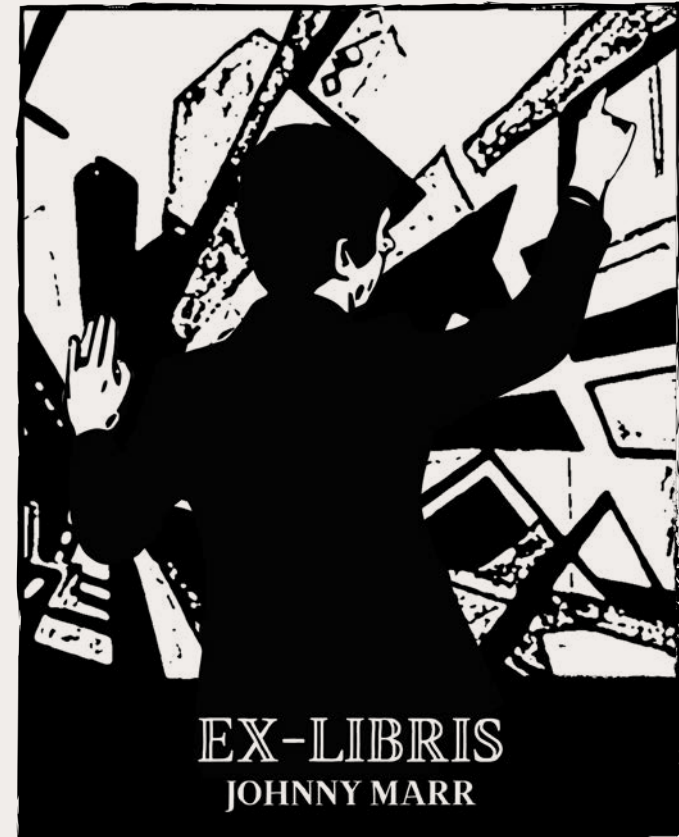




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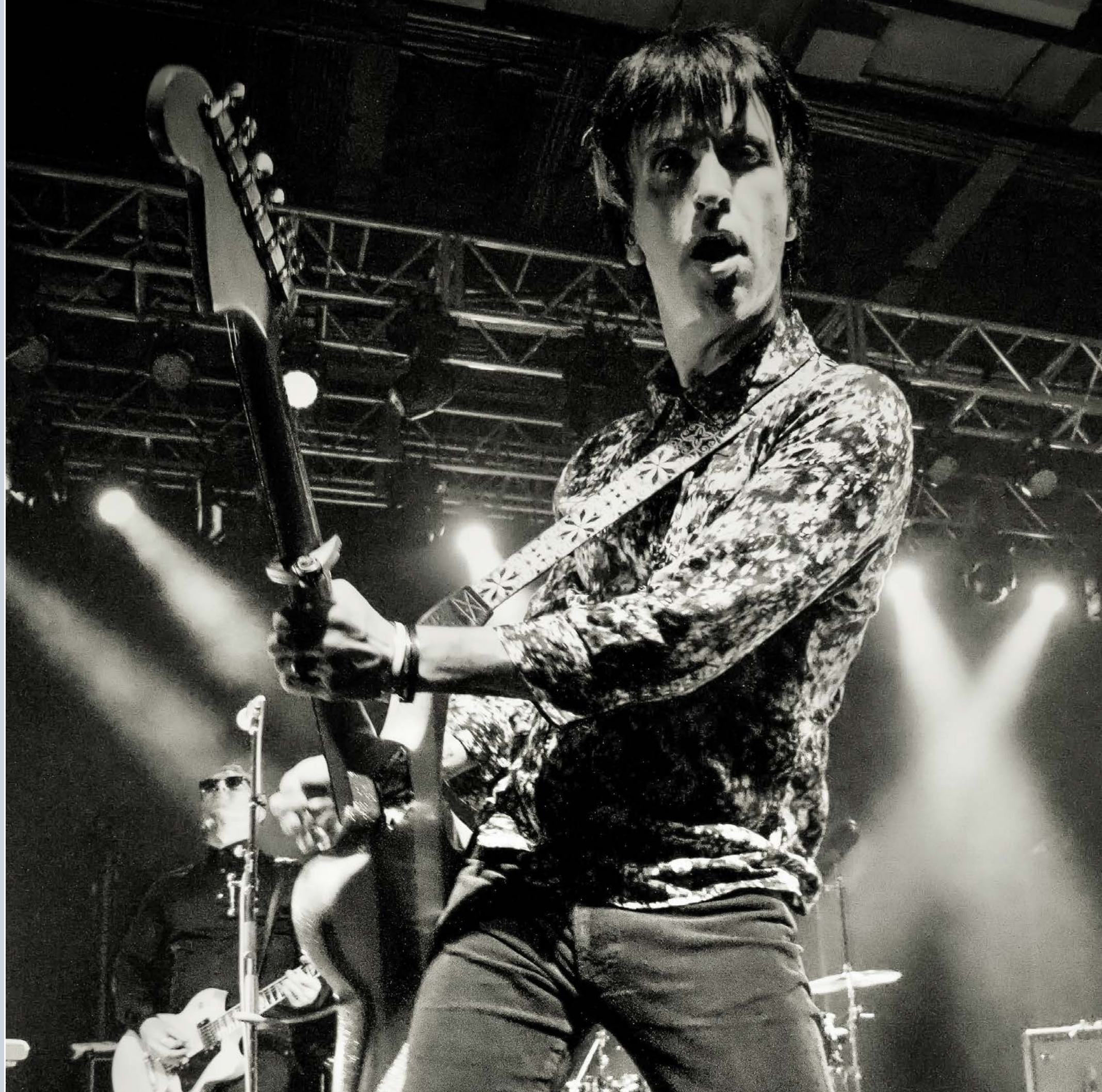
Velocity



A JOHNNY
MARRVELLOUS
PUBLICATION

OCTOBER 2020

PHOTO BY TONY SMITH
(ANAHEIM, USA, 2019)



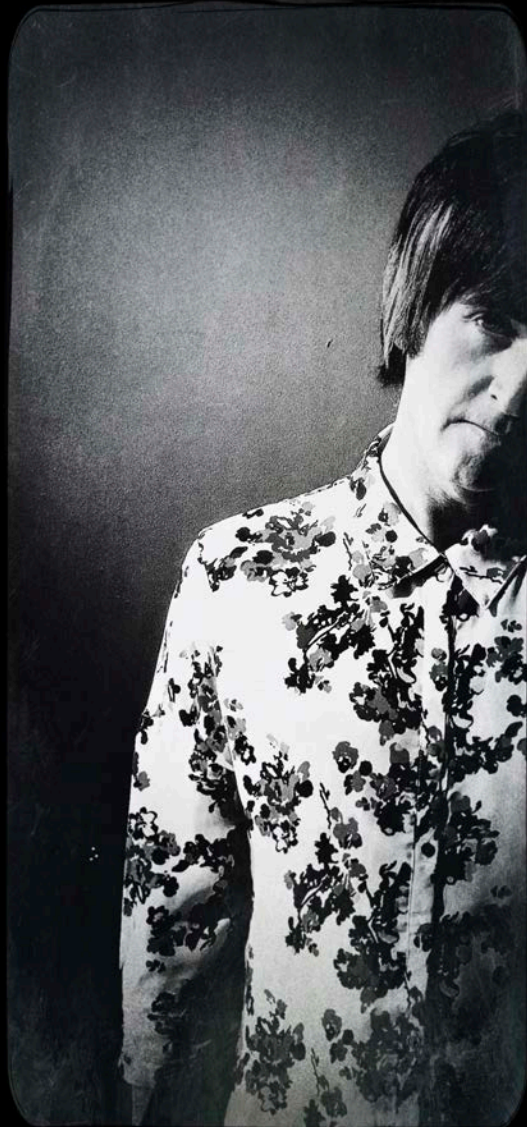


PHOTO BY ALY STEVENSON
(BERLIN, GERMANY, 2018)

PREFACE

There's a special sort of adrenaline rush that one experiences at a Johnny Marr gig. Partly, it's because of Johnny's own infectious energy onstage; his enthusiasm and the sheer quality of his musical craftsmanship. Partly, it's a result of the intense emotional impact of witnessing live performances of songs that mean so much to so many people - songs that are literally, in some cases, life-changing. And partly, it's because going to Johnny Marr shows offers an opportunity for personal connection between fans from a rather eclectic variety of backgrounds. Meeting up with fellow fans before and after gigs often feels like a family reunion of sorts - minus the wine-drunk aunts and the racist uncles.

This year, we're all feeling the absence of these treasured experiences. But at the same time we're immensely grateful for the opportunities we've already had in the past. We've made a lot of good memories, which this book is a tribute to.

Soon, hopefully, the show will be able to go on. And when it does, we'll be ready and waiting with open arms.

- Aly Stevenson & Dory Englander

GLASGOW, UK
O2 ABC GLASGOW
19TH MARCH 2013

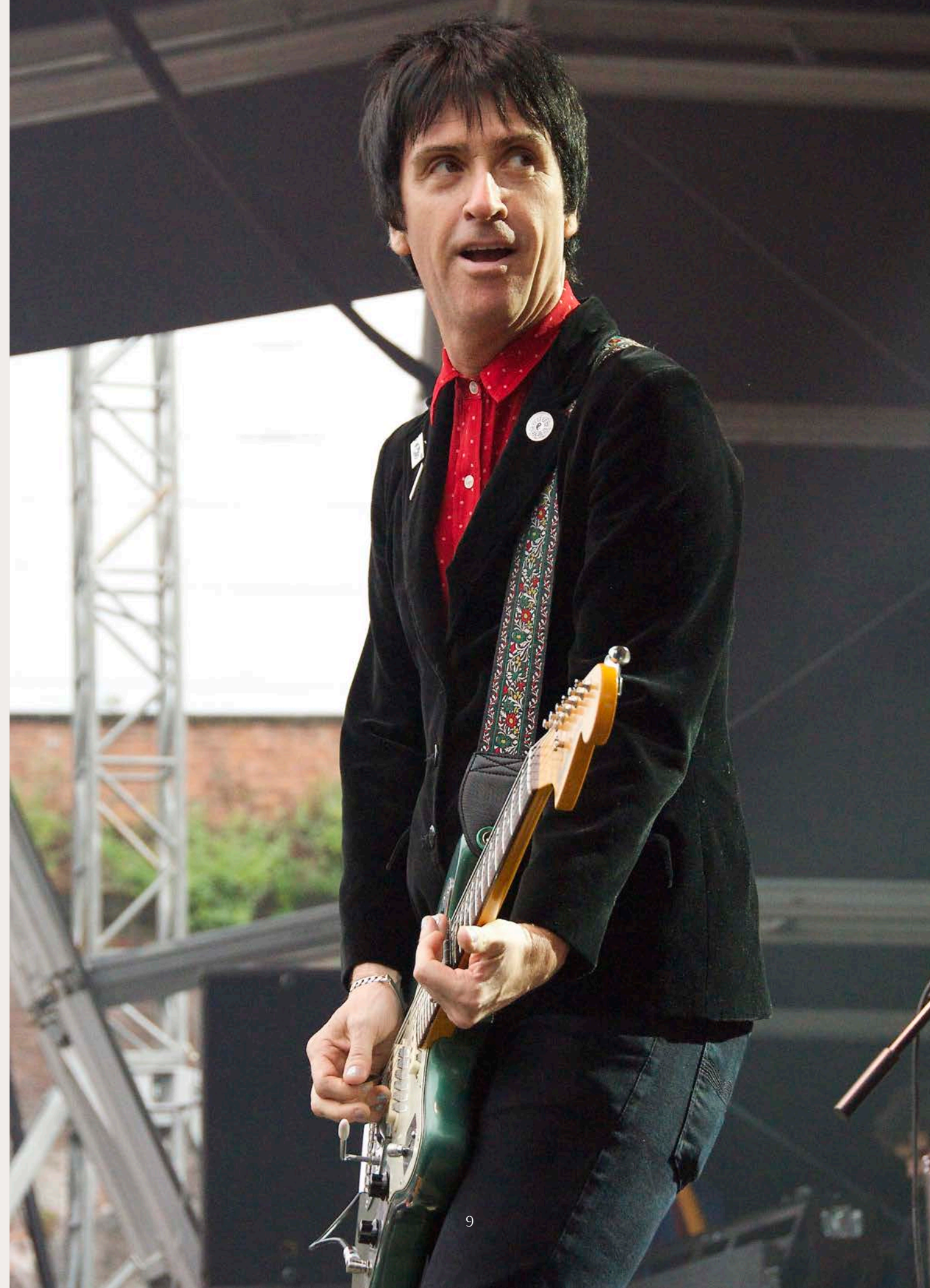
OPPOSITE PHOTO: MARC MCGARRAGHY (CASTLEFIELD, UK, 2015)

I spent over a decade in the charming city of Glasgow. It is a true place of cultural vibrancy that boasts a busy events calendar with numerous key venues supporting live music.

Counting myself fortunate to have seen Johnny Marr in collaboration with others, I am lucky to have enjoyed some of his live shows including Modest Mouse at ABC (same venue as this show), The Cribs (Academy Glasgow) and The Healers (Scala, London). With each show representing individual moments of originality, they highlighted Marr's delight from working with musicians from a diverse range of backgrounds.

As notable and entertaining as these shows were, the distinct opportunity to catch one of the first shows on his Messenger tour signified something that was even bigger. An instant classic, the debut album became a favourite of all time when I first heard it in February earlier that year. The level of excitement it filled me with left no doubt in my mind about the viability of this newly launched chapter of his career.

Designed by CJ McNair, ABC's home was a building constructed in 1875 and rebuilt in the 1920s. Utilised for over a century, its use served multiple purposes until the roof was damaged during the Art School fire in 2018. Unmistakably Art Deco in



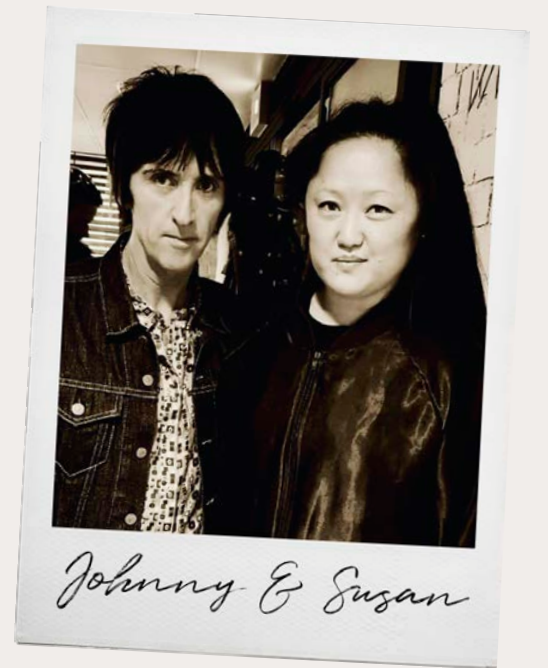
“Everyone in the room was just as excited as I was, and everyone wanted him to do well. We all wanted him to succeed as an artist, and the venue space became the embodiment of our unity, passion and support.”

style, it served as a cinema, an ice-skating ring and a dance hall. As a music venue, with two spaces, it promoted acts of high international and domestic acclaim.

I know now that this performance would cement just how feasible the transformation to solo artist actually was. What is unforgettable is the sense of togetherness and anticipation. Everyone in the room was just as excited as I was, and everyone wanted him to do well. We all wanted him to succeed as an artist, and the venue space became the embodiment of our unity, passion and support.

With a confident setlist, a handpicked selection of songs from *The Messenger*, which in addition to the title track, incorporated *The Right Thing Right*, *Sun & Moon*, *European Me*, *Generate! Generate!*, *Say Demesne*, *I Want the Heartbeat*, *New Town Velocity* mixed in with some *Smiths* and *Electronic* classics, he made sure to leave no trace of doubt about his degree of sincerity.

For me this show constitutes the beginning of what was to become the truest, most authentic part of his career. Slightly on the rawer side, there was integrity and intimacy, it was structured, yet it was delivered with an openness and a flexibility. It felt as though it was trialling some component parts, with *Glasgow* representing a clear-cut opportunity to enjoy the reactions.



But above and beyond, the performance was inventive and electrifying. It really would shock me to learn that I was the only person to leave with a deep awareness of how this gig and tour helped shape his lifelong ambition.

Becoming a solo artist was a natural next step for Marr, and the *ABC* gig depicted his intense, prolific energy coupled with an immense resourcefulness. It was special, and I will never forget being at this show.

- Susan Hansen

GLASGOW, UK
O2 ABC GLASGOW
19TH MARCH 2013

This was the very first time I'd seen Johnny in the flesh. I had goosebumps when he walked on and they remained pretty much for the full gig. Hearing THAT guitar sound live is amazing. I can scarcely put into words what it's meant to me over the years. The gig was over before I knew it (a sure fire way of knowing you've had a great time!). It seemed like it only lasted about 15 minutes! Hearing How Soon Is Now and There Is A Light live was almost religious and the material from The Messenger stood up to those timeless songs really well. I was on a high for days after!

- *Craig McMahon*



PHOTO BY MARIA MELI
(TORONTO, CANADA, 2018)

MANCHESTER, UK

THE RITZ

22ND MARCH 2013

OPPOSITE PHOTO: MARC MCGARRAGHY (MANCHESTER, UK, 2013)

I never got to see The Smiths live.

I was old enough to appreciate their music, but too young to go to their gigs. I distinctly remember buying the 'Hatful of Hollow' cassette in Golden Discs on Grafton Street in Dublin when it was released and, from then, I was hooked.

I'd followed Johnny's career, working with lots of great bands, but when I heard he was releasing a solo record and — even better — playing his first solo gigs, I just had to go. I found out he would be playing at The Ritz in Manchester, venue for The Smiths' first live gig, so I knew it would be... 'historic', 'epic'...?

I'd been made redundant in February 2011 and I still wasn't working. It meant that I didn't have much money, but it also meant I had no restrictions when it came to going away for a few days and travelling to Manchester.

I managed to get a ticket for the first night (woo-hoo!) and I got a cheap flight and hotel.

I went on my own, but I didn't care. I did a reccy to check out the venue and I'd been to Manchester for gigs before, so I knew the crowd would be decent.

I wasn't wrong!



The gig was fantastic and I just loved hearing so many of my favourite songs. Even though I'd seen Morrissey live lots of times, and I'd heard him singing the words he'd written, this was different. For the first time I was listening to the guy who'd written all those amazing, compelling guitar riffs actually play those amazing, compelling guitar riffs. He was live and in front of me. I got totally caught up in the atmosphere and by the time he played 'There Is A Light...' I was standing there in floods of tears. A girl in front of me noticed I was crying and asked if I was ok. I think that made me worse; I just stood there, full of emotion, sobbing!

The whole evening felt... 'momentous'. It was a very significant night for one of my musical heroes and I was delighted to be a part of it.

- Melissa Moloney

MANCHESTER, UK
THE RITZ
22ND MARCH 2013

I've had the good fortune to see Johnny 5 times over the last 6 years in Manchester, spanning all 3 of his solo albums.

The occasion I'm gonna speak about was that first time at Manchester Ritz on Friday 22 March 2013 which he played promoting his album *The Messenger*.

At this point in time the atmosphere I was expecting was unknown. Would it be a laddish sort of crowd you get at Oasis gigs or something more calm? The reason I was wondering this because I always think it would be the same fan demographic.



I would be pleasantly surprised as it was one of the most polite gigs I'd been to for a while.

Don't get me wrong, the crowd was well up for it (it was a hometown gig after all) but there was also a respect between the fans which is now common place. Also there was no flying pints of you-know-what you'd have to duck out of the way of.

Just after 8pm Johnny would arrive on stage, opening with "The Right Thing Right".

As you would expect, there was plenty off the debut solo album along with Smiths and Electronic classics, but there were some surprises too, with a rousing cover of "I Fought The Law" by The Clash.

A great night and a great vibe made even better by hearing my favourite Johnny single, "New Town Velocity".

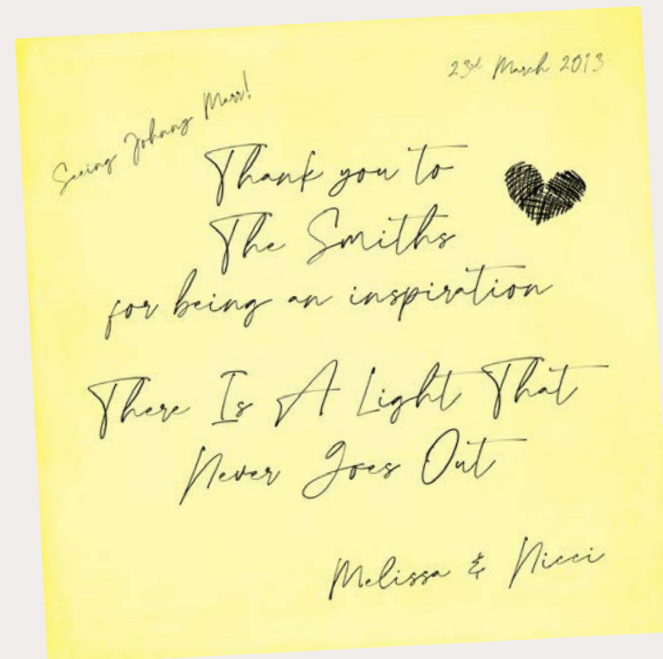
- Lee Bellfield

MANCHESTER, UK
THE RITZ
23RD MARCH 2013

When Johnny Marr released his debut solo album, *The Messenger*, I was not disappointed. All of the philosophical and artistic ideas ricocheting off wiry guitar riffs got me hooked. My lifetime friend Nicci — who I have known from age 4 — was also buzzing about it. Johnny’s guitar playing has spoken to us for many years, and so we HAD to go and see him live! Without hesitation we booked the Manchester Ritz show.

On the day of the show, I was bouncing off the walls. Some snow had fallen in Stoke, but this did not stop us from going to see Johnny. We took the train up to Manchester and made the inevitable Smiths-influenced trip to Salford Lads Club. We had a cup of tea and bought some souvenirs before waltzing into The Smiths room, smiling, laughing and taking photos of all the wonderful Smiths artefacts. We left a couple of

messages on post-it notes to add to the display. The whole day we were in a hypo state, singing *CALCULATE CALCULATE CALCULATE* and giggling to ourselves. People must have thought we were on something.



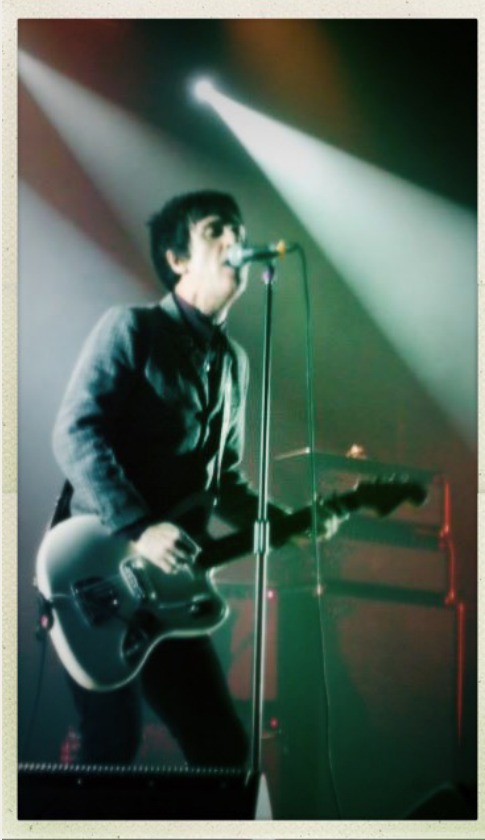
That night, we finally got into the Ritz venue, and took a left of centre spot, just behind the front row. Our excitement was past breaking point now! Once the lights dimmed, we were ready for action. Johnny and his band walked on stage, and we went hysterical! He strummed the first chords to “The Right Thing Right” and with that, we were in heaven. “Stop Me If You Think You Have Heard This One Before” began and we were thrilled to see Johnny do his own take on the Smiths classic. The third song was catchy single “Upstarts”, so we



The Ritz

sang and danced to our heart’s content. “Lockdown” was good fun too. Who knew that 7 years later I would be writing this piece in a pandemic era lockdown? Can I get back what I want? In a lost town? A little later on, the opening chords to “Bigmouth Strikes Again” were upon us and we sprung off our feet, singing every last word. “I Want The Heartbeat” began and at this point I was fixed up on electric adrenaline. As we applauded, Johnny and the band left the stage. A few more chants of “Johnny Marr Johnny Marr Johnny Marr” filled the Ritz and moments later they walked back out for the encore. I was thrilled to see Johnny play the Clash track “I Fought the Law”. Before the end, we were treated with Electronic’s “Getting Away With It”, which was irresistible, and the epic “How Soon Is Now?” Finally, “There Is A Light That Never Goes Out” filled my heart, as the whole crowd sang along in unison. It was the most perfect end to our first Johnny Marr show.

The lights went up and we drifted back out into the freezing cold, our faces beaming from the magic we had just witnessed on stage. We decided to wait outside with a few



other fans to see if we could meet Johnny. After what felt like an hour had passed, we were still waiting on the pavement. Eventually, a man in a black blazer appeared down the road. He had dark, sharp hair, and I could see a burgundy jumper too. I had seen that very jumper in the “Upstarts” video, so I immediately turned to Nicci, quietly exclaiming “Oh my god, I think that’s Johnny” (I think I swore too). He wandered towards our little gathering, so then we saw that he really was Johnny Marr. We waited patiently so everyone could chat with him. When he greeted us, we said hello and thanked him for the brilliant gig. He was the most humble and down to earth person — happy to share his time with us. He was grateful we had travelled from snowy Stoke to see him. Before he left, we both got a photo taken with him and he signed my CD copy of *The Messenger*. In these moments, I knew this was just the start of a beautiful journey. Hello you mystery, Mission velocity.



*Melissa & Nicci meeting
Johnny for the first time.
The start of a
Beautiful journey.*

- Melissa Roden

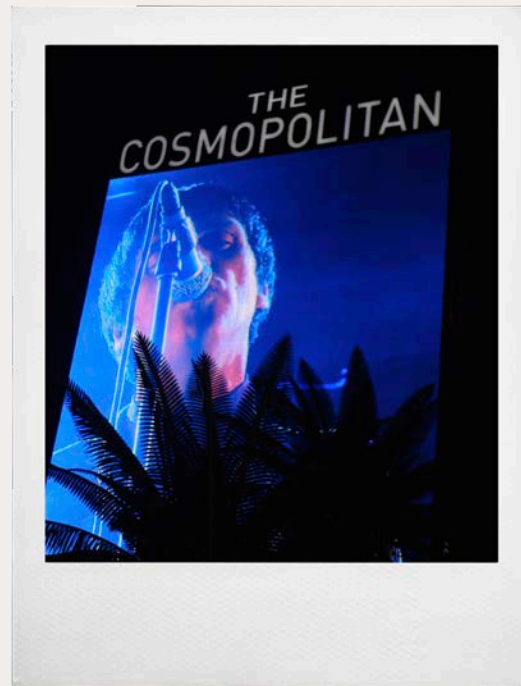
*“Eventually, a man in a
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“Oh my god,
I think that’s Johnny”
(I think I swore too).”*

MELISSA RODEN

MANCHESTER | THE RITZ | 23/03/2013

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, USA
BOULEVARD POOL AT THE COSMOPOLITAN
11TH APRIL 2013

OPPOSITE PHOTO: ILZE FREY (MANCHESTER, UK, 2019)



Our first Johnny Marr concert was surreal! Personally I couldn't believe I was seeing and hearing Johnny play Smiths songs live! The Blvd Poolside venue at the Cosmo in Vegas made it all more magical. Even Johnny commented on the stunning view of the strip from the stage. Besides JFM and the music, the next best thing are the fans. We met our first of many awesome JFM fans who would become good friends as we stayed in contact and met up at future shows.

- Jerome & Suki Stockham



SOUTHAMPTON, UK

THE BROOK

6TH JULY 2013

MAKING MEMORIES IN 2013:
THE BROOK, SOUTHAMPTON

Funny thing, time. When I think back to the release of *The Messenger*, it doesn't feel that long ago. But in reality, it's getting on for eight years. So, when I think back to June 2013, it manages to feel like ancient history and just five minutes ago, simultaneously. Which is a funny thing.

I'd been fortunate to have seen Johnny earlier that year at the Shepherds Bush Empire, not long after the album came out. If memory serves, two pre-festival warm-up gigs were announced for that summer. I was, I decided, definitely having some of that.

One of them was in Leeds. Too far for a southern-dwelling type like me. The other was in Southampton — I managed to get two tickets and a trip to the south coast was in order.

I took my eldest son with me. He was 14 and this was going to be his first ever gig. I can't actually remember the first gig I ever went to, which probably says more about the gig than anything else. Taking my son with me felt important. Significant. One of those "we're making memories" things.

“I took my eldest son with me. He was 14 and this was going to be his first ever gig. I can't actually remember the first gig I ever went to, which probably says more about the gig than anything else. *Taking my son with me felt important. Significant. One of those “we're making memories” things.*”

SEÁN FLEMING

SOUTHAMPTON | THE BROOK | 06/06/2013

We managed to perch at the end of someone's table in the gallery, upstairs at the venue. I'm not one for the seething mass of bodies that tends to make up the main event at a gig. Not with my bad back, anyway.

*"Is it going to be this loud
all the time?"*

The first thing that struck my son was, without doubt, how loud it was. "Is it going to be this loud all the time?" he asked me. At that point, the band hadn't even come on. I shot him my very best indulgent smile and told him to prepare himself as best he could.

The gig was, as you might expect, fantastic. The band were, as they have always been, absolutely rock solid and the atmosphere was electric.

It was also the last time I ever saw Johnny using a guitar lead. As he moved around the stage, his lead kept getting tangled in one of the front-of-stage footlights. One of which was unceremoniously booted out of the way by our favourite Mancunian. After that, he's always been wireless — and who can blame him.

After the gig, I bought my son a red Johnny Fuckin Marr T-shirt. Then we drove home. He shouted at me most of the way because his ears were ringing.

- Sean Fleming

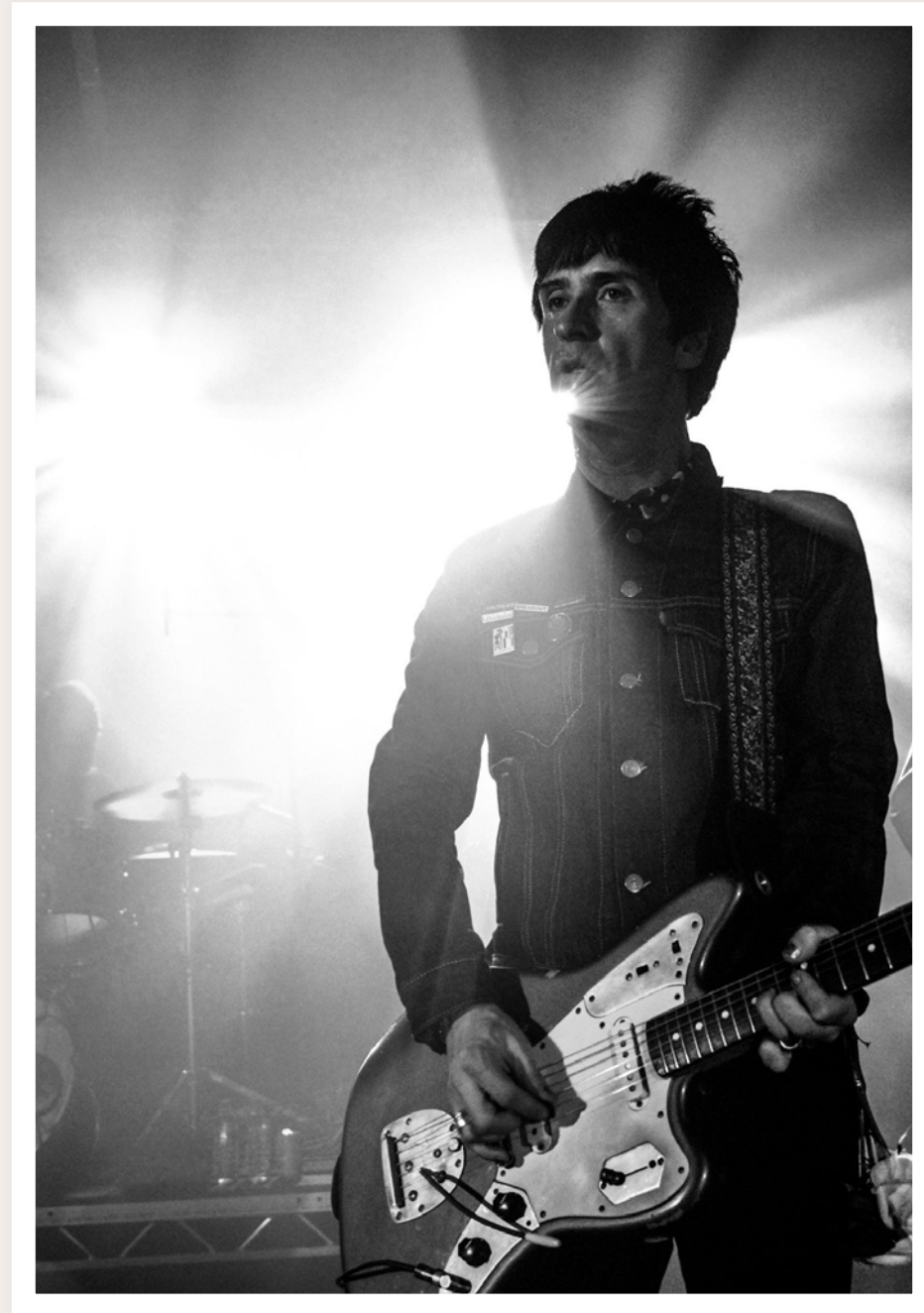


PHOTO BY LIV PARKER
(NEWCASTLE, UK, 2015)

THE EVOLUTION OF MY JOHNNY MARR GIG EXPERIENCES

It was February 2013 when I started a new job after 20 years at a dream job that had sadly come to an end. There were many unknown variables awaiting me but one thing I knew for sure was that the commute to my new job was a long one; about an hour each way. For months and months, I listened to the entire *Messenger* CD non-stop during my commute. As I experienced many ups and downs, it was my go-to source of comfort. And such a stellar debut solo album to boot! So when I saw that Johnny Marr was touring, I didn't hesitate to buy tickets for the show at the 9:30 Club in Washington, DC on April 29, 2013. Besides loving the new album, I missed the Smiths gigs in DC back in the 80s, so I was psyched to finally hear some Smiths songs live. The show certainly did not disappoint! Besides hearing the songs that had comforted me for the past few months such as "New Town Velocity" and "The Messenger", I finally got to hear "How Soon is Now", "There is a Light that Never Goes Out", and "Big Mouth Strikes Again" live! It was a show for the ages.

Because of that, I got tickets to see Johnny again later that year on November 16, 2013 at Webster Hall in NYC. I always love shows in NYC because they often add an element of surprise not offered in other cities. The sold-out show at Webster Hall did not deviate from that notion, as we were treated to a gorgeous rendition of "Please Please Please Let Me Get What I Want" with Andy Rourke joining on stage. My trek

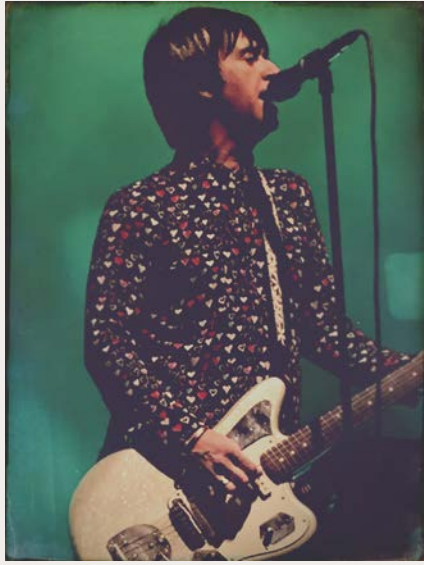


“For months and months, I listened to the entire *Messenger* CD non-stop during my commute. As I experienced many ups and downs, it was my go-to source of comfort.”

to NYC enabled me to see half of the Smiths! And I also got to hear “Panic” for the first time.

A whole year went by before I got to see Johnny again on November 11, 2014 at the 9:30 Club, this time for the *Playland* tour. Another tightly performed show as I got to experience it up close in the 3rd row. This time, I waited outside the club afterwards for a few hours hoping to see Johnny. And I was absolutely thrilled to learn that my patience paid off as Johnny finally exited the club and graciously signed merchandise and posed for pictures. I instantly noticed the very chic and well-tailored coat he was sporting on that very cold night as I got to thank him for playing “The Headmaster Ritual”, a song I had on repeat during my teenaged years.

Somehow, Johnny skipped DC a few times and I didn't get to see him again until September 26, 2018 at the



Fillmore in Silver Spring, MD. At this point, I had listened to *Call the Comet*, which in my opinion is Johnny's best yet, religiously for months and was super excited to hear the tracks live. And to add to that, I had bought passes for Johnny's Meet and Greet, so I was bursting at the seams in anticipation. Even though I was stuck in traffic for almost 2 hours and was the next to last to arrive for the Meet and Greet, it was a brilliant evening. My husband and I made new friends while waiting in

line and when it got to our turn, we were graciously greeted by Johnny. After some photo ops, we engaged in fun conversation and exchanged a lot of laughs. But most importantly, I got to tell Johnny how much his music meant to me and it was a priceless moment as Johnny looked genuinely touched. The evening finished off with another phenomenal sounding show featuring a brilliant set list, including a unique performance of "New Dominions" and some beloved classics like "Last Night I Dreamt that Somebody Loved Me" and "You Just Haven't Earned It Yet Baby". Being close to the front row, I was in awe of Johnny's guitar wizardry and how effortless he makes it all look.

As I sit here writing this almost 2 years later and the world is yearning for more live gigs, I think about how important live music is to our souls and our quality of life and how it's paramount that concert venues make it out of this pandemic in one piece. As I reflect on how each Johnny Marr gig has escalated



"As I sit here writing this almost 2 years later and the world is yearning for more live gigs, I think about how important live music is to our souls and our quality of life and how it's paramount that concert venues make it out of this pandemic in one piece. As I reflect on how each Johnny Marr gig has escalated in its impact on me, I am encouraged to remain hopeful."



in its impact on me, I am encouraged to remain hopeful, looking forward to that day when I am graced with his musical talent on that stage once again.

Until then... Happy Birthday, Johnny!
Wishing you and yours well!

- Arbeta Lu

STRADBALLY, COUNTY LAOIS, IRELAND
ELECTRIC PICNIC, STRADBALLY ESTATE
1ST SEPTEMBER 2013

2013 was a big year for Johnny Marr. I didn't know it at the time, but it was a big year for me too.

Johnny was playing at my favourite music festival — Electric Picnic — and I was going with a group of friends. My best friend had managed to get us a couple of VIP passes and she treated me to a night in a fancy hotel because it was my birthday weekend. It couldn't get any better!

Sunday, 1st September, was the day before my birthday and I was enjoying hanging out with the gang. But we had different musical tastes and I didn't want to accompany them to every act. At about 4pm I said I was going to head over to the Electric Arena to get a good spot — as near to the railing as possible — for Johnny's set. I watched the end of the previous band, then when the crowd dispersed I nipped up to the front and got the prime position. I was set!

A couple of guys stood beside me and we started chatting about gigs and bands. One of them was a huge fan of Depeche Mode and had travelled around Europe to see them, so we compared notes about going to different cities to see bands play. I assumed the guys were friends, but one of them drifted off and the Mode fan stayed. We didn't chat much during the gig itself — it annoys me when other people do it! — but we hung around afterwards and chatted some more about music. We found out we had a lot of similar likes — and dislikes — and it was great to meet someone who

was as enthusiastic about music as me.

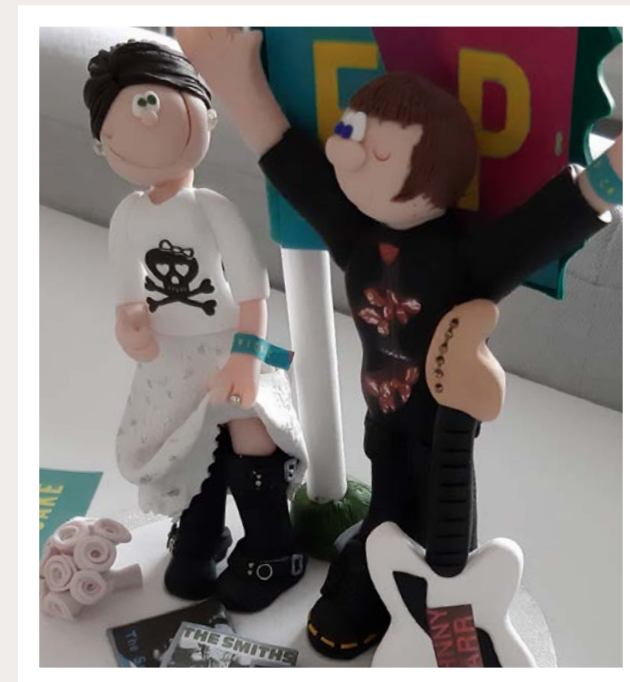
I'd arranged to meet my friends again at 6.30pm, so I went to head off. He told me he'd like to continue the conversation and asked me for my number...

He waited for two weeks to call me!!!

We had our first date on 14 September 2013, and I made him a framed copy of *The Messenger* on vinyl for a first Valentine's present in February 2014.

He proposed on 23 December 2015 and we got married on 23 March 2017!

- *Melissa Moloney*



WREXHAM, UK

WREXHAM CENTRAL STATION

5TH OCTOBER 2013

OPPOSITE PHOTO: MARIA MELI (TORONTO, CANADA, 2018)

I was having a particularly bad night shift at work and was grumpier than usual when the unexpected news that Johnny would be playing a gig so close to where I live as part of his *Messenger* tour was announced online. The gloom of my night was instantly lifted as I realised I was off work and could go and finally see Johnny live and in the flesh.

Tickets were purchased within seconds of being released, and over-enthusiastically on my part, I bought an extra two tickets in case my mates didn't get theirs.

All my mates were as keen as me and had purchased tickets instantly like I did, so I was left with two tickets.

A few days before the gig and I still had one ticket spare, so I posted online asking if anyone wanted it. A friend from Liverpool posted that she would love to come, so as her partner was a long time friend and he had done me loads of favours over the years, I gave her the ticket.

To say she was overjoyed is an understatement!!!

We arranged to meet her in Wrexham, as she had never been there before. We left to catch the train to Wrexham, which we missed, so I drove to work, left my car in the car park and got a taxi into town to meet her. She was obviously distressed, as



“Johnny came on stage to a packed out crowd and launched into “The Right Thing Right”, which is my favourite song from *The Messenger* album, and went on to play the most amazing show I had ever heard.”

when we got outside the venue we heard in her very broad Northern Ireland accent, “My phone won’t work as I’m in bloody Wales!” (a phrase I will never forget).

We got into the venue early to get a great spot and had a few beers, enjoying the support act.

Soon Johnny came on stage to a packed out crowd and launched into “The Right Thing Right”, which is my favourite song from *The Messenger* album, and went on to play the most amazing show I had ever heard.

When a show is this good, especially when it is the first time you have witnessed someone live that you have admired and listened to since you were 14 years old, it is almost impossible to have a favourite song or moment, but I do remember getting very emotional when Johnny played “Getting away with it” and “There is a light...” — and the sight of a woman falling flat on her face as she missed the step she was stood on because she was dancing to “I fought the Law” is something I won’t forget.

After getting the mandatory red “Johnny F***** Marr t-shirts, my friend went home to Liverpool after the gig.

Unfortunately I would only get to see my friend another two times, as after a sudden illness she passed away in June 2014, leaving my mate and her 6 year old daughter devastated.

This gig will always be special to me as it was the first time I had seen Johnny play live, and following the sad loss of my friend, it taught me to enjoy life as much as possible, as you never know what is around the next corner!

- Adam Roberts

MANCHESTER, UK

MANCHESTER ACADEMY

12TH OCTOBER 2013

I was lucky enough to see Johnny's first solo gig in Manchester at The Ritz. The atmosphere of seeing an artist in their 'hometown' is so special, and I just loved hearing him and being in his city.

He played again in October that year, I still had no job and I got a ticket and a cheap flight and....it was just meant to be!

I visited Salford Lads Club and had a private tour with an Irish girl who volunteered there; it was a JM-related immersive experience.

I went on my own again but, this time, I ended up chatting to a couple of guys before the gig started. One of them, Mike Coy, had a big Union Jack banner with 'There Is A Light...' on it and his friend, Pedro Gaspar, had travelled from Portugal for the gig. He trumped my journey from Dublin!

The gig was fantastic — I hadn't expected anything less — and the venue was bigger than The Ritz, but the atmosphere was still amazing.

Afterwards, Mike suggested that we go around to the back door and we might get to



Manchester Academy

meet Johnny. No need to say any more to me! I was in!!

We waited, and we waited... and we waited. A couple of people gave up and I considered it myself — October in Manchester is not warm! — but we hung on. And we were rewarded.



Pedro's beautiful custom banner

Johnny came out and spoke to everyone in turn. He posed for photos, he chatted to fans, he signed memorabilia. There was a young guy who'd been at the gig — probably only about 20 years old — whose Mum turned up after the gig to bring her son his guitar, so that Johnny could sign it. And he did. He was brilliant!

I was so nervous and excited at the same time, to meet him, but he was so nice. We chatted about Ireland, I mentioned I'd been at The Ritz and he thanked me for coming over for the gigs. I'd given Pedro my phone to get a few photos and he managed 3. They're so blurry you can barely make us out — so I haven't included those ones here - but they were still testament to meeting the great man.

When I got back to my hotel, I texted a friend to tell them I'd just had the greatest night of my life!

- Melissa Moloney

CARRBORO, NORTH CAROLINA, USA

CAT'S CRADLE

19TH NOVEMBER 2013

A great memory is Johnny's November 19, 2013 show at the Cat's Cradle in Carrboro, North Carolina. Still perseverating over the last minute cancellation of the Smiths' 1986 *The Queen Is Dead* Tour stop in Atlanta, Georgia (Morrissey claimed 'exhaustion'), my neighbor and I were looking to make amends with the team!

When very famous / critically acclaimed acts play relatively smallish/mediumish venues in your town, deep down you worry nonetheless that either (a) people won't show up or (b) the crowd will be silent.

So what happened that night was kind of awesome: sold out show filled with people singing along with the songs so loudly that at times the crowd was louder than the band! I have really not been at a Cat's Cradle show with quite the same feel.

Just goes to show how much Johnny Marr is beloved by folks everywhere...

- Christopher Cox

"So what happened that night was kind of awesome: sold out show filled with people singing along with the songs so loudly that at times the crowd was louder than the band!"

CHRISTOPHER COX

CARRBORO | THE CAT'S CRADLE | 19/11/2013

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA
NORTHCOTE SOCIAL CLUB
5TH JANUARY 2014

OPPOSITE PHOTO: VIOLETA PRECIADO (FRESNO, CALIFORNIA, USA, 2016)

The previous night, Johnny, Iwan, Jack and Doviak played at the Corner Hotel in Richmond. Johnny had stormed onstage, buttoned up in burgundy velvet and blazing a trail of rock moves, winks and salutes. It was an awesome sight. The band took no prisoners.

The next night at Northcote Social Club was of an entirely different nature. Slower. A bit gentler. Intimate. NSC holds only 350 people after all, against the Corner's 800. This show was in a lounge room by comparison. Johnny bounded onstage as the theme from the Persuaders passed its peak of tension; still energetic, but more casual than the night before. Maybe it was the smaller crowd, or perhaps any sense of expectation the band had felt the previous night had been met and duly dispensed with. Either way, this night's show felt like Johnny and the band were playing a tiny show to friends. From the steely guitar chords and kick drum that announced their arrival, to the triumphant opener "The Right Thing Right", the euphoria of "Panic", and the dangerous cool of "Word Starts Attack" and Theatre of Hate's "The Hop": this was all of my life in a rock show. It was my band, and this was my gig.

It had been another sweltering Melbourne summer. Indifferent to the weather, I had worn my pink-on-black GENERATE! t-shirt under a brown wool blazer. Edwyn Collins haircut locked down with a poisonous quantity of hairspray, and one inch taller thanks to a pair of brown Cuban heels. After the show, with Johnny shooting the breeze with the fans, I waited my turn to tell him what he meant to me. He



asked me if I wanted him to sign my copy of *The Messenger*. I said “yes, please” and then words began tumbling out of me. I was half-way through delivering a ridiculously earnest, embarrassingly heavy speech quietly into his ear when he turned to look at me and said “You’re a musician.”

Happy birthday, Johnny, and thank you.

- Andy Campbell xx

“I was half-way through delivering a ridiculously earnest, embarrassingly heavy speech quietly into his ear when he turned to look at me and said “*You’re a musician.*”

“This was all of my life in a rock show. *It was my band, and this was my gig.*”

ANDY CAMPBELL

MELBOURNE | NORTHCOTE SOCIAL CLUB | 05/01/2014

JOHNNY MARR IN BRAZIL



Fátima, Johnny & Amelia

My Johnny Marr gig and meeting experiences were in 2014 and 2015 in São Paulo, Brazil, my only two gigs of him at the moment (how time flies!). These two stories probably were told in other moments, but they are special memories that I will cherish forever!

In April of 2014, I was at Lollapalooza Festival with my sister Fátima. It was the first time Johnny and his band visited Brazil in his solo career and it was my first time seeing him too, so I was looking forward to seeing him play live. The festival site was a racetrack (“Autódromo de Interlagos”), which means it was huge, and we just arrived at the main entrance on time to start Johnny’s gig. When we realized that we were far from the stage, we started to run like crazy, it was looking like we were running away from the police. It was a hot day and, thanks to God, all the way to

the stage was downhill! We arrived in the middle of “The Right Thing Right” and after we recovered our breath, we enjoyed the gig very much. I was impressed by the great energy of Johnny on the stage and when I thought things could not be better, he called Andy Rourke to play bass on “How Soon Is Now”. It was just amazing! After the gig, my sister and I went to a place that looked like access to the backstage. Some other people joined us and they started screaming: “Johnny, Johnny!”. After a few minutes, Johnny himself appeared to talk to us, I just couldn’t believe it! I was so nervous but when I started to talk to him it was so easy, he is so down to earth. He talked to every fan, being gentle and nice to everyone there! Andy came to talk to us too, which made the experience more special. Johnny’s kindness to his fans made me admire him and his work more than ever.

In June of 2015, Johnny came back, as the headline of the 19^o Cultura Inglesa Festival, with his *Playland* Tour. I was looking forward to seeing him again: I just loved the first gig in 2014 and my expectations were high. Johnny and his band didn’t disappoint us. They gave us a memorable night playing songs of Playland and The Messenger albums — what a gig! It makes me forget the gig earlier in which a Brazilian singer murdered all the British classic rock songs.

The next day I was still excited about the gig of the night before. So, Fátima and I decided to go to the airport, as we had a feeling that we could meet Johnny and his band there. We went our way to the airport, imagining the possibility of meeting Johnny again. We waited for about 1 hour and then, at the check-in line, we saw a familiar figure from the distance. We saw Doviak, Iwan, and Jack too, but they were far from where we were. Coincidence or not, Johnny was in the part of the check-in line that was near us and we just called him. He saw us and came to talk to us,

just like an old friend, smiling, so cool and a nice person like only he could be. It is incredible how he can make us feel comfortable around him. We talked about the gig from last night that was just fantastic, he asked us about our occupations, and when I told him I am a Geography teacher of teenagers, he looked at me and said, impressed: "Wow, you are brave!". I smiled, proud of myself. I still remember clearly these words in my head when I'm working at the school. After that, we took a photo and he said a warm goodbye. I just couldn't believe what just happened there, it was so awesome that I couldn't stop smiling for the rest of the week. Until now, when I remember these moments, I smile and feel well, and look forward to seeing his gigs again in Brazil or somewhere around the world.

- Amelia M. Kubota



PHOTO BY SARAH DOONE
(LONDON, UK, 2014)

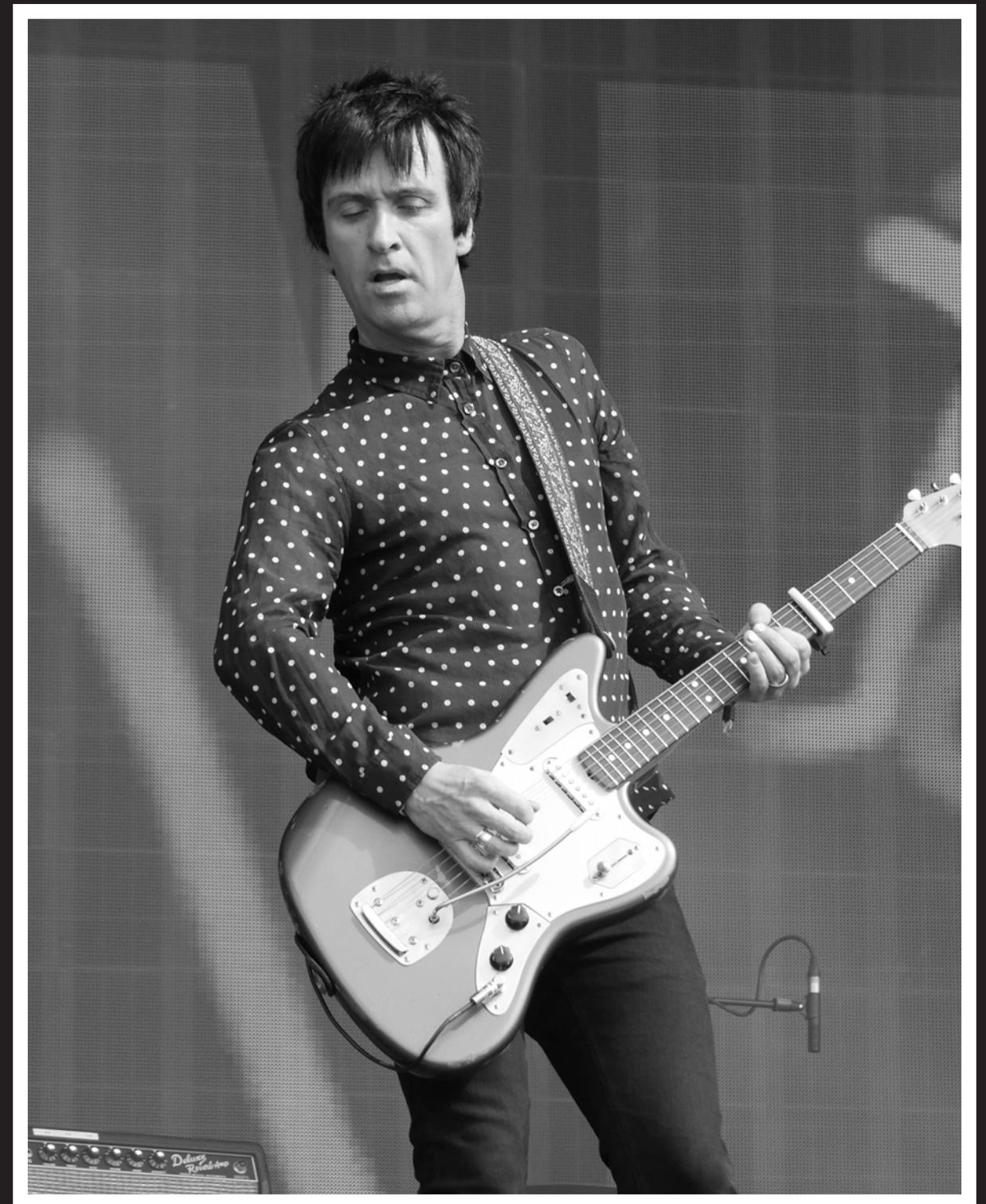


PHOTO BY NIGEL BURN
(LONDON, UK, 2014)

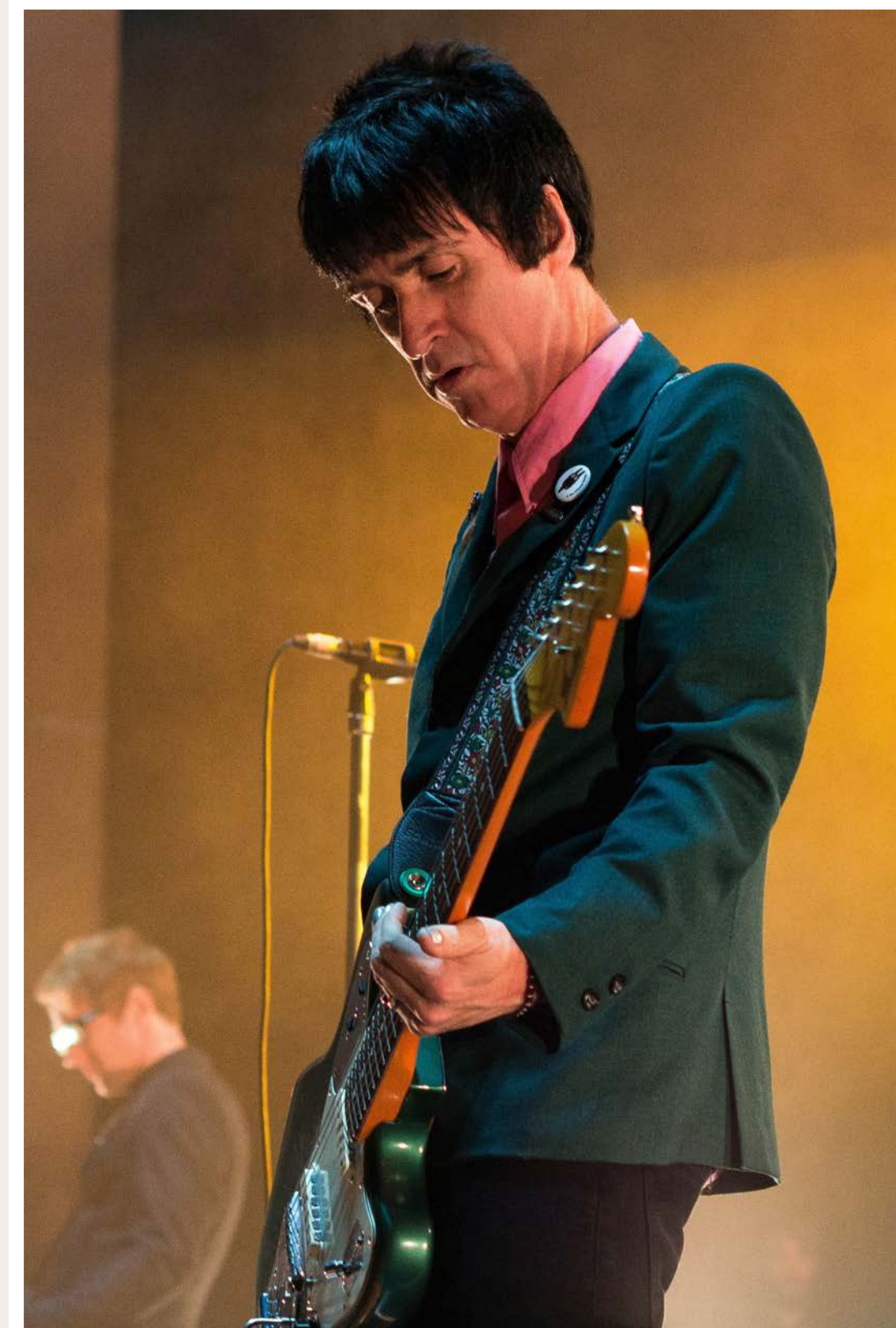
WOLVERHAMPTON, UK
CIVIC HALL
17TH OCTOBER 2014

OPPOSITE PHOTO: SARAH DOONE (LONDON, UK, 2014)



"I'm a fulltime wheelchair user. After years of seeing Marr in different groups, he headed out on his own, and what a frontman he is! Been to lots of Johnny Marr gigs. At the Wolverhampton gig my mate Paul and me decided to wait after the gig to see if we could see Johnny. What a dude, he came out and had a photo on my Nokia. Photo was crap, no problem — it took four attempts to get the photo — then he signed our tickets and set list and we had a talk — well cool. Still buzzing to this day. Can't wait for the gigs to start again. A special person, our Johnny!"

- Tony Hand



LONDON, UK

O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON

23RD OCTOBER 2014

I was in my last year of sixth form and I probably spent more time obsessing over the Smiths than studying for my A-Levels. I spent the entire day in a frenzied state of excitement, willing the final bell to ring.

My friend Charlie and I caught a train from Leighton Buzzard to Euston, then a tube to Brixton and queued outside the venue, eagerly awaiting Johnny Marr. In the meantime we got chatting to a lovely guy called Priest about all things Marr and music.

Our early arrival paid off as we were right at the barrier, and the gig surpassed all expectations. Johnny's explosive energy was a wonder to behold, and his renditions of Smiths classics were truly electric — 'There Is A Light That Never Goes Out' was a real highlight. The lighting sticks out in my memory as adding to the ambience, particularly the disco ball during 'Candidate'.

Johnny initially rocked a pink shirt and green blazer combo, before changing into a blue 'Boys Get Straight' t-shirt later on. He even brought out Noel Gallagher in the encore — the pair covered 'Lust for Life' before finishing on a high with 'How Soon Is Now?'.



PHOTO BY SARAH DOONE
(LONDON, UK, 2014)

I've seen Johnny twice more since, and he always puts on a cracking show, but neither quite matched up to the pure exhilaration of the first-time experience. It was a joy to spend the gig with two fellow devotees, and it's a feeling I won't forget.

- Rosie Crabbe

LONDON, UK

O2 ACADEMY BRIXTON

23RD OCTOBER 2014

OPPOSITE PHOTO: SARAH DOONE (LONDON, UK, 2014)

Brixton was incredible. It felt like a validation of Marr as a solo artist. I saw him play the The Institute in Birmingham & the Roundhouse in 2013, which were also special as they were the first few times I'd seen him headline. I'd only previously seen him support The Stone Roses, I think in 2012 — however, watching him with 5,000 people singing along to both solo and Smiths tracks was awesome. What made it extra special too was our friends travelled down from Manchester, Coventry, Birmingham and Kent, who are all huge Marr / Smiths fans. The Brummie lads were friends from secondary school and we all bonded listening to The Smiths together, sharing albums and talking

music. We arrived early and hung around outside trying to meet him and get stuff signed, but we never had the chance. (My patience paid off though a few years later at the Kentish Forum gig. Johnny came out and we had a great chat and he signed some stuff. He was the only Smith I've never met and he's always been the one I admired the most — he formed the band. It was one of the highlights



of my life). A wonderful shared experience and a superb show. To sing along to “Bigmouth” with guys I'd know since 1984 was such a great experience. His music brought us together and forged our friendships.

- Craig Foxall

COLOGNE, GERMANY

LUXOR

2ND NOVEMBER 2014

OPPOSITE PHOTO: TONY SMITH (ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA, USA, 2019)

First concert, first row, fantastic experience.

And amazing autographs in addition. I was lucky to meet Johnny before the concert, at the entrance. Very lucky indeed, as after waiting for an hour or two, I was just about to turn away for getting something to drink, when Johnny turned up. He was super-nice and signed both albums. Thank you!

I add a photograph of the signed albums, as I do not have any from the concert itself: Too busy living the moment!



It was good to see my friend Aly again, and the happy faces of the people around me.

After the concert I got signatures from the band members too. And while sitting and waiting in the lobby enjoying the afterglow, I suddenly noticed a man coming from somewhere backstage, heading for the main entrance (or rather, exit). As soon as he came in sight, I started to wonder — all in the flash of a moment — why he was carrying a laundry basket that way, walking bent over, very much in a hurry,



and if he might be wearing a wig, when I suddenly realized: That's Johnny Marr. Trying to get out without being seen.

And so ... I waited until he was safely outside before nudging the people beside me to tell them what they just missed to notice.

Maybe this story does not sound very exciting, but it left me with a warm feeling of respect and thankfulness.

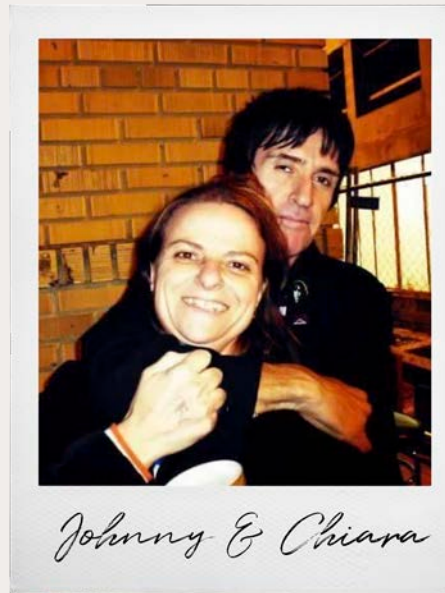
-Anita Maria Amberg

WASHINGTON DC, USA

9:30 CLUB

9TH NOVEMBER 2014

When I think back to the moment I first read that Johnny Marr was about to release a record by himself, I still feel the same happiness I did then. Johnny Fuckin Marr was back with his guitar on a record of his own, what a joy! “The Messenger” has been love at first listen. The nostalgia for The Smiths finally ended and I just wanted him and his solo music. 2013 passed between the Italian summer dates, the two in Manchester, and a flood of emotions while the desire to meet him in person begins to grow. The opportunity comes when I least expected it, in Washington, in November 2014, outside the 9:30 Club. I had to go to DC for work and was allowed to choose when. I had just been to Johnny’s Apollo gig and I couldn’t wait to see him again. I’m going to check out the tour dates and, on November 9, he would be there, in DC too. I was about to miss that concert because it started really early, I remember the rush to the venue when I notice the time and arriving a few minutes before the start. Beautiful as always. Upon leaving I thought it was not late, that I could wait a bit. The tour bus was there, perhaps the dream could come true. We were a few people waiting, chatting to each other when, oh my god, he appeared before me. I could not believe it, I returned to the same 16-year-old girl who attended the only concert The Smiths ever performed in Italy, in Rome, my hometown. “Sixteen, clumsy and shy”, exactly



“I always feel I haven’t said enough, not thanked him enough. Because I’m grateful to Johnny Marr for being such an important part of my life *and for every single hug he has given me*”.

that. I always thought he was a lovely person, but I never imagined how adorable he could be. Kind, smiling, affectionate. He was glad to know that I had been to the Apollo. I loved how he dressed then, with the high buttoned jackets and striped shirts. I had one too that evening, in black velvet. I bought it precisely because it was “a la Johnny Marr”. I was so awkward, I was too excited, there was such a relaxed atmosphere but I was enchanted and, like all the other times that fortunately came after, I always feel I haven’t said enough, not thanked him enough. Because I’m grateful to Johnny Marr for being such an important part of my life and for every single hug he has given me. It transmits such positive energy that it illuminates you with him.

Happy birthday dear Johnny, have a truly special one in this truly special year. Happy birthday to you and Angie with lots of love, xxx.

See you soon ‘cause we miss you so much!

- Chiara Busico

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA
DANFORTH MUSIC HALL
20TH NOVEMBER 2014

OPPOSITE PHOTO: MARC MCGARRAGHY (LEEDS, UK, 2014)

PLAYDATE AT JOHNNY'S PLAYLAND

A wintry feeling had descended on Toronto in November 2014 — fingers and ears could freeze and needed protection from hats and pockets. On that night, Johnny was playing the Danforth Music Hall shortly after releasing *Playland*. I went down before the doors opened, hoping to get a spot near the front, but others were quicker, already staking a claim to real estate along the stage. I was in about the third row of bodies where I met Natalia, a spirited and funny woman to my right.

Even before the opening act, we were engaging in witty repartee. Beyond the friendly conversation Toronto music fans often have at live music venues, there was chemistry in our chatter. I took some photos during the concert, but a punk fan's dramatic hair made guest appearances in a few pictures.

Johnny came right to the edge of the stage, sharing his musical passion and easy charm while creating intimacy by interacting with the audience. His friend, Kevin Drew, joined him on stage for two songs during the encore, one of them a Smiths tune and the other Iggy Pop's "Lust for Life."





Johnny & Maria

The evening ended with the audience singing along to “There is a Light That Never Goes Out.” Like the lyrics of that song, he certainly did take us out where there was music and people and it was Natalia’s and my privilege to be there that night.

My new-found friend and I decided to wait and try to meet him instead of scurrying to our toasty homes. After an hour in the numbing cold, when both equipment and merch had been loaded on the trucks (I had scored a red Johnny Fuckin Marr shirt earlier), Johnny entered the lobby, saw us freezing outside, and asked us to come into the building. He was compassionate, as divinity is. About 15 fans followed us into the warmth. Natalia and I had waited by the venue’s front door, while other fans waited by his bus across the street. Johnny was gracious, speaking to and taking pictures with fans.

The sub-zero temperatures had probably frozen our brains; our mouths were moving, but embarrassing eruptions were spewing forth. There is photographic evidence of our meeting His Musical Eminence, but luckily no incriminating audio



Johnny & Natalia



“The sub-zero temperatures had probably frozen our brains; our mouths were moving, but embarrassing eruptions were spewing forth. *We can only plead temporary insanity.*”

exists. We can only plead temporary insanity. [A similar affliction beset me outside the Phoenix Concert Theatre after Johnny’s concert on a particularly frigid night in April 2013. My usually unflappable self was thrown into a Gravitron ride hoping the 4G force didn’t scramble me.]

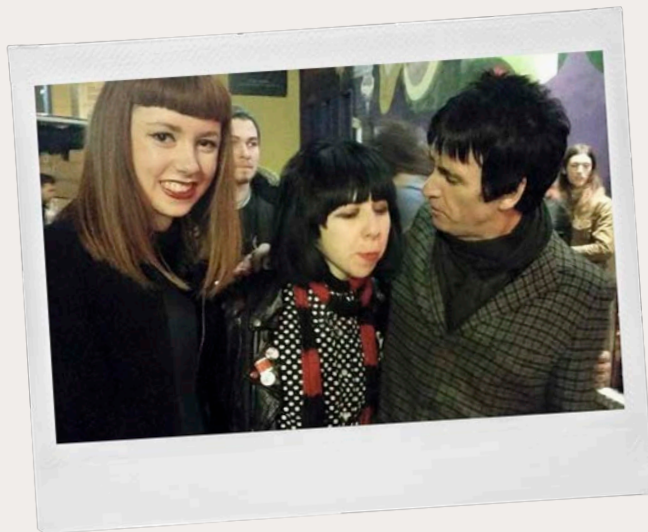
Natalia and I have since shared six years of concert going, get-togethers, her exhibits and one of her burlesque performances. We also met Johnny after his Velvet Underground concert. It was May 2018 B.C. (before COVID-19) and the venue was a packed, sweltering sauna. Ah, the good ole days of concert going ... heavy sigh.

- Maria Meli

STOKE-ON-TRENT, UK
THE SUGAR MILL
19TH MARCH 2015

Me, Charlotte and Aaron found out that Johnny Marr would be coming to our local Stoke venue, so we snapped up tickets straight away. As the oldest sister, and sibling, in my family, I had a major music influence on my brother and sister. I was the one that switched them onto The Smiths, and Johnny's unique guitar sound.

In the weeks before the gig, I was listening to Johnny's *Playland* album on my bus rides to a face painting job at a theme park. It was like my head was in 2 different Playlands. One week, however, the theme park was very quiet and I was very bored. So, for some brain activity, I started reading books at work. While distant rollercoaster screams disintegrated in the air, I was hooked on Johan Huizinga's *Homo Ludens*. This book gave me a wonderful insight into Johnny's new album. "Man only plays when in the full meaning of the word he is a man, and he is only completely a man when he plays." — Huizinga.



Gig night finally arrived and the 3 of us took the 20 minute bus ride to Hanley. The Sugarmill venue is my home city's main place for intimate gigs. Down on the corner, stands the beautiful brutalist British Telecom building, which reminds me of the New Town Velocity video. I was so

“While distant rollercoaster screams disintegrated in the air, I was hooked on Johan Huizinga’s *Homo Ludens*. This book gave me a wonderful insight into Johnny’s new album. Man only plays when in the full meaning of the word he is a man, and he is only completely a man when he plays. — Huizinga.”

happy to have my brother and sister with me, and thrilled to finally meet the Dynamic Duo, Aly & Ory, who I had been collaborating with online, for the Dynamic fanzine. We exchanged greetings and gifts and talked about how excited we were for the show. Me, Charlotte and Aaron settled at the front of the dancefloor. I heard some Banshees playing from the speakers. Then, suddenly, the lights plunged and arcade sounds bounced between the walls. I was ready to play.

Jack, Iwan, Doviak and Johnny bounded onto the stage, ripping into title track “Playland”. Lift up, Lift off, To adrenalin. My heart started pounding at a stupid rate as we all jumped to his jagged riffs. Johnny looked smart in a polka dot shirt (almost like mine) and black velvet jacket adorned with badges. As a guitar player, I was in awe of his beautiful Sherwood Green Fender Jaguar, and — speaking of pretty green — “Easy Money” got everyone moving. The poignant “New Town Velocity” was more emotional, seeing my siblings with me, before “The Headmaster Ritual” whipped the room into action again. Johnny’s cover of Depeche



Johnny & Charlotte



Johnny & Aaron

Mode's "I Feel You" felt like a religious experience while "Back In The Box" had me hanging on every word. When the drums to "The Queen Is Dead" set in, our faces lit up. We were ecstatic. I was happy to share "Candidate" with my family members, as the song's optimism always helps me to stay strong. We gathered our thoughts and caught our breaths as Johnny and the boys left the stage.

Soon, they were back, storming into "Bigmouth Strikes Again". (It's always that Smiths one which gets me chanting and dancing like an idiot.) "Dynamo" stood up perfectly before glorious B side, "The It Switch". The finale of "How Soon Is Now?" was like the perfect homage to the many Friday nights I spent in this venue, dancing to the classics (and failing to get laid).

As the crowd filtered out onto Brunswick Street, our faces beamed. We chatted about the amazing show as we waited to meet Johnny. Me and my brother had met him previously, but our sister wanted her chance too. When Johnny recognised 2 of us,

he thought it was so cool that we were all family. He made time for all of us, asking about our lives etc... My friend, James, who was also at the gig, took photos of our meeting. We all laughed about our polka dot shirts, and noticing my fringed hair and faux leather jacket, Johnny announced "Wow, you're like the female Ryan Jarman!". I love The Cribs, so this was pretty cool, knowing that he once played with them too. It did get me thinking about my Jarman resemblance though. Well I wonder...

- Melissa Roden, Stoke

WAKEFILED, UK
WAREHOUSE 23
7TH JULY 2015

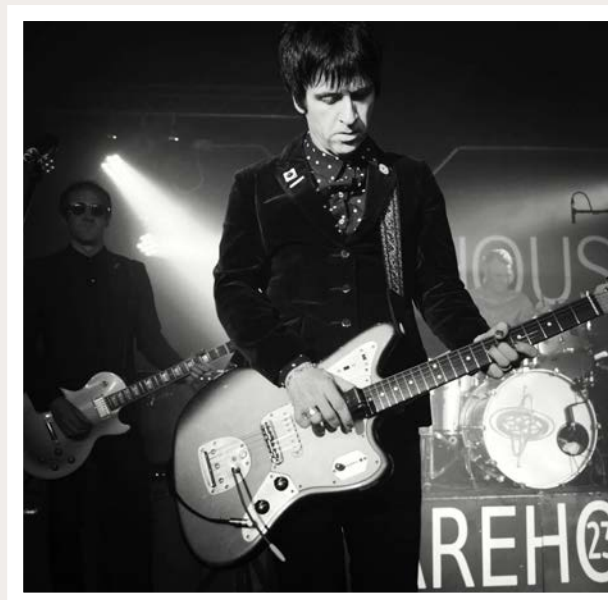
LIVE PHOTOS: NIGEL BURN (WAKEFIELD, UK, 2015)

WHO KNEW WAKEFIELD COULD BE SO HOT?



“Johnny and the band delivered a flawless set amidst the ever increasing heat — which meant we all began to melt together — and generated *an energy within the audience that was palpable and so positive.*”

I’ve always found it impossible to have a stand out gig — I’ve loved seeing Johnny perform in a variety of venues as the experiences have always been unique and special in their own way. My long suffering husband is always steadfast though: for him, Wakefield was the best. It was a surprisingly warm July evening and Warehouse 23 isn’t blessed with air conditioning! We were fortunate to arrive early enough to



Alison & Johnny

blag a place at the front to the right of the stage and when Johnny began to play, the throng behind us (in what isn’t a very big venue) seemed to get even closer and the temperature didn’t stop rising.

Johnny and the band delivered a flawless set amidst the ever increasing heat — which meant we all began to melt together — and generated an energy within the audience that was palpable and so positive. There was something almost retro about the night: an authentic old fashioned concert venue with sticky floors, a crowd that was enthusiastic and there for the music and our icon within touching distance and effortlessly engaging with the whole room.

No gimmicks, no fancy staging, no decent loos — instead an evening characterised by stunningly good music delivered by the incomparable Johnny Marr.

- Alison Moore

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA
NICETO CLUB
17TH JUNE 2015

OPPOSITE PHOTO: ALY STEVENSON (BERLIN, GERMANY, 2018)

“Johnny,
you came to my beloved Argentina on the recommendation of my other
beloved, Franz Ferdinand, and nothing made me happier than SEEING YOU
and knowing that you loved my country. June 17, 2015 is a date that my
heart will never forget because I was able to see my legend live for the first
time. Your music made and makes my life better, and it was a fundamental
piece to have chosen the production of musical shows as the profession
for my life. Seeing you that night in front of my eyes I thought “Really my
whole life went by with this man’s work playing in the background.” I hope
to see you and work with you when you return to Buenos Aires, give you
a big hug and that together we talk about music, and, of course, about the
Premier. I love you with all my heart. Mery.”

- Mery Clemente



BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA
 NICETO CLUB
 17TH JUNE 2015

LIVE PHOTOS: JULIETA BRIOLA (BUENOS AIRES, 2015)

The last time Johnny came to Buenos Aires, Argentina, was with the *Playland* tour, June 2015.

I had been away from concerts and stuff for a while following my dad's passing and some time to mourning him.



My editor at the time suggested that I should do the e-mail interview with Johnny and go to the concert to make a review too. So, this concert was a sort of come back to life for me at the time. I don't have many memories of that year, but I still have the feeling of being there, the energy of the band, how a year

of touring improved the show (I've seen two *Messenger* gigs from 2014) and the company of my friend Walter, who took care of me that night.

In the picture you can see that "My Monster" was played at the show — at that moment we didn't know yet that it'll be a future song by Blondie! The setlist and the hands that are holding it are from our dear friend Vero, who we meet at the end of the show.



I've never met Johnny but I'm very grateful for that healing rock night at Niceto Club, Buenos Aires.

-Giselle Hidalgo

“There are a lot of people in my audience that I know I like and I’m proud of them. They’re good people. *Music has given us an excuse to come together.*”

JOHNNY MARR

INTERVIEW WITH GISELLE HIDALGO, FOR ULTRABRIT MAG



 BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

NICETO CLUB

 17TH JUNE 2015

I was 17 years old and there was nothing happening at all. I'm from a small town in the south of Brasil, and there was just nothing goin' down (at all). I couldn't go to gigs and I didn't even bother to leave the house. I spent my days listening to music and watching gigs on YouTube. Sometimes I'd find a full show with professional filming and multicameras. It was fun as I got to experience the whole gig with no cuts. But it was mostly fan videos, filmed from their phones with shaky cameras and the crowd screaming louder than the band. And, of course, they were my favorites. The vibe became more intimate from the point of view of the crowd, and with all the messiness and euphoria, you kinda start feeling like you're there.

My favorite gig, which I watched almost everyday, was from a club called Niceto in Buenos Aires, 2015. It was just like that phenomenon Johnny talks about, the crowd feeding on the band's energy and giving back 200%. The atmosphere was buzzing with adrenaline, and as the camera shifted from the stage to the crowd, I couldn't tell which side was having more fun.

I was going through my last year of highschool, which I just couldn't wait to be over with. I had decided to study at night to make time pass faster, but it just made me anxious for most of the afternoon, and when dusk fell over town I'd just procrastinate to the last minute to stay in. One fine day I decided to watch the gig to distract myself, hoping I might uh, accidentally miss school. But by a miscalculation the gig ended

too early instead. I grabbed my backpack and run downstairs, but as I stepped out into the sunlight I just.. Didn't felt so bad? It always felt wrong to be outside on my own, but I was still on a Hype and the songs were still with me.

I passed by strangers going home from work and people chatting on the sidewalk and thought about "The Right Thing Right". I never felt a connection with the people in my city, even though everybody kinda knew each other. I always got puzzled when Johnny talked about his town like it was a part of his identity. I tried to find something we could have in common, something other cities didn't have, and I couldn't think of anything. But I suddenly liked the thought of being part of the crowd, that I could blend in and be just another person lost in their own thoughts, feeling very unique but being moved by the same symphony.

Well, sorta. I don't know what those guys were listening to, but I could see "Candidate" fading in as I turned the corner and the sun shone over the pavement. It was on the soft light contouring the leaves on the trees. And I felt it's full exuberance on the multicoloured clouds that blended into each other then faded slowly into blue. I heard Lou Reed talk about flowers of clay, but I wasn't convinced until I listened to *Playland*. Maybe it was an excuse to look up, but it distracted me from the paranoia of staring at my own feet. And it made me look forward to leave the house — something I never thought would happen.

It was a slow change, and I wondered how much I could actually credit the songs I was listening to. Sometimes it seemed like it was just a part of growing up. I was changing and maybe becoming more outgoing and less interested in being shy. But like the gigs themselves, I think it was just building up. As I listened to the songs they

gave me energy and things to think of, so I gave them meaning and they were in the background of many moments, guiding me through them and becoming even more important to me. And, eventually, taking me to places I didn't think I could go.

I watched the crowd chant along to "Lockdown" and wondered where those kids came from. I wanted to be brave like them. It was a song about having nowhere to go, feeling sick of being put down and searching for a new meaning of home. I suddenly realized it was a song about me and my friends. And if these times define me, I don't want to hide at home forever. So I texted them, and we decided that night was too good to waste. We met behind the school and went to the park instead. It was a small town and there wasn't much to do, but as we shielded from the rain (also brought by Johnny's mancurian influence, I'm sure) and just stayed together trying to entertain each other and listening to music, I felt free. I knew I still had a place to go. And it was alright.

- Nath

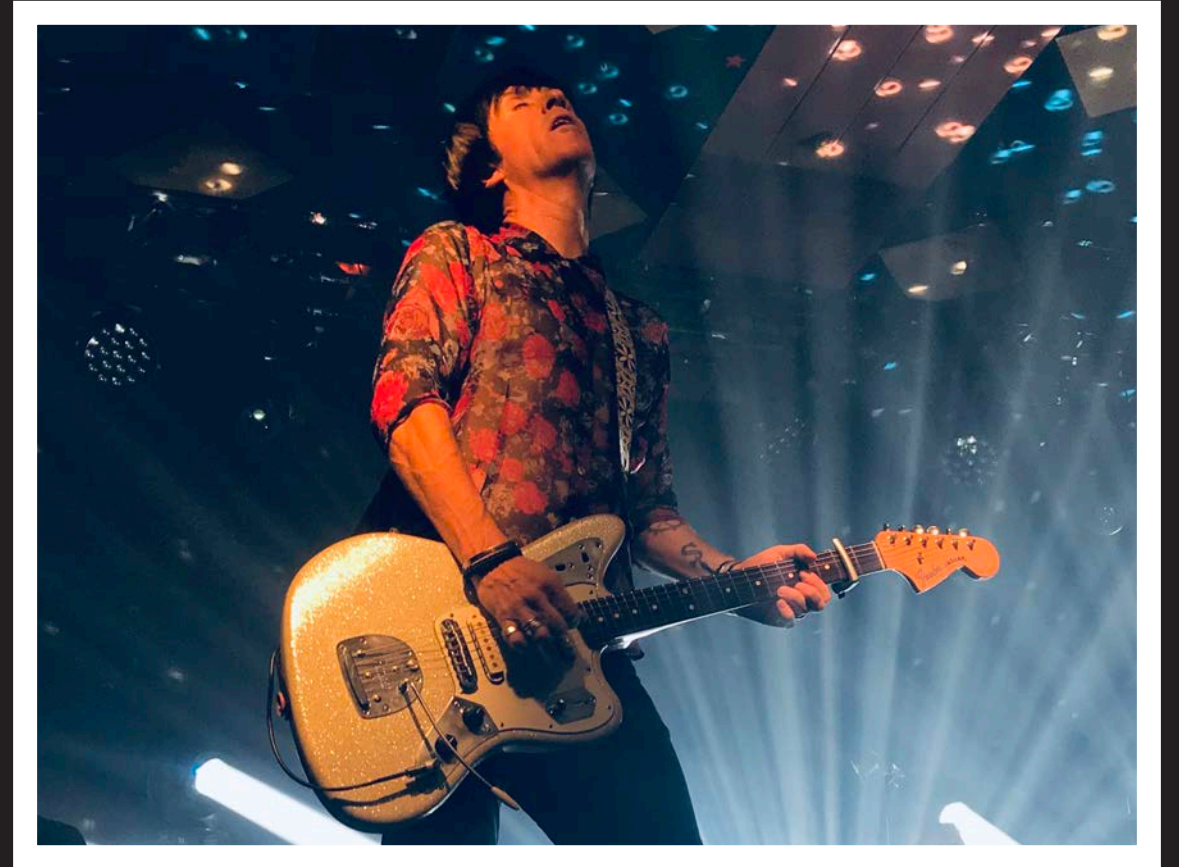


PHOTO BY ILZE FREY
(GLASGOW, UK, 2018)

SOUTHAMPTON, UK
ENGINE ROOMS
15TH SEPTEMBER 2015

SPECIAL MISSION:
THE FELT DOLLS

I had the chance to go to 3 Johnny Marr gigs: two in Brazil — Lollapalozza (2014) and Cultura Inglesa Festival (2015) — and one in Southampton, UK (2015) at the Engine Rooms, while I was on a European trip with some friends. I also had a special mission at the latter: give the personalized felt dolls my sister Amélia handcrafted to Johnny and the band! It's very tense to have a mission like this, because you never know how to do it, how to reach the band or where you're gonna meet them. Or even if you're gonna meet them! Amélia was talking to Jack and Iwan through social media. So they knew in advance they had a



special gift to receive. I arrived at the venue at the end of the afternoon.... At some point, I realized the band was on the second floor of the venue and from time to time, I could see one of them at the window...I could even see Johnny ironing his shirt.



Whenever one of them were close to the window, I waved the doll on their direction. Tense, excited, anxious... and also a bit foolish... so many emotions I was feeling at that moment. Then, Iwan saw me, waved at me and turned to the others to tell I was there! What a relief! They knew I was there! A few other fans were there, not more than 10. Few minutes later, the band came down... Jack, Iwan, Doviak... I remember that Jack was the first to appear and they came directly to my direction. I was very, very excited, they were really, really kind to me. Johnny came to the door as well. And I accomplished my mission: I gave all of them their presents: their own personalized felt dolls! They seemed to have enjoyed it. We talked for a while, took photos and talked a bit more. Of course, I was nervous, but thankfully I don't freeze in situations like these. Johnny asked me what did I do for a living, and considering that working in a bank as a social and environmental risk analyst is not that common, Johnny remembered we've met before, few months earlier, in Brazil at the airport with my sister Amélia. It's nice to know Johnny not only is very considerate to his fans but he also has a good memory. Well... all the trip was worth it... I couldn't stop smiling. But there were more: we were invited to watch the soundcheck! Just amazing!!! And the show hadn't even started! Well, I don't need to say how wonderful was the concert. I enjoyed every song, every second they were on stage. I just love small venues because it makes you feel so close to the band. I know how much my sister wanted to be there. I'm sure she'll have another opportunity to meet them again.

This is how she started to create the felt dolls to others great musicians we love. Johnny Marr's was the first. Then she created the New Order members... and some people related to them. Most of the dolls are in Manchester. Unfortunately, the only one that couldn't reach the owner was Denise Johnson's. Another lovely and beautiful soul. There are only a few others with special fans around the world: Brazil



(in 3 different states), Australia, Israel and USA (Massachusetts and Virginia). We hope this pandemic moment be part of the past and that soon we can go to other gigs. And this time, Amélia will give her presents in person to Johnny Marr, Jack Mitchell, Iwan Gronow and Doviak!

Happy Birthday Johnny and Angie! I wish all the best to you and for now... stay safe!
Love you!

*- Fátima Kubota
São Paulo, Brazil*

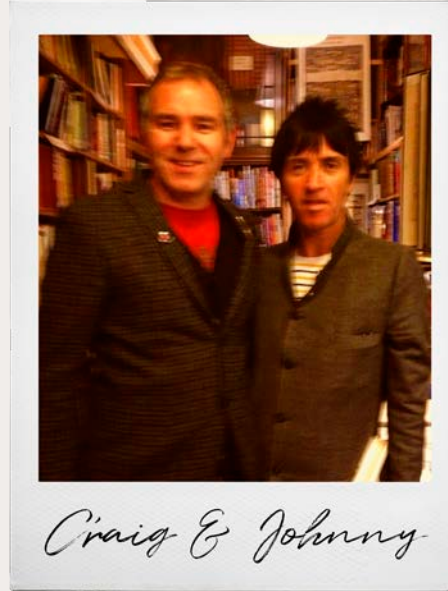


PHOTO BY SARAH DOONE
(LONDON, UK, 2014)

EDINBURGH, UK
LIQUID ROOM
14TH 20 OCTOBER 2015

& KILMARNOCK, UK
GRAND HALL
15TH OCTOBER 2015

This was another gig that almost passed me by as I watched on from almost another dimension. Johnny's music can do that to you. I had luckily met him earlier in the day. My wife and I were walking past the venue on our way out for lunch when we saw the tour bus parked outside the venue and a group of people waiting on the pavement. As we were walking back up the street from the opposite side, Johnny jumped out (road side) and darted across



Craig & Johnny

the street with his friend into a bookshop. After worrying about bothering him I

bit the bullet and followed him in and asked for a photo. He was super nice, as was expected. I was a bag of nerves and Johnny actually asked ME more questions than I asked him! He said to make sure to get there early to see Nile's band and I told him I'd been enjoying the "Carsick Cars" single. My wife took two photos, both of which turned out a bit blurry, so I'm hoping to get a nice clear picture with him one day! The

gig itself was great and the sound was awesome, not too dissimilar to King Tuts in Glasgow. Johnny has said to me he heard it was a "Little rock box" and it totally was.

*"His music
always makes
me feel ten
feet tall."*

The *Playland* material sounded great live, and loved Nile joining him onstage for their version of "Crash". Amazing day altogether.

The very next night we were on to Kilmarnock, which is only 15 minutes from where I live, so I was over the moon Johnny was playing there. I'd actually heard a few negative comments previously about the sound in the Grand Hall but I thought it sounded even better than the previous night's smaller venue. Some amazing moments were had on this night, chiefly hearing my favourite Smiths song ("The Headmaster Ritual") live for the first time. His music always makes me feel ten feet tall. That will never change. Some of my favourite Live photos are from this gig. I saw Aly and Ory up on the balcony from a distance away. VIPs!

- Craig McMahon

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA, USA

ACE OF SPADES

2ND MARCH 2016

OPPOSITE PHOTO: OLIVER JUNGEN AND MARTINA HILLE (BRIGHTON, UK, 2018)

I had missed out on seeing Johnny Marr and the Healers in San Francisco in 2002, but I was excited to that I got to finally see him at the Fillmore in San Francisco in April of 2013. Leaving the show I knew I would want to see him again in concert and it was just a matter of how soon. Listening to his older works like *Electronic*, *The The*, and *Healers* became an addiction, and to say I was fan was an understatement.



What I did not know was how Johnny would engage and meet his fans after his shows and really get to know his fan base.

That became my mission . . . the mission to meet Johnny Marr.

Once *Playland* came out and tour dates were announced I scored tickets to the show at Ace of Spades December 12th. Due to a family illness that prompted Johnny to cancel the remaining tour dates, the show was canceled and rescheduled for March 2nd. I had an old Smiths Record, *Hatful of Hollow*, and I kept thinking man, how cool would it be for him to sign that for me along with getting to meet him. Wishful thinking but worth trying.



The show was amazing, the venue quaint, and I was able to be in the front to soak in the genius of Johnny's guitar playing. As the encore ended and the people trickled out, I did not see where Johnny would be able to meet and greet with his fans so I walked off, heading to my car. I saw the tour bus and a young lady who managed get the set list. I asked to see it and she politely let me see it, but the next thing she said was the jackpot:

“Speechless, shocked and in awe, the only words that I could muster were “Can I please hug you?”.

“Johnny's in there.....in the bus and I am going to wait for him to sign it (setlist).”

I was in shock and in the distance to my left you could see fans congregating in the area, thinking Johnny would appear from that spot. It was just this one lady and I waiting at the door of the bus waiting and waiting till finally...Johnny walks out. Speechless, shocked and in awe, the

only words that I could muste were “Can I please hug you?”. He laughed and said yes, then asked for my name. I shook his hand and he remembered the young lady from the Fresno Show the day before. We spoke of the last time I had seen him at the Fillmore and how he has always really enjoyed San Francisco. What was a conversation of three now became an area filled with many fans holding memorabilia for Johnny to sign and share stories.

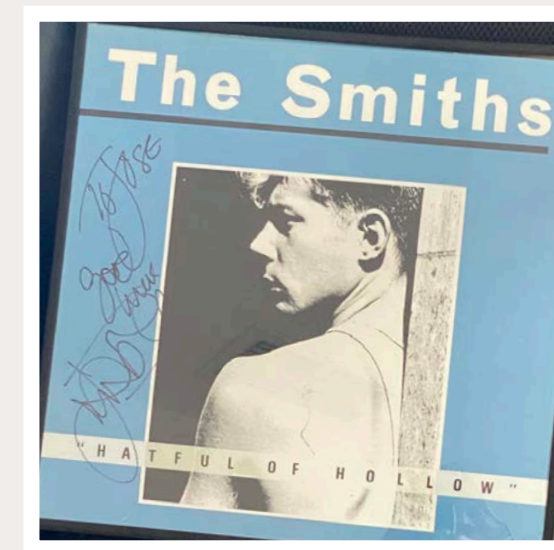
Then it hit me...the record! I ran back to my car, racing back, hoping that he had not left yet. He was surrounded still by many fans but he politely signed my album. We all stood there hearing fans share their stories on what the impact Johnny and his

music had on their lives, and it was all so surreal.

I couldn't believe that one of my heroes was so down to earth and conversing with all of us. Most heroes disappoint but Johnny just continued to add to his legacy of what a great person he is. I left so full of adrenaline, I could not sleep and wish I had tickets to the Independent shows in San Francisco.

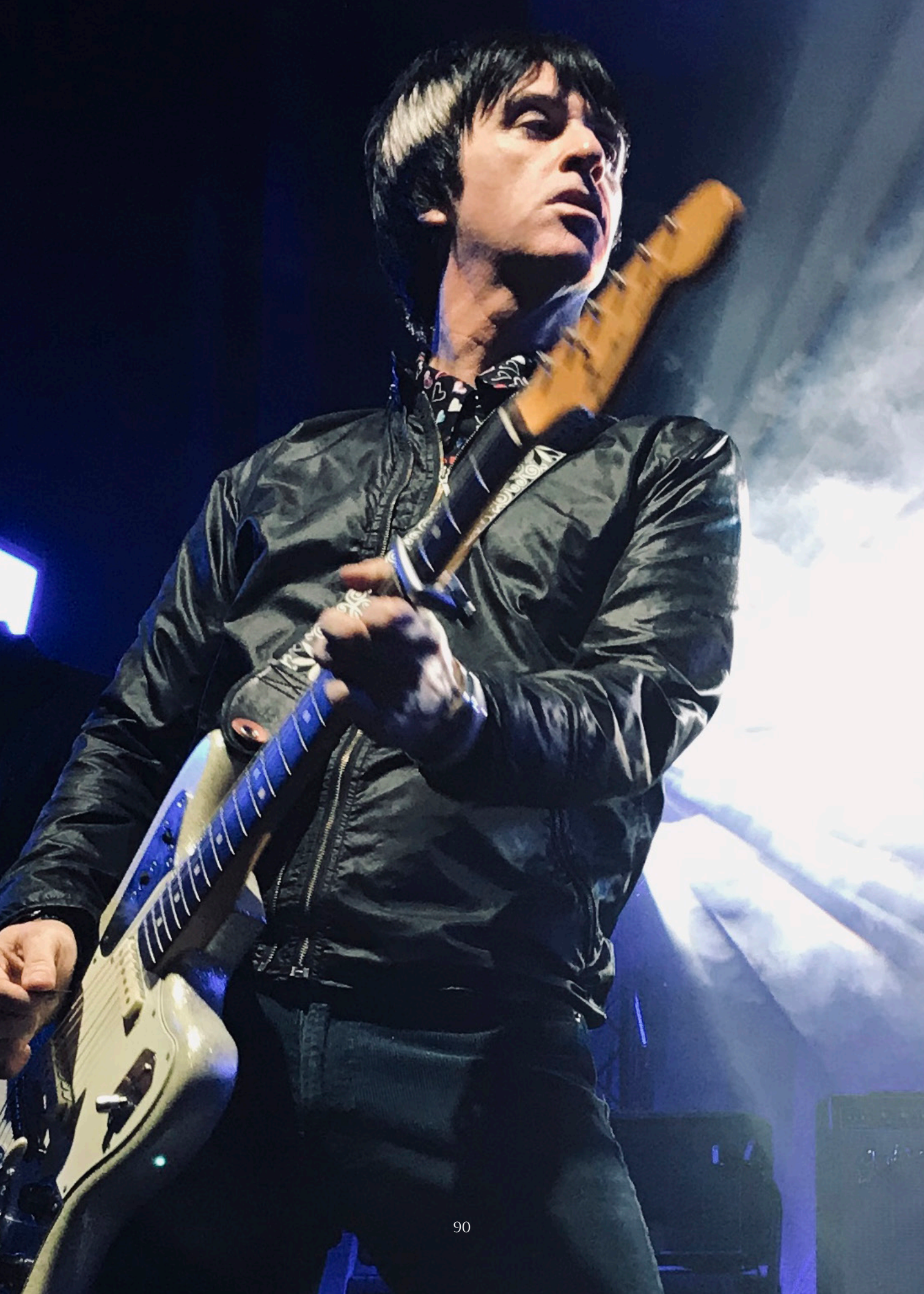
I would go on to see Johnny many more times after my initial meeting with him and wait to see him, but nothing compares to the first time. Johnny's music is always in

constant rotation and I always look forward to his new material or when he will be coming back to the Bay Area. It amazes me the power of Johnny's music on how it brings people together and given me the opportunity to meet fans like Jim Brodt, and become friends that keep in touch.



I never would have thought that on 2/3/2016 the show at Ace of Spades would forever change me and how I listen to Johnny's music. Such a simple, kind gesture on his part, but leaving a huge impression on me. So much that during this pandemic it has been a struggle to not be able to enjoy Johnny's music live and share good times with friends at his shows.

- José Romero



POMONA, CALIFORNIA, USA
GLASS HOUSE
4TH MARCH 2016

I remember being excited that he was having a show around 2014 or 2015 near the area I was living at, but unfortunately the tour was cut short due to personal matters. Flash forward to March 5 2016, and I was in line at the Glass House in Pomona, California. This show was special to me as this was the first time I was seeing him live, and the band were in top form. The energy that he and the band put forward was surreal. I remember almost being moved to tears when Johnny played the riff to “The Headmaster Ritual”. I’ve heard his renditions many times on Youtube but it really is a different feeling to see and hear it live. I sadly didn’t meet him after the show, but I was buzzing on the way home. I’ve been a massive fan of him since 2014, and seeing him live had been a life goal for me since then. That is what makes this show so special to me.

- Erik Gutierrez

OPPOSITE PHOTO: ILZE FREY (BIRMINGHAM, UK, 2018)

POMONA, CALIFORNIA, USA

GLASS HOUSE

4TH MARCH 2016

In 2015-2016, I was going through some of the toughest times in my life: depression, a bad relationship, and health issues. So when I learned there would be a series of gigs in California I was over the moon because I felt like this was what I needed to get some light into my life.

I had been a fan of Johnny for years and this was going to be my very first time seeing him live. Next, I needed to convince my mother to travel by car all the way from my hometown in Mexico, and after some discussion, she agreed.

My sister was also excited as she loves Johnny's music too and decided to attend the gig with me (even though she's younger, she's always supporting and caring about me). It took us around twelve hours to get to California by car and it was definitely all worth it.

The night of the gig we were so excited and got to the venue quite early, so after buying some merchandise we were able to get good spots to enjoy the performance. As I am quite tiny, it was easy for me to get myself to the very front row and it was the very best. When the gig started and the band appeared on stage there was a moment I couldn't believe I was there looking at my favorite musician, it was so surreal to be watching Johnny play just a few feet away from me, a true dream come true.

It was the best night of my life, the gig was awesome from start to end. There was

a rush of emotions through my body and I was so happy and grateful to be able to experience it. I was just crying tears of joy when the band performed "There Is A Light That Never Goes Out", as it is my favorite song ever, and Johnny dedicated it to everyone in the room and no one else.

Seeing Johnny play the guitar from that close distance was something else, I could feel his wonderful vibe like he's truly enjoying it and at the same time, there's so

much focus on what he's doing. He was born to be a musician and bring so many beautiful songs to this world.

"He was born to
be a musician
and bring
*so many beautiful
songs to this world.*"

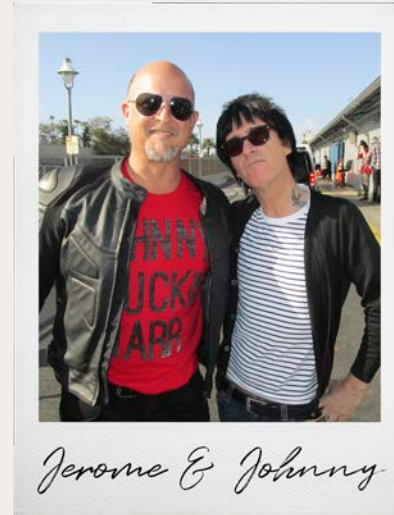
I enjoyed the gig so much that I felt like it happened really fast, and then came the encore: "How Soon is Now?" and "New Town Velocity". After these last songs, Johnny reached my hand and gave me the guitar pick he used to play and

I was in shock, happy but trembling. It was so amazing and to this day I am grateful for that because that night I knew everything was going to be alright, and to this day things in my life are getting better and better (a little slow, but steady). I know that night truly changed everything and Johnny saved my life. Happy Birthday!

- Mel Blake

SOLANA BEACH, CALIFORNIA, USA
 BELLY UP TAVERN
 6TH MARCH 2016

The first time I met JFM, I was so starstruck. My first question was how does he maintain his schedule, as this was our 3rd show in as many days, and Suki was sleeping and missed out on meeting Johnny! He said he understood since Suki is British! Ha!



Jerome & Johnny

I then thanked him for rescheduling and he was very gracious enough to sign my ticket stubs for all 3 shows and the vinyl I brought. We then spoke for 15+ min about his upcoming book, a new album, and then he asked all about me. How I met and married a Brit in 1989 having grown up in Carlsbad, California, and also about my job working in renewable wind energy.



Johnny, Suki and Jerome

They say to be careful meeting one of your idols. Not so with JFM. We were more than just artist and fan. He made me feel like a mate. It was then and there that I knew I to see as many future JFM shows as possible!

- Jerome Stockham

Jerome & Suki's Marvellous Adventures



Jerome & Suki out front of The El Rey Los Angeles, CA. "We just missed Johnny arriving for sound check!! Another amazing Show."



Meet n' Greet at the Ace Hotel, 2018



"Our group of 8 including family and friends can be seen in center row's 2, 3, and 4." Jerome & Suki, Michael, Brittany, Brook & Justin, Alex & Sara.



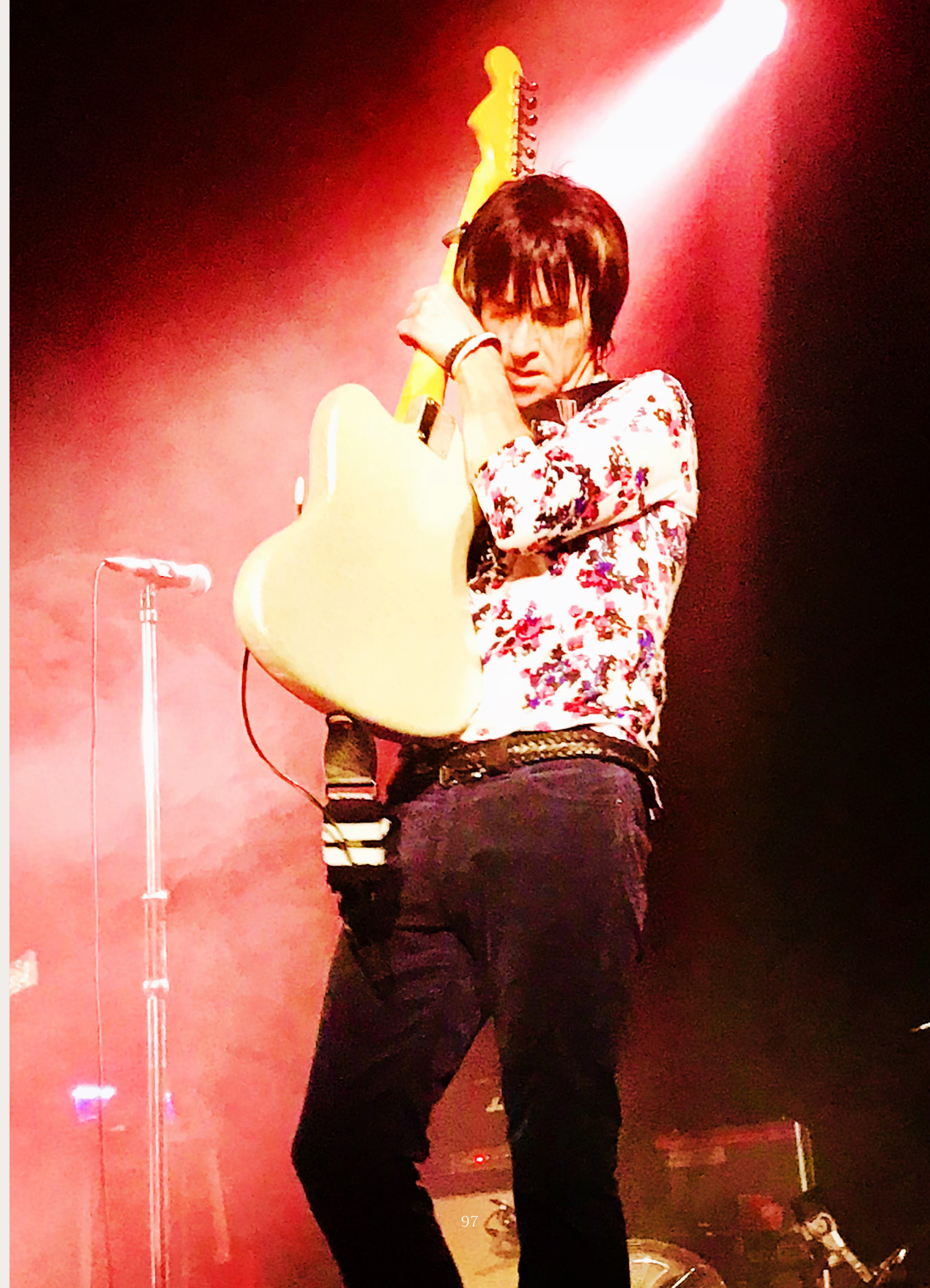
Michael (Son), Jerome & Suki, Brook & Justin (high school friends), Brittany (Daughter)

LONDON, UK
ISLINGTON ASSEMBLY HALL
16TH MAY 2018

OPPOSITE PHOTO: ILZE FREY (LONDON, UK, 2018)

This was a special show. The venue is very intimate and we were all pretty excited to see Johnny in such a small venue at what was essentially a 'one off show'. It was great to hear the album played live, and being so close to him and the band. We felt very privileged to see him in such a great venue. I love the album, so was excited about hearing it live - Marr didn't disappoint. Cracking show.

- Craig Foxall



AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

PARADISO NOORD

20TH MAY 2018

OPPOSITE PHOTO: JOANNE LEE (AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS, 2018)

When it comes to the ‘best’ gig I’ve ever been to, I have to say nothing could beat the second night at Albert Hall last year. Seriously, I’d do anything to relive that whole week! However, as I know most people who were there will choose that one and I don’t want to be too obvious, I’d like to share a rather personal anecdote from the *Call the Comet* pre-launch tour.

In May 2018, I changed my job and was fortunate enough to have free time to go on a short trip between jobs. I hadn’t planned or expected any of those to happen, so every part of coming up with travel plans was a last-minute thing. I was already aware that Johnny was going on a tour and as it had been almost three years since the last time I went to Johnny’s gig, deciding my travel destination was a no-brainer.

I had initially considered going to Ireland and the UK, but all the tickets got sold out like in seconds, so I decided to go to Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands instead, and then I got on the plane. Needless to say, everything was impeccable - fantastic performances, intimate venues, and also the weather was perfect, all three nights in a row!

But what made the night in Amsterdam even more memorable for me was fellow fans. Of course, like at most gigs of Johnny, the fans I met in Stockholm and Copenhagen were lovely and friendly. However, bumping into other fans who speak the same





language as me was a whole new experience. Because I've been to many different countries for Johnny's concerts but never had a single chance to meet or speak to another Korean fan before, I got so excited and became friends with them right away. During the gig, we stood in the front row side by side, looking on in awe at the mind-blowing performance, and after the gig, we were so eager to tell each other how great the gig was, so that we almost forgot to draw breath. We followed each other on social media to keep in touch (yes, we're staying in touch!), and I even went to the next UK tour in the same year with one of them.

Before that night, I never realised how much my first language could affect the overall experience. Then it made me wonder how great it would feel to have Johnny playing in Seoul, the city where I live, and go to the gig with all my friends here. But don't get me wrong, it's not like I don't want to travel anymore for gigs - I believe there's no other experience like that and can't wait to do it all again. I'm still keeping my hope anyway to see Johnny announcing tour dates, including a stop in Korea once this crazy time of pandemic is finally over - I'll be over the moon if that dream comes true!

- Joanne Lee

OPPOSITE PHOTO: ILZE FREY (NEWCASTLE, UK, 2018)

BERLIN, GERMANY
FESTSAAL KREUZBERG
21ST MAY 2018

Call *The Comet* was the name of Johnny Marr's new album and I really wanted to get a presale code for a preview show. I submitted 2 locations, Leeds and Berlin, but I thought the latter was wishful thinking. 2 days later, fan / friend, Jackie, reminded me to check my inbox. I opened my emails and my jaw dropped. I got a presale code for BERLIN! The next day I used the code to book my ticket. I was ecstatic!!! I had always dreamed of visiting the German capital — the culture was fascinating.

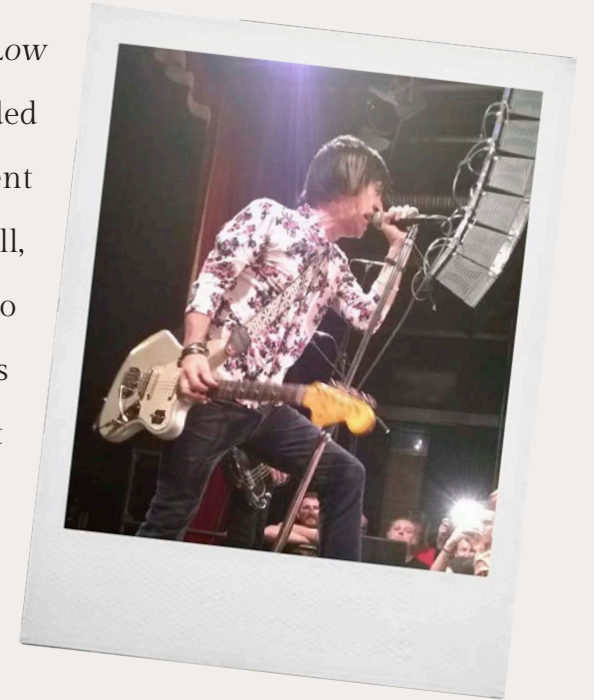
I hadn't got on a plane in several years and knew I would have to fly out alone, but I put all the plans in place. This was a dream come true. I was going to see JOHNNY

MARR in BERLIN!!!

The day before my morning flight, I took my suitcase on the train from Stoke to Manchester, then went to find my Airbnb in Wythenshawe, a.k.a Johnny Marr's old childhood estate, which was once the largest council estate in Europe. I barely slept that night (too excited) and, when I left for the airport in the morning, the bus station was deserted. (Heroes in an empty station?)



On the plane, I listened to David Bowie's *Low* album — perfect flight music. When I landed in Berlin, I couldn't wait to see it all. I spent 3 days exploring the sights: the Berlin wall, the Reichstag, Brandenburg Gate etc... I also found the legendary Hansa studios, plus David Bowie and Iggy Pop's old apartment in Schöneberg.



Johnny Marr night finally arrived and I took the U-bahn round to Festsaal

Kreuzberg. I had no idea what to expect from the new album, apart from the songs I had heard. Once I got inside the venue, I took a place at the left of the

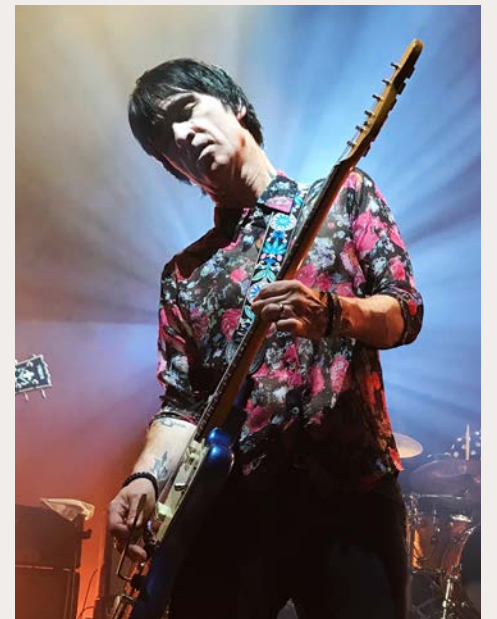
stage. I felt so lucky to be in a tiny venue in the German capital, ready to watch one of my favourite musicians. I really couldn't wait to hear the new stuff. Some fans near me tried to look at the setlist, but not me — I like surprises!

*"I didn't need
hallucinogenics
to get high.
I was flying."*

Eventually, the lights descended. I clapped and cheered as the band strolled on stage. I was so happy to see Jack, Iwan and Doviak looking smart, as always. Johnny sprung onto stage in a charming floral shirt, with a flash of blond in his raven black hair and ripped into lead track "The Tracers"; the 60s psychedelic sonics caught me in a cosmic trance. I didn't need hallucinogenics to get high. I was flying. Then, "Bigmouth Strikes Again" blasted into action, so



naturally, I went ballistic. A few songs in, a fast drum machine beat got my pulse going through “New Dominions”. This new material was really something. The slower, heartfelt, “Hi Hello”, was beautiful and bittersweet. 2 weeks before, Johnny had posted Instagram photos at Heaton Park, near to my Prestwich residence, but unexpected events had forced me back to my old house, and away from my beloved Manchester. This song helped me to deal with my difficult transition. A slow piano held the room still, beginning a gorgeously guitar-picked piece, “Walk Into The Sea”. I nearly got a little teary, but Electronic’s “Getting Away With It” instantly got me dancing again. I was also overjoyed to witness the poignant drama of “Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me”, a song that speaks volumes to me as a single, free spirited woman.



*“I felt like
the luckiest
girl alive”*

It was a pleasure to hear *Playland* tracks again, and the legendary “How Soon Is Now?” before the band left the stage. But it wasn’t over just yet, and besides, I needed more. Johnny and his band thankfully returned to give us a gothic wall of sound, “Actor Attractor”. The Bunnymen-like solo blew me away. The atmosphere eased into “Please Please Please Let Me Get What I Want”, and it really was Good times for a change.

TOP PHOTO: ILZE FREY (GLASGOW, UK, 2018)
OPPOSITE PHOTO: MARIA MELI (TORONTO, CANADA, 2018)



I felt like the luckiest girl alive. As I blissfully danced and sang with Berliners to “There Is A Light That Never Goes Out”, the chords from Johnny’s Fender jaguar chimed out from the speakers, I wanted those moments to last forever.

Several hours later, I was back in England, but it felt like I had fell down to earth.

- Melissa Roden

OPPOSITE PHOTO: MARC MCGARRAGHY
(MANCHESTER, UK, 2018)

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA
 VELVET UNDERGROUND
 30TH MAY 2018

This show was a part of the intimate launch tour for one of my favourite Johnny Marr albums (who's kidding who, I can't pick a favourite!), *Call the Comet*.

The venue ("Velvet Underground") was tiny, sweltering, and the stage was basically a large platform. In other words, my definition of absolute heaven! We were all packed closely together, practically reverberating with excitement. The lights went

down, and it must have been about 2 minutes before the gig was set to start, when my youngest decided to Facetime me from home. Thinking something was wrong, I immediately picked up and saw his excited nose pressed up against the screen. "Mama? Is He on yet?" (I capitalize the "h" because that's how he practically said it). I got off the phone hurriedly, promising to take lots of pics and videos, and also not wanting to miss Johnny's entrance onstage.

"The audience swayed together in one giant, sweaty, heap."

The band was packed tightly together, and the stage was so small that when Johnny came on, it felt like he was practically eye level with the audience. Those first guitar chords were positively electrifying. Hearing Johnny play those new album songs live for the first time was pure joy, I don't think I stopped grinning throughout the entire

show. The sound swept me away the whole night, and my ears were reverberating with magic. The audience swayed together in one giant, sweaty, heap. As usual, Johnny's guitar playing took on a life of its own, taking us on a journey along a spectrum of emotions.

The show ended all too soon, but I managed to snag a few great pics and videos for my son, who proclaimed, "Wow! You could practically touch his guitar, you were so close!". Indeed, I had to duck a few times. My hearing was muffled for a solid week after that show, but it was well worth it! And thus, began our journey of the many *Call the Comet* shows that followed.

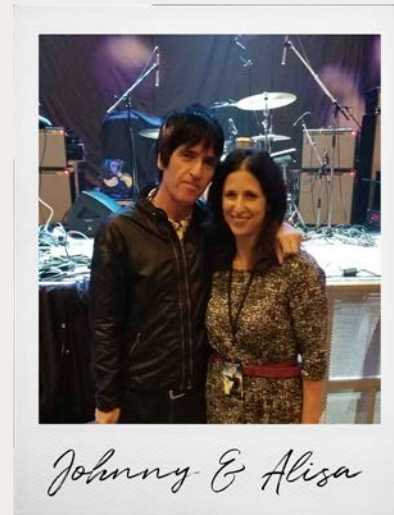
- Mona Minhas

VANCOUVER, BC, CANADA
VOGUE THEATRE
20TH SEPTEMBER 2018

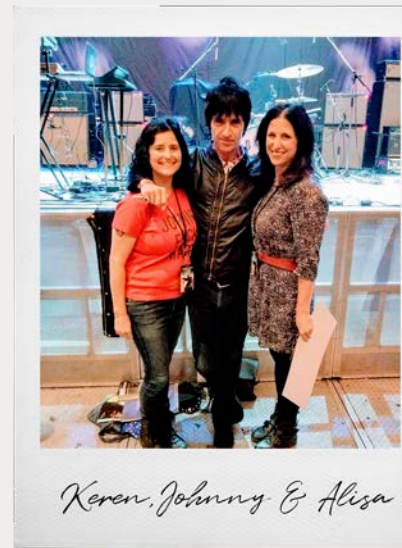
SEATTLE, WA, USA
& SHOWBOX
21ST SEPTEMBER 2018

Two years ago, September 2018, it's not an exaggeration to say that Johnny changed my life. I went to two gigs in two days: September 20 in Vancouver, BC, and September 21 in Seattle, Washington. I'd never done that before for any artist or band. I had just come through probably the worst 18 months of my life, which had included months of extreme burn out and severe depression so bad that it's not an exaggeration to say that it's surprising I was still around to go to Johnny's shows. It was a very dark time and I didn't feel like a very worthwhile person. But remember those old lyrics, "the songs that saved your life"? Well, let's just say that *Call the Comet* came at the right time, and when the tour was announced, it was a little spot of hope. I'd been set to see Johnny on one of the fatefully cancelled 2014 gigs (in Victoria, BC), but I cautiously allowed myself to hope that in 2018 it would all come full circle.

I can't quite explain it to other people, but those two days in September absolutely saved me. Just when I believed that everyone was a threat (I'd gone through some terrible trauma at the hands of others) and that I didn't deserve anything good — even air to breathe or food to eat — Johnny walked out of the venue a few hours before the gig in Vancouver, completely on his own accord, and came to talk to ME. He saw me and my sister standing there, he saw us notice him through the glass

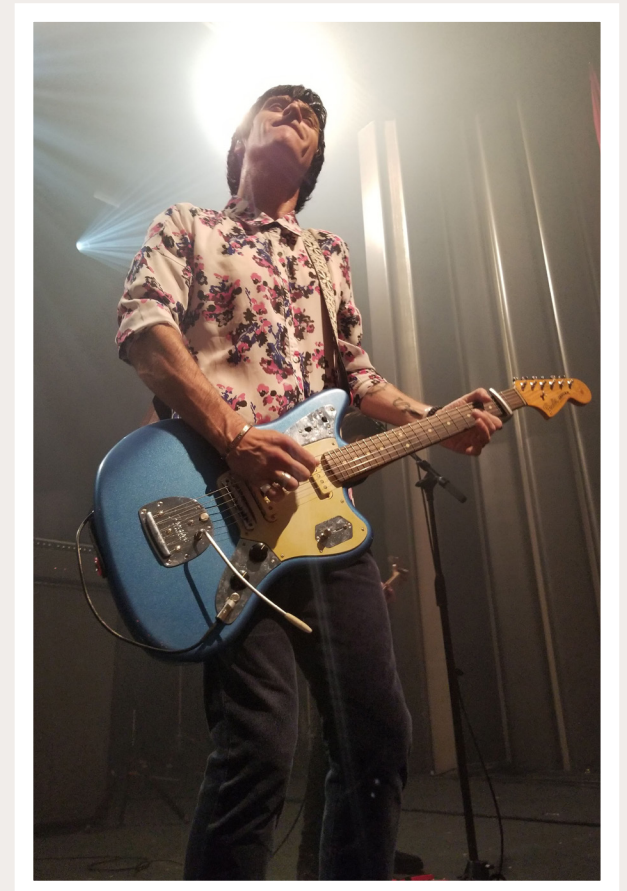


Johnny & Alisa



Keren, Johnny & Alisa

doors, made a silly face at us, and strolled out to chat. I was dumbfounded, not just because it was Johnny Fuckin Marr, but because someone thought I was worth it — someone important, who owed me nothing, who had better things to do with his time, thought I mattered enough to come have a chat, ask me questions about myself, touch my elbow (!), give me hugs. And then play his heart out right above my head (I was lucky to be front and centre on the barricade), investing himself so totally in the moment, gifting us all with his magical music and grace. I could go on and on about the details—the incredible thing he did with his guitar in the bridge of "How Soon is Now?", the Manchester disco of "Getting Away with It", how he'd lift his face up and close his eyes in pure joy and let us watch him get lost in playing. His love for music and his appreciation of and identification with his fans — he's a music fan, too, and we know he gets us — was a light in the darkness. He couldn't have known that he was saving my life on those two days, in the moments that first night when we chatted on the street and later





“Those days were the beginning of my recovery, of remembering that people can sometimes be terrible, *but they can also be wonderful, generous, generative, and kind.* “

at the meet and greet, and when I listened to him soundcheck “Hey Angel” in Seattle the next day. He couldn’t have known. And yet he did; because that’s just him. Those days were the beginning of my recovery, of remembering that people can sometimes be terrible, but they can also be wonderful, generous, generative, and kind. That as low as I felt, some people could still see me and thought I mattered even just a little bit.

Thank you, Johnny, for the last four decades of music but especially for those two days in September 2018. I hope if you are ever having a hard day or doubting yourself, you’ll know that you kept a random Canadian woman going — you kept children having a mother, a husband having a wife, a human continuing to live and breathe and, as it happens, flourish.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart, and happiest of birthdays to you.



- Alisa Harrison

OPPOSITE PHOTO: MARC MCGARRAGHY (MANCHESTER, UK, 2018)

SILVER SPRING, MARYLAND, USA
 THE FILLMORE SILVER SPRING
 17TH OCTOBER 2018

The year 2018 was by far one of the happiest of my life and Johnny played a large part of that happiness. Seeing Johnny Marr live isn't just going to see "a show", it's going to an experience like no other. I've



been to a lot of gigs but none of them prepared me for what I experienced during the 2018 *Call the Comet* Tour. Seeing Johnny Marr is exciting enough. Meeting Johnny on your birthday, there's nothing that even comes close! I've lived in Maryland for decades and going to see Johnny at the Fillmore in Silver Spring, on October 17th, 2018, took me to a part of the state I'd never ventured to. Silver Spring turned out to be a very hip place. There's a record store next to the venue, which Johnny visited, and along the same street are some great places to get a bite before the show. My excitement, however, made it difficult to indulge my appetite. The line waiting to get into the Fillmore was buzzing! The energy generated by the excitement was infectious and everyone in line became fast friends. Fans were lined up with everything



from Smiths memorabilia to Fender guitars, waiting for Johnny to emblazon them with his bold, characteristic signature.

Meeting Johnny was, of course, the ultimate experience, but what really struck me that night was the way the audience came together and sang along with some of the songs. Of course, that happens at a lot of gigs, but there was something different about the feeling

of this one. I have never felt such strong comradery at any concert before or since. The feeling is one I can't put words to. There was an energy weaving through the audience connecting everyone together. The excitement alone could have powered Johnny's entire rig! It's a feeling that still, two years later hasn't faded. There was definitely magic in Maryland that night.



Thank you, Johnny, for making it a memorable birthday and for giving me the best gift ever!

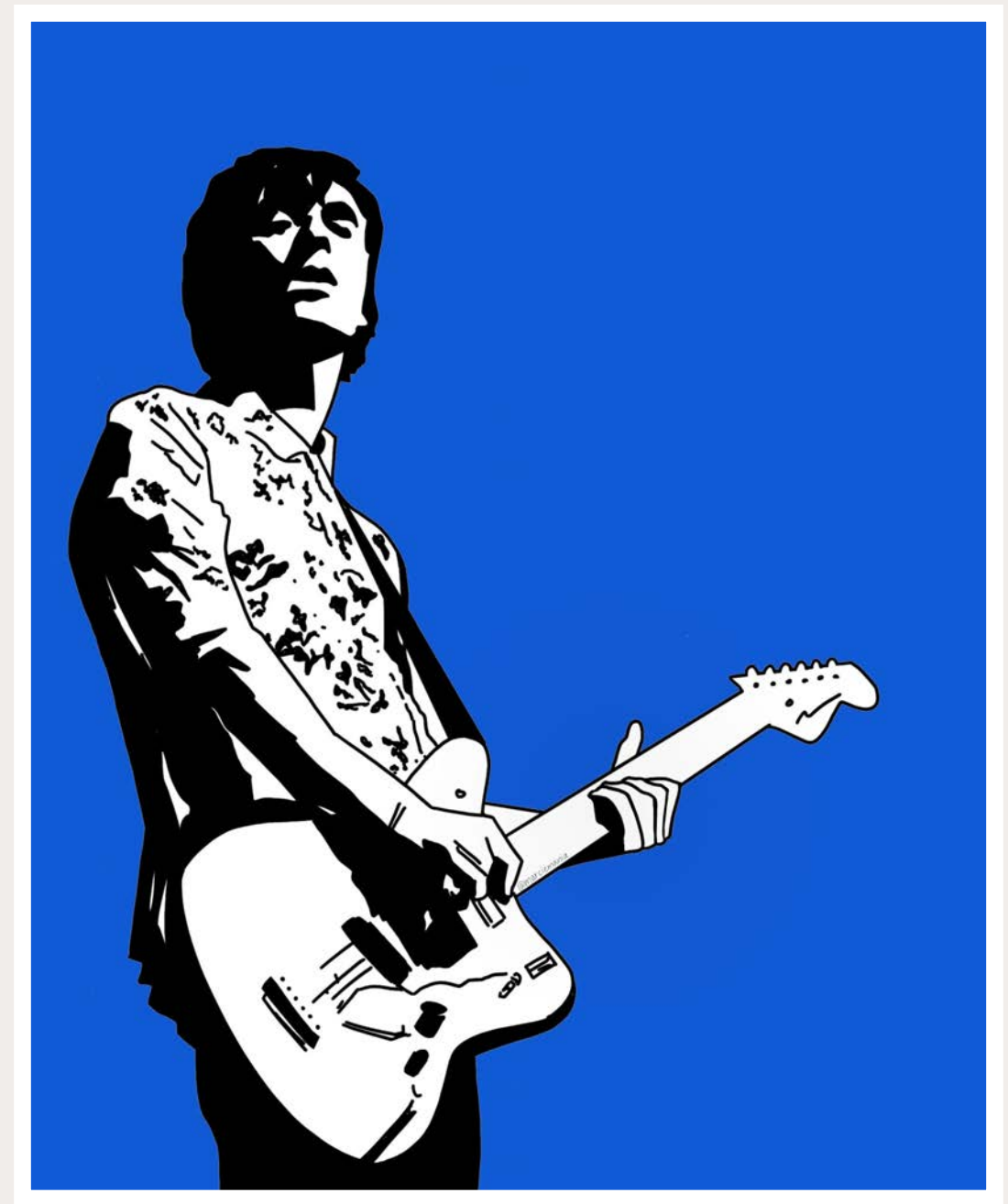
- Mj Zander

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA
 THE PHOENIX CONCERT THEATRE
 19TH OCTOBER 2018

OPPOSITE ARTWORK BY MARCIE CONNAN

Johnny Marr's music has been a constant throughout my life. Not only has his music served as a soundtrack to all the typical milestones, but connection over his music has led to meeting some of the best people in my life, including my husband. Seeing live music is a passion of ours, and in October 2018, we finally had our first opportunity to see Johnny perform live at the Phoenix in Toronto, Canada. My husband and I waited in anticipation for months leading up to the show. We go to concerts often, but this was our unicorn.

I'll never forget seeing Johnny first step onto the stage, with all the swagger one would expect. Here was the man who inspired me to pick up a guitar! The energy in the building was infectious as Johnny completely owned the stage and gave us just a taste of his brilliance. We were mesmerized from the very first notes of "The Tracers", through a special guest appearance from Kevin Drew of Broken Social Scene, and all the iconic songs that showcased Johnny's talent and brilliant body of work. Needless to say, we were completely blown away. At one point, my husband and I looked at each other, tears of pure joy springing from our eyes, as we held hands, got lost in the music and stood in awe of the best guitarist on the planet. It was decades in the making, and so epic to see and hear how these songs were meant to be played. Often imitated, never duplicated; we were riding the Johnny F*cking Marr vibe, hanging on every strum, and simply did not want it to end.



The show inspired me to capture the experience in this illustration which instantly brings me back to the most memorable performance I've ever seen. Thank you for the beautiful memories, Johnny!

- Marcie Connan

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

THE PHOENIX CONCERT THEATRE

19TH OCTOBER 2018

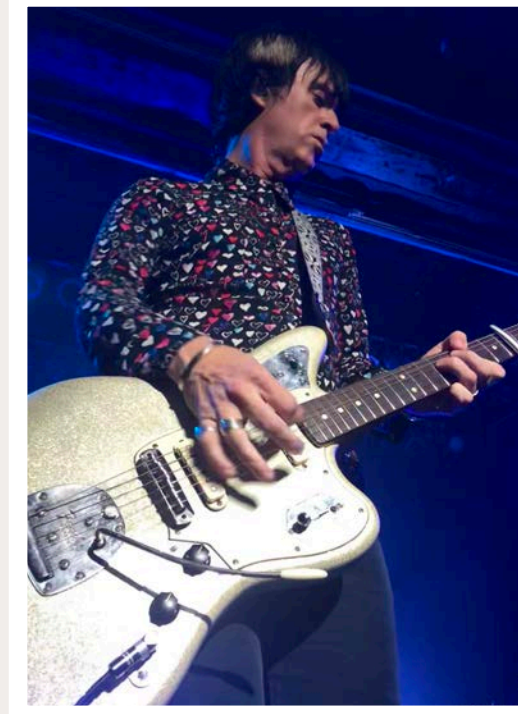
This was the second time I saw Johnny on the *Call the Comet* Tour, the first being an album release show at the Velvet Underground several months earlier. This was such an incredible night for me, as I had an experience that I can only describe as life altering and life confirming with respect to my decision to stop drinking in early 2018. Prior to his concert in Toronto, a friend of mine and I were fortunate to attend a meet and greet event with Johnny. The Smiths and The The were two bands that helped me get through some very difficult personal times when I was a teenager 30-35 years ago. Johnny has always been one of my musical idols and after my experience that night, he's also one of my life idols.

Arriving at the Phoenix, I was anxious and nervous, but upon walking into the room



to see Johnny standing there, I was instantly overcome with a feeling of calm, as though this was exactly where I was meant to be at that moment. He just has a way of making you feel so comfortable and welcome. I even got up the courage to give him a hug. Lol. When he noticed my The The t-shirt from their recent comeback tour, he mentioned he would be seeing Matt Johnson in a few weeks. Little did I know that would include a rare on-stage appearance together. He then graciously signed several items for me, including my 1985 pressing

of *The Queen is Dead* and a copy of his book.



In his autobiography "Set the Boy Free", Johnny describes how he decided to become spontaneously sober ("kicked alcohol into touch and never looked back" was how he described it). During our 5-10 minute chat, I mentioned that I had also "kicked alcohol into touch in February". Johnny's eyes lit up and he excitedly said "Isn't it a great feeling?!". At that moment, 15-year old me and 49-year old me were officially reunited. The photo of the two of us was

taken immediately after that conversation.

The show itself was incredible, and I was right up front to see Johnny at his absolute best. If not for the autographed items and photos from that night, I would have thought it was all a dream. To be honest, part of me still can't believe it happened. And to think, had I not made the decision to become alcohol-free, it never would have.



- Mike Shennan

TORONTO, ONTARIO, CANADA

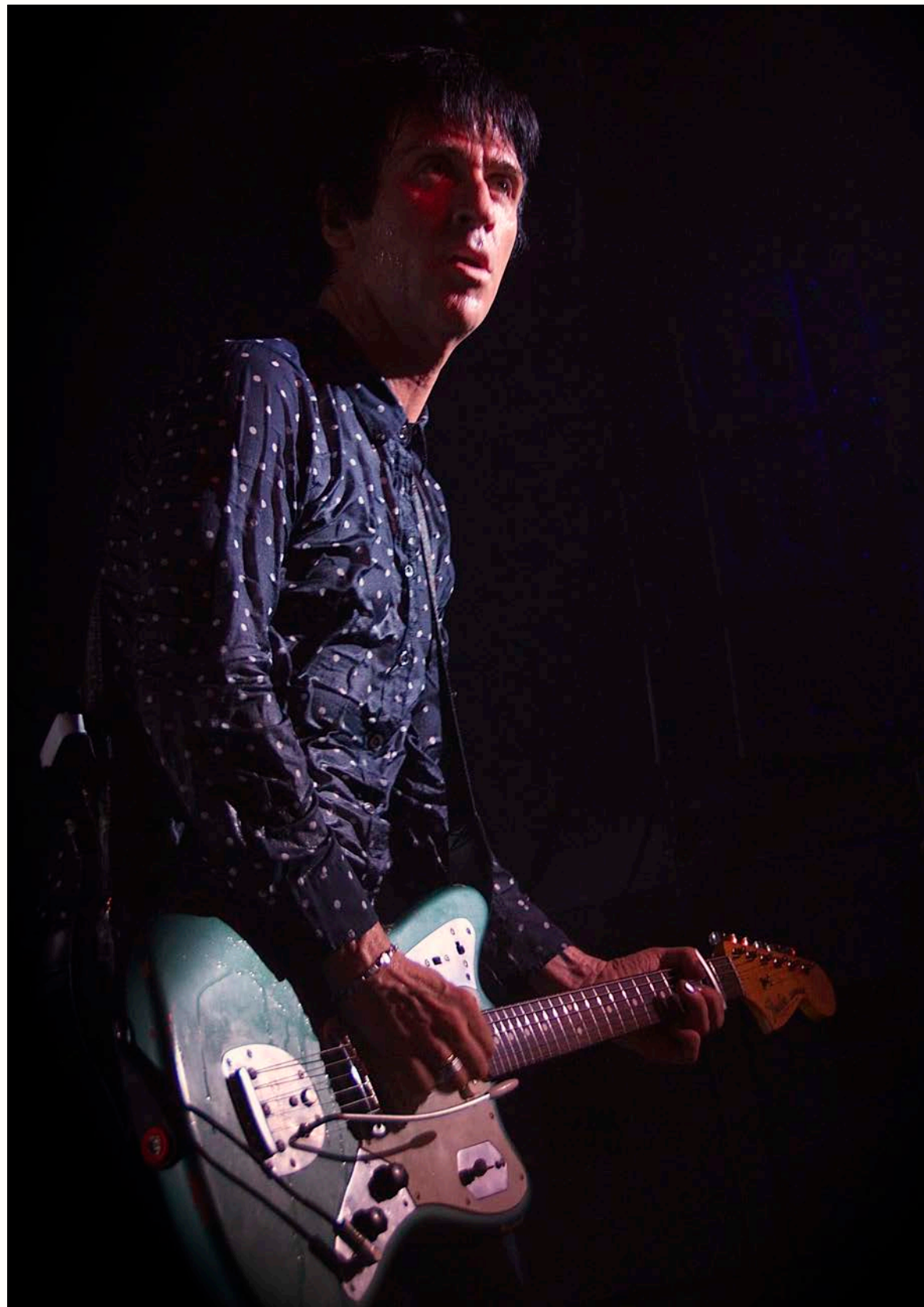
THE PHOENIX CONCERT THEATRE

19TH OCTOBER 2018

OPPOSITE ARTWORK AND LIVE PHOTO BY NATALIA TCHERNAIAK

It was a dark and stormy night. Late October, 2018, Toronto, Canada. I was about to set out to see Johnny Marr in concert for the second time that year (a new record!) (pun intended), and I was on a mission. Hearing “Walk into the Sea” played at the preview show earlier that May, has reached deep into my soul and touched my heart in the most profound way. I knew if I heard it again, I’d start crying. Being an artist, I feel especially susceptible to wave-like inspiration like this, and the song, the whole album *Call the Comet*, had inspired a great amount of new artwork from me; working in cyanotype medium, I called it “cyanide tsunami”. And I had to share it with Johnny! So I went dressed for the waiting-outside-weather, with my artwork-to-give-to-Johnny in hand, determined for the success of my mission. And of course, I was rewarded. “Walk into the Sea” came on, I teared up listening to this Music of the Spheres play the strings of my heart, and then assumed my position by the tour bus ambush afterwards. Certainly, Mr Fucking Marr did not disappoint his fans. He hung around and really made a conversation with each and every one of us who stayed behind. When it was my turn, I cut to the chase and confronted, “Johnny, remember we met in May, and I gave you one of my prints?” A puzzled look came across a pretty face; he really didn’t want me feel bad, but he clearly had no recollection of any of the print-giving events taking place prior. I appreciated his effort, and just kept on spewing information, while giving him the print heavily inspired by the song, like illustrated lyrics. And I can tell he appreciated it — he took the time to look at it, to talk to me about my practice, to wish me luck and all the best. As we parted, he stretched out his hand for a handshake, but I stepped in closer





“Call the
Comet”,
had inspired a
great amount
of new artwork
from me.”

for an embrace. I realized afterward it was a complete violation of personal boundaries, but Johnny took it well, and gave a true and heartwarming hug. With a smile he said in the end, “Oh, I’m not worthy”, and I just smiled back, overwhelmed with all kinds of emotions. I kept the smile on all through my bike ride home, and it kept me warm.

- Natalia Tcherniak

OPPOSITE PHOTO: MARC MCGARRAGHY (WAKEFIELD, UK, 2015)

PHOTO BELOW: NATALIA TCHERNIAK (ONTARIO, CANADA, 2018)



BATH, UK

THE BATH FORUM

6TH NOVEMBER 2018

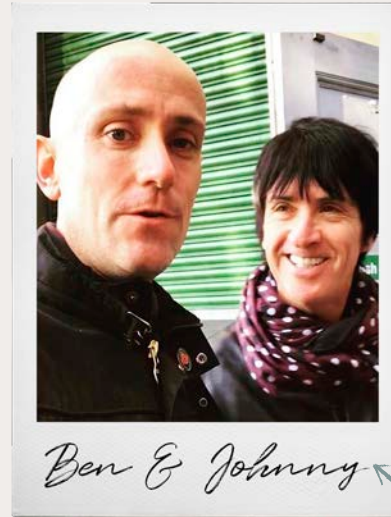
OPPOSITE PHOTO: CATHERINE SMITH (GLASGOW, UK, 2018)

The date was 6th November 2018. Having seen Johnny live at my local Northampton venue (The Roadmender) and been to his 'in conversation' book gig at Birmingham Town Hall, I decided to travel cross country by myself to see Johnny in action at Bath Forum.

Having never been to Bath before, after checking into my hotel I decided to take a walk through the historic town and have a look around. After a while I stumbled across the gig venue with two tour buses parked outside.

I immediately fell into to full groupie mode and waited for what felt like a very long time for a glimpse of Johnny. After a while he appeared and I failed to play it cool and meekly asked for a photo.

Of course Johnny was lovely. He was clearly between sound checks, yet stopped for a quick photo and handshake.



FIND SOMEONE WHO
LOOKS AT YOU LIKE
JOHNNY LOOKS AT
BEN!



I have met some of my heroes and on occasions felt a little disappointed — but this certainly wasn't true of Johnny. Cheers mate! (Er... I can call you mate, right Johnny?)

- Ben Gilbert

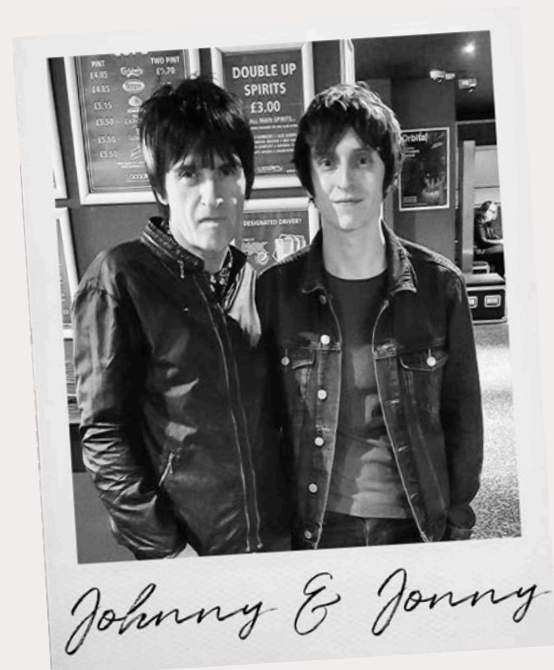
SHEFFIELD, UK
O2 ACADEMY
13TH NOVEMBER 2018

I've been lucky to catch Johnny on all of his solo tours so far - but this one was pretty special.

Call The Comet contains some of my favourite work Johnny has done, so to finally see it live was brilliant. The tracks were energetic, focused, and generated such an electric atmosphere with a perfect set list. Riding the wave of the opener "The Tracers" and then peppering the show with classics by The Smiths — that never sounded fresher — it was a tour de force that gave you the sense that this band was a truly well oiled, cohesive machine fresh from touring the USA.

"Walk Into The Sea" is, for me, one of the best tracks Johnny has released. Atmospheric,

brooding and emotional, it was really something to hear that song live, and a special moment for me. I guess you become thankful for the joy musicians and performers bring in a deeper way at gigs. No matter how brilliant a record is, the energy and visceral thrill of experiencing your favourite music live cannot be substituted. The two way, symbiotic exchange where the band enthuses the crowd and the crowd give that energy back ten fold was so obvious that night. Pints flying around, sing alongs, chants...it becomes quite



obvious how much people love Johnny Marr. Especially when he then throws in a cheeky cover of Kylie Minogue...

The other side of the coin is the social aspect of the show — gigs, as we are all too aware at this testing time, are about bringing people together. I spoke to some wonderful people and made a few friends that evening. Getting to say hello to the man himself beforehand was great, along with my favourite Dynamic Duo Aly and Ory, who knit this fantastic community of fans together. It truly is something special.

I recall feeling so inspired after seeing such a master at work I picked up my guitar with renewed vigour the next day, and felt more focused practicing with my own band, riding on that post gig euphoria any concert go-er will be able to identify with! Music truly can lift you in more ways than just being present.

The most noticeable thing for me as I walked back to the car in the cold Yorkshire night was casting my mind back to seeing Johnny at the Deaf Institute in Manchester in 2011 and thinking of the upward trajectory since. *The Messenger* was immense, *Playland* a step up, and this was yet another notch on song craftsmanship. It was, for me, the culmination of watching Johnny and the band develop as a unit, a touring band, and ultimately, songwriting. Who knows we're we'll be with that fourth album.

Let's hope we'll be able to enjoy that again.

- Jonny Hughes

“No matter how brilliant a record is, the energy and visceral thrill of experiencing your favourite music live *cannot be substituted.*”

JONNY HUGHES

SHEFFIELD | O2 ACADEMY | 13/11/2018



PHOTO BY LINDA POULNOTT
(CESENA, ITALY, 2019)

GLASGOW, UK

BARROWLAND BALLROOM

15TH NOVEMBER 2018GIRLS
IN GLASGOW

The friendships nurtured with other fans is really important to me (and to many fellow fans) and getting together is brilliant. What is truly wonderful though has to be sharing a gig together — and Glasgow Barrowlands gave an irresistible chance to do that with some of my closest buddies.

Having met Johnny prior to the gig (which was utterly fabulous and so special), standing right on the barrier with Linda Poulcott, Catherine Smith and Kirsty Smith was simply out of this world. We whooped, we danced, we grinned at each other and we also voluntarily provided backing vocals whilst conveniently forgetting that we're all the wrong side of 40! Whoever said fangirls have to be teenagers is an idiot — at that gig we were all in the moment and probably a bit ridiculous.

The set was phenomenal and the performance that Johnny gave was nothing short of magnificent. I left feeling totally and utterly high on life and bedazzled by the glitterball. What an incredible gig, in an iconic venue with my favourite Johnny Marr people in the same room.

- Alison Moore

“ We whooped, we danced, we grinned at each other and we also voluntarily provided backing vocals whilst conveniently forgetting that we're all the wrong side of 40! Whoever said fangirls have to be teenagers is an idiot.”

ALISON MOORE

GLASGOW | BARROWLAND BALLROOM | 15/11/2018

GLASGOW, UK
 BARROWLAND BALLROOM
 15TH NOVEMBER 2018

I've been to absolutely loads of Johnny's fab gigs and loved every single one of them.

They are very hard to choose between, but my favourite gig was Barrowland, Glasgow, on November 15th 2018, where I had the pleasure of going to the meet and greet beforehand.

Johnny was such a lovely gentleman and so easy to talk to. We talked about all sorts, but I forgot to ask him to put my daughter Mary's name on the poster he signed, which I had promised her I would do!

I also forgot to tell him that when she was 7 years old, at primary school, the teacher had asked any of the children in his class, willing to do so, to stand up and sing their favourite song. Mary told me that all the children who did sing, sang a One Direction song, except her. Mary stood up and sang "There Is A Light That Never Goes Out". She told me that her teacher, who was in his early 20s, picked up his guitar, started playing it and sang along with her. A well educated teacher.

The gig was out of this world and I had the pleasure of being with a lovely bunch from this group — Alison Moore, Catherine Smith, Connor Whyte, Linda Poulcott,



Lee Dela Cruz & Riley Langston. Aly and Ory were wonderful, as always.

I'm really missing the Johnny gigs and seeing the lovely bunch.

I hope the gigs will be back on, in the not too distant future.

Thanks,

- Kirsty Smith



GLASGOW, UK
 BARROWLAND BALLROOM
 15TH NOVEMBER 2018

Brief moments, unconscious kindness and lasting impressions. It's tough when you are a kid who society wants to define only by your difference, your additional support needs, your diminutive height and your medical prognosis. As a result interactions with outward looking adults who accept you for who you are tend to be magnified in their importance.



We look back and hope Johnny Marr enjoyed his brief moment of connection with our kid when they chatted at Glasgow Barrowlands. We are however acutely aware that for Molli it transcended fan/artist meet and greet; these rare moments become way markers from which she plots forward her aspirations.

To add some context, as the parents in this scenario, what's more challenging than your kid being seen as "different" is her being invisible. What that does is cement a sense of self that she can't achieve, she can't shine and she shouldn't bother trying.

So how do the 2 threads connect...simple, guitars.



We left the Barrowlands with a kid telling us on repeat that Johnny told her she can. The guitar was restrung with thinner gauge strings, the action was lowered but the

“We left the Barrowland’s with a kid telling us on repeat that Johnny told her she can.”

false start disappeared into another period of time where the guitar gathered dust. However, unlike other such times this actually turned out to be the laying of foundations. Move forward in time and she now has a tutor; a kind, charismatic guitar player who enjoys the person she is and who now has her playing daily.

The abstract nature of a momentary connection is translated through her unique perception in the

most heart warming manner. Johnny Marr (insert journalist's grandiose description) is just Johnny, there is no sense of separation.

We have "checked in" with her musical muse 3 more times since the Barrowlands, including a soaking in an Edinburgh thunderstorm and a trip to Manchester that coincided with the day of her 18th birthday.

She knows Johnny now, why wouldn't she, they chatted, they connected, he was kind and musically he is around the house and car all the time.

Molli has a naivety that perfectly balances our fierce protection from life's toxic influences, her vulnerability and the best parts of the human spirit. So what does she want me to tell Johnny? "Tell him I'm now moving from vegetarian to vegan, tell him I can tune my guitar, ask when he is coming to the football with us? Does he know Raith Rovers won the league? Oh and if he is lonely he can stay with us when he comes to Scotland?"

There is no distance between artist and listener, there can't be when as Molli says, we are just "folk, guid folk that are kind and who ken each other, kind of like pals and we both play guitar".

Thank you Johnny, thank you Ory and Aly. Just holler if our reality can ever help yours.

- David & Molli Hancock

“There is no distance between artist and listener, there can't be when as Molli says, we are just *“folk, guid folk that are kind and who ken each other, kind of like pals and we both play guitar”.*”

DAVID & MOLLI HANCOCK
GLASGOW | BARROWLAND BALLROOM | 15/11/2018

GLASGOW, UK

BARROWLAND BALLROOM

15TH NOVEMBER 2018

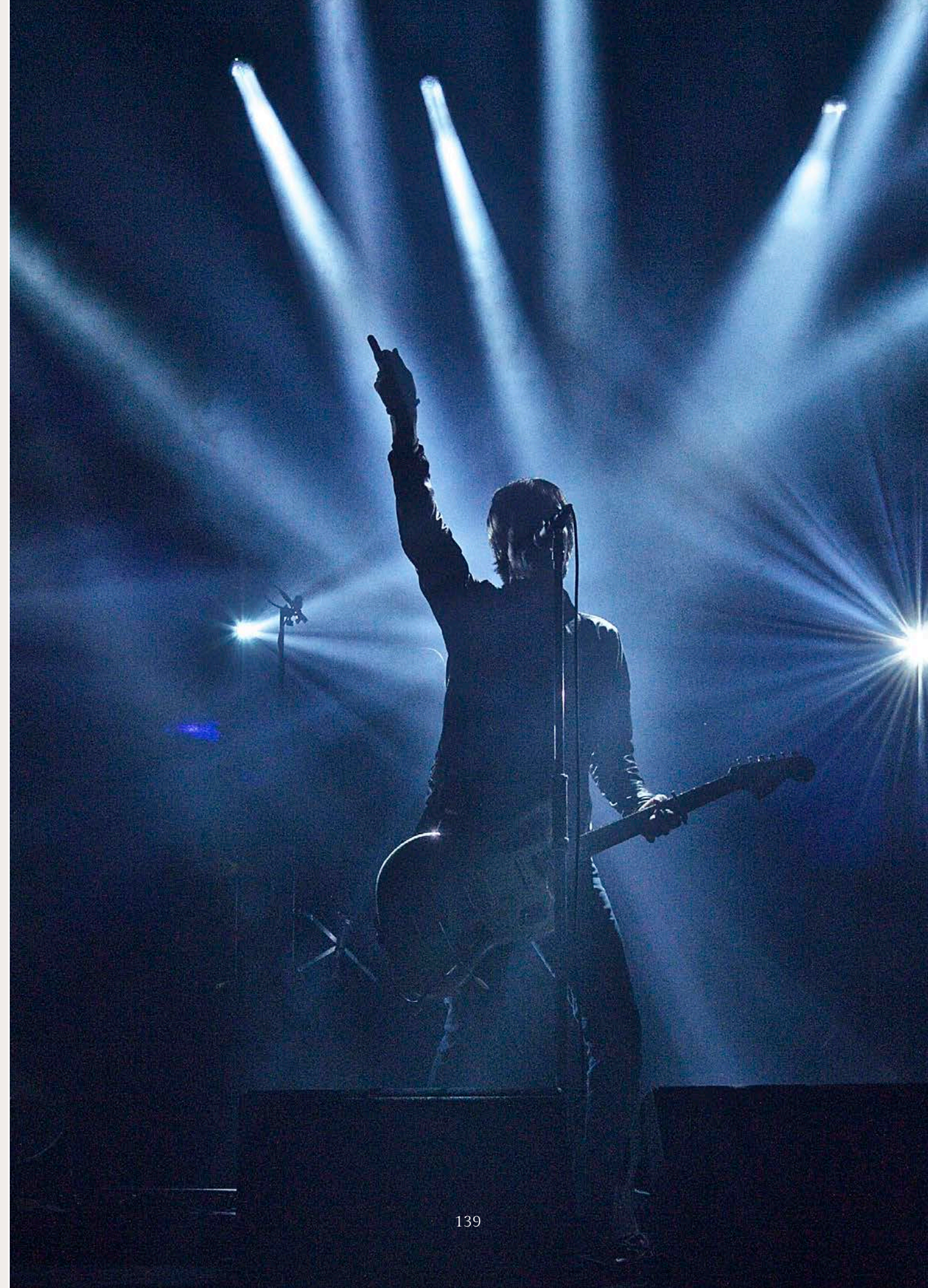
This was the one I'd been waiting for! Johnny at The Barras. I knew this was going to be epic and it proved to be. He brings so much (positive) energy to a gig, it's impossible for it not to affect you. He's been affecting me since I was 15. There was little run in the middle of the gig that literally blew me away — "The Headmaster Ritual", "Walk Into The Sea", "Getting Away With It", "Hey Angel", "Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me" and "Spiral Cities".

Wow!

The one thing that kind of annoys me about this gig is that I saw a few familiar faces (Aly, Ory, Linda, Keks) in the venue but was, I guess, a bit too shy at that moment to come up and introduce myself. Hopefully I get the chance to meet them again.

- Craig McMahon

OPPOSITE PHOTO: MARC MCGARRAGHY, MANCHESTER, UK, 2018)



LIVERPOOL, UK

O2 ACADEMY LIVERPOOL

17TH NOVEMBER 2018

MANCHESTER, UK

O2 APOLLO

18TH NOVEMBER 2018

My most memorable gigs were most definitely in November 2018. The first of the two was in Liverpool and I brought my wife, Leyla, along with me. She's been to a few Johnny gigs with me before but this was the first in a while.

We checked into our hotel and went out for food / drinks and to meet up with the lovely Erica and Fernanda, who were also in town for the show. I'd never met the girls before so I was nervous, but that soon passed as we all got to know each other over a beer and some fries!

On to another pub, (shock!) and we met up with Alison, Richard and their daughter, Grace.

It is such a surreal feeling meeting people in the flesh after only ever communicating through the 2 dimensional medium of social media, like seeing an avatar come to life!

Onto the venue and we all convened as close to the front as we could. It wasn't long before the house lights went down and our hero took to the stage with his familiar swagger and confidence, like he owns the gaff. And for those 2 hours he certainly does! Kicking down on his pedalboard he engages wall of psychedelic sounds which takes the adrenaline up to the highest level!

The show was all killer as usual and by the end of the night I was a proper sweaty mess!

The following night was Manchester. Still feeling raw from the previous night's shenanigans, I was even more nervous about meeting even more new faces. As I checked in to the McDonald hotel, I met Seán Fleming, closely followed by MJ, her partner Vic, María Stewart and the fabulously debonair Adi Harrold! At the show I convinced Adi to join me in drinking red wine by the pint. Not big and not clever. But whilst returning from the bar, I bumped into another pair of familiar looking avatars — Riley and Lee, whom I escorted to the front with the rest of the crew — the Marr mates! And If you believe in all that shit, there was never a night before or since where the stars were all perfectly aligned.

Most of us ended up back at Aly and Ory's hotel room for an after party with plenty of coke going around, although it was the fizzy beverage kind and not the Class A narcotic, thankfully! I think I'd had enough of an adrenaline ride for one weekend!

- Chris Beattie

MADRID, SPAIN

SALA BUT

21ST NOVEMBER 2018

I guess I am not the only one who miss live concerts, especially if Johnny Marr is involved? Definitely not, we're all on the same page.

Although my last Johnny Marr concerts were the two nights at Albert Hall in Manchester on September last year, I am going to talk about his gig in Madrid in 2018 for the *Call the Comet Tour* as a way of invoking him back to my country again.

Of course, people in general have a tremendous respect for The Smiths' legacy, but I wanted to check for myself if all I had seen and heard about Johnny's live concerts was true. As for his records, I've always considered he had very clear and defined ideas about his music and career. The fact that the venue was Sala But, small and cozy, made me decide, so I planned to meet some Johnny loving friends there (the best plan in the world).

I'll spare you my excitement and how nervous I was when I was packing for Madrid (so optimistic I took my copy of "Set the Boy Free", just in case...dreaming is free), I also took a couple of photos just in case too, wishing for the best one more time.

We move forward in time when the concert was about to start. The first song was "The Tracers". I thought I liked more the live version and that sounded perfectly. *Call the Comet* is an album full of gems that really shine live. Goosebumps and moving moments with the classics, from The Smiths' "How Soon Is Now?" or "Last Night I



PHOTO BY ILZE FREY
(GLASGOW, UK, 2018)

Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me", and the communion band/audience that was "There Is a Light That Never Goes Out".

Trying to go back to reality little by little, my friends and I commented on how magical that night had been and hung around once the gig had finished. I saw some fans waiting outside with the same book I had brought too (popular signing material, I could see).

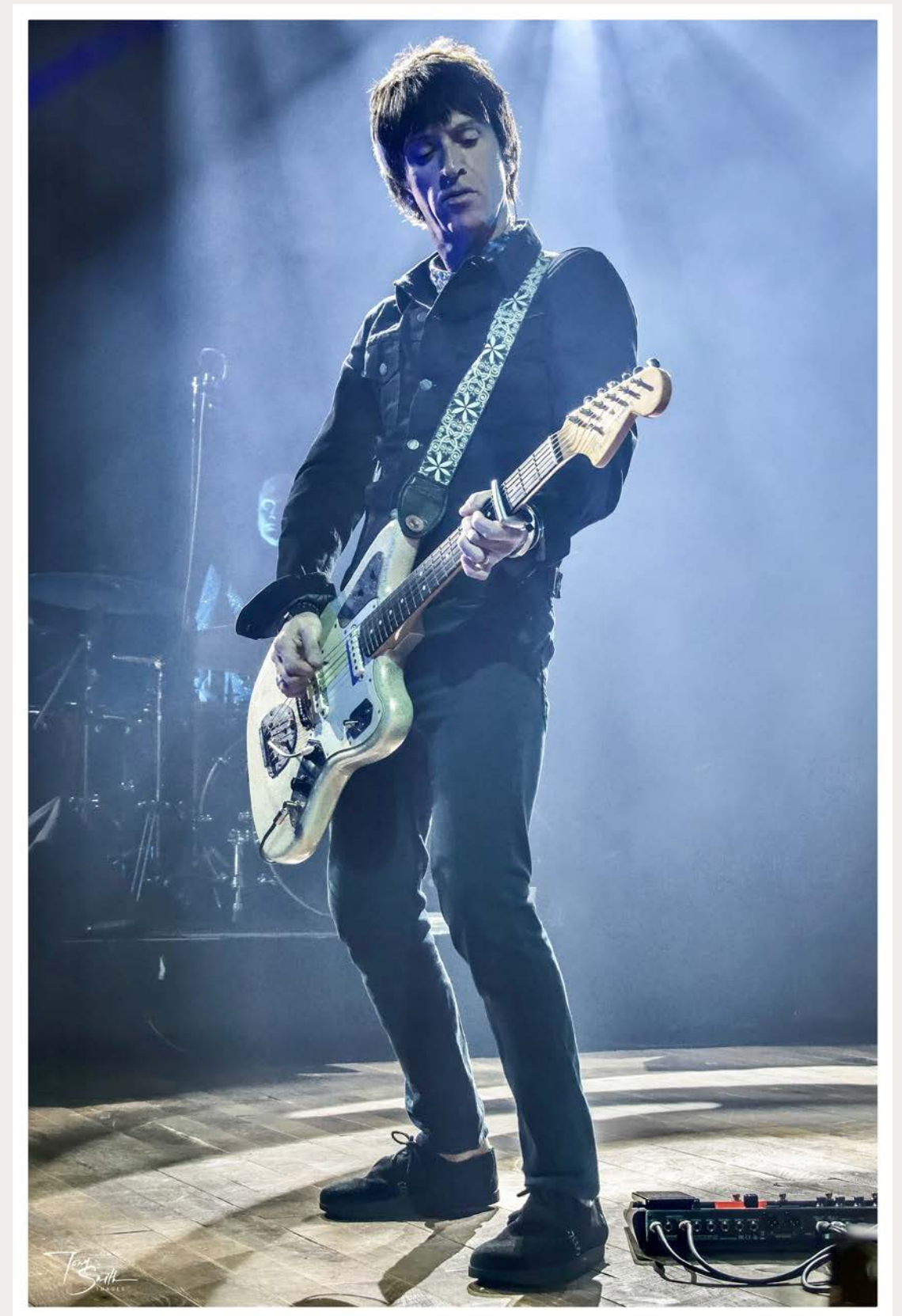
After an hour or so, once the roadies and the merch staff had packed everything, Johnny came out. I couldn't believe how generous and gentle was with all the people who were out of the venue. He took time with all of them for selfies and signing, trying to please them. I could have a little chat with him, got my book signed and two photos for some friends who weren't able to see him on this tour. I must say his manners and kindness were impeccable even when I must have done or said something stupid (but I don't have a legend in front of me everyday!).

When Johnny finished signing and taking selfies, he said goodnight and we all looked at each other with incredibility at what had just happened. I suppose it's something none of the people who were there will forget.

Finally, I admit the last things I packed in my bags were the stuff Johnny signed (I needed to see them before falling asleep). It was so perfect that sometimes I think it was a dream and more this year that has been so challenging for all of us. If we can get through this, we will be stronger and I'm sure next JM concert will be a blast.

- Maria Luz Castro

OPPOSITE PHOTO: TONY SMITH (ANAHEIM, USA, 2019)



ZAGREB, CROATIA

LAUBA

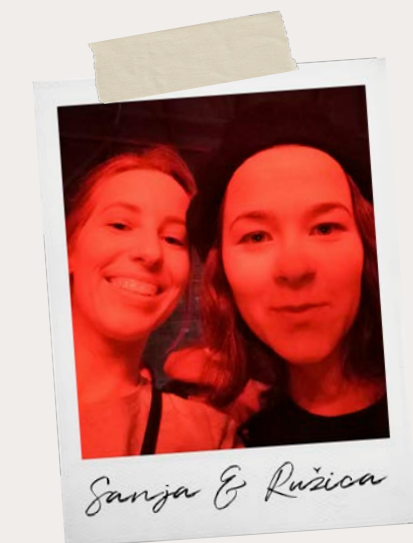
24TH NOVEMBER 2018

OPPOSITE PHOTO: DAVE KAPLE (LONDON, CANADA, 2019)

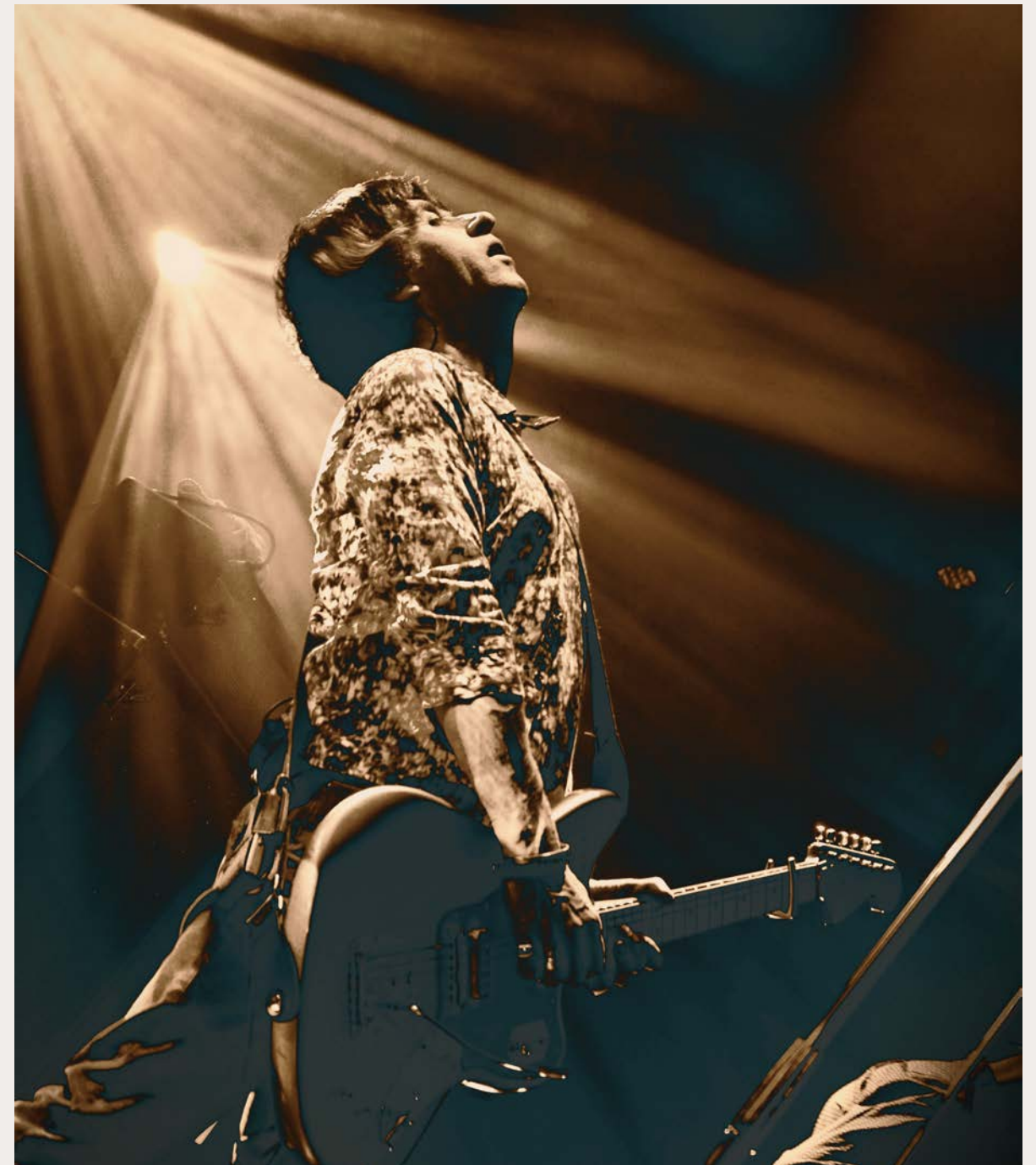
When I heard that Johnny is touring and that my city is on the list, I just had to be there. Getting a ticket was a struggle, spending hours on my computer waiting for two tickets (for me & my bff). It was surreal waiting for a concert and being there on that night. We tried to be as close as we could, we stood in second/third row jamming on every song, singing every song, even the ones we weren't familiar with. And to see Johnny so close, playing magically his guitar — wow, just wow. I was yelling his name, trying to at least get his eyes

“Jamming on every song, singing every song.”

to see me. I would be so happy if he just looked my way. And he did. I lifted my hands and made that heart sign. He smiled, and winked. I was D E A D. Later that night he threw his guitar pick towards me but some guy in front of me (who was just standing like a statue) managed to slowly and without any emotions pick it up, even though I was fast as a cat in searching where it landed. I was gutted. Like, dude, the legend is



right there, standing in front of you, so close and you stood here like a marble sculpture, not even jamming your head! We stayed for about 20 minutes near the stage after they finished, hoping Johnny will appear. Unfortunately, he didn't. But



I was thrilled anyways for just being there and hearing him play. And my friend's birthday was on 25th, so we welcomed her birthday there on that night.

- Sanja Fera

LONDON, UK
 EARTH HACKNEY
 9TH DECEMBER 2018

When the tickets for what we thought was the last show of the *Call the Comet* tour went on sale in the UK, I was sitting on my couch in Toronto, and my fingers went into auto-pilot mode and I impulsively bought tickets. I sheepishly informed my husband about an hour later that we might be going to London in December to see Johnny's last show. He was

a little shocked, but was quickly game! After all, we had seen quite a few shows on the tour, and it only made sense to cap it off.



A few weeks later, we figured out how to leave our kids in good hands and got on the plane with major excitement. It was my first time in that part of London, which was really cool. We lined up for the show, it was a chilly night, but excitement was mounting. The earthH arts centre venue itself was really unique, with stacked, terraced seating. We managed to snag a spot in front of the stage. Johnny was in amazing form, especially

considering that he had been touring for so many months. The sound was great, and the fans were really engaged. The gig highlight was when he played "This Charming

Man" for the first time, after many teasers. My head nearly blew off with excitement, as I could hardly believe it was happening! He sounded absolutely amazing, and it was wonderful to focus on his voice alone, as he opted not to play guitar in a very rare moment. As he ended the show with "There is a Light", the choir of voices from the audience that enveloped the entire atmosphere was positively moving. I'll never forget that moment that felt somehow unifying, and yet I was so far away from the place I call home.



We hung outside the venue for a long time after the show, outside, meeting some fellow fans (some who wanted to meet up again during our visit!), and it struck me in that moment that Johnny's fan-base is such an incredible community of like-minded, generous, and lovely spirits. Maybe it was being in Hackney, maybe it was the sheer adrenalin rush from another Johnny Marr show, but it was one of the most memorable nights I've had. I'm so grateful to have attended that very special gig.

- Mona Minhas

MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY, USA
 THE WELLMONT THEATRE
 1ST MAY 2019

THIS NIGHT HAS OPENED MY EYES

Fast forward, and Johnny is playing in my home state! My concert buddy Frank Leong & I were determined to get to the venue early. We usually like to have a leisurely dinner before lining up. As we approached the restaurant there was a grand tour bus parked right out front. I commented to Frank that it would be crazy if that were Johnny's bus. We were a bit early and the restaurant was not ready to receive patrons, so we stepped back out onto the sidewalk to wait.

Shortly thereafter, someone exited the bus. We couldn't fully see them, because a lamppost and some signs were blocking our view. I asked Frank who it was, and he commented that it was probably just the bus driver. Meanwhile, someone who I can only assume was a roadie was lugging all manner of things from the cargo hold of the bus to some destination around the corner. The "bus driver" was having difficulty locking the door to the bus. He kept opening the door, closing it, then entering a pin into the keypad. This



happened several times until he consulted with the roadie. Suddenly, my instinct kicked in and it dawned on me that this was no bus driver. I peered past Frank and all I could see was the obscured silhouette of a man holding a bag, he had several rings on his fingers, and was wearing a pair of trainers. Holy hell, it was Johnny! I told Frank and he couldn't believe it! I was determined to speak with him! I slowly approached, he with his back to me. Nervously I uttered, "Hi Johnny." He turned slowly and smiled. Everything flew out of my head again and I was in awe. Does that ever stop?! He extended his hand to shake mine. All 4'10" of me stood there looking up at him. He said, "I've met you before, yeah?". I could now die happy! As before, everything went by in a flash. In the next several days bits of the conversation came back to me. He had complimented my motorcycle boots, asked if we were sorted for the show, which I can only assume meant did we have tickets? Also, Frank had invited him to dinner, but he placed his hand on his stomach and said, "Thanks, but I never eat before a show." Needless to say, the show was phenomenal, and I made a new friend, Mark Levy.

As for Johnny, he is such a humble man full of grace, compassion, and generosity that you cannot help but love him.

All of these wonderful memories have me yearning for our greatly anticipated return to concerts, the friendships we've forged, and basking in the love that Johnny dotes upon his adoring fans. Happy Birthday Johnny!!

- Denise DeNezza

LONDON, ONTARIO, CANADA
LONDON MUSIC HALL
10TH MAY 2019

PHOTOS: DAVE KAPLE (LONDON, CANADA, 2019)

LONDON CALLING

Got up, got out of bed, ran a comb across my head.
Went to work and could not wait.
Quitting time meant I went straight
to the train for a London date
with Johnny Marr and his musical mates.

On Friday May 10, 2019, I was eager to see Johnny live at his only Canadian date. I left work a little early and caught the train for the two-and-a-half-hour-ride to London, Ontario. There was barely enough time to check in to my accommodations and dash the few blocks to the Music Hall, where eager fans were already waiting.

I got in, but the area in front of the stage was lined by prospectors who had staked a claim. They were looking for a gold experience. Stage left, I spotted a guy and his friend who looked approachable. I was hoping to get a few good live shots of his Marrness (with a camera, of course, phones are anathema for concerts and live events). I asked this fan if I could squeeze into a fractional opening next to him for a few songs and then I would move away. He generously consented.





There was no opening act, and the show seemed delayed. In that prelude, I got to chat with Dave, my space benefactor. He showed me some of the cool photos he had taken at other concerts and edited. I recommended he send in a submission to the JohnnyMarrvellous ladies for the next book project they produced for Johnny. Showtime came, I took pictures from my special spot just in front of James Doviak, and then I went upstairs.

The Music Hall is a relatively new and clean venue with a plexiglass-bordered, wraparound second floor, with some tables along the perimeter, and some stadium-type seating. It has a great vantage point which is still intimate. I've never watched a concert from such a perspective before. Dead center was further from the stage, but I could see the whole light show and the twinkling of the mirror ball when it was uncovered. It was a holistic concert experience. The left side of the balcony brought me closer to the guitar guru.

After the concert, I and a few others met the dapper Doviak, who was warm and friendly, much different than his cool stage persona. Composed bass man Iwan Gronow also spoke to and took photos with fans. (OK, they were accosted when they stepped out of the venue.) Fifty or so fans were waiting to pounce on Johnny, but he stealthily avoided capture.

I've kept in touch with Dave and even saw him at another concert. We both seem to like many of the same artists. Mr. Maher sparks multiplying people connections.

- Maria Meli

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, USA
ST ANDREWS HALL
11TH MAY 2019

This show was another special one (aren't they all?). We were lucky enough to meet Johnny outside the venue, which was truly lovely. As always, he was a real gem. We also met some really lovely fans while we were in line, and had amazing conversations as our excitement mounted for the show itself.



As we assembled inside the venue and began to settle into waiting mode for the show to begin, there was a woman standing beside me and I don't know why, but I decided



to strike up a conversation with her. A few minutes in, she said to me, "I'm a huge music fan, but this is the first show I've attended in about 10 years". I was really flabbergasted by that, but something innately to me suggested that I shouldn't ask any questions about it. Instead, I told her that she was in for a huge treat, as attending a Johnny Marr concert was literally a life-changing experience. Her voice then softened, and I had

to strain to hear her through the crowd of chatter, as she said, "My little boy died many years ago, and I haven't been able to bring myself to go to a concert



since. It's the first time me and my husband have ventured out for the evening alone". As a fellow mum, music fan, and passionate human being, it took every restraint in me to not reach out and hug this woman. Instead, I offered lots of kind consolation in my words.

As the amazing show got started, about two songs in, I felt someone suddenly grab and squeeze my right arm rather hard. When I looked over, it was this woman - her eyes

glassy with excitement and an enormous smile plastered across her face. "This music is so amazing! I can't believe it!". Joyfully, I chimed back, "Isn't it incredible? And the night is just getting started!". She must have squeezed my arm at least two more times during the show, and it truly couldn't have felt more normal, even though she was a virtual stranger. It made my heart sing, not only to experience Johnny at his finest, but knowing that this woman next to me was being touched at the same time.

Music has such a powerful way of conjuring up feelings that are so universal, and yet simultaneously incredibly personal. That night, I couldn't have been more proud to be a Johnny Marr fan.

- Mona Minhas

“Music has such a powerful way of conjuring up feelings that are so universal, and yet simultaneously incredibly personal. *That night, I couldn't have been more proud to be a Johnny Marr fan.*”

MONA MINHAS

DETROIT | ST ANDREWS HALL | 11/05/2019



PHOTO BY TONY SMITH
(ANAHEIM, USA, 2019)

ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA, USA

HOUSE OF BLUES

19TH MAY 2019

Happy Birthday Johnny!!

In 2017, in order to learn more about social media for job prospects, I decided to start an Instagram fan account. As for the subject, it was down to either Stuart Sutcliffe or Johnny Marr. Of course, poor Stuart died at 21 so there weren't that many photos of him and Johnny won by default. Looking back, I could not

have selected a better subject for my account, @manic_pixels.



Of course, I'm a genuine fan dating back to the days of the Smiths. But it was a revelation to discover all the twists and turns in Johnny's rock'n'roll history. There was so much to admire about him! One of the most awe-inspiring aspects about him is seeing him perform live.

At his House of Blues Anaheim show in May 2019, we were at the back of a long line to get in. I got lucky enough to be selected at random by a staff member who gave us front of line

passes if I could name my favorite song from *Call the Comet!* Boy, did they pick the right person! I think I picked "Hey Angel" or was it "Actor Attractor"? We ended up

at the front of the stage where I met some very friendly fellow fans. That was a real perk. It was great to meet my online friends in person!

“The thing about experiencing a Johnny Marr show is that *it spoils you for seeing anything else.*”

The thing about experiencing a Johnny Marr show is that it spoils you for seeing anything else. Especially in a club show like the House of Blues where you can get up close. Every other band I've seen since then has not quite measured up to that show. They were missing the thrill of seeing a guitar genius at the top of his game. Some were missing a super-tight band with the charismatic presence that Johnny has. Some bands just didn't seem to work as

hard or put out as much energy as Johnny and his band did. And of course, the songs of Johnny Marr — not many musicians have a back catalog that packs such an emotional punch as well as compelling new material to obsess over.

I'm not sure what the future holds, but when live shows return and Johnny tours again, I will most definitely be there!

- Jane Fujimoto

Instagram: @manic_pixels

ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA, USA

HOUSE OF BLUES

19TH MAY 2019

PHOTOS: TONY SMITH (ANAHEIM, USA, 2019)

I am a little embarrassed to say, despite being a fan and supporter of Johnny Marr since the early days, this was the first time that I have seen Johnny perform live in person. I arrived 3 hours early to the venue with hopes of meeting



Johnny prior to the show. As I waited patiently in the downstairs lobby / loading dock area near the tour bus, Johnny was apparently out for a jog and entered the

venue upstairs for sound check. Needless to say, I missed meeting him prior to the show where I was waiting. A couple of concert friends texted me and said they had just met him upstairs as he entered the building for sound check. STRIKE 1 !

I gladly purchased the VIP & Pass The Line tickets to ensure my concert real estate up front at House of Blues Anaheim. I was able to get a great spot on the rail, just off center, for optimum line



of sight viewing. Lucky for my friends and I, Johnny liked our side of the stage and he spent a good amount of time playing right in front of us. The highlight song of the night for me was "The Headmaster Ritual", which happens to be on my personal top 10 favorite songs of all-time.

As the majority of concertgoers exited the venue to head home, myself and a dozen or so diehard fans made our way to the downstairs lobby and waited for our chance to meet Johnny in person. As we waited patiently, we saw the other touring band members, crew and support staff, but Johnny was nowhere to be found, not even a glimpse. One by one, the diehard fans were throwing in the towel because it was getting late and still no sign of Johnny. STRIKE 2 !!

I had already invested 3 hours prior to the show and 2 hours after, so there was no way I was leaving unless I was the last person standing. Just a tad over 2 hours later,



Johnny surprisingly came out of the tour bus to greet us at about 12:15 am. Not only did he pose for photos and sign autographs, Johnny actually took the time to engage with each fan on a personal level. It gave me the feeling of being long lost friends getting reacquainted after years of absence. HOME RUN !!!

What is not to love about Johnny? Besides being one of the best guitar players in the industry, he is a genuinely nice guy and real class act. There is

a reason everything he touches turns into gold and it is NOT luck. I have attended several hundred concerts during the course of my lifetime and this was definitely one of the best concert experiences for me, not only for 2019, but of all-time!!! Thank you so much Johnny for the wonderful memories and making this one special.

- Tony Smith

www.instagram.com/tonysmith_images
www.facebook.com/TonySmith_images

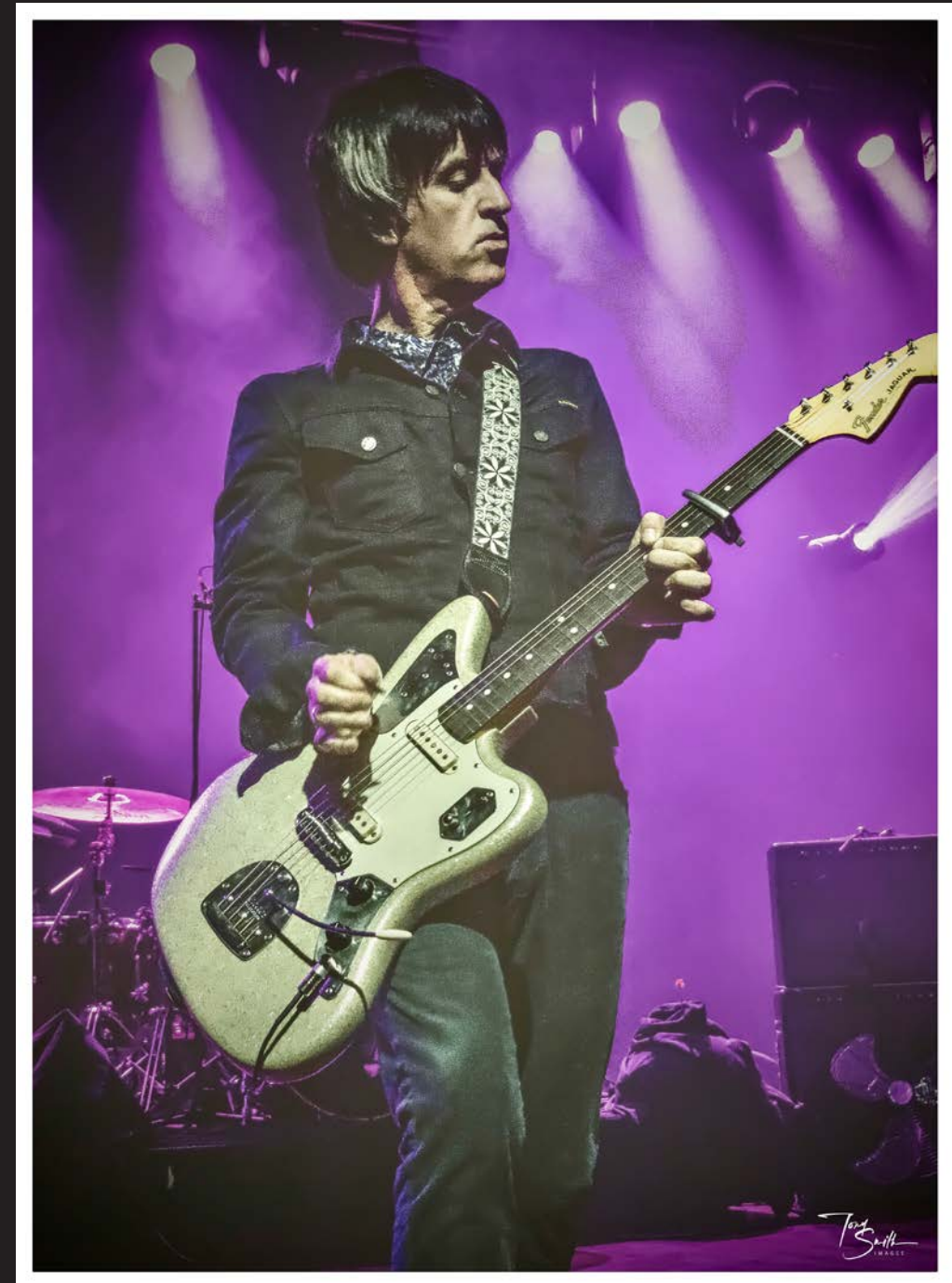


PHOTO BY TONY SMITH
 (ANAHEIM, USA, 2019)

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, USA

JOHN ANSON FORD AMPITHEATRE

21ST MAY 2019

The last time we saw JFM on tour was in Los Angeles on Tuesday May 21st. Two super cool things happened at this show.

1. Billy duffy joined JFM on stage for the last 2 songs! My top two favorite guitarists!! I have some awesome videos!

2. I purchased front and center tickets for the show and at the end of the show I reached out to give Johnny a high five and he reached out and gripped my hand while pressing his guitar pick into my hand and gave it a good shake!

Much to my great surprise and amazement, another fan had captured the moment perfectly. We exchanged info so he could forward this photo! And you can even see Billy in the background smiling!! So awesome!



We also were lucky to have purchased 4 other tickets for our good friends Jamie and Crystal, seen in the photo. And our son Michael and Sammy, who we only later found out was pregnant with our first grandson! So I brag that our grandson has already been to his first JFM show!

- Jerome Stockham



REACH OUT TO SOMEONE YOU LOVE

PHOTO BY HARLON MITCHELL
(LOS ANGELES, USA, 2019)

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, USA

JOHN ANSON FORD AMPITHEATRE

21ST MAY 2019

I often travel to see music. LOVE music, NEED music, will travel very far for Music. A show in my immediate area is incredible. Creating an adventure around a show, exploring a new city, pushing my boundaries, plopping myself in the middle of a town I have zero experience in? That's magic, lightning in a bottle.

Isolation for 5 months now, I have a deep well of adventure and experience to delve. I am fortunate I traveled, collecting music memories to sustain my spirit...mind you, I travel cheaply, stealthy, I adore staying at an Airbnb, settling in, cooking and meeting people in town as if I'm a new neighbor, as apposed to the luxuries of grand hotels and restaurants...which are nice, but the trade off? I can travel VERY often, a way of life as apposed to a plane ride to a far away country as a special and rare treat.

June 2nd 2018 I flew home early from Sydney Australia, 2 Neil Finn shows at the Sydney Opera House, especially to see Johnny's *Call the Comet* album launch show at August Hall in San Francisco to open the tour.

In May of 2019, to close the North American tour, I travelled by bus to Los Angeles to see Johnny at the Fords Theater, West Hollywood. When I got off that bus, for the first time, I could feel what they all talk about, "that L.A. energy". The big sky full of sunshine, palm trees, girls in shorts on roller skates traversing back and forth



PHOTO BY ALY STEVENSON
(BERLIN, GERMANY, 2018)

along the Walk of Fame, absorbing the adoration their exhibitionism deserves, L.A. has that, singularly unique joy. I arrived a day early, settled into my pad one block off Hollywood Boulevard, turned on the AC, put "The Matrix" on my huge airbnb TV and relaxed, regrouped and got ready to check out the area. Amoeba Records, scores of thrift shops, vegan restaurants... the people...their confidence is infectious, invigorating, their energy, joyous optimism, I want more ...

I have another day of exploring, show tonight...



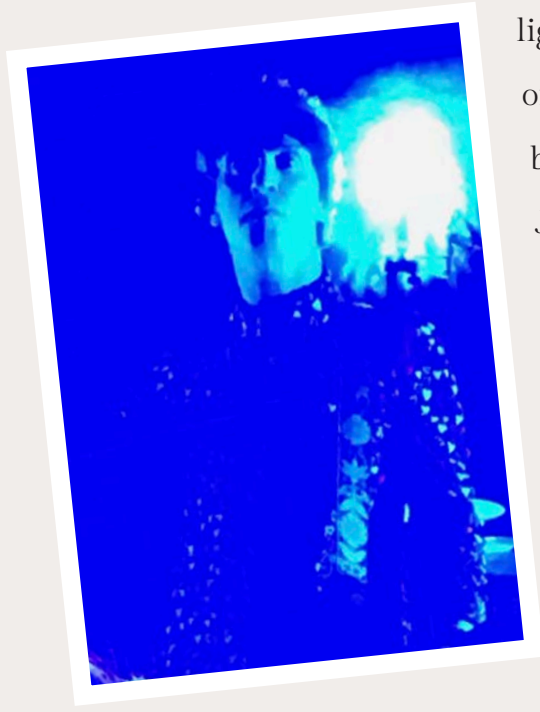
I catch a ride into the Hollywood hills to the Fords Theater. Outdoors amphitheater cut into red rock hillside, covered in trees, vistas and views peek out in all directions. A view of the Pacific Ocean reflected sunset to the right, Downtown L.A. view straight ahead, cliffs shoot straight up behind the stage to the left, sloping hilly verdant vista behind, the most gorgeous and sexy venue...

I find my seat, 12 rows back center... too far, I make a game plan in my mind...how to get closer to the stage... the sun sets, it gets dark, the stage lights blue, wisps of smoke and here's Johnny!

The music starts with a roar, the audience moves to the stage... uh oh... not that kind of venue... security escorts the fans one by one away from the stage and "back to your seats"... I am one of the last to be shooed away, an entire song's time in the front, "that was nice" I thought... I turn to go back, 12 rows...what's that? 3rd row is an empty spot, here's my cue. I stand by the empty chair, puppy dog eyes glance to the gentleman in possession of the coveted spot, he asks if I'd like to have the ticket for this seat, "I accept." The goddess of opportunity, positive vibes and *yolo* have blessed me, in spades.

This trip, this show, this time I wanted especially to be up front, absorb the Marr-gic... A FANgirl night... Johnny is all about expression, joy, doing your thing, abandon your hang ups, can't argue with the God-like Genius.

I wanted to be a participant. Could be the L.A. vibe took hold of me, propelled me to make myself more electric, more like a peacock with full regalia unfurled. The stage



lights, blue and purple, flashes and dreamy circling orbs of light set me to full on Marrvellous...3rd row back, I dance, I sing, I stare and I stare, and stare at Johnny, he gives his huge adorable Johnny wink... I am staring and staring...fans surrounding me start jumping and squealing and congratulating me, "He winked at you!!!"

I couldn't believe it...

I snapped out of my Marr-dream, I could hear the music again, blood returned to my body, I

started dancing, again. My mission felt complete, I JOINED

THE MARR-a-shere and returned to Earth, safe and sound. So I thought.

"Last Night I Dreamt Somebody Loved Me" I record, I stare, I could swear Johnny is singing it to me... It goes on and on... I walk up to the stage, Johnny walks right in front of me, I let out a mini howl, he plays an oh so emotional, sexy guitar solo... I DIE... after a few riveting minutes of pure nirvana, he walks away into the misty darkness... as I record, I realize "JOHNNY MARR IS PLAYING RIGHT HERE, 3 feet away, RIGHT NOW" a moment I never imagined, but never doubted.

After this, security laid off and allowed me to stand at the foot of the stage with the front row... I enjoyed the remainder of the show elevated 3 feet in the air (metaphorically on cloud 9), Billy Duffy, Doviak, Ewan and Jack playing "I Fought the Law" and then "How Soon Is Now". Johnny comes side stage again and plays two solos in front of me as he waves the unwitting Duffy over (Billy missed the cue, I moan) ...

Johnny's connection to his fans is tangible, his warmth and adoration is so deep, so approachable, so generous. I for once had the nerve to put myself right in Marr's Way, what an experience.

Thank you, Johnny.

And in the end...The love you take is equal to the love you make.

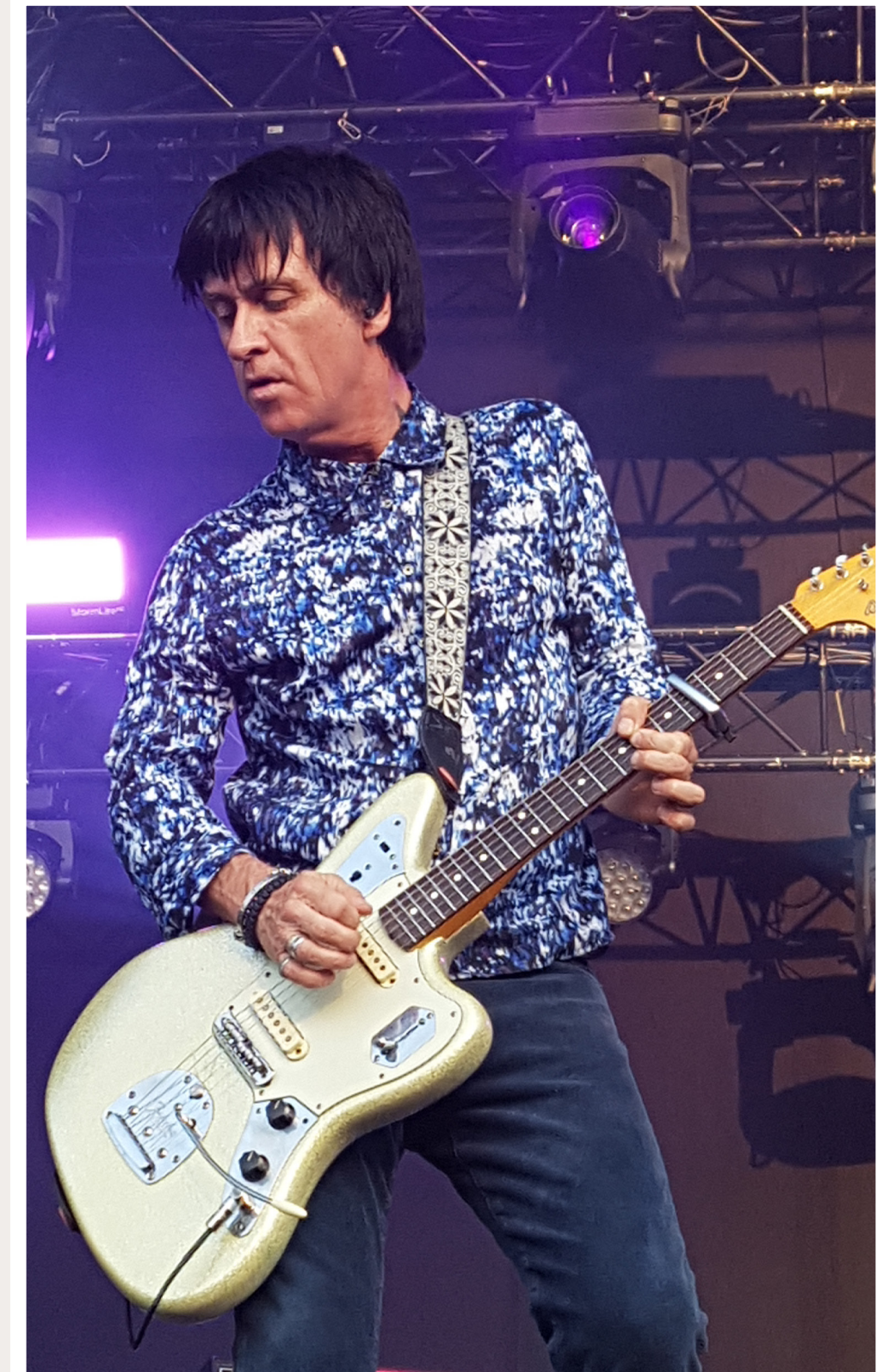
- Josephine Ramos

LONDON, UK
ALL POINTS EAST
25TH MAY 2019

OPPOSITE PHOTO: MIMI MAURICE (SAINT CLOUD, FRANCE 2019)

My first, and so far only experience seeing Johnny was at All Points East in May last year. There were a few acts I was keen on seeing, so I decided to fly over to the UK from Australia and make a trip of it. Of course, it was Johnny's set I was most excited to watch! I arrived at the venue in plenty of time and tried to get a good spot. I noticed there were a few other people in the crowd wearing Johnny/Smiths T-shirts, and the crowd was obviously buzzing with anticipation! When Johnny came on the crowd went wild! I watched the set in awe; the band were on point and were obviously just as at home playing a big festival set as they were doing a solo gig. They had just come back from a North American tour a few days earlier and there was nary a sign of jet lag in sight! They played a number of Smiths songs as crowd pleasers, but I was most impressed with the newer songs and may have teared up a bit at one point! I walked away exhausted yet immensely satisfied and vowed to come back to a proper gig as soon as possible. Unfortunately it looks like it might be a little while more yet but I can't wait to experience the thrill again and meet some of the wonderful people I've met through this group since!

- Emily Stark



CESENA, ITALY
ROCCA MALATESTIANA
18TH JUNE 2019

It's not very often that Johnny sets foot on the Italian peninsula. Therefore, when 2 concerts, only a day apart, were announced, I jumped at the opportunity. I disregarded the fact that the venues were going to be exceptionally difficult to reach on public transport from my home here in Southern Italy. However, as the saying goes, "Where there's a will, there's a way", and Johnny is always worth the effort and cost. Within a short time I had bought my tickets, organised trains and buses and booked hotels.



After a laborious journey, I arrived alone in Cesena, a picturesque little town in the pretty countryside of Emilia Romagna. The venue was spectacular. The concert was being held in the grounds of an ancient hilltop fortress. Prior to my arrival, I'd been contacted by some of Johnny's Italian fans who'd arranged to meet me there late afternoon. When I reached the place, Johnny and the band were halfway through their soundcheck, and were easily visible to the handful of folk who had gathered in the scorching Italian sunshine. It was so lovely to share the experience with my Facebook friends, some of whom I'd finally met in person for the first time.

As soon as the check was over, Iwan, walked over to where I was standing, to fetch some water. I took the chance to say hello. Surprised to hear my Glaswegian accent,



thousands of kilometres from Scotland, he struck up a conversation with me. During our chat, I was aware of someone standing nearby. I looked up to see Johnny beaming a big smile over at me. Straight away, he said, "Hey Linda. How are you doing?". We'd already met several times before, so we weren't strangers. I was delighted to have another opportunity to talk to him face to face. I commented that I'd had a difficult journey to get there and that I was embarking on an adventure, the following day, to get to the next gig at Lake Garda. He joked "I'd better be good tonight then, eh? Otherwise, you'll be off back home!". Whilst chatting, he mentioned that he'd seen a comment I'd written on his Twitter page, requesting that he play "I Feel You". It's one of my favourite covers and I'd never heard him perform it live. Incredibly, he'd taken note, and was including it in his set that evening. In fact, he played it again, 2 nights later, at the Gardone Riviera gig. Needless to say, it sounded immense on both occasions and was better than I had ever imagined it would be. I was so grateful that he had remembered. Our conversation lasted about 5 minutes, after which Johnny excused himself as he had to get changed and ready for the event ahead.



PHOTO BY LINDA POULNOTT
(CESENA, ITALY, 2019)

As the sun set, the location took on an amazing and intimate atmosphere. The fortress glowed a golden red, as the sky behind the stage turned into a deep cobalt blue backdrop. The grassy area quickly filled up with excited fans who had come from far and



Forza Johnny!

wide. Many of us recognised each other from the “Johnny Marrvellous” group. It was just like meeting up at the barrier with old friends, and it made the moment even more special and memorable.

Not before long, the lights dimmed as Johnny and the lads burst onto the stage and straight into “The Tracers”. As usual they put on an amazingly energetic performance. The place was truly buzzing, and nobody wanted it to end. For many of the fans it was the first time they had seen them live, and they were left pretty speechless by the experience.

At the end of the evening, my friends and I had quite a long conversation with Doviak. While we were talking, we heard a gasp from the crowd who were stunned to see a huge shooting star streaming across the night sky. Someone called out “ Guardate, è la cometa di Johnny ! “ Look it’s Johnny’s comet !”..... Who knows? ...maybe it was.

- Linda Poulnott

CESENA, ITALY

ROCCA MALATESTIANA

18TH JUNE 2019

OPPOSITE PHOTO: LINDA POULNOTT (CESENA, ITALY, 2019)

The concert in Cesena was a perfect example of everything that's great about going to a gig, especially one with no pre-assigned seats, where you can get there early, wait, maybe catch the soundcheck, wait, meet people, form friendships, and... wait (I love waiting). And then it begins. And then, unfortunately, it ends.

The venue was definitely unusual compared to the concert in Milan in November. It took place inside the Rocca di Cesena, a small stronghold in an elevated position right at the core of the city centre.

I arrived around four and was promptly adopted by Linda, whom I had been working — and it wasn't just me — at convincing to show up as early as she could. I couldn't have chosen a better companion for these long hours of slowly melting in the heat, as, besides her positivity, enthusiasm, and expertise at choosing the right spot, she was a magnet for nice and charming people (I think you know who you are, and thank you!) who joined in in the experience (I am not kidding: everyone — Johnny included — knew that it was a good idea to come and talk to her).

When the time came, the part of our bodies that hadn't evaporated was in for a treat. The night was beautiful, the sound impeccable, and we finally got to see "Armatopia" performed, after having sung it in our heads almost every day for the last months.



I find my experience accurately represented by the official photos of the event (and I can't help but smile when looking at them), where every face in the crowd is staring with intense concentration at the guitar. Although sometimes I did manage to remind myself to look up from the guitar (not that it ever lasted long).

My favourite memory from the day, however, took place hours before the gig itself.

As I mentioned, I arrived in Cesena shortly before four and walked from the station to the city centre. The sun was hot and blinding, and there was barely anyone around. I had never been to Cesena and, once in the main square, I was a bit worried about taking the wrong street. That's when I heard a familiar sound coming, or so it seemed like, from the sky. It was the soundcheck for "New Town Velocity", it was everywhere, and it guided me uphill, straight to the Rocca. And all the way up, as I climbed the path and the stairs, I was completely alone and it was just the stones, the trees, the sun, the sky, the song, that song... and little, hopelessly sweating, transfixed me.

- Chiara Brady

"I learnt that you don't need to bring your own friends to a Johnny Marr gig. You can just go and find the best company in there."

MICHELA PIATELLI

CESENA 19/06/2019 | LONDON 08/08/2019 | TURIN 25/08/2019

A Wonderful Summertime

Recalling the three wonderful gigs I saw last summer means recalling an incredible journey made of music, places, people, that I could scarcely have imagined when I planned it.

Everything started when I stepped on the train to Cesena for my second JFM gig after the one in Milan in 2018. Going to another town to attend a show on my own sounded a bit awkward back then, but it was either be brave or give up, so off I went. And I didn't think it possible, but I learnt that you don't need to bring your own friends to a Johnny Marr gig: you can just go and find the best company in there.

Also I didn't think it possible to talk with Johnny before the show, but again I was soon to be contradicted: saying hi to him amid the field, getting one of his guitar picks and snapping pics along with other fans were the most natural things ever — and he's been the kindest person ever.

Time flew by, and at 10 pm the band walked its way to the stage through the medieval tunnel of the castle, to the greatest excitement of all attendees. Watching the four guys from the front row and listening to my very favourite songs really took my breath away.

I was so looking forward to hearing “Armatopia” live, and it was also the first time I got a full version of “This Charming Man” after the short teasing in Milan — and then in the encore, a super sweet performance of “New Town Velocity” made it an unforgettable gig.

Saying that the show in Cesena was a game changer is still an understatement. I went in on my own and went out with a lot of new friends, an unexpected shower of love, and a sudden urge to see more gigs.

This is when I started thinking about London. I had a vacation in Oxford already planned for the beginning of August, which meant missing Johnny’s gig at Meltdown festival for just a few days. For some time I kept repeating to myself that I could as well wait for the date in Turin, until I decided that I couldn’t and definitely bought a ticket for London’s gig and prolonged my staying in England. Which was a bit of a folly, to be honest, but as Oscar Wilde used to say, “Follies are the only things we never regret” — and I never did.

There are three things about that afternoon in London which are stuck in my mind: listening to “The Bright Parade”, which had just been released, realising I had no jumper when a cold wind suddenly swept through the Southbank centre, and meeting Johnny on his way in for a quick but memorable greeting.

I can’t stress enough how thrilling and exciting is to see a show abroad, especially when abroad is England, which I love with all my heart. I was close to tears with Nile Rodgers’ introductory speech, and couldn’t believe it when the other Nile joined his dad on stage for a great version of “Please Please Please” and a superb “Shack Up” (both of which I had never seen live), and then again for the final “There Is a Light”,

when all the audience stood up and sang along.

And after that, I felt so blessed that there was still another date in my country! I was so lucky as to meet Johnny in Turin as well, and it was awesome to have a little chat early in the afternoon and to tell him a bit more about myself and my dreams — needless to say, he’s been the perfect listener even with my far-from-perfect spoken English!

Later that night, when the band came on stage and many of us down there were expecting “The Tracers” as the first song, “Armatopia” kicked off an incredible show. It only had to last one hour, but it was such a wonderfully constructed hour that anyone could do nothing but get fully involved with body and soul, from the very first notes up to the very last.

If there’s a common thing about all three shows is I didn’t want them to end. All three times I was completely immersed in music, and yet could think with the utmost precision “Ok, this is happiness, make it last forever”. While a live show cannot last forever, some of that happiness can, and it certainly did: for not only did I witness three incredible gigs last summer, I also learnt how to push boundaries, to open up with people, to always pursue what I love.

Thank you dear Johnny for all the music and the magic: please know that you don’t just make people happier — you make them better.

Happy birthday with all my heart.

- Michela Piatelli



In these times of isolation and sadness
I find hope in your music bringing us together as one
Like Bobby said on that wet August evening ...

Lightning and the king

Anvil clouds
Over
New
Town
There
Is
Electricity
In
The
Air
While
Waiting
For
First note
Call the comet
I am ready
To
Hear

Heavens open
Down from castle
Above
No stopping
Prince of the gardens
Striking
Raindrops
Away
With
Guitar
A
Perfect
Melody
And
Swagger
In
Rain soaked
Edinburgh

- *Craig Spence*

SAINT CLOUD, FRANCE
 ROCK EN SEINE FESTIVAL
 23RD AUGUST 2019

OPPOSITE PHOTO: MIMI MAURICE (SAINT CLOUD, FRANCE 2019)

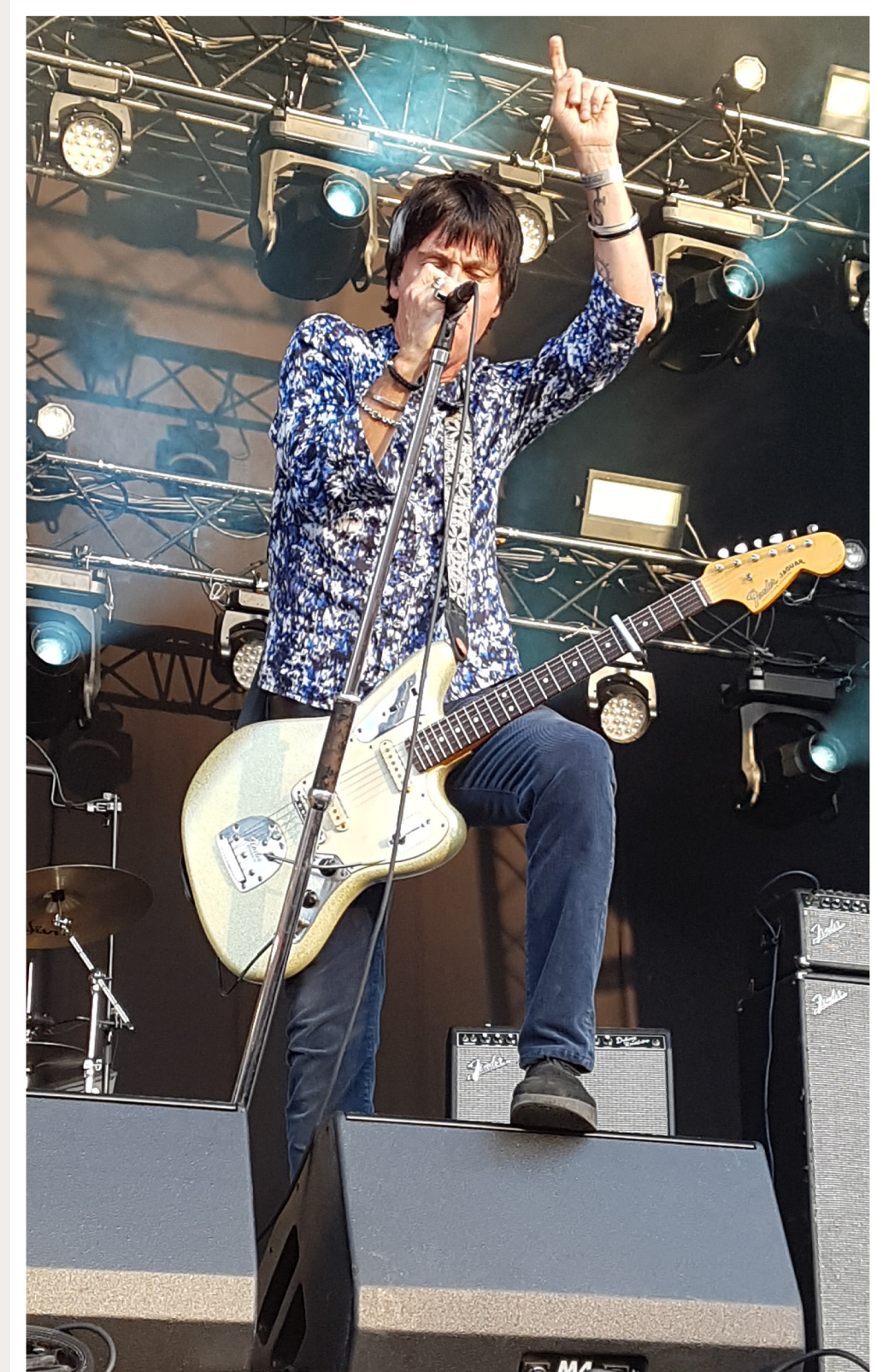
When I heard that JM will perform at the Rock en Seine festival, I was so happy and I ran to get a ticket. Plus, it was near my hometown at 10 minutes by walk from my parents place, perfect! On the day, I was so excited and came early as I wanted to be the nearest as possible. I met other JM fans from France, we were happy to meet finally after sharing our passion on social medias. We went straight away to the scene and waited patiently till the gig. It was an awesome gig with as usual lots of winks and smiles from JM!! A great set list and we couldn't stop singing along. Happiness was on our faces! At the end of the

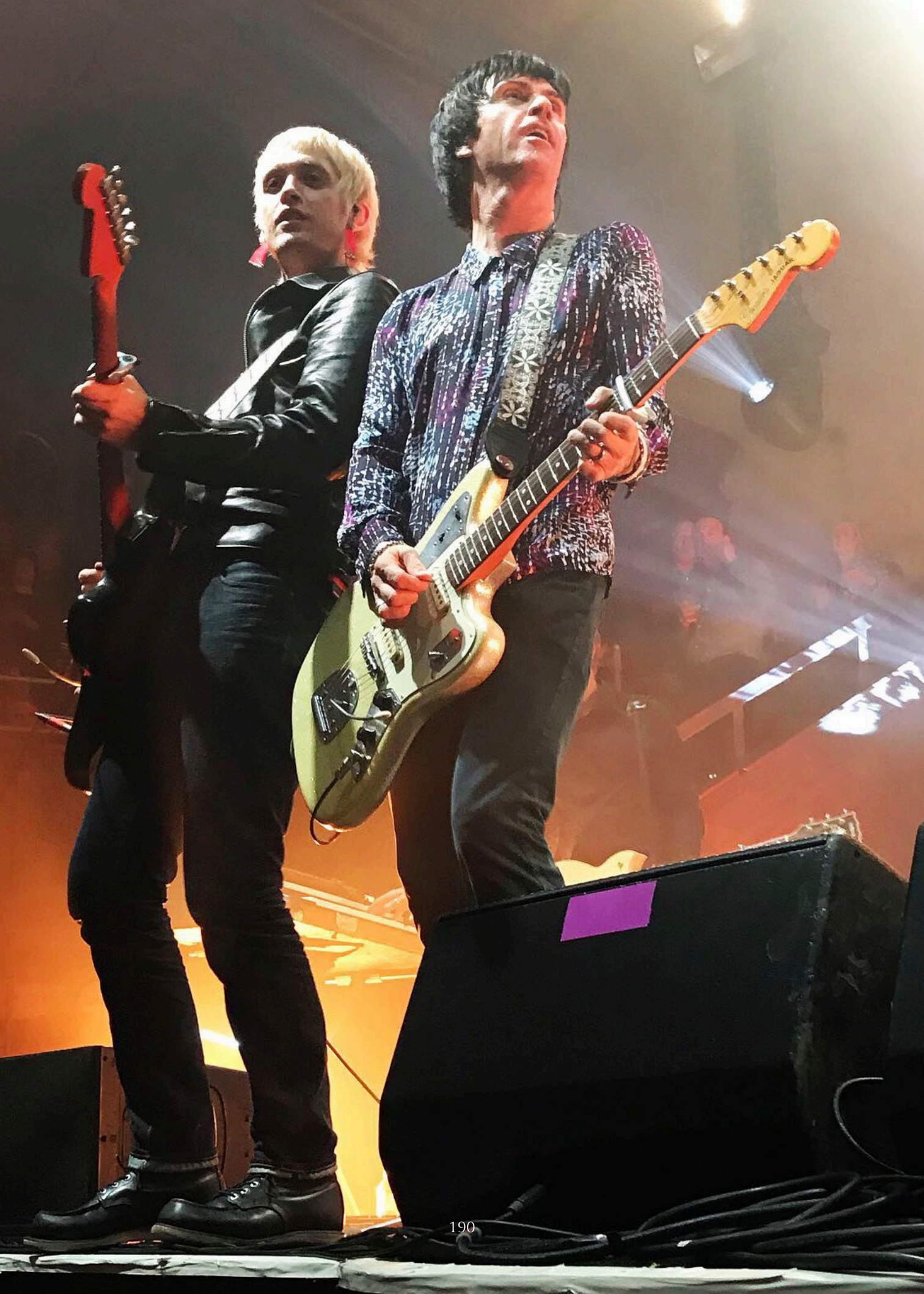
show, I luckily caught a JFM guitar pick too, I was so happy!! The show was filmed too, I had the pleasure to watch it again later and saw our happy faces. Plus, I had the chance to meet Iwan et Doviak before the gig and we had a nice chat together. Thank you for this gig, we miss you!

- Mimi Maurice



*Doviak, Mimi and Iwan,
 catching up before the show!*





MANCHESTER, UK

ALBERT HALL

4TH–5TH SEPTEMBER 2019

OPPOSITE PHOTO: ILZE FREY (MANCHESTER, UK, 2019)



PHOTO BY NICK SMITH
(MANCHESTER, UK, 2019)

I'd love to wish Johnny a happy birthday!!!! I went to both Manchester gigs last year.

I absolutely loved his version of "Shack Up" with Nile. I actually bumped into Donald Johnson from ACR a while back and told him apologetically, Johnny's version was better. He said he'd let me off as he loves Johnny too.

- Helen Jones

MANCHESTER, UK

ALBERT HALL

4TH SEPTEMBER 2019

This has to be my favourite gig I've been to, which is hardly a surprise as it was a Johnny Marr gig. It was at Manchester Albert Hall on 4th September 2019, and I was so happy and lucky to have made it to this particular gig, as not only was it the second to last show on his tour, but I had quite a rough year so I was unable to get to Johnny's previous shows on the *Call The Comet* tour. This show was particularly special because I traveled to Manchester with my best friend, which in itself was amazing as we both adore the city, but seeing Johnny live was definitely the highlight of our trip! It was also my friend's first proper gig, so she was pretty blown away at this being her introduction to live music. The entire day, I felt on top of the world to be completely honest, and it was the best break from everything else going on, so I've got to thank Johnny for that. I'm a huge fan of Johnny's music from every stage of his career and I feel like he just keeps getting better and better, if that's even possible. The Smiths are really important to me, so some highlights of this gig have to be when he performed songs such as "Last night I dreamt that somebody loved me" and of course, "There is a light that never goes out" because it's such an incredible feeling listening to some of your favourite songs, played by your favourite guitarist. After the show, I half jokingly told my friend that it felt like I'd just seen god perform right in front of me and it genuinely was one of the best nights.

- Paige Hawson



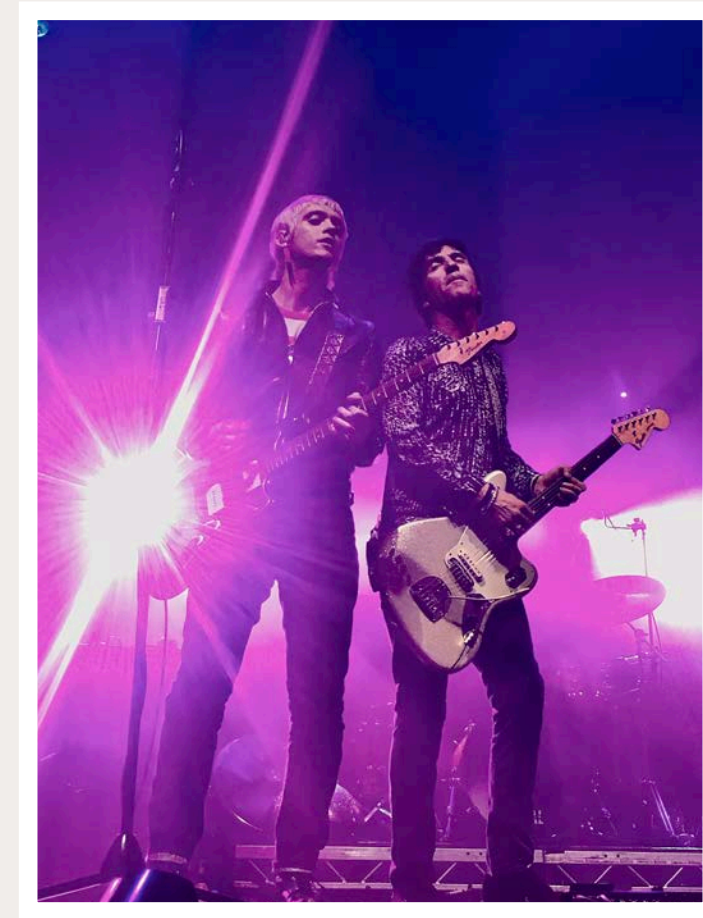
PHOTO BY PAIGE HAWSON
(MANCHESTER, UK, 2019)

MANCHESTER, UK

ALBERT HALL

4TH–5TH SEPTEMBER 2019

I'm going to write about our amazing trip to Manchester to see Johnny's last two shows for the *Call the Comet* tour at Albert Hall on September 4th and 5th 2019. This was a HUGE deal for Guy and myself. From the moment we decided to go, to getting the gig tickets, frantically trying to make travel arrangements, sorting out how to make it all work and then the fun part...the countdown to the shows. The build up was incredible. I'm pretty sure we never stopped smiling the whole time we were there. I remember walking up to the venue, seeing Johnny's tour bus and pinching myself because I couldn't believe we were actually there. We met some amazing people, fans just like us, who we now call friends. You know there's a bond when you can stand for hours waiting together (in the rain, cold, bitter wind and all four seasons in a Manchester hour) and still laugh and have fun!!! Even better is standing there and Johnny walks up out of nowhere and let's you hug him....sigh...sheer bliss!! When we finally walked into the Albert Hall for that first time I was amazed how beautiful the venue was. Wasn't sure what to look at first, in the end the incredible windows are what stood out the most. I felt very honored and blessed to be standing there in Manchester, about to watch Johnny play a phenomenal homecoming show. It didn't seem all that long ago I was just a teenager in Texas listening to my Smiths tapes in my bedroom. It was a very magical moment for me, one I will always remember. As we waited for Johnny



to come on stage you could feel the excitement in the crowd. As I looked around it was great to see all the happy, smiley faces. I loved being a part of all that. I think Johnny felt the energy too because he seemed to be enjoying the moment. We loved all 12 of our *Call the Comet* shows we saw. I wouldn't change a thing...well...except maybe see more Johnny shows!!!

Happy Birthday Johnny!! We are wishing you a beautiful day filled with love, laughter and lots of cake!!!!

Love and big Texas hugs,

- Johanne and Guy Brader xx

Liam & Jack Brader's *Marvellous Stories*



The Detroit show on May 11th 2019 at the St. Andrew's Hall was really special to me because I had my first plane ride to get to the show and I went to the Motown Museum and saw Johnny there. He was wearing a cool black hat, so when my Mom said I could pick something out at the Motown Museum gift shop I found a black beanie hat that sort of looked like Johnny's. I wore it the whole day and never took it off. I even wore it to the show. I'm pretty sure I looked good in it. Later at the show Johnny gave me a shout out and that was cool.

Happy Birthday Johnny!!

Hope to see you soon.

Love,
- Liam Brader



Johnny was nice. He let me follow him around in Detroit. I had fun. Can we do it again?

Happy Birthday Johnny!!

Love,
Jack Brader

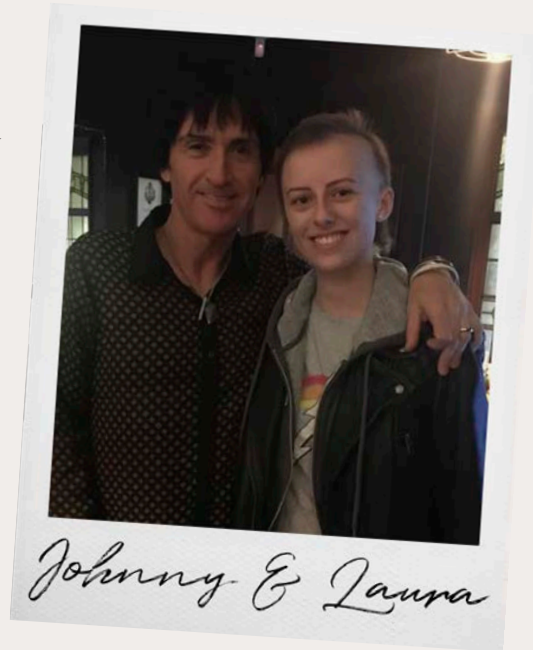
MANCHESTER, UK
ALBERT HALL
4TH SEPTEMBER 2019

My daughter Laura was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer in 2018 and she was still struggling with monthly chemo and the brutal after effects of radiotherapy.

We first saw Johnny live in Portugal at the NOS Alive festival in Lisbon in July, having been long time fans, it was a fantastic, spine tinglingly wonderful show on a hot summer night. Laura was smitten and absolutely determined that we should do everything we could to catch the hometown show in September.

With the help of Aly and Ory we were able to get tickets and what a memorable night it was. Despite the fact that he was only a couple of hours away from going on stage Johnny spent almost an hour chatting to Laura, Mark and I in his dressing room. He was so gracious and kind and really interested in Laura's story (and her bass playing!) It was just the most phenomenal experience, spending time chatting with our musical hero

It was the show of a lifetime, the kind of night you never forget.



And then as the gig drew to a close, Johnny announced that he was dedicating the last song to his new mate, Laura.

The song was 'There is a light that never goes out'.

I immediately burst into floods of tears, it was the most beautiful gesture and Laura was beyond thrilled, we have always loved that song and it meant the world to us that Johnny dedicated to Laura. I will never forget the sound of 2,000 people singing every single word.

We have reminisced about that night so many times, it's a memory that we will treasure forever.

Laura is still doing well and next month she'll be starting her second year at Manchester University.

Thank you so much Johnny & happy birthday you wonderful man.

Much love from
Nicola, Mark & Laura Nuttall x



PHOTO BY MURRAY INNES
(EDINBURGH, UK, 2018)

TURNING DAYDREAMS INTO SOUND

I first got into gigs because of Johnny. Before I met him, I never cared about live versions and assumed they'd be inferior anyway. But seeing him play and have fun with the songs changed my view forever. I liked the songs from *The Messenger* since the first listen, but I didn't quite get the vibe of the album until I heard them live. It was like they got an entirely new energy and gained new meanings for me.

He hasn't come to Brasil since 2015, when I didn't know him yet, but that didn't stop me from trying to witness the magic. Of course I think it's kinda silly to film at gigs, especially when you're in the pit. If I could go, I'd be too busy Freaking Out to film. But hey, thank god some people are silly (especially those in the pit) and kind enough to share those moments that became so important to me.

I was very excited to hear him singing, to meet his new band and see what he was up to. In a way, it felt like I was meeting an old friend after years without seeing each other. Like some sort of time bending or something. I was happy to see he had changed a lot and there were new things for me to be excited about, and his presence on stage still hypnotized me just as much. His singing seemed to show a different side of him, and the new songs made me feel like I was getting to know him all over again.

The energy of the gigs was always very high, and the slow songs became even more intense by contrast. I loved watching him perform “Say Demesne” and felt that the sensibility of the song was enhanced by the little alternations on his singing and the dark blue and red lights. It made me want to be there even more, and wonder about all the work that goes into a gig behind the scenes. Some songs became more interesting when I got to hear their backstories, and I found myself checking the time on every video to find the ones with some banter. I also got to watch the same gig from different points of view, and hearing people singing along and shouting I just couldn’t wait to join them.

Call The Comet was about to come out and I already loved “Spiral Cities”, but when I heard about the launch tour I knew I was in for something truly special. It was the first time I looked forward to an album release and listened to the singles as soon as they came out. Every morning was like Christmas, and I’d race to YouTube to find a recording of the previous night. The first I listened to was “Day In Day Out”, which totally overshadowed the release of “Hi Hello” for me and became my first favorite from the album. I also loved “Last Night I Dreamt...”, and every day I would find a slightly better, more complete video. I was on a hunt, and by the time the album came out, there were only three songs I hadn’t heard yet. Mission accomplished! (well, kinda).

I never called myself a music fan, but since I wouldn’t shut up about each new song I found, the expectation and the suspense, even my friends were calling me that. So I went for it and started showing up at school in long coats and button ups, messing up my hair and fooling people into thinking I was cool. I guess it worked, and I had a lot

of fun too. My predictions had been pretty bad for that year. I had good friends, but sometimes I was just surrounded by some prejudiced, awful people. It was election year and they were louder than ever. But Johnny was always louder than war, and I soon discovered I could discreetly put my earphones on and watch the world outside. There’s so much more to life than that. I just had to find it. And then I knew I could go home and it would be waiting for me too.

I felt weird including my story at first. I’ve never really been to a gig, so how could I know how everybody’s feeling right now? But I think that’s just how I’ve been feeling since I first saw him on stage. It’s a longing for freedom, poetry and goodness. A place where people can be themselves and have fun together. Turning daydreams into sound and experiencing the real danger of leaving your comfort zone and letting go. So of course we all miss it. I was looking forward to watch the festivals this year, even from a distance. But I think the best we can do right now is turn down the lights, turn up the sound and try to capture the energy and hope that was recorded and shared with so much love. And pretty soon we’ll all be together again when he dedicates his songs for all of us (and nobody fucking else).

- Nath

MANCHESTER, UK

VICTORIA WAREHOUSE (SUPERGRASS' SPECIAL GUEST)

27TH FEBRUARY 2020

I was able to steal away for a holiday in England and Europe in February 2020. I had intended to visit with my friends and watch Manchester City play in person. Unfortunately there were no Johnny gigs set up for that time; however, there were many other wonderful things to do such as see Julian Cope in concert which I have never done before. Luckily, I was able to meet up with Iwan, bassist extraordinaire and catch up with him. It was nice to see him well and producing more great music of his own. While I was planning the trip, I noticed Supergrass were playing two nights in Manchester during my stay. One of my best friends got me the ticket for the last night of their two day



Erica & Johnny

residency at the Victoria Warehouse on February 27, 2020. During the sizzling set filled with many of their greatest hits, I was completely gobsmacked when Supergrass lead singer, Gaz Coombes, announced a special guest: our own Johnny Marr. With tears streaming down my face, I witnessed them perform two songs, "Sun Hits the Sky" and "Please, Please, Please Let Me Get What I Want." I remember thinking of the Johnny Marr Marvellous group of wonderful people, my family, my friends, and having so much gratitude while



Catching up with Iwan



watching them perform — little did I know things in the world would take a different turn. I am grateful to have seen this performance — the last gig I attended before COVID sheltering in place — and to thank him after the show for such a fabulous gig. Much love to Aly and Ory, and all of those who support Johnny, living in the light and possibility of a new tomorrow.

- Erica Fabay

ENDORPHIN HEAVEN

Every music fan will tell you that nothing comes close to the buzz you get from seeing your favourite bands live. But there is something special about Johnny's gigs and those brief encounters before and after the gig, something profound that takes place, an exchange of energy, inspiration, something almost therapeutic.

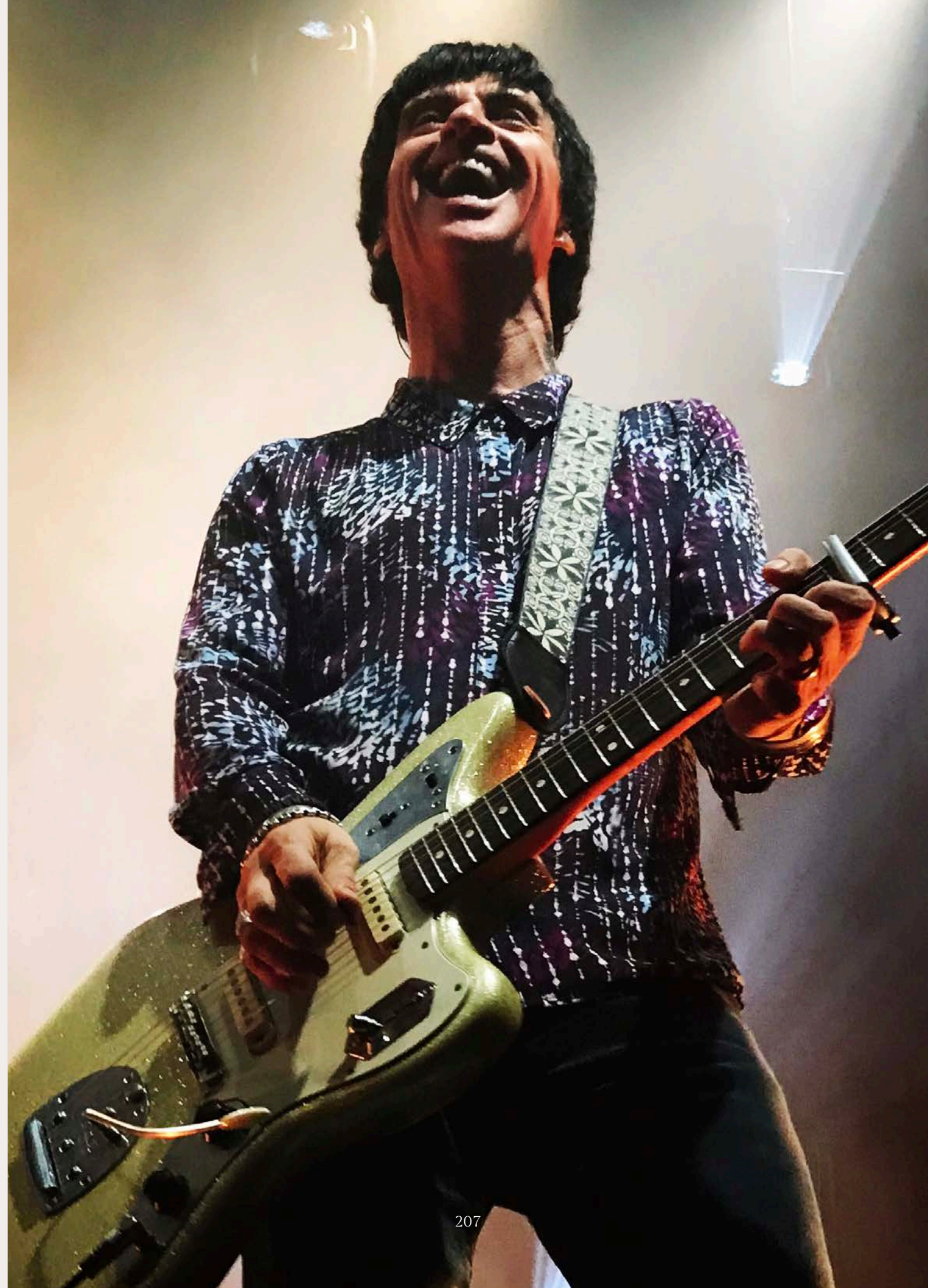
I never stop admiring how someone so charismatic and cool remains so humble, attentive and genuinely interested in his fans and their stories. And his performances, although musically perfected to detail, are so sincere, heartfelt and inclusive.



You know why people gravitate to Johnny? Because he brings out the best in everyone. My ultimate antidepressant, my favourite happy pill. Can't wait to see him and the boys on stage again!

- Ilze Frey

OPPOSITE PHOTO: ILZE FREY (MANCHESTER, UK, 2019)



 SPECIAL PHOTO FEATURE
 BY MARC MCGARRAGHY

In six short years Johnny has re-established himself in the wider public consciousness. In that time I've been lucky enough to be in amongst his fans capturing his performances across cities as he's released four albums and shared his life in 'Set The Boy Free'. From the intimacy of university gigs to the beautiful space that is the Royal Albert Hall, it's been a privilege. Not just watching how Johnny's solo career has blossomed, but how his fans have supported his progress and been so integral to each gig, making them all distinctly and uniquely memorable.



“Capturing Johnny’s solo career live has been the *best experiences I’ve had with a camera*”.

Music Photographer
MARC MCGARRAGHY
on working on Johnny’s tours since 2013.

What’s changed in that time? The confidence in the spotlight, the tilt towards more fan shout outs for his newer songs, the growing feeling of family in the crowds.

What’s not changed? The man, how he is meeting the fans and on stage, the consistency of the shows no matter how large or small the stage, the ‘Marrphoria’” surrounding each gig and ahead of the next one.

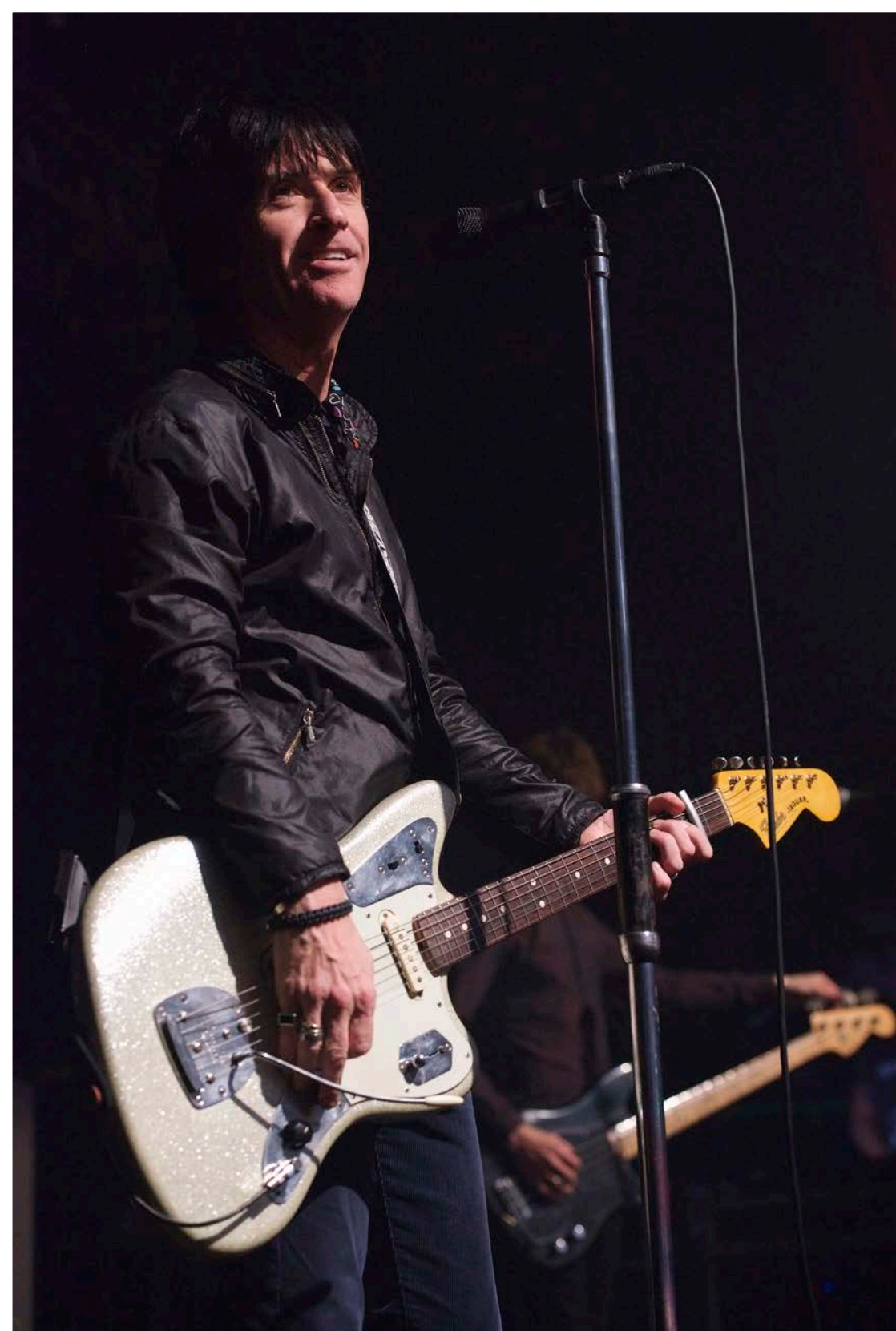
Looking back across my photos during this time, each gig evokes fantastic memories. Early plays of the latest album before gigs, stand out tracks on the night, the many wonderful varied venues, but also what’s it like to work in and around the fans, before and during those concerts.

Here’s just a few random favourites moments across Johnny’s solo tours that instantly bring a smile:

First gig shooting Johnny at The Duchess, York (now sadly closed) in March 2013, just after the release of *The Messenger*. Six feet from Johnny in a small, packed, low ceilinged room and I’m wedged next to the guy with the loudest voice in the room shouting “I fuckin’ LOVE you Johnny” throughout the entire gig. Arms outstretched, trying to reach his hero. It was true love. Shooting two weeks later at The Ritz, Manchester two lovely ladies on the balcony offered to ‘hold’ my spot by the rail whilst I photograph Johnny from the pit for the first three songs. No easy task in a packed gig. Later I got to drive Joe Moss home, one of my favourite memories from any gig ever, a wonderful man.



JOHNNY MARR



Later that year I'm lucky that Johnny's *Messenger* tour in the States coincided with my travels there. Catching him perform at the Fillmore was so special. Perched at the front put me within earshot of two Mexican girls as they sang word perfect renditions of 'Stop Me' and 'Panic'. They'd travelled from San Diego to be there.

2014 saw the unmatched intimacy of the Brudenell in Leeds, a shared front row with my brother and what were starting to become very familiar faces all along that row. But the moment of the year was the night of Joe Moss's wedding at the Manchester Apollo in October. *Playland* had just been released, 'Easy Money' had wakened a wider audience up to the fact that Johnny was indeed back, his hometown crowd were electric and at Johnny's request joined him in the loudest rendition of 'There Is A Light....' to celebrate Joe and Sarah's special day. The walls of the Apollo shook, "God bless you from the bottom of my heart Manchester....my fucking people!"

Early 2015 at the Teenage Cancer Trust event at the Royal Albert Hall, a beautiful arena, a fantastic event, but equally impressive were the huge number of Marr t-shirts on the front row as Paul Weller headlined.

That July, Wakefield, Warehouse 23, was possibly the hottest Johnny Marr gig ever. Johnny's shirt stuck to him like cling film and, shooting a wonderful set from the back of the stage, lots of familiar faces squeezed into a drenched front row.

The triumphant Albert Hall gig marking the release of *Adrenalin Baby* in October 2015 and taking the shot from behind the stage that features in 'Set The Boy Free' was a high. But arriving early afternoon in Newcastle a few days later to see so many faces that'd been on the front row in Manchester already sat queueing on the paved



university campus precinct before the Student Union gig was a reminder, as if it was needed, of the devotion of his fanbase. And being recognised by some of Johnny's fans before the 'Set The Boy Free' book launch event at Birmingham Town Hall just before Christmas 2016 was special, and what a lovely evening as he shared stories with John Robb.

But I think the last night of Johnny's mini summer tour last year really brought all of these great memories together. Arriving in the afternoon there was already a line of familiar and friendly faces outside the Empire. In the bar further down the street grabbing a pre-gig meal the couple next to me chatting excitedly about the fact Johnny was visiting their home town, what songs he might perform etc. A father and son on the way over to venue, the youngster in his Marr T, a group of four girls in their teens on their way in, and yes.....the large contingent of fellas like me, my age group, my hairline. The Middlesbrough gig summed up the journey so far for me. Packed, young and old, the audience had a real buzz of anticipation about it pre-show. We all had to share space, we were all there to share in the magic. The old songs were celebrated, the 'new' solo work now sat proudly amongst those sang along to and Johnny and his great band delivered the best kind of night of live music. Delivered with honesty, passion and a crowd left wanting more. It may even have been hotter than Wakefield!

- *Marc McGarraghy*

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Image bases by ILZE FREY (cover, p.188), MARTINA HILLE & OLIVER JUNGEN (back cover).

Art design by MISS X².

“Everyone in the room was just as excited as I was, and everyone wanted him to do well.”- Susan Hansen

“We left the Barrowland’s with a kid telling us on repeat that Johnny told her she can.” - David Hancock

“Whoever said fangirls have to be teenagers is an idiot.” - Alison Moore

“The thing about experiencing a Johnny Marr show is that it spoils you for seeing anything else. ” - Jane Fujimoto

“I learnt that you don’t need to bring your own friends to a Johnny Marr gig: You can just go and find the best company in there.” - Michela Piatelli

“There are a lot of people in my audience that I know I like and I’m proud of them. They’re good people. Music has given us an excuse to come together.” - Johnny Marr

