, together with two songs he had recorded alone: "On the Loose" and "Broken Dreams". He played all the instruments there himself, except for the drums, which were drum machines, and the guitar solo in "On the Loose", which was recorded by John Norum. First the "Rock the Night" single was released. Then sometime later the EP "On the Loose" was released, including "Rock the Night", "On the Loose" and "Broken Dreams". But even though two of the songs on that EP were recorded by Joey alone, the EUROPE logo had been printed on its cover by mistake, making it look like a EUROPE single. John Norum didn't like that very much. "Joey had done everything there himself," he said. "So it wasn't too cool that the single was released as a EUROPE single. We, the other guys in the band, weren't even there!" But it wasn't all bad. In total 90 000 copies of those two releases were sold in just a couple of months, making "Rock the Night" EUROPE's first huge hit in Sweden.

The movie "On the Loose" was recorded in the small town Katrinaholm in 1985. EUROPE acted in the movie, with Joey being one of the main characters. Another actor appearing was the old rock star Jerry Williams. The plot of the movie evolves around the young couple Peter and Nina. EUROPE come to their hometown to do a concert, and it turns out that Nina had an affair with Joey a couple of years ago. Peter doesn't like this very much. If you haven't seen the movie, you're probably wondering: Is it any good? Well, personally I have to admit that I wouldn't have seen it if EUROPE hadn't been there. EUROPE themselves aren't too thrilled about the movie either. "One of the worst movies ever made in world history," John Levén said.

"On the Loose" was shown at schools and youth clubs all over Sweden, and became a big success. Since both the movie and the "Rock the Night" single had become such huge successes, EUROPE decided to go on a new tour: The "On the Loose" tour. This time they would play in big sports halls. The budget for this tour was much bigger than for the earlier tours, so their light and sound equipments were better than ever. It was a successful tour, and EUROPE were better on stage than ever. Now they showed that they truly were a world class band. On the tour they presented the new songs "Danger on the Track", "Love Chaser" and "Carrie". The first version of "Carrie" consisted only of piano and vocals, and was more tranquil than the version on their next album. According to the EUROPE members themselves, the first version is the best.

After the tour EUROPE finally had time to relax for a while. One day the Japanese rock magazine "Burrn!" paid them a visit. There was now a huge EUROPE fever in Japan, with many fans waiting for a new album. In the USA there was quite a different story. "Wings of Tomorrow" had been released there in May 1985, but didn't sell much, mostly because Epic didn't bother to do much promotion for it. To quote rock journalist Anders Tengner: "It was like they threw the record at the wall and hoped it would stick..." Another reason was that EUROPE never made a video for their first single ever

released in the USA, "Open Your Heart". They didn't make videos for any of the other singles from the "Wings..." album either. Perhaps it was because of the big fiasco they had had with the "In the Future to Come" video...?

In the summer Joey wrote and produced the single "Can't You Stay?" for John Norum's sister, Tone Norum. Originally he had written it for the next EUROPE album, but realized that it didn't quite fit the band's style. So he gave it to Tone instead, and it became a big hit during the fall. Besides producing the single, Joey played all the instruments and sang background vocals on it, while John Norum recorded the guitar solos and Ian Haugland recorded some drum parts. At that time Joey was asked by producer Dieter Dierks to write a ballad for the German band Scorpions. He wrote the song "One of a Kind" and sent it to them. But he never heard from them again, so the song would later be included on Tone Norum's debut album "One of a Kind" instead.

Later Joey was asked to write a song for the charity project "Swedish Metal Aid". It was kind of like "Band Aid", but this time there were only Swedish hard rock bands involved. They were going to do a single, and the income from its sales would be donated to the starving people of Ethiopia. Joey wrote the song "Give a Helpin' Hand", which was recorded in the fall of 1985. He was one of the five lead singers on the song, accompanied by a huge choir consisting of members from almost every hard rock band in Sweden, including EUROPE. The single was produced by Kee Marcello, the guitarist of the glam rock band Easy Action. He also recorded the guitar solo. This was the first time EUROPE and Kee worked together, but it wouldn't be the last.

The Final Countdown

Many years ago there was a discotheque in Stockholm called Galaxy. Before it was opened in the evenings, a lot of people were waiting outside to get in. The people who owned Galaxy wanted an instrumental song that could be played while the crowd was waiting. So around 1983-84 they asked Thomas Erdtman if Joey could write a song for them. Joey decided to do it and borrowed a keyboard from Mic, who hadn't joined EUROPE yet at that time. After a while Joey came up with a keyboard riff that he really liked, and gave it to Galaxy. Then, one late night in the summer of 1985, the EUROPE members were at Galaxy. Joey's song was played over the speakers, and John Levén really liked what he heard: "I said, 'It's fantastic. You have to write a song!'"

"One day Joey asked us to listen to this new song he had written," Ian remembers. "He had recorded a demo of it and was really excited about it. So we all sat down in his car and Joey put the demo tape into the car stereo." That song was "The Final Countdown". "I was inspired by David Bowie's song 'Space Oddity' when writing it," Joey said. In the beginning the other members' reactions were mixed. "It didn't feel quite like a hit, but there was something special about that song," Ian said. "A song with a life of its own."

"My first impression was: Do we have to include this song on the new album?" John Norum laughed. "I was pretty skeptic towards it in the beginning, but later I thought: 'OK, let's give it a shot'. And it turned out pretty good!"

In the summer of 1985 it was time to think about a new EUROPE album. And now it wasn't enough with the best producers in Sweden. Now it was time to get an international producer. Scorpions' producer Dieter Dierks was interested, but would eventually produce Twisted Sister's "Come Out and Play" instead. Other producers EUROPE asked were Gary Moore's producer Tony Platt and Bon Jovi's producer Bruce Fairbairn. But none of them were interested either. Fairbairn even said that there were no hits among the demos he had heard. One of them was "The Final Countdown", a song that would become number 1 in 25 countries. Finally they ended up with Kevin Elson, former sound engineer for Journey. At the same time that EUROPE asked Elson, he got an offer to produce UFO's comeback album. But he chose EUROPE, and the budget for the album "The Final Countdown" was 1 million Kronor. (140 000 US Dollars) Then Elson suggested that EUROPE could use the Powerplay

Studios in Zurich, Switzerland. "He had worked in that studio before and therefore he knew that he could give us a good sound there," Joey said.

Most of the songs had been ready for a long time, but one week before going to Zurich, Joey wrote the last song that was going to be included on the album. He had been fascinated by the history of the Native Americans, and that led to the song "Cherokee". New versions of "Rock the Night" and "On the Loose" had been included on the album, together with the new songs they had played live in 1984-85, like "Carrie", "Ninja" and "Love Chaser". Another new song was "On Broken Wings", which would only be used as B-side for the "Final Countdown" single.

The recordings started without problems, until something terrible happened. Everything was finished, except for the lead vocals. But Joey couldn't sing. His voice was completely "broken". First they thought that he just had a cold, because both Levén and Ian had had a cold not long ago. But Joey soon found out that it was far more serious: His vocal cords were completely inflamed. He had gotten a mysterious virus, and was told not to sing or speak at all. He went back to Stockholm to rest, and ate lots of garlic to make his voice better. The other guys had already went home, as they were finished with their recordings. When his voice had gotten a little better, he sang "Give a Helpin' Hand" together with Swedish Metal Aid, live at the show "Nöjesmassakern" with a fever of 38°C.

Then he went to the Soundtrade Studios in Solna to try recording the album again. First he sang the song "The Final Countdown". It went well, even though he still had a fever. But that was the only song his voice could manage for now. After that he went to Florida, because the warm weather there might help improving his voice. Later he went to Kevin Elson's studio in Atlanta. After a lot of trying, he succeeded at singing the vocals for "Ninja". But he wasn't satisfied with the result. Joey was deeply depressed over the fact that he couldn't do better than that, and started to think that his career could be over.

This problem had made the recordings cost more than the budget had allowed. But when Lennie Petze at Epic Records heard "The Final Countdown", he didn't think twice about doubling the budget to 2 million Kronor (280 000 US Dollars). Back in Sweden, Joey and Ian had gone to the resting home Skebo Herrgård. There Joey rested and Ian dieted after the "On the Loose" tour. "I think I lost about 10 kg in one week!" Ian laughed.

After that, Joey hired singing master Bo Sydow to help his voice getting better. That helped, and they went to San Francisco where Joey recorded the remaining nine songs in ten days. In February 1986, the first single from the album was released: "The Final Countdown". It smashed right into number 1 on the Swedish charts, and that was a bit surprising for EUROPE. Originally they had just wanted it to be an opening song for concerts, and not a single. But since "Rock the Night" had already been released in Sweden one year earlier, and "Carrie" didn't fit as a first single, they decided on "The Final Countdown". But they still used it as opening song during the entire "Final Countdown" tour, even though it had become such a huge hit.

The release of the album had been delayed because of Joey's voice problems. But even though the album was finally finished, the release had to be delayed again. EUROPE had hired the American artist Les Katz to make the cover art for the album, but he hadn't started working on that art before the album was finished. So EUROPE had to start their Swedish "Final Countdown" tour without any support from the album. The first concert was in Gävle on April 29. Joey and EUROPE were better than ever, giving a fantastic show in every concert. But during almost the entire tour, the concert halls were only half-full. If a rock concert is going to be successful, one of the most important things to have is an audience that knows all, or most of the songs and can be a big part of the show. But now EUROPE played all the songs from the new album, and there were several songs that the audience had never heard before. The newspapers were saying that the tour would probably end up in an economic fiasco for EUROPE. The tour leader this time was the experienced Bosse Norling, who earlier had done tours with ABBA. The tour was very expensive; it cost 102 000 Kronor (14 300 US Dollars) a day to keep the tour going on.

Finally, on May 26, the same day that the last concert of the tour was arranged in Solna, the album "The Final Countdown" was released. It got stunning reviews everywhere. Everything was great: The songs, the music, the vocals, the production. Ironically, the only thing that they got bad reviews for was the album's cover art. It was basically just amateur-painted portraits of the EUROPE members flying up in outer space. The EUROPE members themselves weren't too thrilled about the cover either.

"It's pathetic that an album release has to be delayed because of the cover art," John Levén said. "And even then the art wasn't exactly of world class!"

"It looks like somebody threw up and added some pictures to it!" Ian said.

A Swedish TV crew was in Solna that day to film EUROPE's concert. It would be broadcasted on TV in the fall. An American promotion team were also there to film the concert, and there was a European album release party. At the same time and place, EUROPE decided to shoot their second music video, "The Final Countdown". That video captured the excitement of EUROPE in concert, and video cuts of Swedish landscape and TV technicians working on the broadcast of the concert were also included. EUROPE were ensured a gold record on basis of the advance ordering of the album alone - 50 000 copies. In only two months, 100 000 copies were sold. But despite the huge success, not everyone was satisfied with the production of the album. "I couldn't stand the way it was mixed," Norum said. "The keyboards completely buried the rhythm guitar."

"It was a better production than the two previous albums and it was the first 'professional' album," Levén said. "But I think there are too much keyboards and too little guitars. And the drums shouldn't have that reverb sound and crap like that. But that's how albums should sound back then, it's a document of the time."

The success of the song "The Final Countdown" was a blessing and a curse for EUROPE. "We usually say it's the best thing and the worst thing that happened to us," Mic said, "It was good because we got internationally recognized and it was number 1 in close to 30 countries. But we're always gonna be compared to that success we had, and I think that we're more of an album band than a Top 10 band."

The international release campaign of "The Final Countdown" started in Europe in July 1986. First the single was sent to radio stations, and after much airplay on radio, the single started climbing most of the European charts. The first foreign country where it became number 1 was the Netherlands. Joey spent almost the entire summer producing Tone Norum's debut album, "One of a Kind". He got a break when he and Thomas Erdtman went to the USA to promote EUROPE. The video for the "Final Countdown" single had achieved a "High Rotation" spot on MTV. ("High Rotation" = The videos played most often on MTV)

On September 3, EUROPE started a Japanese tour. This was their first tour there ever. The only other Swedish band who had toured Japan before was ABBA. EUROPE did six concerts in Japan - four of them in Tokyo, the two others in Osaka and Nagoya. The Japanese had built a copy of EUROPE's stage design, because bringing it all over from Sweden would be too expensive. Sound and light equipment was also rented there, so all that EUROPE had to bring was their instruments. In concerts one of the most popular songs was a medley of songs from "Europe", in which an instrumental version of the Swedish national anthem was included. Needless to say, the most popular song was "Seven Doors Hotel", their first hit in Japan. EUROPE had a lot of work to do in Japan: Their Japanese record company, Victor, had planned several TV interviews, press conferences and photo sessions, among other things. A new single had already been released in Japan only: "Love Chaser". Instrumental versions of it and "Carrie" were also included on the soundtrack for the movie "Pride One".

Right in the middle of the Japanese tour, a shock came: John Norum wanted to leave the band. He was tired of the endless promotion touring, having to do playback shows, interviews and photo sessions all the time. "Now it was all about the money and our image, and the music took second place," Norum said. "It all became too much bubble gum metal, and I didn't like that. I hated the whole

image - those hairstyles made us look like poodles." Norum and the other members had serious disagreements about their music: He wanted to play harder guitar, which the others didn't think fitted their songs. They, on the other hand, wanted to use more keyboards, but Norum didn't. He had songs that he wanted to be on the album, but there wasn't any room for them. "'Tempest writes the songs' was the word." Another reason that Norum wanted to quit, was that there was an intern conflict between him and manager Thomas Erdtman. Right from the start Norum realized that Erdtman only wanted to make money and wouldn't think twice about fooling EUROPE for big sums. Norum never wanted to sign the contract with Erdtman and Epic Records, but was convinced by the other members.

Around 1984-85, Norum's mother Sofie had started to date Erdtman. "At first I thought it was cool and so did the other guys," Norum said, "But she started telling me that he often had lots of money in his pockets saying: 'This is the boys' cash but I don't care - let's have fun with it instead'. I thought it was strange that he had so much money and we had so little when we already had two gold albums. It was all a mystery. I left partly because of Erdtman's management, and partly because he and Joey made too many decisions. Joey and Erdtman were the bosses, and the rest of us had to deal with it."

The others were shocked by Norum's decision, but at the same time they understood him. They hadn't gotten along really well lately, so maybe it would be best if he left the band. "There was a silent agreement between us," Ian said. "He wanted to leave the band, and we wanted him to leave the band."

"It grew on us, I guess, the vibes got worse and worse," Mic said. "He isolated himself more and more, so his decision didn't come as a shock. I guess there was too much press and promotion and too little rock 'n' roll."

"To a certain extent I don't blame him," Levén said. "You had dreamt about playing and touring. Not about doing interviews."

"One of the reasons that John Norum left when the band got big, was that we stopped talking and even communicating with each other," Joey said, "Things were enclosed instead of just talking it out. This was done to improve the situation, but instead we just drifted further and further apart, of course."

Norum agreed to go on with EUROPE for a new tour in Sweden, but then that was it. The guys agreed to keep Norum's decision secret. An incomplete band could mean loss of popularity. The only thing that was on the four remaining members' minds that night was to find a replacement for Norum. They wanted a really good Swedish guitarist, and in the end they all thought of the same person: Kee Marcello, the Easy Action guitarist who EUROPE had worked together with on the "Swedish Metal Aid" single. "Kee had just recorded an album with Easy Action and I remember that we got a copy of it before it was out," Levén said. After listening to it, there was no doubt about him being the right guitarist for EUROPE. Then Erdtman called Kee and gave him the offer, but Kee refused. "He felt bad for the other members of Easy Action and their record company, and he was the most important writer in the band. They took the cover photo for the album the day after we asked him, so you can see on the photo that his mind is somewhere else." But EUROPE didn't give up. One evening Erdtman met a friend of Kee's at the Hard Rock Café in Stockholm, and asked her to convince Kee. She thought that Kee was stupid to refuse the offer, so she promised to do her best.

Meanwhile, EUROPE got their revenge with the second leg of the Swedish tour. Now the talk about economic fiasco was long gone. EUROPE were greeted by the masses at ice stadium after ice stadium, in town after town. The leg also included two concerts in Norway, namely Trondheim and Lillestrøm. The grand finale was at the Ice Stadium in Stockholm. Now the "Final Countdown" single was number 1 in West Germany, and it kept climbing the charts all over Europe. On October 14, 1986 the band went to Munich to do a showcase gig, a concert for specially invited guests, press and record companies. It would be Norum's last live concert with EUROPE for 13 years. Right after the gig Thomas Erdtman got a call from Sweden. Kee Marcello had changed his mind and was ready to join EUROPE.

Norum was asked to do one last promotion tour with the band because there wasn't enough time to rehearse with Kee. They did playback performances at several TV shows all over Europe, ending the tour in Amsterdam, the Netherlands on October 31, 1986. There they played at Sky Channel's annual music festival, which was held at the discotheque Escape. Norum was happy when the show was done. "Finally it's over," he said. "Now I can make my own music." He and the band parted good as friends at the Arlanda airport in Stockholm. It was probably best for them all that it went that way. But did Norum ever regret it? "That's happened a few times - I missed my pals from Väsby! But at the same time it was the best thing I could have done. I got a solo deal and could make a solo album with my own songs. After that, Dokken called and in 1990 I moved to Los Angeles and lived there for eight years. I wanted to get away and try something new."

"In retrospect you can say that Norum did the right thing," Ian said. "He believed in his thing and stood up for his opinion."

Now Kee was the guitarist in EUROPE. After practicing their songs at home for weeks, it was time to start rehearsing with the band. "The first rehearsals with him were great," Mic said. In late November they shot the music videos for "Rock the Night" and "Carrie". The "Rock the Night" video was shot at the Hard Rock Café in Stockholm and the "Carrie" video was shot at the Swedish Film Institute in Stockholm. Kee's first official performance with EUROPE was a playback performance at the TV show "Peters Pop Show" in Dortmund, Germany on December 12, 1986 in front of more than 16 000 people. Other artists performing were Samantha Fox, Depeche Mode and Billy Idol, but the most popular ones were EUROPE. The show was aired on TV in 36 countries, and watched by 50 million people. Then the band did another promotion tour on various playback shows for TV. "It was so bizarre to play 'air guitar' to songs I hadn't recorded," Kee laughed.

On November 2, the "Final Countdown" single had finally reached number 1 in England. The band celebrated with beer at an English pub in Stockholm. At the end of the year, the single had sold almost 2 million copies.

Their first live tour around the European continent started in Bergen, Norway, on January 24, 1987. "The first two months I was so worried," Kee said, "Did I do the right thing when I threw myself into EUROPE's world career? What would the fans think? The hardest part was when the guys in the band wanted me to play those melodic parts of the songs the way John Norum did. For example, I had to do 'Carrie' like he'd done it. That felt really difficult in the beginning. I was scared that I'd lose my own playing style... But later everything felt great. I didn't lose anything by playing like John, quite the contrary. I learned a lot and broadened my own playing. Today I don't regret even for a second that I joined EUROPE!"

On February 22 and 23, EUROPE recorded their concerts at Hammersmith Odeon in England for the home video "The Final Countdown World Tour" that was released later that year. The tour ended on March 12. The arenas were filled in every city they had played, like in Zurich, Switzerland, where 12 000 people came to the concert. In Italy a total of 66 000 people came to the seven concerts EUROPE did there. In total 155 000 people had come to see EUROPE live on the tour. Right after that, the band went to the Soviet Union to do a TV show. "That's probably one of the weirdest places I've played at," Kee said.

"The Final Countdown" was climbing fast on the Billboard chart in the USA. The videos for "The Final Countdown" and "Rock the Night" were shown often on MTV. America was ready for EUROPE, and the band's first US tour started in San Fransisco on April 15. They decided to play in theatres with room for 2000 - 3000 people, as they didn't know how many people would come to their shows. They thought it would be better with a full theatre instead of a half-full ice hall. All the concerts were sold out quickly.

EUROPE played in 23 cities all around the USA and traveled 14565 kilometers. For the tour they had hired a private jet for 650 000 Swedish Kronor (91 000 US Dollars). "The idea was to save time to do more promotion in every city," Ian said. "At that time it was said that the record label was gonna pay

the difference between commercial and private flying. But we ended up with the whole bill making it cost more than it was worth."

"Someone said we should fly private," Levén said. "We just thought, 'Cool - our own stewardess bringing pizza every time you get on the plane'. I mean how good can it get? But they forgot to tell us the important thing: 'By the way - you're paying for this.'"

The tour ended in Philadelphia on May 17. The Swedish TV channel SVT had followed the band during the tour, producing the documentary "EUROPE in America", which was shown on TV in 1988. It was also released on home video. EUROPE's biggest hit in the USA was actually "Carrie", reaching number 3 on the Billboard single chart. The "Final Countdown" single ended up as number 8. The album stayed on the chart for over 60 weeks, also reaching number 8. The band could go home with a platinum record - 1 million sold albums. In total, the "Final Countdown" single has sold more than eight million copies and been number 1 in 26 countries. The album has sold just over six million copies.

In September they went to the Sierra Nevada in Spain to record the video for "Cherokee". It was filmed a half mile from where Sergio Leone shot the famous Clint Eastwood spaghetti western "A Fistful of Dollars". When filming the scene where the horses run through the valley, someone accidentally set some brush near the set on fire. The entire video crew, including band members, had to fight the fire by quickly digging a road that the fire could not bridge.

The taxes were high in Sweden, and EUROPE's tax advisers, who were pretty sloppy at that time, suggested that they should move abroad. EUROPE decided to so, and only Mic chose to stay home in Sweden, while the others moved to the tax haven Nassau on the Bahamas. But Mic's adviser told him to move as well if he wanted to make it. So eventually Mic moved there too. Later they all moved to an island in the West-Indies called Turks and Caicos.

Out of This World

Having been one band amongst many others, EUROPE was now top priority for CBS Records, second only to Michael Jackson, when it was time to record the next album. "I guess Joey was the one who was under the most pressure," Mic said, "He was the one writing most of the material. We did our best in backing him up. Without having to say it you knew that repeating a success was the main thing."

In March 1988 EUROPE went to London to start working on their fourth album, "Out of This World". The album was recorded at the Olympic Studios, Townhouse Studios and Swanyard Studios between March and June. It was produced by Ron Nevison, who had previously worked with such bands as Led Zeppelin, KISS and The Who. "We wanted Ron because he'd done the classic UFO albums 'Lights Out' and 'Obsession', and the early Michael Schenker Group stuff," Joey said. But the band wasn't satisfied with Nevison's production and thought that he made too many decisions about the sound. "It sounds way too slick," Ian said. "I'm sorry to have to admit it, but perhaps Ron Nevison wasn't the right choice," Kee said, "He wimped it out a little bit too much. Y'see, the songs sounded a lot heavier, but Ron came in and took the spontaneity away. But listen, I don't think we can put the entire blame on him - we should have been more aware of what was happening. It's funny, but our rehearsal tapes from that album are great. We only recorded them on a cassette player, but you can easily hear how rough and raw the songs sounded."

The first single from the album, "Superstitious", was released in July 1988 and went straight to number 1 on the Swedish singles chart. "Out of This World" was released on August 9 and also went to number 1 in Sweden. During the summer EUROPE did their second US tour, this time as "special guests" for Def Leppard. "When we made the deal with Leppard, their 'Hysteria' album had started to drop in sales so they wanted someone to join them to help sell tickets and asked us if we wanted to do it," Ian said, "Just a week after we've signed the deal they got a hit with 'Pour Some Sugar on Me' and everyone including the devil and his brother bought 'Hysteria'. Looking back I guess they didn't need us but we got maximum exposure and made some money at the same time. The funniest thing was that they asked us personally if we wanted to go with them on their indoor tour in the fall but we were already booked for an Asian tour so it meant breaking all those contracts plus our management

thought that tour was more important. Lesson learned is that if you get a chance to tour with a Def Leppard going up, you take it."

Before leaving USA, EUROPE shot the music video for "Superstitious" at an old castle on Long Island, New York with Nick Morris as the director. "Out of This World" peaked at number 19 on the Billboard 200 album chart and "Superstitious" peaked at number 31 on the Billboard Hot 100 singles chart. Then the band went to Europe to do a promotion tour - a month of interviews and playback shows. "The worst month of my life," Levén said, "We were supposed to come back. We were supposed to do South America, but we canceled that because 'Out of This World' wasn't doing that good. The biggest mistake was leaving the Def Leppard tour."

A newly recorded version of "Open Your Heart" was released as the second single in October. "I remember recording it the first time, it was a really special moment and was a very important song for us to get signed to America," Joey said, "When we were later recording for the 'Out of This World' album in London we wanted to make the album a bit broader, maybe we didn't have enough ballads or something. We were discussing the album and we felt that it was such a great song that it deserved a better, a greater chance so we decided to re-record it and I think it turned out really well." The music video was shot in London and directed by Doug Freel and Jean Pellerin.

In November EUROPE started an Asian tour with a charity show at a soccer stadium in Bombay, India in front of 60 000 people. The tour included two nights at the legendary arena Budokan in Tokyo, during which the band shot the music video for the third single, "Let the Good Times Rock", once again with Nick Morris as the director. The single was released in March 1989. The European "Out of This World" tour started in Malmö, Sweden on January 10, 1989. The tour was a great audience success, with sold out concerts in almost every country. The tour ended in Brussels, Belgium on April 5. At that time the sales of "Out of This World" had stopped at two million copies. Compared to "The Final Countdown", this was a fiasco. "I feel that the success with 'The Final Countdown' was one of the reasons why we broke up," Mic said, "When the rest of the albums didn't sell as much, we lost the spark. And that was even though the other albums didn't flop. They all sold a couple of millions. Perhaps we were a band that should have sold one million instead of six. We weren't mentally prepared for that tremendous success."



Prisoners in Paradise

In the summer of 1989 EUROPE started working on their fifth album. "After the 'Out of This World' tour we decided we wanted to spend more time in the States than we had previously," Ian said, "It was partly because we needed to get some inspiration but also because we had both our management and record company there, so we figured it would be easier to keep a good relationship with them if we were there. We packed our bags and went to L.A., rented some apartments in Hollywood and a rehearsal studio at S.I.R. where we rehearsed and jammed for some months." The songwriting process had changed compared to the previous albums. "On the earlier albums Joey would bring us more or less ready-produced demos that we'd just add our personal touches to. But this time around, Joey just presented us a rough idea on guitar or we would simply jam on ideas and build songs from there. Some of the songs we wrote during these sessions were 'Little Bit of Lovin', 'Seventh Sign', 'Bad Blood' and 'Homeland.'"

During those sessions they got an offer to play at a rock festival in Milton Keynes, England. That festival took place instead of the annual Monsters of Rock festival at Castle Donington, which had been cancelled that year due to the deaths of two fans during the Guns N' Roses concert at the Monsters of Rock festival in 1988. "Our Swedish manager at the time thought it would be stupid to break up the writing session in favor of the festival," Ian said, "While our American manager, Herbie Herbert, told us that 'he wouldn't piss on us if we were on fire' if we turned down the offer." The Milton Keynes festival took place on August 19, 1989 - Joey's 26th birthday. EUROPE played for more than 60,000 people and the setlist included four new songs: "Yesterday's News", "Seventh Sign", "Little Bit of Lovin'" and "Wild Child". The festival bill also featured Skid Row, Vixen and headliners Bon Jovi. "It turned out to be not only one of our biggest gigs ever but also one of the most important gigs we ever played in Britain. It gave EUROPE a lot of rock 'n' roll credibility which we didn't exactly have a lot of in Britain! The headlines in the rock magazines said, 'EUROPE louder than Mötörhead!' The funny thing was that the night before the gig I met Lemmy from Mötörhead at a rock club in London, and when I introduced myself to him I said, 'Hi! I'm Ian from the rock band EUROPE.' He just looked at

me and replied, 'EUROPE is not a rock band!' The revenge was sweeter than sugar!"

Later that year, on September 17, EUROPE did a concert at the nightclub Whisky A Go Go in West Hollywood, California. "We were approached by people from the legendary Whisky A Go Go asking us if we wanted to play a surprise gig at the club," Ian said, "We thought it sounded like a cool idea, but since we didn't have any work permits we were a little concerned what Uncle Sam might say. The whole problem was solved when somebody came up with the idea that we should play under a fake name, so we ended up playing the gig as the 'Le Baron Boys,' named after the rental cars we had. The show gave us a chance to try out more new songs, which were in an early stage, on the crowd."

In the fall of 1989 they decided to fire their manager, Thomas Erdtman. "Many of us saw Erdtman as a slippery person, but if we were gonna go against him, we had to be united," Mic said, "This took us several years and we weren't that united until the time of the tour with Def Leppard in 1988." John Norum said he was "surprised that it took so long. The decision was taken five years too late." Norum has claimed that Erdtman has swindled millions of dollars from the band, leaving only crumbs for them in the end. "There has to be something wrong when he has a big house, five cars, summerhouses everywhere and a big boat, while the band has to share a fucking house in the West Indies!"

In February 1990 EUROPE went to Chile to play two concerts at an annual music festival in Viña Del Mar. In the same year they spent time in the West-Indies, London, San Francisco and Los Angeles writing more songs. "After a short break we went back to the States and continued to write songs," Ian said, "First in L.A., then later in San Francisco where we wrote songs including 'Talk to Me,' 'Girl from Lebanon,' 'Homeland' and 'Til My Heart Beats Down Your Door'." When they had 24 songs they started to approach producers. "We had meetings with Terry Thomas and we went to Vancouver where we met Bob Rock at a strip club (a very distracting, yet very pleasant, experience!). He was very interested in the project but unfortunately he'd just started working with the Metallica (Black) album, so he was kind of busy."

"But one night when we played The Whisky on the Sunset Strip, there was another producer in the room checking us out," Joey said, "It was Beau Hill. We got along great and he ended up being our producer."

"After about four weeks of pre-production, we went to the Enterprise studio in Burbank, California," Ian said, "Everything went very smooth; the drum tracks were done in two days and the whole session done in about ten weeks. We were very happy with the way the songs came together and we felt that this was gonna be the best EUROPE album to date."

"The only real problem has been in selecting how many and which songs to put on the album," Joey said, "We actually want all fourteen, but because of the total amount of playing time, we might just have a job fitting it all on. I think that we'll end up with twelve songs and a couple of B-sides. We started out with twenty-four songs which we cut down to fourteen."

The album was finished in November 1990, and working titles for the album were "Break Free" and "Mind in the Gutter". After that, the band spent the month of December touring in South-East Asia. However, CBS Records, which was later renamed Sony Music Entertainment, wasn't satisfied with the album and cancelled the release. "During the recording there was a restructuring in management at CBS," Ian said, "Everyone involved in EUROPE were gone over one night and replaced with new people who had their key projects. We went from being a priority band to an inherited project. The new people didn't like what they heard when we played them new material. 'We don't hear any hits - write more,' they said. That's when we lost a lot of the fire. We were being ass-fucked by the record company that used to back us up."

Four new songs were written: "All or Nothing", "Halfway to Heaven", "I'll Cry for You" and "Prisoners in Paradise". The band went back to the Enterprise studios to record those four songs and remix the rest of the album. Suddenly there were too many songs for one album, and eventually it was decided that four songs from the original track list had to go, namely "Here Comes the Night", "Sweet Love Child", "Mr. Government Man" and "Long Time Comin'". Advance tapes were made and the album title was decided to be "Prisoners in Paradise". But then CBS struck again: Two more songs, "Break Free" and "Yesterday's News", were taken off the album, due to CBS' claim that the length of the

album would have been too long if they had remained on the album. Instead they were included as bonus tracks on the Japanese edition.

Several demos that were recorded by the band around 1989-90 are available on the bootleg "Le Baron Boys", which has been spread all over the Internet. The bootleg includes early versions of songs like "Little Bit of Lovin'", "Talk to Me", "Seventh Sign" and "Break Free", as well as unreleased songs such as "Don't Know How to Love No More", "Wanted Man", "Rainbow Warrior" and "Blame It on Me". Fans have asked for an official release of these demos, but the band hasn't announced such plans as of yet. "They were recorded on a smaller format," Joey said, referring to the fact that the demos were only recorded on an 8-track recorder. "The quality of the original recording might not be up to a high standard, because it was only demos we did for the 'Prisoners' album, really."

"On the bootlegs the sound quality is from tape," Ian said, "I don't know if multitrack recordings exist. The only option would be to re-record them again. I listen to these tapes sometimes. There is interesting material in there."

During the recording sessions in Burbank, EUROPE got in touch with John Norum again. They hit it off so well that Norum asked Joey to sing on his second solo album, "Face the Truth". Joey agreed, and the two of them recorded the duet "We Will Be Strong", which was released as the first single from "Face the Truth" in 1992. Joey also appeared in the music video for the song and co-wrote another song on the album, "Counting on Your Love".

The album "Prisoners in Paradise" was released on September 23, 1991 and peaked at number 9 on the Swedish album chart. It reached the Top 20 in Norway and Switzerland, but only managed to reach number 61 on the UK album chart. It sold about a million copies worldwide. The title track was released as the first single in Europe, except for the UK, and it peaked at number 8 on the Swedish singles chart. The music video was directed by Nick Morris and shot at the Arab World Institute in Paris, France. The second single was "I'll Cry for You", which peaked at number 28 on the UK singles chart. The band recorded an acoustic version of "I'll Cry for You" at the Soundtrade Studios in Stockholm, and it was included as an extra track on the single. The music video was directed by Phil Tuckett and shot at the Circus in Stockholm. On New Year's Eve 1991, EUROPE played a concert at the Tokyo Dome together with Tesla, Thunder and headliners Metallica in front of 30 000 people. An interesting side note is that the concert was called "Final Countdown '91".

On January 7, 1992, EUROPE kicked off the "Prisoners in Paradise" tour in Helsinki, Finland. Quite often the band had three guitarists on stage: Kee, Joey and Mic, in order to reflect the more guitar-based sound of the album. The last single from the album, "Halfway to Heaven", was released during the tour and the music video was shot at The Marquee in London. At this point the band started to discuss if they should take a break. "I remember in the tour bus afterwards, we were talking about where the whole thing was going, and I think at the time the consensus amongst the band was that we really felt ready for a break," Joey said, "After all, we'd been a touring rock band for years. We did our first album in 1983 and started touring almost straight away. Then when 'The Final Countdown' broke in 1986... Basically we never went home, ha, ha! We felt that it was time to put some roots down, and I was really into the idea of making my own solo album."

"We didn't say we quit," Kee said, "We decided to go, 'Let's put a lid on this, let it rest.' Because right then grunge was going crazy all over the place. Melodic rock was fucking out. We were talking, 'Do we wanna do a record in this climate? I think not. Nobody's gonna dig it anyway. Nobody is gonna understand it. So let's put it on hold.'"

"I remember things differently," John Levén said, "The only person who wanted to stop was Joey. He brought up the subject of a break, but it seemed like a good idea. We had tax problems in Sweden and a lot of bad press. We were fed up with the financial side of the music business."

Another factor was the growing tension between Joey and Kee. "Joey and me didn't get along," Kee said, "In the beginning, when I was hesitating about the offer to join the band, their manager promised me to take place in the drivers seat together with Joey, songwriting and direction wise. I wouldn't have accepted the offer otherwise. But when it came down to picking songs for 'Out of This World', which I wrote and demoed 8 tracks for, I barely got one of my songs on the album ('Just the Beginning.') Thomas Erdtman and Joey never intended to seriously let me in on the songwriting, and

this made me very frustrated. On 'Prisoners in Paradise' I tried to tag on as co-writer on Joey's stuff, but it never really panned out. Don't get me wrong, I'm very proud of how those songs and albums turned out anyway, but I guess the way I felt about it really took its toll on me. I tried to be 'just the guitar player' in the band for a while, but I just couldn't do it."

"Since Joey had done so well with writing the songs so far, there was no point in Kee beginning to write too," Ian said, "That's why we didn't support him."

"There was always tension between Joey and our guitarists," Mic said, "When it came to the tension with John, something good came out of it. Joey was inspired. When Kee joined the band and wanted to write and produce, as Erdtman had promised him without our knowledge, there wasn't the same positive creativity. And Kee was disappointed when he noticed that no one supported him when it came to the songwriting. The conflict between Joey and Kee was the beginning of the end for EUROPE."

EUROPE played the last concert on the tour in Portsmouth, England, on March 15, 1992. After that, the band members moved back to Sweden, while Joey decided to stay in England because he had met a girl in London, Lisa Worthington, who later became his wife. In 1993 Joey and Thomas Witt compiled a EUROPE greatest hits album, "1982–1992". It included the biggest hits, some album tracks and some rarities such as the acoustic version of "I'll Cry for You", "Sweet Love Child" and "Yesterday's News".

After they moved back to Sweden, the band members faced tax problems. Their move to the Caribbean to avoid the taxes, wasn't approved by the Swedish taxation authorities. They considered the band still being resident in Sweden, so they had to pay the taxes. "We did end up with fantastic debts to the taxman," Kee said, "They were claiming we were not living in America or the West Indies as we said that we were – we were in fact! So we had a long battle in court about this for years, and finally in 1997 we lost in the supreme court. That was terrible, we had to re-think our entire lives. You're supposed to live on what they call 'existence minimum' – you're allowed to have a stereo and a TV, and a video, but you can't really go beyond that. I have to say though that the authorities have been pretty good to talk to – they could have been much worse to us – they could have sent someone to come to our places and pick up anything worth any money, which they didn't. They thought it was enough just to have this terrible, stressful debt on your shoulders – for at least five years we knew we really couldn't do anything about the situation. Luckily I got rid of that debt five years later, so it's gone now." The tax debts expired in 2002 and nowadays the band members prefer not to talk about their former tax problems. "It doesn't affect our business today," Joey said.

The band members spent the rest of the 90s working on several projects. Joey recorded two solo albums and Kee recorded one. Mic, Ian and John Levén toured and recorded with former Deep Purple/Black Sabbath member Glenn Hughes and various bands such as Brazen Abbot.



The first reunion

The band members started to discuss the possibility of a EUROPE reunion in 1998. "Mic and Ian came over to see me in Ireland," Joey said, "Then whilst we were there, John Norum called from LA, and we were like 'Yes, maybe now is the right time to get things started again.'"

In 1999 Sony Music kept asking Joey to do something special with "The Final Countdown" for the new millennium. Joey decided to record an ambient version of the song in January, calling it the "Blue Version". Sony Music weren't satisfied with it, though, so they decided to hire producers Brian Rawling and Gary Miller to produce a dance remix that used Joey's vocals from the original mastertapes. The result was "The Final Countdown 2000", released on December 12, 1999. At the same time the greatest hits album "1982–2000" was released, which was basically a reissue of "1982–1992" with different cover art and "The Final Countdown 2000" included as a bonus track. However, EUROPE didn't want the remix to be on the album. They had suggested that two unreleased songs from the "Prisoners in Paradise" sessions, "Here Comes the Night" and "Mr. Government Man", should be included instead, but Sony Music didn't seem to care.

In September 1999 there was an article in the Swedish newspaper "Expressen", saying that EUROPE was going to reunite for New Year's Eve. The band was to receive 1 or 2 million

Kronor (140 000 - 280 000 US Dollars). The band denied that it was true. During the following months, it became clear that EUROPE was going to reunite for one show in Stockholm on New Year's Eve. Rumors had it that they would be paid 21 million Kronor (2.9 million US Dollars), to play "Rock the Night" and "The Final Countdown". Joey Tempest would apparently get 11 million Kronor, and the rest of the members would split the remaining 10. In reality each member, including Joey, got a half million Kronor.

For that night, EUROPE had a six members line-up: Joey Tempest, John Norum, John Levén, Mic Michaeli, Ian Haugland and Kee Marcello, making this the first EUROPE concert with two lead guitarists on stage. The band went on stage when it was 15 minutes to midnight, it was 15 degrees below zero (Celsius), and Joey had a cold. They did a great show, the only bummer being the vocals. Joey couldn't reach the high notes like he did years ago, but after all he did have a cold. When the last note of "The Final Countdown" had been played, it was just minutes left of 1999, and Joey Tempest said, "Tack Stockholm!" (Thank you Stockholm). Then the band left the stage, and the King of Sweden made a short speech and proposed a toast. Then there were enormous fireworks, and the new millennium had begun. The concert was broadcasted live on Swedish TV3, and Joey said in a late interview that it had been great to play together with the guys again. The next day, the Swedish newspapers "Aftonbladet" and "Expressen" both gave excellent reviews of the concert, and even had a comment from John Norum saying: "So far we have no plans, but I really hope we'll get together to play again."

On April 14, 2000, the band members made an appearance at the Hard Rock Cafe in Stockholm. They had donated some memorabilia for display in a big glass unit, such as gold and platinum records, hand-written lyrics and Joey's jacket from the "Prisoners in Paradise" video. The band also received gold records for the sales of "1982-1992" in Sweden. The cover band Playboys was at the cafe to play a short set of EUROPE classics - interestingly enough, they didn't have any keyboards on stage - and right before they were going to play the last song, Ian came up on stage. Soon he was joined by John Levén, John Norum and Kee. Together with the Playboys vocalist, they tore into "Rock the Night". Right before the second-to-last chorus, Joey and Mic hit the stage. Since there weren't any keyboards on stage, Mic had to settle for backing vocals. The next day, there was an article in "Aftonbladet" saying that there would be a new EUROPE album and a tour in 2001. This wasn't true, however.

In December 2002, EUROPE announced that they would release a box set to celebrate their 20th anniversary as recording artists. Joey Tempest revealed that a 2-CD "Greatest Hits" album and a DVD, all packed with unreleased material, was planned to be released in 2003, exactly 20 years after the release of the "Europe" album. But the release date for this set was heavily delayed.

Start from the Dark

On October 2, 2003, a big announcement was made: EUROPE had reunited. But this time it wasn't just for one concert. Plans for a new album and world tour were announced. At the same time the official website, www.europetheband.com, was launched. The band had switched back to the The Final Countdown lineup: Joey Tempest, John Norum, John Levén, Mic Michaeli and Ian Haugland. "Deep down we always knew that we would get back together again," Joey said, "When we did the rehearsals for the millennium gig, we realized that the magic and chemistry was still there." But Joey had to finish his third solo album first. "Contractually I had to do that album. So that came out in 2002, and then when that deal was over, I decided that I wasn't going to renew it. I knew that by then I was ready, that the timing was right to do this again. So in the beginning of 2003 we had a band meeting, and from then on it was just a matter of moving forward and writing songs for the new album. That was always our intention. We thought that if we were gonna make a comeback, we wanted to do it properly, and that meant we wanted to write and record some new songs, a new album."

"We felt that if we wanted to do this right, we should do it with the lineup that had the right chemistry," Ian said. "I started missing my partner in crime, John Norum," Joey said, "Even

though Kee Marcello did a great job playing guitar on *Out of This World* and *Prisoners in Paradise*, when John was not around I always felt that something was missing." Kee claimed he was too busy with other projects, including a new solo album, to join the reunion. "We talked for a while about doing a six-piece with both me and John Norum," Kee said, "I can only speak for myself, but that wouldn't have worked. Not for me anyway. And I think Norum would feel the same way." Norum expressed himself similarly: "I was cool with Kee doing some shows, but I said from the beginning that if there was gonna be a studio album I had to do it on my own."

The songwriting for the new album started early in 2003. "Norum and I started bouncing ideas back and forth to each other," Joey said, "The first two songs we wrote were 'Start from the Dark' and 'Got to Have Faith', both of which originated from his riffs. I finished the songs off in my studio in London, wrote the lyrics and came up with the melodies, moved things around a bit... Then I sent them back to Norum and he was like, 'Hey, this is great.' At that point we sent them to the management and to the rest of the guys in the band, and everybody was like, 'Wow, this is exciting!' So we knew we were on to something."

On March 3, 2004, the 2-CD "Greatest Hits" album and DVD were finally released in Sweden, although not as a box set, but sold separately. They were both titled *Rock the Night*. The DVD was the first official EUROPE DVD ever, and included all their music videos from 1986 to 1992, plus live footage and interviews from 1982-88.

Later that month EUROPE went to the Studios 301 in Stockholm together with the *The Final Countdown* producer Kevin Elson to record their new album. "It doesn't have so much to do with *The Final Countdown*," Mic said about the choice of Elson, "He is very good at finding what's missing in the songs. He has good ideas. At the same time he is a very easygoing fellow. We didn't want to have some new 'hip' producer, but someone that we know can bring a good sound". Few people knew about the recording of the new album. "That's how we wanted it to be," Ian said, "We didn't want any people from the record company or management to interfere."

"We did the whole song writing bit in probably six to seven months," Joey said. "Then we went into the studio and did the whole recording thing in 40 days. We didn't want to drag this out. We called Kevin in America and said, 'Let's not drag it out, let's record the whole thing in 40 days and then mix it quickly to try and retain that live vibe. Let's make this a point in time and not drag it out for years.' So we recorded it pretty much live. It's just a mark in time really."

On June 11, 2004, EUROPE played their first full-length concert in 12 years in Vallset, Norway. It was the premiere of their reunion tour, which included various festival dates around Europe, and the highlight was the concert at Sweden Rock Festival on June 12, in front of more than 20 000 fans. The concert setlists included several old classics, but also introduced the title track from their new studio album: "Start from the Dark". Another interesting fact was that they didn't play any songs from the album *Prisoners in Paradise*. The B-side track "Yesterday's News" was the only song played from that period. "I guess you can blame it on me," John Norum said, "I don't like that album at all. It's the worst EUROPE album ever."

"I think the band grooves much better on stage now," Joey said, "When you're young, you play quite fast and you're very excitable, which can be a bit unpredictable up on stage, but now all that sits very well, the band grooves and plays great together."

In September, "Got to Have Faith" was released as the first single from *Start from the Dark*. The music video featured the band rocking out in a garage, mixed with clips from the cult films *Ghostrider* and *Ghostrider 2*. *Start from the Dark* was released in Sweden on September 23, 2004, by Sony Music Sweden, which also released it in the rest of Scandinavia. Internationally EUROPE had gone from Sony Music to Sanctuary Records, record company for bands like Iron Maiden. The album's style was hard, using detuned guitars and pushing the keyboards more into the background. Many fans were surprised. "To have remade *The Final Countdown* would have been the dumbest thing possible," Norum said. "Mic was tired of the old 80s style keyboard sound," Ian said, "He always wants to do new things. There are actually a lot of keyboards on the album, but they have a guitar-like sound and melt together with the guitars."

"When Norum and I started writing, it was very obvious this was going to be more guitar oriented," Joey said, "We didn't write together as much before with EUROPE. He would play guitar and I wrote most of the songs. Now since we've been writing stuff together, it's really triggered off some melodic but yet more guitar oriented and heavy music. It was just automatic! It was something we wanted to do that sounded like the rehearsal we had when we first met."

The European leg of the *Start from the Dark* tour started in Helsinki, Finland on October 14, 2004. Six songs from the album had been included in the setlist, along with "Girl from Lebanon" from *Prisoners in Paradise*. The last concert on that leg was played at the Hammersmith Apollo in London on November 15, and was filmed for the DVD *Live from the Dark*. The DVD also included interviews and music videos, and was released in Europe on November 18, 2005. The single "Hero" was released in November 2004 and was given a nostalgic music video, recreating scenes of teenaged band members dreaming of becoming rock stars. Live clips from EUROPE's concert at Hovet in Stockholm one month earlier were also included. An interesting fact is that Ian Haugland's son Simon and Mic Michaeli's son Marcus appear in this video.

In January 2005 EUROPE went on a Japanese tour. Three of the concerts were recorded for a planned live album that ultimately wasn't released. In March they played some concerts around Europe, including two concerts in Russia. On April 22, they started their first US tour in 17 years. The venue was the House of Blues in Anaheim. Then they did a tour in the UK, as well as playing some more concerts around Europe. In August 2005 EUROPE received a gold record for selling 30 000 copies of *Start from the Dark* in Sweden.

Secret Society

On June 12, 2006 EUROPE started the recording sessions for their seventh album, *Secret Society*, at the Kingside Studios in Stockholm. The recording took almost two months. Ian and John Levén recorded their parts in June, and John Norum, Mic and Joey recorded their parts in July and August. The album was produced by the band and mixed by recording engineer Lennart Östlund, who's worked with bands like Led Zeppelin, Scorpions and Genesis. The album was released on October 25, 2006. "We wanted it to be a little bit better than *Start from the Dark* from the point of view of sound and songs, and we are very happy with the results," Joey said, "We think it's one of the strongest albums that EUROPE has ever

done. There is definitely some more melodic stuff on this one. Start from the Dark was very raw and made a statement, which is cool but for us it felt like a debut album in a way, so we wanted to branch out a bit on this one and take it to new levels."

EUROPE kicked off the Secret Society tour in Lund, Sweden the day after the album release, October 26.

To mark the 20th anniversary of The Final Countdown, Warner Home Video released the DVD The Final Countdown Tour 1986: 20th Anniversary Edition on October 4, 2006. The DVD features footage from the concerts at Solnahallen in Solna, Sweden on May 25 and 26, 1986, as well as extra material such as new interviews with the band, a visit to the Powerplay Studios where the album was recorded, and a picture gallery from the The Final Countdown tour. The picture gallery includes a previously unreleased song, "Where Men Won't Dare," which was co-written by Joey and John Levén. It was supposed to be included on the album, but ultimately it didn't make it.

Almost Unplugged

On January 26, 2008 EUROPE did a semi-acoustic live concert at Nalen in Stockholm and called the event "Almost Unplugged". The band was accompanied by a string quartet and played reworked versions of their own songs, including hits such as "The Final Countdown" and "Superstitious", early tracks like "Memories" and "Dreamer", and the live premiere of "Devil Sings the Blues". The setlist also included cover versions of songs by bands that have influenced EUROPE's sound throughout the years – "Wish You Were Here" by Pink Floyd, "Love to Love" by UFO, "Since I've Been Loving You" by Led Zeppelin and "Suicide" by Thin Lizzy. The show was broadcast live over the Internet via www.europetheband.com. "That was solely meant as a webcast, but it turned out so well," Joey said, "We were so pleased with the result that we decided to release the Almost Unplugged CD and Almost Unplugged DVD." The CD was released on September 17, 2008 and the DVD was released on August 19, 2009.

On May 21, 2008 John Norum's wife, Michelle Meldrum-Norum, died as a result of a cystic growth on her brain that had restricted oxygen and blood flow to her brain, rendering her brain-dead. She was 39 years old. "It's been very tough. The worst time in my life. We were together for 16-17 years and she was my soul mate." EUROPE had planned to kick off a festival tour in Kopervik, Norway on May 31, but due to the tragic circumstances the concert was cancelled. The rest of the tour went on as planned and one of the highlights of the tour was a co-headlining concert with Whitesnake in Padua, Italy on July 23. During Whitesnake's performance of their encore "Still of the Night", Joey joined David Coverdale on stage for the last chorus. Another highlight occurred in Sweden when EUROPE played two concerts as opening act for Deep Purple, on August 8 in Linköping and August 9 in Ystad. Norum joined Deep Purple on stage in Ystad for a performance of "Smoke on the Water". In October EUROPE played a rescheduled concert in Kopervik and two concerts in Spain. The biggest surprise on the setlist was an acoustic version of "Prisoners in Paradise". Norum has said in interviews that he refuses to play the song, so instead Joey and Mic performed the song acoustically.

Last Look at Eden

In December 2008 EUROPE went to the Bohus Sound Studios in Gothenburg to start recording their eighth studio album. This time they decided to go with a younger producer, Tobias Lindell. "We knew that Tobias was interested in working with us, as he's contacted

our management before, and asked for an opportunity," Joey said, "We were very excited to try this young producer, and that proved to be a very good combination. Tobias records on an old Neve desk, and then mixes on a brand new desk, meaning you'll achieve that old world sound and the new, crunchy sound. When it comes to mixing and producing a record, what he comes up with is really world class." The recording sessions lasted until February 2009. More is More was announced as a working title for the album early on, but in March the official title was revealed as Last Look at Eden.

In April 2009 EUROPE went on a mini tour around Chile to play their first concerts there since the Viña del Mar festival in 1990. "It's been a long time but it's great to be back," Ian said, "And it's amazing to meet all these happy fans still being around for EUROPE after such a long time." Those Chilean dates were followed by a festival tour around Europe, including a concert at Sweden Rock Festival. On August 16 the band headlined the metal festival Bloodstock Open Air in Derby, England. The announcement of EUROPE as headliners for Bloodstock caused a bit of controversy. "We had no idea what to expect from that show," Joey said, "There were however, strong reactions for and strong reactions against us playing by the people that go there but we did one similar to that one – Hellfest in France a couple of months before and it went really well. We were hoping this one would turn out great and thankfully it did. We went straight on the forum afterwards to check how we did and we found that some people were converted! Some people liked us. In our view, it was a success."

The song "Last Look at Eden" was released as the first single from the album on June 8, 2009. The music video was directed by Patric Ullaeus, who had previously worked with bands such as In Flames and Within Temptation.

On July 21, 2009 former FORCE bassist and co-writer of the song "Scream of Anger", Marcel Jacob was found dead in his home in Kristineberg, Stockholm. He was 45 years old. Jeff Scott Soto, the vocalist in Marcel's band Talisman, issued the following statement: "It is with deep regret and remorse I, along with fellow members of Talisman, am announcing our brother, longtime colleague and overall greatest musician we've ever played with, Marcel Jacob, is no longer with us as of today, Tuesday July 21, 2009. Marcel took his own life after many years of personal and health issues he was battling."

"I've lost my friend and the best bassist I've ever played with," Talisman drummer Jamie Borger said, "Now there is no future for Talisman." Both Jeff and Jamie had spoken to Marcel only a day before he committed suicide. "We were mere days from starting what would have been our 8th Talisman studio album together, celebrating the 20 year anniversary of the band," Jeff said, "I spoke with him just yesterday about finalizing the details that would get us started only to get the news this afternoon that my friend merely gave up on it all."

"One of my best friends has passed away," John Norum said, "I'm shocked! We have lost one of the world's most gifted and talented musicians of all time. A terrible tragedy. My thoughts are with his family. Rest in peace."

"It is a great tragedy," Ian Haugland said, "He was a very competent musician and songwriter. We are many around the world who will miss Marre."

"He was a good friend of EUROPE," Joey Tempest said, "He was a funny guy, intelligent guy. Good songwriter and bass player. He's sadly missed."

Marcel's funeral was held on August 20, 2009 and was attended by John Norum, John Levén and Mic Michaeli, among others. Later that evening Levén performed "Scream of Anger" with the remaining members of Talisman as part of the memorial night that was held at Pub Anchor in Stockholm.

The album Last Look at Eden was released on September 9, 2009. During an interview with the Chilean radio station Radio Universo, Joey said that "Last Look at Eden is more of a EUROPE album than Secret Society and Start from the Dark. Last Look at Eden is a real EUROPE album." Ian said that Start from the Dark and Secret Society had led up to "Last Look at Eden", and Joey agreed, saying, "We had to make those two albums in order to do this."

"With the two first comeback albums, we were very focused on trying to modernize the sound," Joey said in an interview with the British magazine Classic Rock, "This time we followed our hearts and soul. It's very classic-sounding and melodic. It's almost like we've gone full circle."

On August 6, 2011, EUROPE headlined the closing ceremonies of the 22nd World Scout Jamboree in Rinkaby, Sweden before an audience of 40,061 Scouts and Guides which included King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden and Queen Silvia of Sweden.

Bag of Bones and 30th anniversary

On July 12, 2011, Europe confirmed that Kevin Shirley would produce their ninth studio album. The recording sessions started on October 3, 2011. On January 24, 2012 the band announced the album title, Bag of Bones. The album was released on April 18, 2012 in Japan by Victor Entertainment and on April 25 in Sweden by Gain Music Entertainment. Bag of Bones debuted at number 2 on the Swedish album chart on May 4, 2012 and was certified Gold in Sweden on July 12, 2012.

The band will play at the Sweden Rock Festival in 2013, with their performance to be recorded for a future DVD and Blu-ray release.

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