

# DYNAMIC

A JOHNNY MARR FANZINE

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# *Johnny Marr* *ready to take us to* **Playland**

**S**ince his tenure with The Smiths, arguably one of the most influential and revered British bands of all time, Johnny Marr has stayed musically active and has continued to brilliantly hone his craft as one of the most inventive and unique guitarists of the modern rock era.

Only 23 years old at the time The Smiths split, Marr had already garnered a slew of accolades for the superb guitar work he brought to the band and for his uncanny knack for writing incredibly catchy yet intricate pop songs.

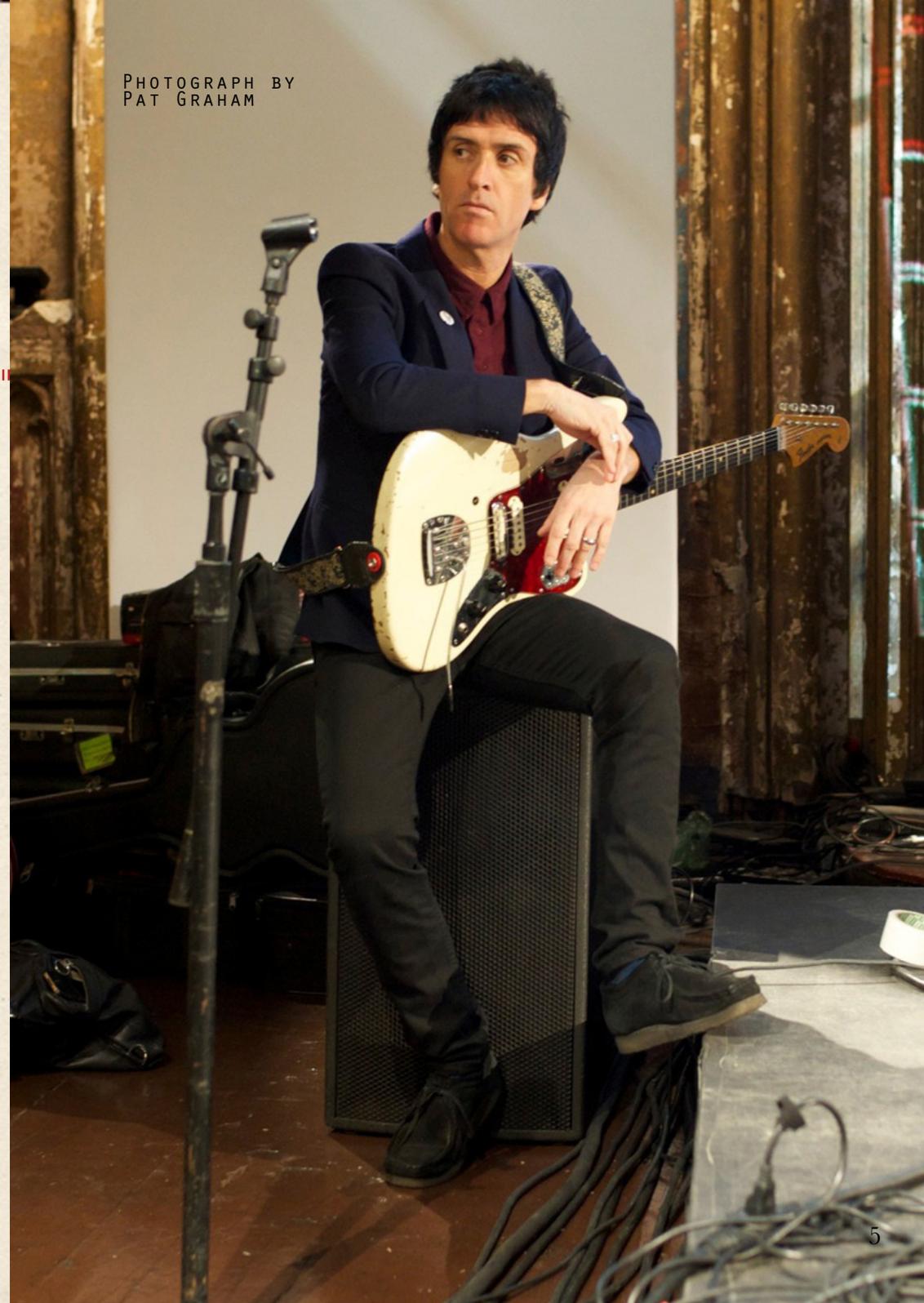
While that band is still worshipped and adored by both their original fan base as well as by a much younger crop of fans who've discovered their music of late, Marr has never been

one to rest on his laurels; instead he's chosen to work at a consistent and steady pace since then and the last few years have proven to be some of the most prolific and fruitful of his career.

While he's added substantial contributions to so many great records during his stints as a member of The The, Electronic, Modest Mouse and The Cribs (among a host of other guest appearances on a stack of great albums), it isn't until very recently that many of his devoted followers have gotten to know the real Johnny Marr.

After releasing a solo album of sorts under the moniker Johnny Marr and the Healers in 2003, it would be a full decade before a

PHOTOGRAPH BY  
PAT GRAHAM



proper solo album would see the light of day. And with it has come a more confident, self-assured and outgoing version of Johnny Marr that has delighted his fans beyond words.

“The Messenger”, released in 2013, is simply put, one of the best pieces of work Marr has ever put his name on. As chief songwriter, lead guitarist, lead vocalist and co-producer of the album, Marr has lovingly and studiously combined all of the many talents he’s mastered throughout his years as a musician and has, seemingly, culminated his skills and his overt love of music as both a fan and a student himself, and created the album that so many of his fans knew he had inside him for so long.

The confidence that exudes from his emotive, heartfelt vocals perfectly intertwines with the collection of raucous rockers that comprise the album and his guitar work is, of course, top notch throughout the album’s twelve cuts.

Following a mountain of favorable, positive record reviews from music press around the world and a

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|||||

successful tour with his new backing band that was met with tremendous success throughout the globe, Marr seems energized and hungry...and more than ready to capitalize on the momentum that he’s experiencing after the grand success of “The Messenger”.

While dabbling in film soundtrack and score work of late, Marr seems to be more focused on further acquiring visibility for himself as Johnny Marr, the solo artist. And, to prove the level of his drive and determination, he’s already got a second solo album written, recorded and ready to hit record store shelves in early October 2014.

While lately, it isn’t uncommon for bands and recording artists to

drag their feet and spend precious, valuable time holed up in recording studios attempting to perfect their work and, in turn, sometimes sucking the life and spontaneity out of their musical creations, Marr has instead chosen the path that was so regularly traveled back in the heyday of rock ‘n roll: he’s opted for the now unheard of plan of attack of writing, recording, and releasing an album hot on the heels of a previous hit album and not forcing fans to wait an eternity for some new material to enjoy.

As he’s mentioned in recent interviews, much of the forthcoming album, entitled “Playland”, was written and conceived as he toured the world in 2013 promoting “The Messenger”. What’s being alluded to is that the new album will contain the same level of unabashed fire and unbridled energy that was so splendidly displayed on its predecessor and that it will serve as a perfect follow-up album, by picking up where his last left off.

And Marr’s fans have already responded favorably to the news via every social media outlet

imaginable by expressing their anxiousness and anticipation for a second solo album being released so quickly in such a short span of time.

Of the many well-deserved superlatives and adjectives that have been used to describe Johnny Marr and the unbelievable amount of great, inspiring music he’s had a hand in creating for the better part of thirty years plus, “prolific” is certainly one that he’s more than merited. Not one to ever stagnate or remain idle, Johnny Marr seems to be fueled by an infinite amount of energy lately. The chemistry he’s achieved with his fine three-piece backing band, both on record and in live performance, has had a huge role in his current busier than usual work ethic and his being hell bent on releasing the very best music he’s capable of that serves as both a token of appreciation for his devoted legion of longtime fans and as sheer proof that he’s still as vital, inspired, gifted and substantial a musician as ever.

By Gabe Echazabal



# JOHNNY MARR

travelling with guitar

Johnny Marr: an iconic figure in the history of English pop music, his guitar playing helped propel The Smiths to their status as legends in the indie music scene. The swirling riff to open “How Soon is Now?” and the agitated notes that begin “This Charming Man” are just two examples of his magic that signal the start of classic songs.

Yet, between the break-up of The Smiths in 1987 and the take-off of his solo career with 2013’s “The Messenger”, there are probably plenty of pop music fans who could be forgiven for wondering where he went.

There's an answer to their queries here: he went his own way, following musical whims and accumulating a body of work that few others could replicate. One of Johnny Marr's key gifts is his versatility. Another is his musical modesty: he's never been afraid to be one of a band; it's not been important to him to always be in the spotlight. Which makes it doubly impressive how good he is at that role.

Marr's work as part of Electronic highlighted the aforementioned gifts. On their first album, his acoustic strumming is an essential loveliness in "Get the Message" and yet he was pretty invisible in the synth-sway of "Getting Away With It".

Johnny did what the track needs, rather than consciously stamp his imprint heavily in every number. "Twisted Tenderness" is the Electronic album that has his guitar most obviously to the fore - and he really showed his range. On the title track, Johnny cut loose with squalling, wah-wah style guitar amid a drum and bass dance groove. Later on in the same song he embroidered with subtle acoustic decoration.

Beautiful simplicity was the key in Johnny's collaboration with Billy Bragg

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on "Walk Away Renee", a wistful song about adolescent yearning, with a deft touch of humour at the end. Listening, there's a sense that Billy (famous for being "one bloke and his guitar") really appreciated singing over Johnny's melody.

Neil Finn, in the "Seven Worlds Collide" concert/album showed that respect too. Johnny gave "Down On the Corner" a whirl, then playfully asked "Is anyone feeling depressed?" before launching into "There is a Light". Finn took the vocals, but paused fractionally near the concluding repetition of the chorus, allowing Johnny's guitar riff to work as part of a call-and-reply duet. Johnny's guitar worked as his voice!

His time in Modest Mouse (particularly the "We Were Dead..." album) allowed Johnny the chance to be really adventurous. In contrast to the

simplicity of his work with Bragg, there's a wall of noise in much Modest Mouse music. Marr contributed spiky, jagged riffs on "Invisible" and "Dashboard", the latter featuring a hypnotic backing layer that seems to pre-empt Johnny's brilliant work on the soundtrack of the movie "Inception", which builds inexorably as the characters' dream-state activities approach their climax.

Elsewhere on the album, Johnny added jangly, summery layers of guitar to "Missed the Boat", and "Little Motel" has

Johnny's guitar in soft, almost lullaby mode, providing relief amid the horns, keyboards and manic vocals of the band.

Versatility and musical modesty. He's worked with The Pet Shop Boys, Kirsty McColl, The Cribs and too many others to mention here. All Johnny Marr's musical performances deserve exploration and have helped him reach his current place: swaggering live performances successfully touring his second solo album. A musician with a great back-catalogue of hits, yet constantly moving forwards.

*By Dave Medley*



PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD HENRY

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK ALLAN



*“We’re guitar players who make records”*

## *Johnny Marr & Nile Rodgers*

On paper Nile Rodgers and Johnny Marr seem to be worlds apart - one of them the chief architect of disco’s sound, the other an indie guitar icon. But both are technical perfectionists and songwriting guitar geniuses who have more similarities than differences.

Johnny Marr, Manchester native, grew up grooving to R&B, meticulously studying the multi-layered guitar parts and how the beat, chord changes and melody created such a powerful, emotional and romantic effect. He was intrigued by Hamilton Bohannon, a key American percussionist, bandleader and producer of the Motown and Disco eras. But his key R&B idol was Nile

Rodgers - a pioneer whose band, Chic, could be called the linchpin between Sly and the Family Stone and Prince.

Nile was an inspiration and guiding light; not only was his guitar sound unique, but his focus was on songwriting, melody and technique, not showboating -- a distinction that continues to define them both.





Both musicians strive to create songs that have a groove and a memorable sound, but, as Marr stresses, “have a whole load of beautiful melodies on top of it.” As “The Hitmaker” we can instantly hum (and then of course start to dance to) so many of Rodgers’ tunes, and of course, Johnny Marr’s songs from The Smiths onward, continue to be the jangly pop soundtrack of our lives.

As guitars players above all else, both have stated that they love to collaborate with a wide variety of musicians who do interesting work. Marr states, “I want to collaborate with people I have a friendship with, a spark with.” Nile has been squeezing out sparks with Duran Duran, David Bowie, Madonna, Daft Punk and Sam Smith. Johnny Marr, has, of course, famously collaborated

with musicians as disparate as The Pretenders, The The, Billy Bragg, Hans Zimmer, Talking Heads, Beck and Modest Mouse.

Marr’s appreciation and love for Rodgers was so important that he named his son Nile, forever uniting them. At the recent Ivor Novello awards ceremony in London this past May, Marr presented Rodgers with the Special International Award saying, “You hear his heart with his right hand and his soul with his left...I hope you feel loved now because you are. You showed what a guitar player could be and what music could be, and always carried yourself with such dignity, grace and positivity.”

Now we wait patiently for them to sync their schedules and create unforgettable music together.



By Ellen Leerburger

Artwork by Aoiro Pukuko



PHOTO © MARTIN SHARMAN

 @MARTSHARM



# On the Aesthetic Education of Marr

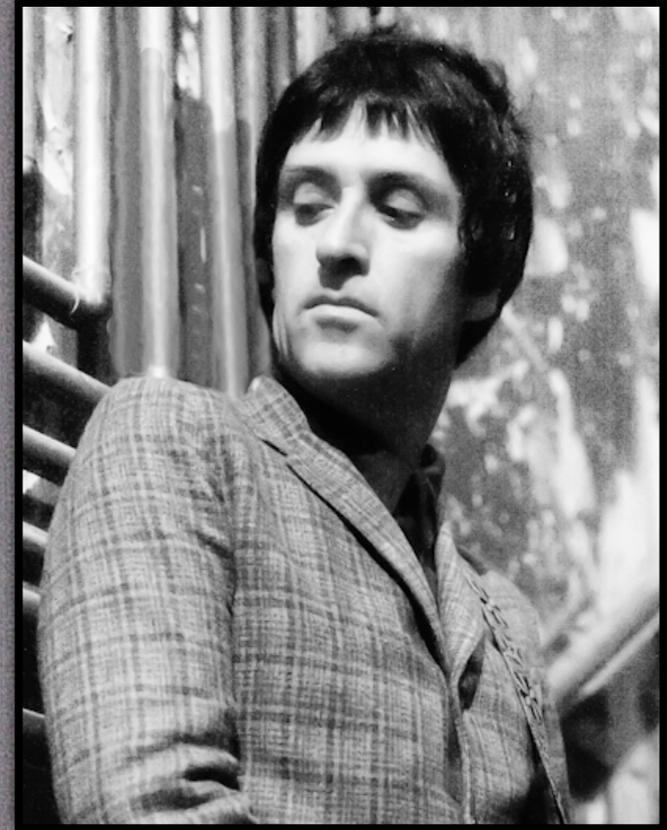


PHOTO BY CARL LYTTLE

When asked to describe Johnny Marr, “stylish” is often a word that comes up. With his excellent collection of shoes, smart blazers and iconic Mod haircut, the 50 year old musician cuts a dashing figure. Though by no means shallow, fashion is important to Johnny, as is his personal aesthetic.

Johnny admits his interest in fashion dates right back to childhood. *"Me and my sister were obsessed with clothes, like a lot of people in my neighbourhood. It was a working-class thing."* (Esquire, 2014.) As a teenager he worked in clothing shops, and by the time he came into the public eye with The Smiths, his fashion sense had fully evolved into a look all of his own. While Morrissey often drew attention with his oversized ladies' blouses and NHS specs, it was Johnny Marr who lent true style cred to the band: no matter what he wore, he always managed to look effortlessly cool. This was a man who not only could play the guitar like no one else could, but could pull off wearing outfits no one else could either. He wore moccasins with almost-indecently tight drainpipe jeans and baker boy caps; yellow turtlenecks with chunky beads; sheepskin coats, Ray-Ban Wayfarers and round mirrored shades. And who could forget that diamond chandelier necklace?

Now at 50, Johnny has swapped his yellow turtleneck for smart button-down shirts (buttoned right to the top, thank you very much), and his

sheepskin coat for smart blazers in turquoise velvet and professorial tweed (he does have a doctorate these days, after all), usually adorned with badges and brooches. The drainpipe jeans are still a staple, but he looks just as good in them now as back in 1983.

Of course there is that age-old argument: if you're attractive, you can wear virtually anything and still look good. Johnny Marr of the 1980s certainly fit that description, and still now is undeniably handsome. But Johnny's innate stylishness is built on more than just good genetics (and in recent years, a bizarre resistance to the ageing process): it's a matter of attitude.

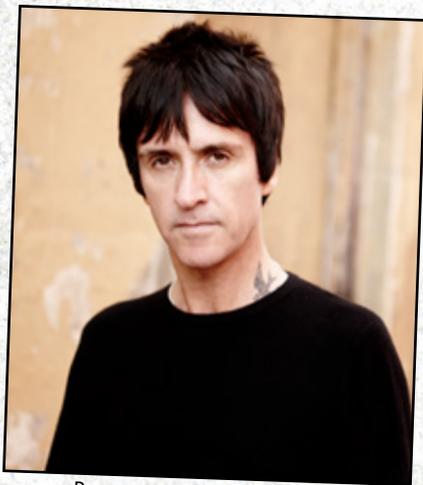


PHOTO BY JON SHARD



*“You should dress in whatever is your mental mode,”* Johnny said to Esquire magazine earlier this year. *“I’m a musician and an artist. I don’t wanna be looking like a City gent. And I don’t wanna be looking like a country squire. Because I’m a rock musician. That’s what I feel like.”*

Not only is Johnny well aware of what styles suit him from a visual perspective, but he knows what clothes and accessories suit his personality. In many ways, his wardrobe reflects who he is as a person. Indeed, his collection of button badges alone is an enlightening glimpse into Johnny’s interests: The Manchester Modernist Society, Wire, Ray Johnson, Aldous Huxley, and even a golden swallow to match the recently-inked tattoo on his neck.

Johnny’s stylishness isn’t entirely dependent on his choice in clothes, however: grooming also plays a role, starting with that very excellent head of hair (no sign whatsoever of thinning over the years, one can’t help but notice). *“If you’re in a band and you don’t take advantage of the great haircut opportunities that affords you, then you’re an idiot. People say to me, “Do*

*you dye your hair?”* and I say, *“Well, does fucking Siouxsie Sioux? Does Bowie?”* Of course I’m going to have a decent haircut. It’s one of the first things I learnt to do - get a few songs together and get your hairstyle right.” (Q, 2013.)

Not only is Johnny’s hair always impeccably styled, but it’s an impeccable style that suits him perfectly. Smart yet edgy, and of course utterly timeless - just like Johnny himself.

Not only is Johnny well aware of what styles suit him from a visual perspective, but he knows what clothes and accessories suit his personality. In many ways, his wardrobe reflects who he is as a person.

Healthy lifestyle also plays a role in maintaining the Johnny Marr aesthetic. Vegan, teetotal and an avid long-distance runner, it’s no surprise that Johnny looks far younger than his almost-51 years. Wrinkles? What wrinkles? And while many men of a similar age are starting to thicken

around the middle, there’s no sign whatsoever of Johnny falling victim to middle-age spread when he raises his guitar above his head onstage and teases the audience with a fleeting glimpse of midriff.

Earlier this year, Johnny Marr did a fashion shoot for Esquire UK - and the results, needless to say, were stunning. Whether decked out in a

dark suit, plaid cardigan or checked shirt with blazer and tie, he radiates stylishness. It’s partly his inherent coolness, and yes, good genetics too - but the real driving force behind Johnny’s aesthetic is his genuine flair for fashion. Clothes may not maketh the man, but they sure maketh him look good.

By Bernadette Rumsen

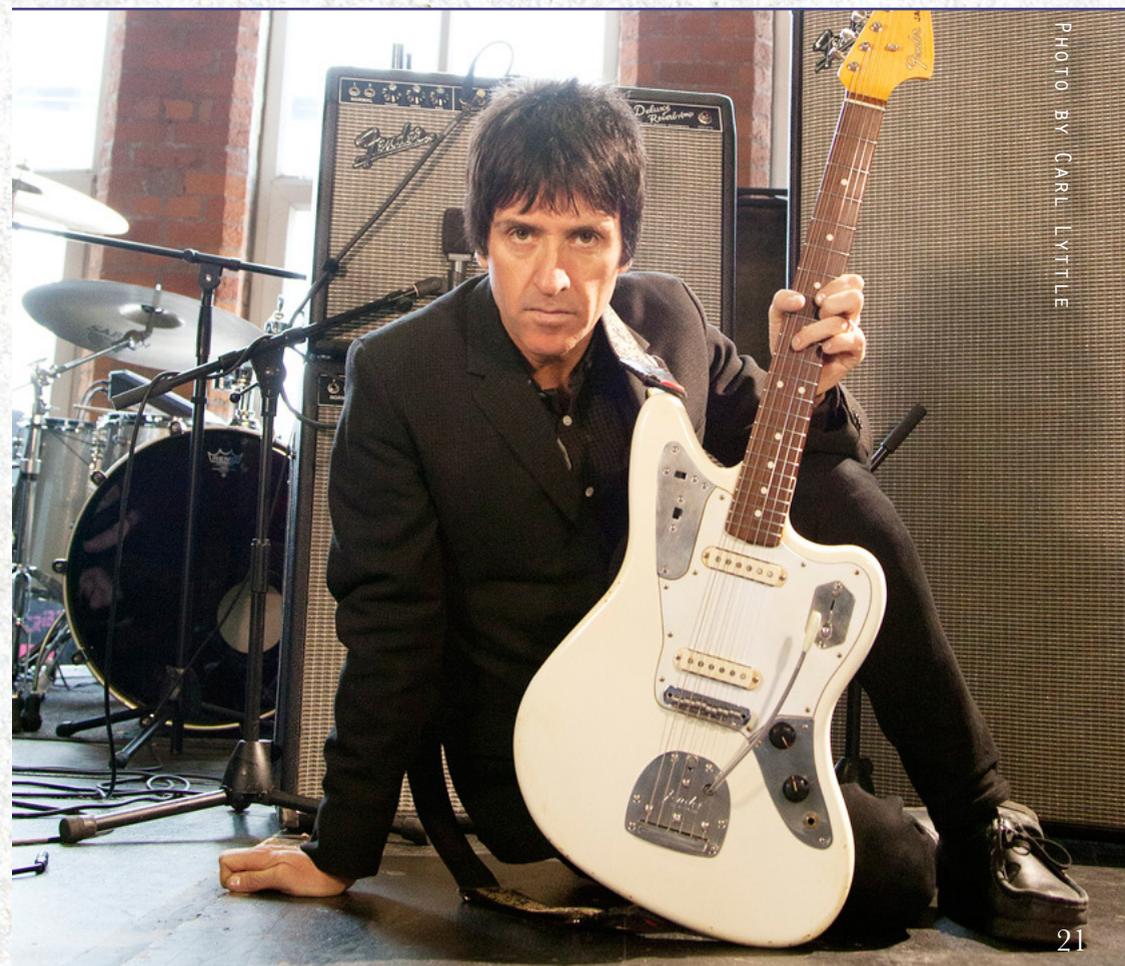


PHOTO BY CARL LITTLE



# Johnny Marr

## Feminism, Women and a bit of Gender

Let's face it, most men born between 1962 and 1973 are feminists. Even my 52 year-old- steelworking-uncle is a feminist. They didn't have any choice. It's the way things were. The graffiti in the women's toilets in Sheffield told me so.

Back in the 80s we were used to seeing people whose gender was ambiguous: Marilyn, Pete Burns, Annie Lennox. Even my steelworking uncle used to put on his bronze eye shadow before stepping out for the night in his ballet shoes and cape. The Smiths were part of this, of course, most obviously Morrissey. But what about Johnny Marr?

Like many of the more subtle aspects of Johnny Marr, all the bits that aren't to do with his guitar playing, his influence on women and feminism has kind of got missed. He was generally considered to be the 'laddish' one in The Smiths. It was the way many men justified being fans of the band. But by all accounts that definition is a very simple one.

Here's a man who can wield an iron, sew on a button and pierce your mate's ears. You might say that some of this is the natural consequence of punk; the DIY approach that said that anyone could do anything, regardless of gender. One look at Viv Albertine's autobiography will tell you otherwise.

A self-confessed fashion fan, Johnny took his style influences from women as well as men. Most notable of these is the

*Johnny Marr talks spiritedly about growing up in era when the gender roles were more fluid.*



Perry girls – an interesting case of a man being influenced by a woman who was influenced by a man! The androgynous style liberated early female mods, allowing them to have a more sexually relaxed style, whilst the men were prettifying themselves with eyeliner and mascara.

Johnny Marr talks spiritedly about growing up in era when the gender roles were more fluid. It's a freedom that younger generations haven't had the luxury of experiencing. As many of his contemporaries have moved out of the limelight

or begun to dress more conservatively, it's important to have Marr show you there's more to being a man than just being macho. That you can have one foot in Manchester City and one hand in a pot of nail polish at the same time.

*Never underestimate the power and influence of the 'big sister', especially one who'll introduce you to some good music.*

On a more personal level, Johnny Marr has spoken about the significant presence of women in his family, the young aunts, for instance, who lived nearby. There's nothing like the potent matriarchy of the working class household! Likewise, never underestimate the power and influence of the 'big sister', especially one who'll introduce you to some good music.

And, of course, there is Angie, a woman who is as much a part of the iconography of The Smiths as gladioli. A mystery woman in some respects but clearly by no means a 'little wife'. The enduringness of their relationship has allowed Johnny Marr to be perceived as a romantic figure but also one who has a respect for women and family traditions. As with much of his behaviour, it runs contrary to the cliché of the promiscuous guitar hero.

All of which contributes to a universal appeal. Who'd have thought it? Any of The Smiths becoming sex symbols!

And yet here's Johnny in his fifty year old prime, in his skinny jeans and winking, being pursued across Twitter by men, women and at least one bear.

Good on ya!

By Helen Angell

# Shopping for music

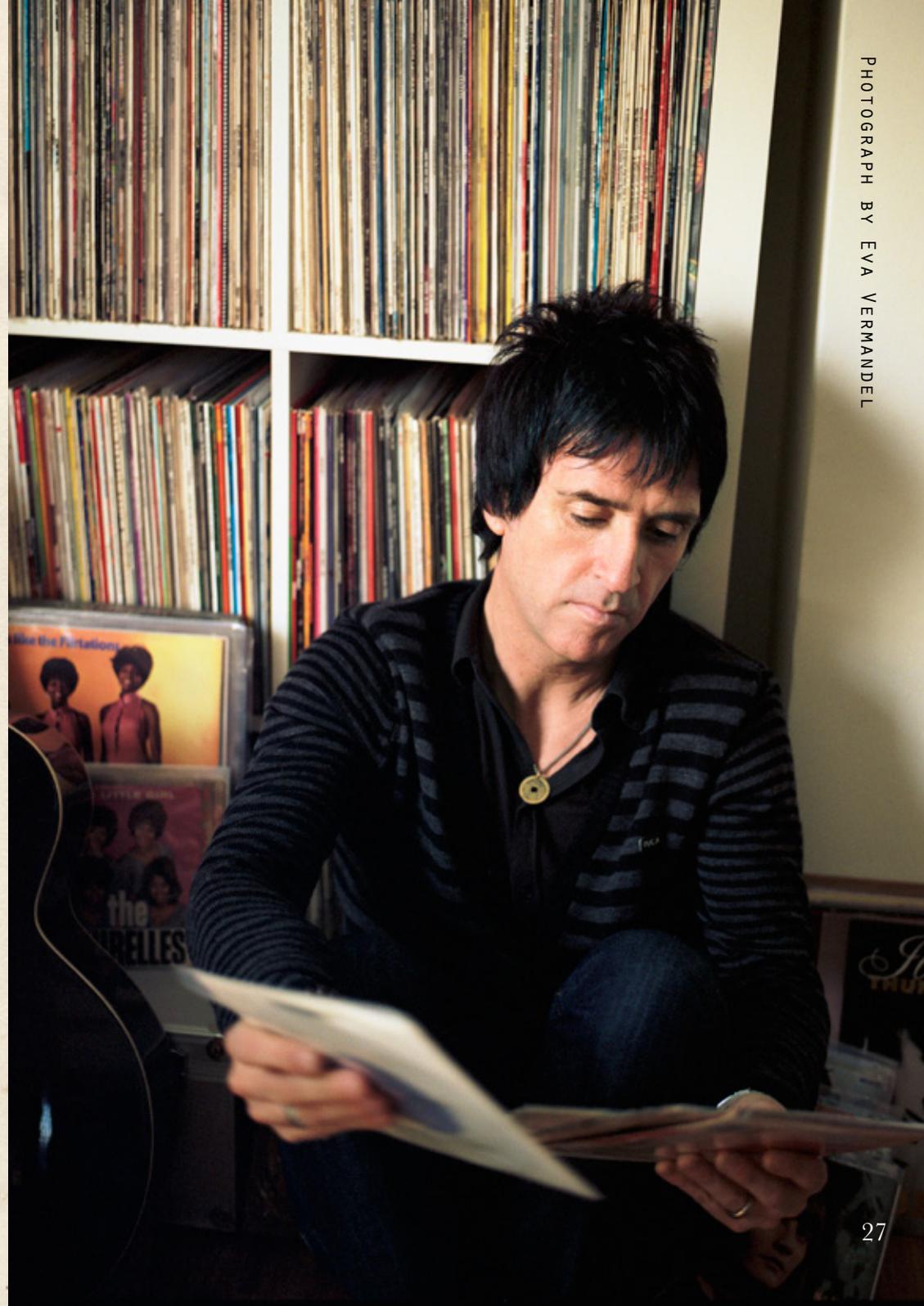
## with the *Angel of Radness* on your shoulder



PHOTO BY NEIL THOMPSON

Each year I discover a couple of LPs, old or new, that I come to really love. Often they were made by bands which split up or died a long time ago. With a bit of lateral thinking, most of these discoveries can be traced back to my fandom for Johnny's songwriting and guitar playing. In fact,

probably the single most important event in my life as a music fan (and as a lifelong guitar geek) has been purchasing *Louder Than Bombs* in 2005 as a 19-year-old. Pretty soon I was Googling 'Johnny Marr interview' on a daily basis. My university readings went to hell as I pored over interviews with him. I wanted to learn about his taste in music, his views on songwriting, guitar playing and record production, and his attitude to life.

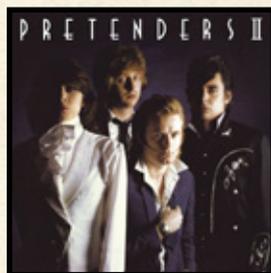


PHOTOGRAPH BY EVA VERMANDEL

The first thing one recognises in an extensive Johnny Marr interview is that he's a dedicated music fan at heart: he nearly always mentions what he's listening to; and a good interviewer will ask. Through his many interviews I've learned – as I'm sure many, many others have also – about the Brill Building songwriters, The Four Tops, Shadow Morton, The Shangri-Las, Iggy Pop, Bo Diddley, T.Rex, CHIC, Wire, The Gun Club, John McGeoch, Patti Smith, Northern Soul music, Bowie, Dusty Springfield, the Velvets and the list goes on. I was collecting music before these Johnny-related revelations, but there seems no doubt that buying *Louder Than Bombs* has granted me a kaleidoscopic view of pop music: from the meager \$20 I spent on that record, the result has been dozens upon dozens of amazing tangential discoveries in record stores. I would love one day to have a scroll through Johnny's iPod... I'll bet his collection is hot. But for now, here are a few Johnny-inspired discoveries that have become classics in my eyes.

### *Pretenders, 'Jealous Dogs,' Pretenders II*

By the time The Smiths were preparing to release 'Hand In Glove,' the first lineup of Pretenders had been put through the ringer of stardom. They'd released two stunningly accomplished LPs but had suffered the death of two members from drug and alcohol abuse. We're all the worse without their guitarist Jimmy Scott and bassist Pete Farndon. They were visionary players, and the track 'Jealous Dogs' from Pretenders' second LP shows

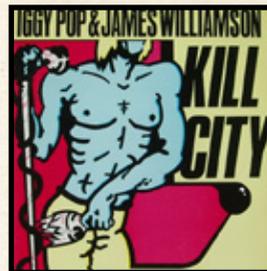


this handsome pair at their most subtle and savage. Johnny has stated that Jimmy Scott was an influence; on this particular track it's not so obvious, but conceptually you can easily draw a connection: Scott plays simple, carefully structured melodic parts that move you. There are no solos, but a few brief and dangerous sounding breakouts in the bridge. Johnny once described Keith Richards' playing as 'interesting without being flashy,' and the same could be said of Scott here.

### *Iggy Pop and James Williamson, 'Sell Your Love,' Kill City*

Johnny has spoken often about how buying *Raw Power* by Iggy and the Stooges was a life changing moment.

*'I bought it and I remember getting on the bus and staring at the front cover in disbelief all the way home. I wasn't disappointed when I played it, it sounded like I thought it would. It was mysterious, sexy, druggy and riffy and to the point. That record provided a world I climbed into for a long time.'*



The Stooges' second guitar player, James Williamson, wrote the music for *Raw Power*, and I liked it so much that I wanted to hear what else Williamson had done. At the time I bought it, *Kill City* was the only other record on which he'd played a substantial amount of guitar; he quit music after the 70s and took up a job at Sony. Not much is written about this LP, and maybe that's a good thing. It's a sad record, made in Los Angeles after the demise of The Stooges with the sole aim of securing a new record contract for Iggy. 'Sell Your Love' is a bitter song about (I think) the path to a life of prostitution; but of course, the music makes street life sound as glamorous as hell. The saxophones sound like waves crashing on Venice Beach, and the guitar riffs are heavy and defiant.

### *Sister Sledge, 'Pretty Baby,' Love Somebody Today*

A couple of years ago I was turned on to CHIC's 'I Want Your Love' by Johnny. If you like CHIC, you're immediately blessed, because in the guise of their company 'The CHIC Organization,' CHIC recorded, played on and produced loads of records for other acts. Across most of these records, they remain a groovy, disco pop act trading in elegant, transcendent melancholy. Paul Lester from *The Guardian* got it in one when he described the pillar of CHIC's music as being 'the rapture of heartache.'



'Pretty Baby' is on the second and final record CHIC made with Sister Sledge. It's a simple groover with a bouncing rhythm, a load of drama, and lyrics about taking your mother's advice. But of course, the foreboding tone of the music suggests that mama's advice ain't gonna be followed. Or in Johnny's words 'there's trouble around the corner.' I've never heard this on a club stereo, but it's about time a DJ gave it a spin: it sounds huge.

By Andrew Campbell



## REVIEW EASY MONEY

'Easy Money' is the first single to be released from Johnny Marr's upcoming second album "Playland" - and what a way to introduce it! The "difficult second album" syndrome can burden some artists, but Johnny attacks it in the positive way only he can, and almost makes it look easy with this gem.



It's the most "pop" song that Johnny has written thus far in his solo career - radio friendly but still carries an edge. Contagious, simple-yet-effective killer riff? Check. Infectious chorus? Check. Masses of attitude - CHECK!

The song comes complete with a typically understated video filmed in a seaside amusement arcade, with the whole band looking dapper and in which Johnny makes his feelings towards the Prime Minister clear with a simple scorn-filled glance towards his portrait on the wall. It's no mean feat to produce a catchy song that still has the capacity to make you think, but Johnny has hit the jackpot with this one. Upon hearing the first bar of this song, with a riff that screams "Johnny Marr!", you know something special is happening and you will be humming the chorus repeatedly as soon as the 3 minutes and 56 seconds of pure pop pleasure is finished.

Johnny has worked with some of the finest artists throughout his vast musical career, but now is the time for him to stand alone as a wonderful songwriter as well as the finest guitarist of my generation.

Easy Money has whetted my appetite for "Playland" and left me salivating for more. Johnny Fucking Marr, I salute you.

By Zed H.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARC MCGARRAGHY  
YELLOW MUSTANG PHOTOGRAPHY

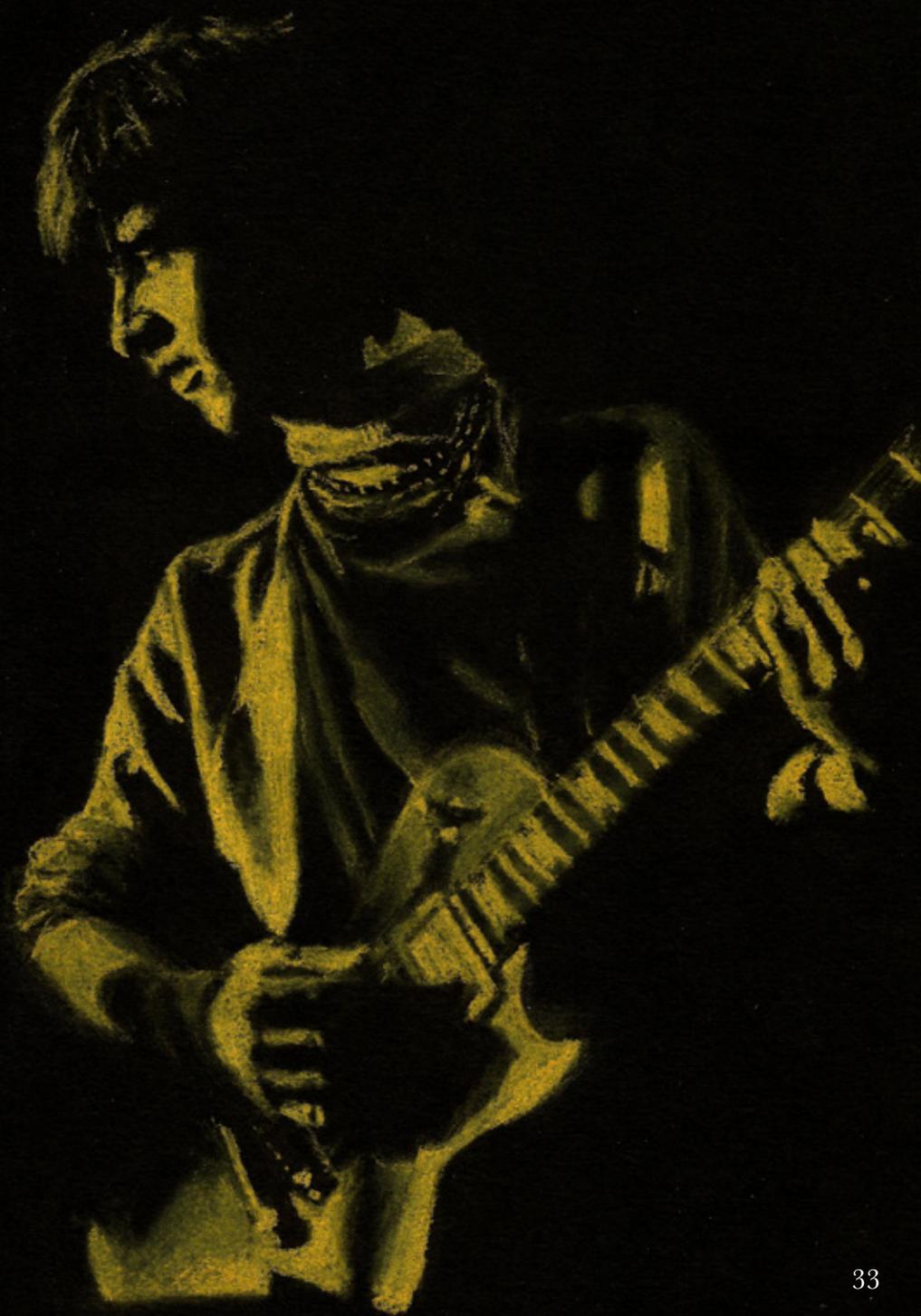


# What Difference did Johnny make?

IMAGINE THIS SCENARIO:

THERE'S A CLOTHING SHOP IN MANCHESTER. JOHN MAHER, THE 50 YEAR OLD MANAGER, LOOKS YOUNGER. EVERYONE KNOWS THE LEGENDARY TALE OF THIS GUY - HE GOT A JOB IN THIS SHOP WHEN HE WAS 17 TO PAY THE BILLS WHILST HE CONCENTRATED ON HIS TRUE LOVE - **MUSIC**.

ARTWORK BY TERESA BEVERIDGE



Word on the street is when he was younger he was the greatest guitar player anyone had ever heard, and back in the day it was a given that this guy would make it big! He had it all - He was fashion forward, enthusiastic, energetic, impossibly optimistic and his ideas were bursting out of his cool haircut adorned head!

Unfortunately, he just never found anyone to work with that matched his own ambition, and even though he slogged it out in many bands, none of them took it as seriously as him. Slowly but surely, he settled down into normal life.

Now imagine if this scenario were true,

## where would music be today?



Let's start with the obvious: no Suede, no Blur, no Oasis, no Stone Roses (indie bands from the north never would have been given a chance), no Radiohead, no Verve, no Coldplay and none of the countless bands that these artists in turn inspired.

The impact Johnny Marr had on a generation of kids growing up, and in turn the music they went on to create, cannot be underestimated. In fact, many now legendary songwriters/guitarists would never have picked up a guitar in

the first place had they not been mesmerized by this impossibly cool complete package. Johnny's playing and attitude spoke to a generation of kids and this is what it said: "pick up a guitar, learn it, write songs on it, don't be dissuaded by anyone, and most importantly do your best to be brilliant!"

I know because that's what it said to me all the way over here in Australia. At age eleven I heard 'The Queen Is Dead' coming from my friend's cool older sister's bedroom - I froze, unable to move,

confused and excited by this sound I could hear. I had always loved music, but right there and then I fell IN love with music, and by the end of that week I had made up my mind: I'm not gonna be a lawyer or a pilot or a council worker - I WILL be a guitarist and I WILL be in a band!

And so my life path changed from that minute on: I became obsessed with all things guitar, and through Johnny's playing and his interviews I received my cues to dig through the history of music, discovering more influences and learning all I could about the magic and beauty of this craft.

At age 17 I found my songwriting partner, we formed a band, I dropped out of University at the first sign of record label interest and threw myself into it.

Did we make it? The wheels fell off. Maybe I couldn't find the right people. Maybe I didn't have the talent, but I never stopped playing, never stopped loving it and I never gave up. Last year I had my debut single released by a local independent label.

But for every Bernard Butler or Noel Gallagher, there are 1000s of me - kids that got turned on to guitar playing by Johnny, who have had a lifetime of enjoyment and discovery because of it, and who know the inexplicable joy of creating music.

Most of our playing and writing is nothing like Johnny's - it can't be - none of us are good enough! The man is frustratingly talented, but Johnny was and is a catalyst for creation and wanting to create. His originality, his sense of melody, his humility as a player in understanding that the 'song' comes first before the ego driven solo, still serves as inspiration to this day.

He's the one that flicked the switch in so many. He's responsible for a lot more records in your collection than you might think.

The difference he made is beyond measure.



By Craig Hansen



# Leave School For Poetry

A few factors were pretty much certain about Johnny Marr's debut album, "The Messenger." It would feature some staggeringly wonderful riffs, it would have a cool aesthetic and it would make Johnny Marr relevant again. Whilst fans tentatively anticipated its arrival, the question on the tip of everybody's tongue was "but can Marr write good lyrics?" Although certainly never giving off the impression that he was illiterate, if Marr had a great skill for lyricism, why had it taken so long for him to release his first solo album? Then of course there was the added pressure of the inevitable Morrissey comparisons that would ensue. His role in The Smiths was to accompany sombrelly witty lyrics, adding joy, movement, excitement and youth to tales of social outcast and lost love. Could he do the same with his own lyrics?

The album's first single "Upstarts" certainly got off to a promising start with its youthful "call-to-arms" nature. Marr proves that,

although approaching fifty when he wrote it, he can easily tap into the minds of young people and the culture of today. It merges a lively hopefulness with poetic imagery, such as "How do we know? It's in our eyes."

**"The Messenger" awakens that glorious liveliness of creativity, merging introspective poetry with enlightening hope over the top of quick yet delicate riffs.**

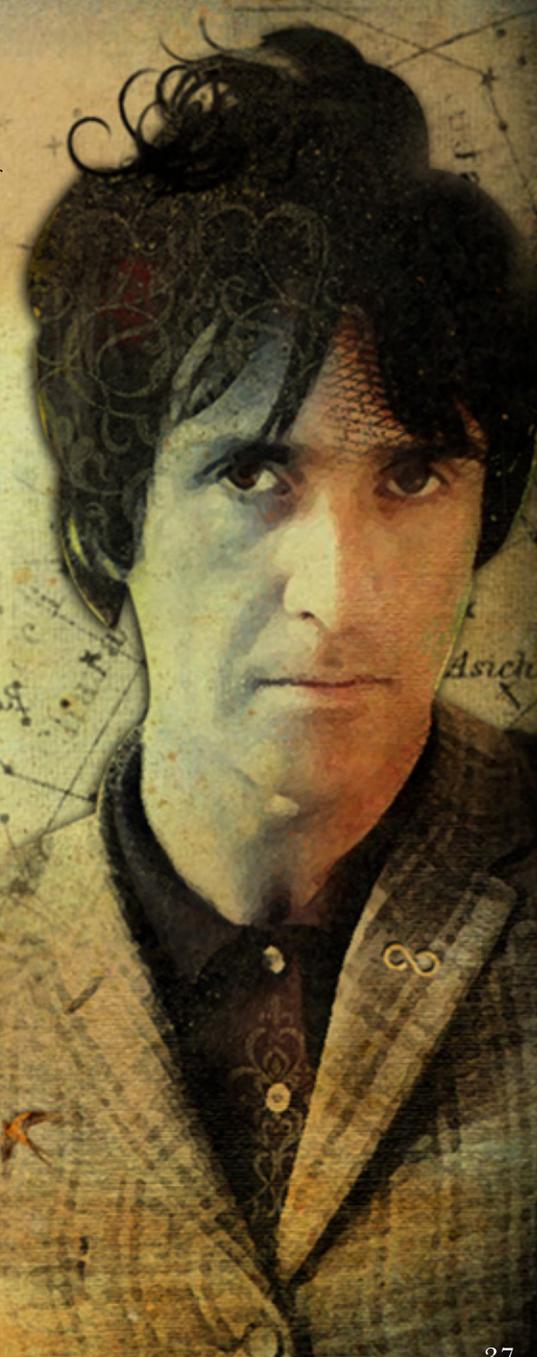
Similar themes are carried across the entirety of "The Messenger." It is not only the leading single that speaks to young people, but songs like "Generate! Generate!" and "New Town Velocity" have the same spark about them. Glittering lines like, "Sensations versus thinking, oh no, no, no it's beginning" are so cathartic, even if you- the epitome

of Smithdom- are walking home in the drizzling rain. "The Messenger" awakens that glorious liveliness of creativity, merging introspective poetry with enlightening hope over the top of quick yet delicate riffs.

One track burrowed in towards the end of the album demonstrates some of Marr's best lyrics. "The Crack Up" features glimmering lines like "Lifeless and the life, the face will never be the same" and "Her smiles are miles of metaphor" that tell a story through the vivid image of a young girl desperately trying to find herself, whilst lost in an unhappy routine. The song was actually inspired by the apparent suicide of Russian model, Rusiana Korshunova and it's about "fame and what we'll do for it, but it's also about being coerced into it."

Marr has proved that although he is still a staggeringly talented guitarist, he is much more than that too. He can frame guitar solos around eloquently written lyrics that bring together both realism and empowerment. A listen to Marr's lyrics would make almost anyone want to leave school for poetry. That is why Johnny Marr will always be a Godlike Genius.

*By Sophie Wilson*

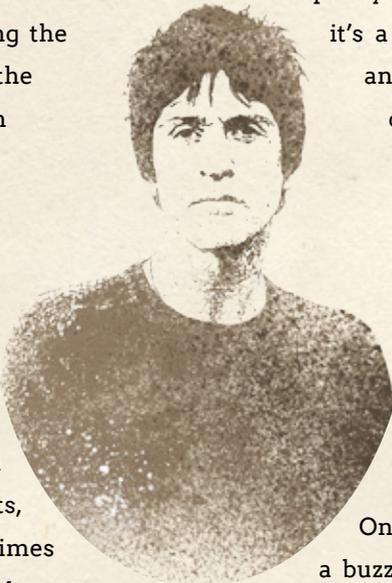


# JOHNNY GOES TO THE seaside

"Shops filled with vinyl of songs richly written  
Tea, pie and mash and the taste of Great Britain  
Fender guitars that rip hearts with their strings  
These are a few of my favourite things"

But where to go to find them all - should I head for the nearest big city or jump on a train to London? Not this time....as just along the coast to Southsea on the edge of Portsmouth is far enough to tick everything off the list. The area has an eclectic mix of independent traders and a high concentration of music and entertainment events, but these can sometimes miss out to the bigger players.

For the second year running, Johnny Marr announced a warm up gig at



The Wedgewood Rooms and the anticipation quickly kicked in. With a capacity of no more than 500, it's a small venue for such an iconic name, and a chance for the crowd to get a whole different experience than from a bigger setting. At the back of the room you're still closer than you would be in plenty of places.

On top of that, it generates a buzz locally that you can't plan or manufacture. On the day of the show there's a tweet from Sweetiepies of Southsea saying that

References: [sweetiepiesouthsea.com](http://sweetiepiesouthsea.com) [pieandvinyl.co.uk](http://pieandvinyl.co.uk)  
[wedgewood-rooms.co.uk](http://wedgewood-rooms.co.uk) [theboyiusedtobe.com](http://theboyiusedtobe.com)

they've just given two of their pies to Johnny - brilliant product placement for a vegan supplier. In turn, one of Sweetiepies' local stockists is Pie & Vinyl - a record shop with a cafe attached, selling a menu of assorted pie, mash and tea; promoting produce from the nearby area. As well as meeting what must surely be a universal need for 45s, LPs and comfort food, Pie & Vinyl is also the record label for a number of local artists, including the evening's support act, The Boy I Used To Be.

'Johnny's so energetic and in a place this size it spreads faster, it's contagious and the whole audience gets involved'.

Before the gig, singer Edward Perry said, 'The chance is a great opportunity to play in front of a brand new audience, the show was sold out before we were asked, it's great to be given a crowd of that size to have to impress. We're

gonna have to up our game. The chance to meet your hero is a pretty cool thing and is a perk to putting in a lot of hard work. We're pretty stoked about it.'

The crowd was pretty stoked too. 'The atmosphere's different in a smaller venue; it's more welcoming and social, like being part of a little community', said one audience member, while another remarked: 'Johnny's so energetic and in a place this size it spreads faster, it's contagious and the whole audience gets involved'.

Later in the year Johnny's tour will take in other venues that don't always hit the spotlight, with the first three nights in October calling at Lincoln, Southend and Bexhill-on-Sea. This matters so much to people living nearby - a chance to be part of something without having to travel far or potentially miss the end of the show due to suburban public transport hitting sleep mode well before midnight.

Brilliant live performances, supporting smaller venues and going off the beaten track? That beats raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens hands down.

By Siobhan O'Driscoll

# Johnny Marr

at THE WEDGEWOOD ROOMS  
Portsmouth, 2/8/14

**I**t must be lovely being Johnny Marr, especially on dates such as this. You get to play the songs you wrote to an adoring, seismic crowd, invite those you admire to get on stage with you and do a couple of numbers; and even pull off wearing peach.

And boy, does he deserve the adulation. In a fanzine devoted to the great man, there is no point/need to go over his extraordinary career, but to say he seems to be having the time of his life is an understatement.

Touring with a very similar set to last year – with a few new ones

thrown in – this is a man completely comfortable with being the front man, at home with revisiting his glorious career and taking pride in his solo material (as well he should).

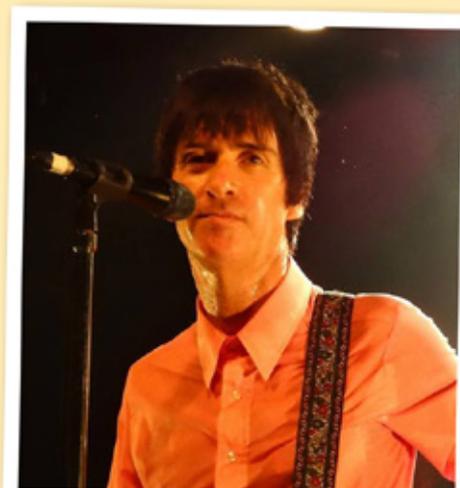


PHOTO BY SAWAKO HUNTER

Opening with a double whammy of Upstarts and Panic, he barely paused for the first 20 minutes except to remove his jacket. The songs from The Messenger sat easily among the Smiths covers – in fact it was Generate! Generate! running around my head next day. New numbers Easy Money, Boys Get Straight, Candidate and (in the encore) Little King all sounded strong and full-on – can't wait to get my hands on it.

Perhaps the upbeat mood was down to his acupuncture ('Can you have too much chi? I think I've o-chi'ed'), or because he loves the Wedgewood Rooms (he played a warm-up here last year too, I hope he is a



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'CAN YOU HAVE TOO MUCH CHI? I THINK I'VE O-CHI'ED.'

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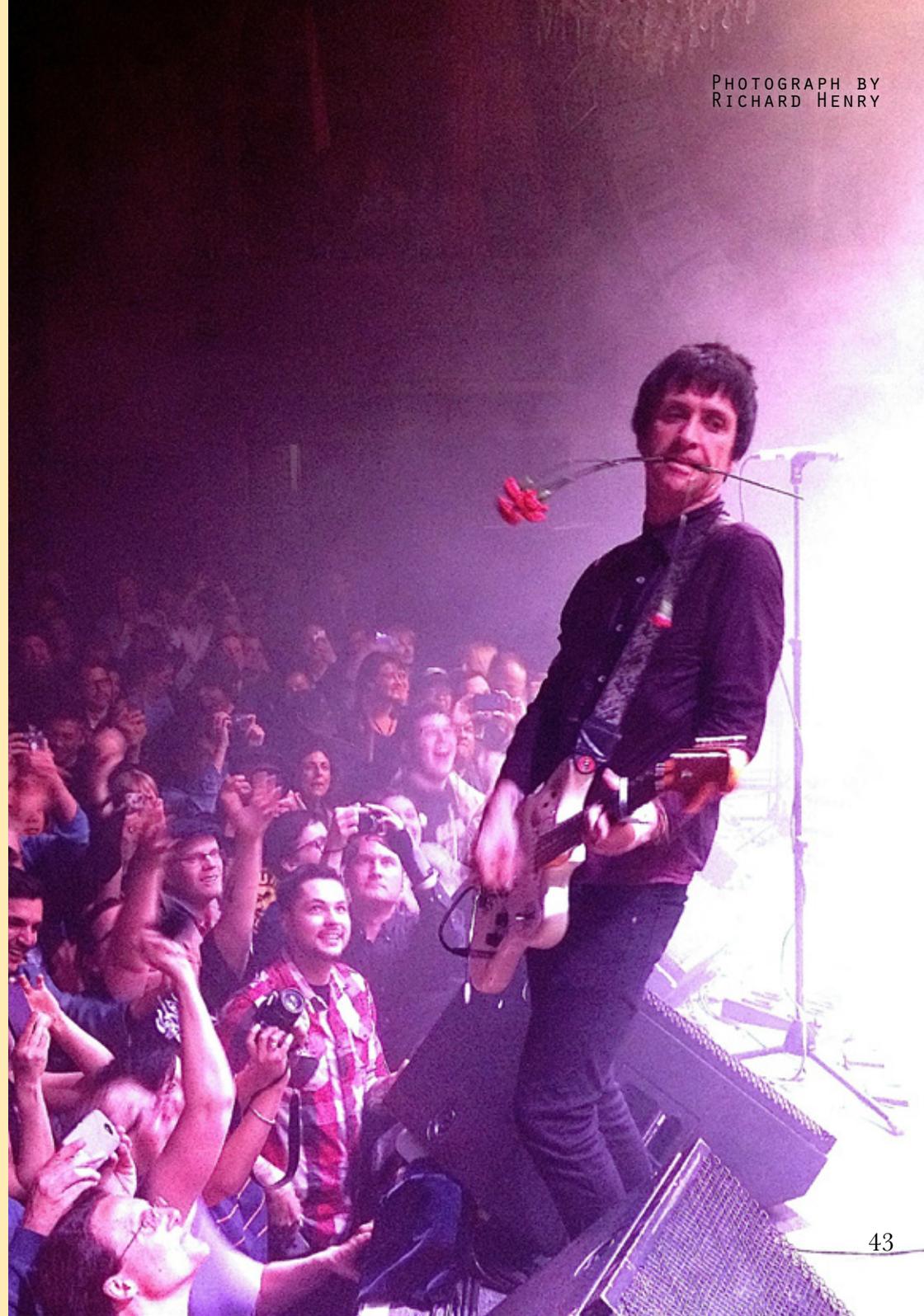
traditionalist), or knowing who was waiting in the wings for the encore.

Robyn Hitchcock emerged to rapturous applause (and Googling by some) and joined the band for Please Please Please. His voice made it less yearning, more railing against the dying of the sun – completely haunting. They then did Robyn's Tell Me About Your Drugs. The band alone again then ripped through Little King, a cover of The Clash's version of I Fought The Law, then of course, How Soon Is Now?

Bouncers were pulling people off the ceiling and mopping the floors at the end. A gig that will be talked about in awed tones by all who saw it for months to come, I only felt jealous for all those for whom an audience with Johnny is yet to come.

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By Claire Perry



# Johnny Marr

## AND HIS FANS



Photo by Marc McGarraghy / Yellow Mustang Photography

All the various platforms of the social media are quite overwhelming to think about: Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to name a few, are to some people the way they go about their everyday lives. You can post inspirational quotes, pictures, talk about what you're up to, maybe you'll post a link to a video or your favourite article of the day.

Or if you're Johnny Marr, it's another way to communicate with your legion of loyal fans.

Let's imagine a world where the internet doesn't exist in 2014. Johnny Marr is playing a gig at your local music venue and the only way you know about it is from fliers and posters hanging up around town. To get tickets, most people call the box office or go and buy them in person. You go to the gig, have an amazing time, and then you wait behind afterwards to meet the man himself. The way Johnny is with his fans, all the nerves you felt when you were waiting to speak to him evaporate as soon as you start talking to him.

This is something that makes Johnny unique from other music artists, apart from his guitar playing style and all his collaborations with other musicians before venturing out on his own; he makes you feel like more than just a fan. He understands that you are a real person and is always grateful for

the fact that you like his music, as well as humbled that you waited behind to meet him after the gig. You never get the feeling that all he wants to do is go and get some sleep before he journeys on to the next gig. Johnny Marr will hold a conversation with you, and genuinely be interested in what you have to say.

You never get the feeling that all he wants to do is go and get some sleep before he journeys on to the next gig.

But that would all happen anyway in the world we live in today, with so many digital things and the internet. As many of us Marr fans know, Johnny uses Facebook and Twitter, and has recently joined the picture-sharing wonder that is Instagram - he is [@johnnymarrgram](#) if you didn't know about this. It's through these platforms that he lets us know what's going on where his music is concerned, whether he's recording, touring or doing another project with Fender (little sidenote here - how freaking beautiful is the Sherwood Green Jag?!). It's also through these platforms that he can communicate one-on-one with the fans, though he predominantly uses Twitter for this. Yours truly has had the honour of having some of my questions posed to him answered.

My favourite has to be this little gem, answered in true Marr fashion:



This was six days after my birthday. What a late birthday present!

Because of Johnny's presence on social media and how he uses it to connect with his fans, it's another way that he stands out from other artists. He doesn't feel the need to adopt an internet persona or be somebody that he isn't. He is the way he is like in reality: brutally honest, very witty and a man who won't take any nonsense. This is all the proof you need of that (this is in reply to a guy who tweeted Johnny 'words going round your a fucking faggot'):



I take my hat off to you, sir.

For all the downfalls of social media, in some ways it is a blessing. If it weren't for social media, fans of Johnny Marr wouldn't be able to connect with each other, and those fans wouldn't be able to connect with him if he wasn't on Twitter and Facebook et cetera.

To finish this article, here is a statement that certainly rings true: fans of Johnny are awesome. They really are. And a big reason for that may very well be to do with the fact that Johnny Marr himself is awesome.

We love you, Johnny!

*By Gemma Faulkner*  @AKAGem\_

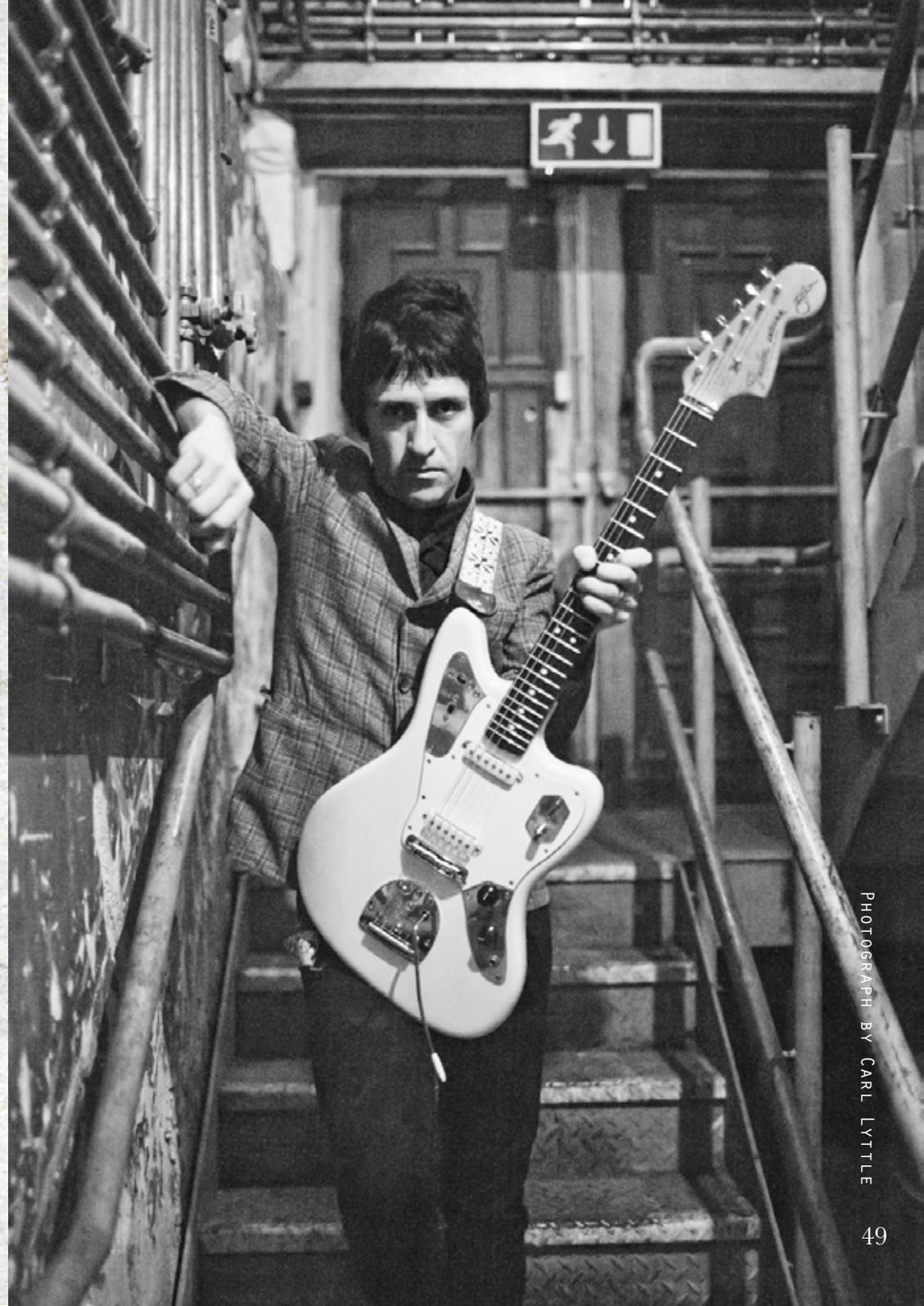


PHOTOGRAPH BY PAT GRAHAM

# HE STARTED SOMETHING

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HOW JOHNNY MARR CREATED A NEW GENERATION  
OF BRITISH GUITARISTS



PHOTOGRAPH BY CARL LYTTLE

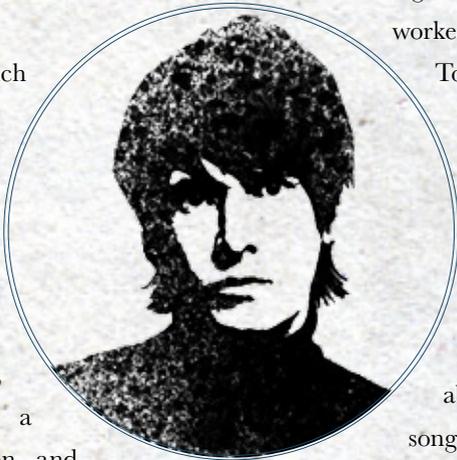
Johnny Marr's influence on British guitarists is undeniable. Not only because some of those who were to become the most important guitarists of the independent scene were huge Smiths' - and especially Johnny Marr's - fans, but also because he himself has in some way contributed in the making of their own music.

For musicians such as Bernard Butler (Suede's former guitarist), Noel Gallagher and Ed O'Brien (Radiohead's rhythm guitarist), Johnny Marr was a source of inspiration and also an important support, who helped them in the important moments of their career.

The importance of Johnny Marr, not only for his style of playing the guitar, but also as a new model of guitarist, is such that, in their interviews, they remember exactly the moment when they saw and heard him for the first time, playing live or on TV, and the effect that this

"meeting" has had on their (not only artistic) lives.

**Bernard Butler:** "When I was 13, my brothers got a terrible electric guitar from a catalogue but they got bored of it. So I took it and sat down with a chord book and tried to work it out. Then I heard Johnny Marr playing with The Smiths and that was it. From then on, every record I got I listened to once then

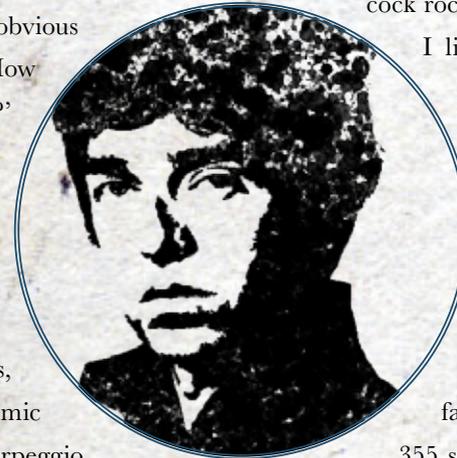


worked out the guitar parts. To this day I can play every Smiths song, something of which I am very proud" (*The Guardian*, 26.8.2006).

Bernard Butler's ability to play the songs of The Smiths from the beginning is undoubted, having also been certified by an expert in the field. "I listened to Bernard and it shocked me: it sounded more like Johnny than Johnny did. It was just weird, very weird, and the fact that he was quite thin and kind of gangly and he was young and he had the same guitar as Johnny and the same look as Johnny and the same kind of impetuosity and that kind of sneering look, it was fantastic. He played

some Smiths riffs and it was terrifying how like Johnny he sounded" (Mike Joyce, speaking of the first time he heard Bernard Butler playing guitar during the Suede's auditions for a guitarist - in David Barnett's "Suede: love and poison").

**Ed O'Brien:** "Johnny made a huge impression on my life, family and band, starting from that Eureka moment, as a teenager embarking on playing guitar. I heard so much spirit and soul in his playing in The Smiths, from aggression to melancholy to tenderness. He covered so much more terrain than other guitarists and could make music sound three-dimensional" (*Mojo*, February 2013). "I'm self-taught and I've been heavily influenced by rhythm guitar players like Johnny Marr. He was an amazing, brilliant rhythm player, rarely played solos, so full of sounds. Even something as obvious as the intro to 'How Soon Is Now?' - that brilliant tremolo. Of course, I'm nowhere near as technical, but I'm also into sounds, pedals, rhythmic textures and arpeggio



*"I heard so much spirit and soul in his playing in The Smiths, from aggression to melancholy to tenderness. He covered so much more terrain than other guitarists and could make music sound three-dimensional."*

- Ed O'Brien

stuff. [The first guitar I bought] was an awful Rickenbacker. I bought it because Marr, Paul Weller and Peter Dinklage all played them, and they were great rhythm guitarists. I always associated leads with cock rock. The only lead guitarist I like is Jonny Greenwood. He doesn't have that cock-rock stance" (*Guitar Radiohead At Long Last, A Future For Rock Guitar* by Bob Gulla - October 1997).

**Noel Gallagher:** "The fact I still play a red Gibson 355 says a lot, 'cos that's what

Johnny played when The Smiths did “What difference does it make” on Top of The Pops, in a turtleneck, with a Brian Jones bowlcut. I bought the turtleneck from Marks & Spencer and thought “That’s it, all I have to do now is become brilliant” (*Mojo*, February 2013).

Johnny himself acknowledges that “I know we made a huge impression on the next generation of musicians. Ed O’Brien from Radiohead sat me down a couple of years ago in a barn on top of a mountain in New Zealand and played me the then unreleased ‘Knives Out’. It was an unbelievable experience. I was beyond flattered and quite speechless, which takes some doing. He explained to me that with that song they’d tried to take a snapshot of the way I’d done things in The Smiths. And I guess you can hear that in it” (Johnny Marr, *Mojo*, May 2004).

Ed O’Brien, for his part, has also confirmed that even when his career was well under way, the music of Johnny

Marr has remained an important source of inspiration for him and Radiohead: “During Radiohead’s *Kid A*/Amnesiac sessions, I had another Eureka moment, smoking weed and listening to Reel Around The Fountain, which aurally expanded, and resonated on another whole level” (*Mojo*, February 2013).



Those guitarists started admiring Johnny’s unique guitar playing and then in turn created their own personal style (“I’ve always been a massive fan of Johnny Marr. His guitar parts are just so well thought out” (Graham Coxon - *Exposed*, 2014).

Johnny’s influence, however, didn’t stop with the 90s. Many British groups still recognize and appoint the Smiths as their source of inspiration. During Carl Barat’s audition for entering future Libertines, in 1997, Pete Doherty asked him to play “This Charming Man” (but Carl came up with “Charmless Man” by Blur) (From *The Libertines - There are no innocent bystanders* DVD). Alex Turner, Arctic Monkeys’ frontman, frankly

admitted the strong influence from The Smiths on the band’s album “Suck It And See”, released in 2011. Justin Young of The Vaccines, speaking of joining Johnny onstage during 2013 NME Awards for a live version of “I fought the law” revealed: “Johnny asked me to do it, and I jumped at the opportunity! He is a hero of mine and taught me that it wasn’t what you played, but how much conviction you played it with. I can’t think of many other musicians from the last 30 years that match his talent” (*NME*, March 2013).

As we said, what makes Johnny really special, as an artist and a man, is that he also personally supported the first steps of those guitarists not only encouraging them to create their music and to believe in their own dreams, but also giving them the instruments to start making it.

**Bernard Butler:** “Johnny Marr gave me one of his own guitars, and it’s my pride and joy. It’s a 12-string Gibson 335 that he played on most of *Strangeways Here We Come*, and a few records before that. I remember watching the Smiths on The Tube playing ‘Sheila Take a Bow’, admiring Johnny’s 12-string. Fast-forward 10 years: I became friends with him and he gave that guitar to me. I almost died. He knows I’m a huge fan and wouldn’t

have even made a record if it wasn’t for him” (*The Guardian*, 26.8.2006).

The story of Johnny lending one of his guitars (the famous Les Paul owned by Pete Townshend) to Noel Gallagher has become almost legendary, as Johnny himself jokingly put it: “It was in the news: ‘Johnny Marr gives Noel Gallagher a guitar.’ The way it was made out was that he and I had met on this grassy knoll at midnight under a full moon in our shades. And I’d walked up onto the knoll and passed him the Les Paul like Excalibur, and said, “Here, Keeper of the Flame. Taketh thy Les Paul and lay down some heavy licks, so the masses may fall at your feet. Arise, King Noel.” And then

*“He lent me the Les Paul that he wrote The Queen Is Dead on. The first night I got my hands on it, I wrote Slide Away, fully formed, like the song was already in that guitar.”*

*- Noel Gallagher*

we drank the blood of a groupie. Which isn't actually what happened. I'd just said, 'You can borrow this guitar for a bit until you get some money.' But he fell in love with the guitar, so I didn't really have the heart to ask for it back." Noel Gallagher does nothing to detract from the legendary aura of the moment. "He lent me the Les Paul that he wrote The Queen Is Dead on. The first night I got my hands on it, I wrote Slide Away, fully formed, like the song was already in that guitar" (*Mojo*, 2013).

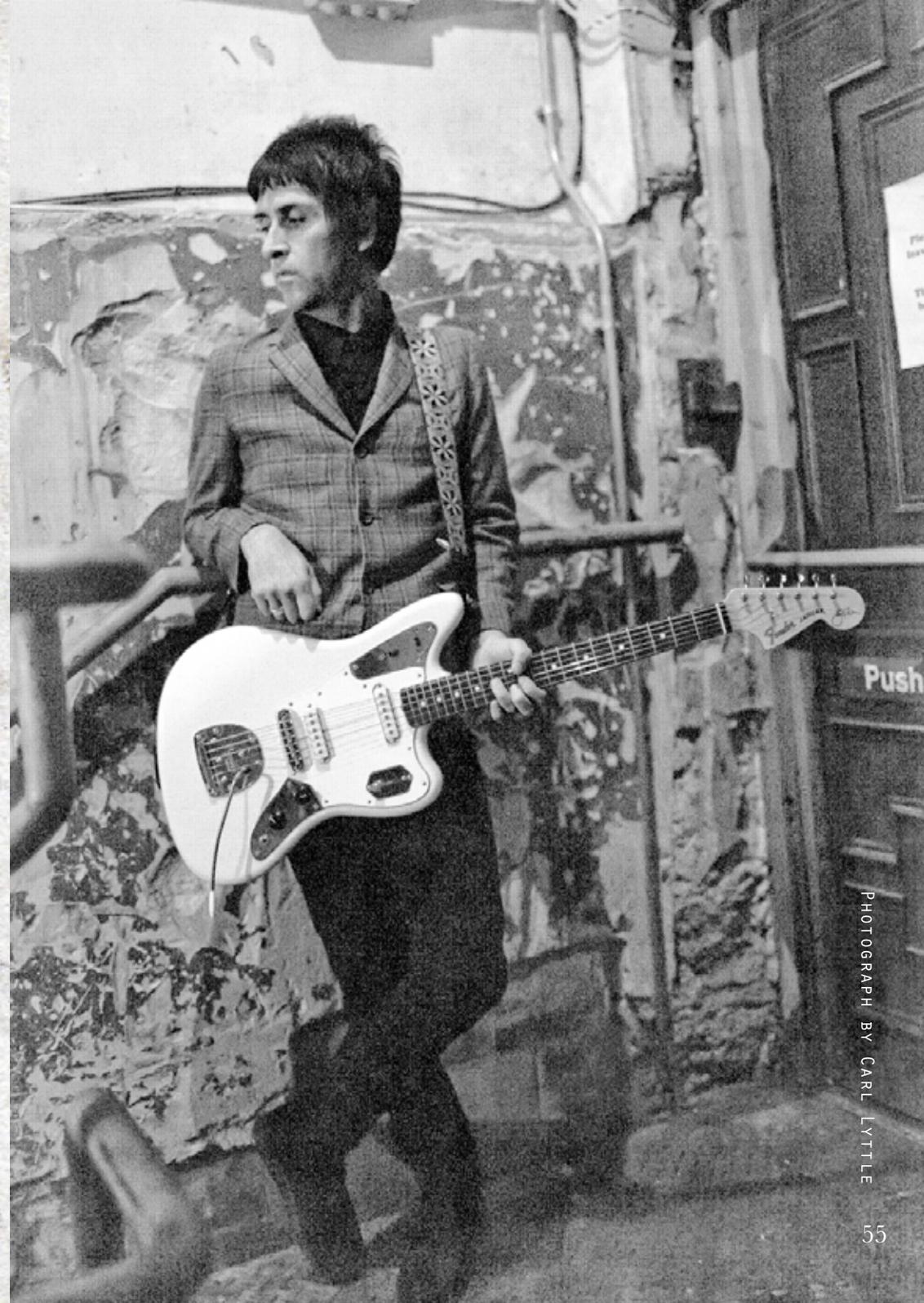
Recently, some of Johnny's guitars still contributed to the sound of a Radiohead's record, "In Rainbows". As Ed O'Brien told *Mojo*: "I check in with him every now and again, on a musical side, too. Radiohead's had a lot of self-doubt, and he's always encouraged us to continue that journey of exploration. When we finalized the track order for *In Rainbows*, I had to drive up to Manchester that night to check in, as he'd been part of the gestation, including lending us three guitars, one of them a 1957 Gold Top Les Paul that I discovered was worth something like \$ 150,000. I wanted to tell him I'd come out the other end, and what did he think of the record? I can't overstate his importance." (2013).

*"I check in with him every now and again, on a musical side, too. Radiohead's had a lot of self-doubt, and he's always encouraged us to continue that journey of exploration"*

*- Ed O'Brien*

Johnny himself says that "whenever I'm asked whether I give bands advice, I always feel uneasy about it. It seems like a very patronizing, pompous, self-elevating position to take. However, if you're around your friends, you just pop 'em straight: 'The live sound sucks because the guitar player's got a bad amp.' You just give them the amp... I've given a lot of people a lot of equipment because I don't like waste. Not because I'm particularly an angel, but because I got helped out by a few nice people along the way... if it just takes a phone call to give someone a little bit of encouragement, it's not a difficult thing to do." (Johnny Marr, 2003).

Moreover, the influence and the presence of Johnny in these musicians' lives were



PHOTOGRAPH BY CARL LYTTLE

not limited only to the musical matter. It is well known that Johnny phoned Bernard Butler, a few days after his violent and traumatic exit from Suede (halfway through the recording of their second album) to express his support and encourage him to follow his own musical dreams.

For others, meeting Johnny was an opportunity to begin a spiritual path of their own: “I got to meet him in 2001. We were flying to Auckland to join Neil Finn’s Seven Worlds Collide project. Meeting musicians can be hugely disappointing, but he immediately put me at ease. He gave me a copy of Aldous Huxley’s “The Perennial Philosophy”, a profound book that embarked me on a journey; he helped legitimize the spiritual leanings in my personality” (Ed O’ Brien, *Mojo*, February 2013).

The best evidence of the importance of Johnny for these musicians is that all of them are still Johnny’s dear friends and huge fans. “He makes what he does look a lot easier that it actually is. He makes it look really easy, right? It fucking isn’t, right? And that takes a genius...or some genius. I’ve been in the studio with him, and there’s nothing he cannot do on guitar. The man’s a fuckin’ wizard.”

(Noel Gallagher, *Rolling Stone, 100 Greatest Guitarists*).

“He is a very nice guy. He is bit of a magpie and he is an inspiration with how he jumps from project to project. I can’t think of anything worse than there being 16 Smiths albums. It wouldn’t be the same now and I enjoy listening to them albums over and over again. I haven’t stopped listening to them since I was fourteen. The Smiths were my everything and meant much more to me than The Beatles will ever mean to me. Johnny is forever changing. What he is doing at the moment is great, what he did in The Cribs was great, What he did in

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*- Ed O’Brien*

Modest Mouse was great. That has been my major inspiration. I haven’t done it in the same way as Johnny but just the idea of flitting between things and not getting worried about it. He is a lot more mobile than me and loves travelling but we have the same sort of character. There are not many 49 year olds that can be inspiring to 14 year olds the way he is. Johnny is a greatest guitarist and he is technically accomplished and he also multilayered guitar parts with John Porter and Stephen Street in The Smiths” (Bernard Butler on *Louderthanwar*, March 2013).

It was Butler, again, that resumed the meaning of Johnny’s example for his own professional and personal life: “Johnny Marr did, and does, what he wanted for all the right reasons – always. He is the first contemporary musician where too many others waste their time living the rock excesses of the past and not working. A real guitarist” (David Barnett’s “Suede: love and poison”).

In the end, that’s what makes Johnny Marr so special. He created his own original style as a guitarist, a style that has influenced and inspired the next generation of guitarists and that still resonates strongly in the music of contemporary British indie groups.

*“Johnny Marr did, and  
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*- Bernard Butler*

Besides, he has helped, supported and encouraged the musicians who came after him to follow their own path and create their own music, sometimes with his own personal example, sometimes giving them the support they needed to start making it. As Noel Gallagher put it: “I wouldn’t do what Johnny did with me. But that’s what he’s like. He’s very much a hippy at heart, and in his soul, even though he dresses like a Mod”.

By Elena Vignolini

# TOP 10 HIDDEN GEMS

We all know Johnny Marr as the guitar virtuoso, the man who stole riffing back from the metalheads and gave us shimmering Byrdsian delights like , 'This Charming Man' and the almost Parliament funk of 'Barbarism Begins at Home'.

However, we also know that his career did not stop with the break up of The Smiths, nor did his talent diminish.

In this article I shall unearth for you the gleaming riff nuggets that you may have missed in this man's epic musical journey through the Smiths and beyond.

## 1 The Smiths

'Back to the Old House'

I admit, not too outlandish a first choice, but it is a window into the supreme talent of this man. Transforming the already gorgeously longing arpeggios of Back to the Old House into a beautiful folksy finger-picked masterpiece, Johnny showed his versatility and flair on this reimagining of the track for a John Peel session. The yearning of Morrissey's vocal pairs well with Johnny's dextrous finger-picking and it is this bright, folk sound that forces this track onto the hidden gems top 10.

## 2 The Cribs

'We share the same skies'

We had to have a cut from Johnny Jarman here! Taken from Johnny's one album stint with the ever-brilliant Cribs, this piece of indie-pop loveliness proved the perfect meshing of the two artists. The Cribs Manics-esque soundscapes, coupled with Johnny's stratospheric riff, instantly combine for a storming track. The kicker in this number, however, is that you instantly recognise who has written the riff. That is the power of Marr!

## 3 Electronic

'Make it happen'

This is one that is perhaps a little left-of-field for most Marr fans, but it is nevertheless a cracking tune. Make it Happen is from the third album created by Manchester supergroup 'Electronic', comprised of Marr and ersatz nice man mumbler, Bernard Sumner of Joy Division and New Order fame. This track showcases Johnny as an Italo Disco pioneer, melding beats and synths to full effect, but still retaining his guitar bite - albeit drenched in wah - as it soars over the processed beats.

## 4 The Pretenders

‘Windows of the world’

From the long forgotten teen comedy 1969 (starring a pre-Iron Man Robert Downey Jr. no less), this Pretenders take on an old Burt Bacharach/Hal David track gives Johnny space to unleash beautifully layered arpeggios and sweeping chords, before a stunningly restrained solo. A brilliant piece of work from Marr, Hynde et al, and definitely worth a listen.



## 5 Inception OST

‘Time’

Johnny Marr's work on the Inception soundtrack is perhaps one of the lesser known aspects of his oeuvre (check me with the fancy words), but is certainly not to be overlooked. Co-opted by Hans Zimmer to contribute to his phenomenal neo-classical score, Johnny obliged with incredibly restrained and nuanced guitar parts which, in their repetitive beauty, added to the complexity and sheer power of these pieces. In ‘Time’ in particular, Marr's repeated riff contrasts gloriously with soaring brass and strings, creating a metronomic counterpoint to the madness ensuing around him. Truly a triumph.

## 6 Modest Mouse

‘Dashboard’

Dashboard is the key single from Marr's stint with nautical alt-rock rabble-rousers Modest Mouse. Taken from, ‘We Were Dead Before The Ship Even Sank’, this number is built around a taut, funky Marr riff, which brings the track in before propelling it along in a super-jaunty fashion. Modest Mouse are very much in the vein of Arcade Fire, so this was seen as somewhat of a sidestep for Marr, but his guitar work rocketed this track to a great deal of success on the Billboard chart.

## 7 Billy Bragg

‘Sexuality’

This fantastic pro-acceptance track from Billy Bragg and Kirsty MacColl, which was a surprise smash hit, also gets the Marr treatment. Nothing too difficult or out of place from Johnny on this one other than some stonkingly lovely jangly chords and a nicely put together outro solo. A brilliant song with an awesome message: what more could you want?

## 8 Talking Heads

‘(Nothing but) Flowers’

Again, few people know, but in Johnny's hyperactive wilderness years he also played guitar on the last Talking Heads album, leading to this dizzyingly ace tune. The highly surreal (lyrically, at least) track from the twisted and beautiful mind of David Byrne, posits a world where the urban has been overcome by nature once more, and the perils facing us if this were to happen. Johnny contributes to the track with some typical running and chiming Rickenbacker licks, padding out the afrobeat percussion and funk bass.

## 9 The The 'The Beat(en) Generation'

This jaunty number by Johnny's post-Smiths group The The is a highly political song which he enlightens with melancholy guitar licks and, of course, his fantastic harmonica work. Showing again that he is not a one trick pony, Johnny provides some beautiful blues harp on this track, and certainly peps it up, displaying again his undeniable talent.

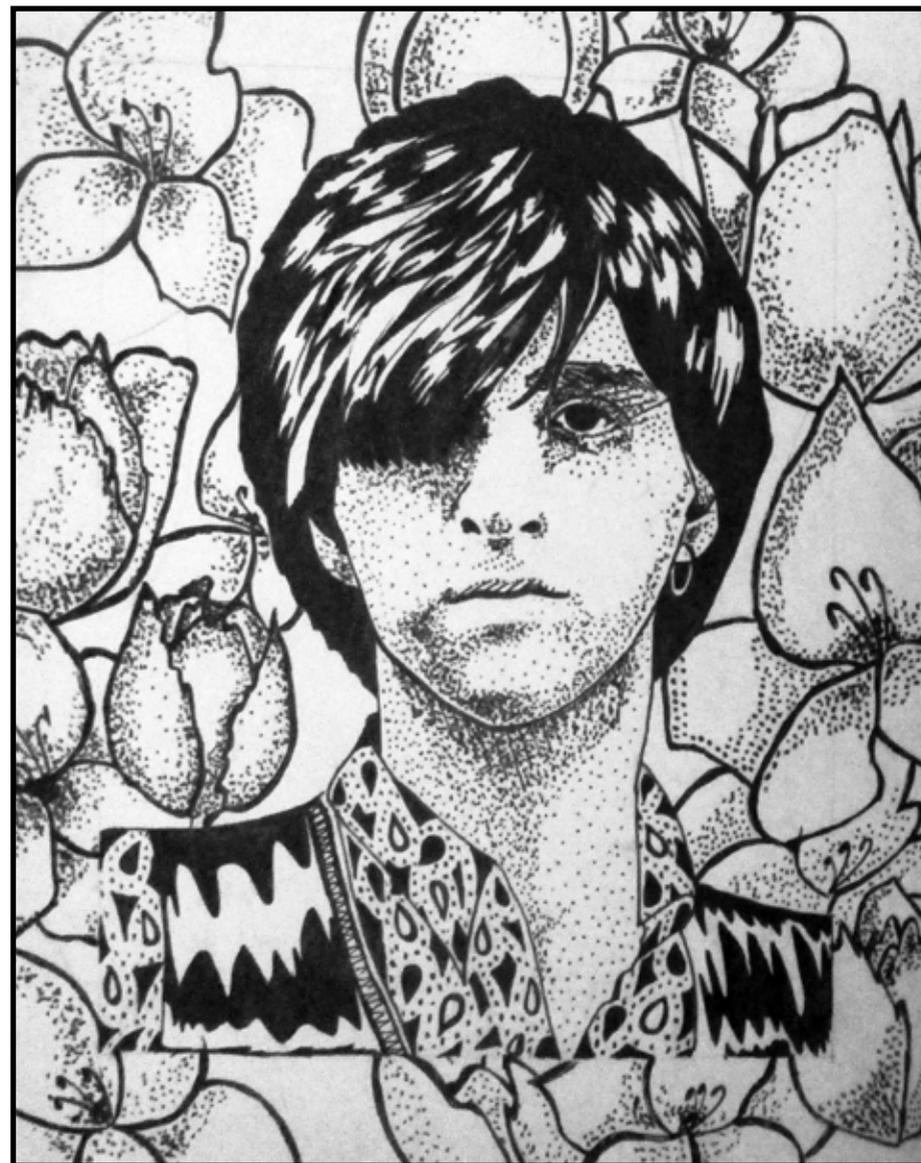
## 10 Beck 'Milk and honey'

In amongst all of the mad samples, the lasers, the feedback and the thumping drums of Beck's 1999 track, you can catch the little arpeggios and tremolo runs of a certain John Martin Maher. Quite possibly one of the most unexpected and yet delightful collaborations that Johnny worked on post-Smiths, it brings to mind his work with Electronic and is worth a listen for sure.

**So, there we are. Mr Marr is not necessarily just the Smiths axeman that you know and love, but is also a multi-faceted, multi-instrumentalist, super talented wunderkind of a musician. I hope that you enjoyed this article and will get some joy out of these tracks, if you didn't know them already!**

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By Ryan Matthews  
<http://ofsoundmindblog.wordpress.com>



Artwork by Anastasia Hykava

# FAST CRASH PSYCHO- GEOGRAPHY

*Manchester, daytime. A man, sharply dressed, strides briskly through the empty streets. Periodically, he stops to take in his surroundings. The Hexagon Tower. UMIST's Barnes Wallis Building. A Wythenshawe council estate. The man absorbs and observes his environment as though it were art rather than a practical milieu for the monotony of everyday life. When he wanders, it is without direction, but not without purpose.*



The man is of course Johnny Marr, and you are watching the accompanying video for *The Messenger's* second single, 'New Town Velocity'. But more than just a music video, you are also watching something else: a *dérive*.



## Driving the Dérive

A cornerstone practice of psychogeography, the concept of the *dérive* can be described as an aimless, unplanned journey, or 'drift', through an urban landscape, guided by whim and with emphasis on the effect or appeal of specific spaces within an individual's geographic environment. In contrast to a simple 'stroll' or 'wander', a *dérive* requires acute attentiveness to not only one's physical surroundings and the natural and cultural environment it entails, but the perceived character of spaces and the moods they evoke.

In the 'New Town Velocity' video, Johnny stars as urban explorer; as modernist flâneur, and it is his *dérive* that we are witnessing on screen. Like a modern-day Guy Debord (albeit with a much better haircut), you can sense that Johnny is not merely observing his environment, but feeling it - and furthermore, analysing it.

## Fast crash psychogeography

*'I am a product of my environment and of my time'*, Johnny acknowledged in an interview with *Vive Le Rock* magazine in 2013. Combining this awareness with existing interests in architecture, geography and social theory, it's not surprising that psychogeography - the study of the effects of the geographical environment on emotion and behaviour - would be of interest to the intelligent and eternally curious Mancunian guitarist.



Psychogeography, a concept developed by pre-Situationist movement Letterist International, initially originated from ideas articulated in Ivan Chatcheglov's influential 1953 essay 'Formulary for a New Urbanism' (coincidentally, the same essay that went on to inspire the name of Manchester's famed Hacienda nightclub). Through the Letterists, many of whom went on to form the Situationist International in the following years, the study of psychogeography further developed into an urban praxis alongside the *dérive*, *détournement* (a technique in which mainstream works and ideas are reconstructed into a subversive context) and recuperation (the flip-side to *détournement*). Grouped together under the larger praxis of unitary

*It's not surprising that psychogeography - the study of the effects of the geographical environment on emotion and behaviour - would be of interest to the intelligent and eternally curious Mancunian guitarist.*

urbanism - "the synthesis of art and technology" - two major themes emerged: play, and exploration.

## Playland, Playground

Whether intentional or not, the title of Johnny's upcoming second solo album contains a subtle nod to the more





ludic elements of psychogeography. Psychogeography, and the concept of the *dérive* in particular, relies heavily on the theory that playful experimentation within the urban landscape is crucial for heightened awareness of one's environment, both mental and geographic. This awareness is of course not an end in itself, but a tool to subvert the conditions and controls of everyday life. Backtracking again to *The Messenger* and the 'New Town Velocity' video, there is clear visual evidence of Johnny engaging in 'play' within his urban environment: tracing invisible patterns on window panes and on Hans Tisdall's wall mural at the UMIST campus; pretending to

walk along a tightrope; practicing tai chi poses - and of course, playing his guitar. While most *dérives* wouldn't literally encompass such actions, in the 'New Town Velocity' video they serve as handy visualisations of an otherwise intangible concept.

### More songs about buildings & paranoia

Beyond the influence of psychogeography on the 'New Town Velocity' video, cities and architecture are a recurring theme in Johnny's lyrics. *'I like the sound of cities and I like stories,'* Johnny told Travel Almanac magazine in 2012. *'If you take any city in the world and really take in the*

*architecture, all these stories come up.'* 'European Me', a paean to cultural identity and the crossing of borders, and 'Lockdown', a touching tribute to coastal towns in winter, are two oblique examples from *The Messenger*. Meanwhile on soon-to-be-released second album *Playland*, the sublime 'Dynamo' is - at least at face value - quite literally a love song to a building.

When speaking of the inspiration behind themes evident in both *The Messenger* and *Playland*, observation of society is a key concept. As a psychogeographer, Johnny is highly

perceptive of his surroundings and all that entails - the people; the geography; the architecture. As an artist, he has the ability to turn those perceptions into something beautiful and creative. Though the Situationists and the Letterists before them have disappeared into the annals of history in their original incarnations, their ideals still live on in artists today, and Johnny Marr is certainly one of them.

By Aly Stevenson



# JOHNNY ON POLITICS: THE SMITHS AND BEYOND

Should music only be considered as entertainment, or should it make people think of important issues?



Music is probably the most effective way to change the mindset of an individual, as well as that of a significant part of society. That's why it is very important to hear the voices of people who have strong opinions and are not afraid of malicious criticism. Johnny Marr is certainly one of them.

Several years ago, accidentally or not, in my hands there was a compilation album *Louder Than Bombs*, by an English alternative band called The Smiths. The title of the album alone was very intriguing. Listening to one song after another, I discovered an unknown world; a world of misunderstanding and alienation, unemployment and petty crime.

In a variety of excellent songs, one song left a special impression on me – *Shoplifters of the World Unite*. The song about subversive individuals whose actions would lead to gradual destruction of capitalism swept me off my feet.

Throughout their career (1983 - 1987), The Smiths expressed

disagreement with certain phenomena in society. While listening to the band's repertoire, I got to *Meat is Murder*, their strident, direct and politically oriented second album. The pro-vegetarian title track, the jovial anti-monarchy hymn *Nowhere Fast*, then *The Headmaster Ritual* and *Barbarism Begins at Home*, in which vividly described scenes of brutality and domestic violence against youth, are particularly impressive. *Meat is Murder* has shown how music can be used to deliver specific political messages. Almost three decades after The



Smiths recorded *Meat is Murder*, the non-musical impact of the band is still admirable. Legions of new fans became aware that lyrics on that album were still relevant, and they followed in the steps of many Smiths' admirers who became vegetarian after they heard the striking message of the title song back in 1985.

Although the widest audience is familiar with Morrissey's controversial political views, his former bandmate from The Smiths, songwriter/guitarist Johnny Marr is also politically opinionated. Being raised in a family of Irish emigrants and living in Britain during the era of Conservatives, Johnny Marr has plenty to say about those dark times of Britain's reign under Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. "My thoughts are that if you see the word 'Thatcherism,' it's not a word that stands for something good. I don't think there's any

getting around that', Johnny says. 'I thought that the British government's statement that she made Britain great again was false and really arrogant because everybody knows, left or right, that Margaret Thatcher didn't make Britain great. If that was the case then why isn't it? I felt like that was very, very disrespectful to generations of families who have never recovered from her legacy.'

(Rolling Stone, April 13, 2013)

Anybody who meets Johnny Marr says that he is an atypical rockstar – direct, single-minded and well-informed. During the 2010 UK student protests, which opposed spending cuts in further education and an increased cap on tuition fees, one female student attracted the attention of the media. This young woman protested in front of the Parliament wearing a Smiths Hatful of Hollow T-shirt, and a photograph of her standing out



against the police forces went viral. 'I thought it'd been Photoshopped,' Johnny said. 'It took a few minutes to sink in that it was real. But I ended up giving it to everyone then. Clegg; the Queen. I was off!'

Numerous fans of the famous Mancunian group were quite surprised when the UK's Prime Minister David Cameron boasted of his love for the Smiths. His statement greatly shocked Johnny Marr and induced him to write his famous tweet: "David Cameron, stop saying that you like the Smiths. I forbid you to like it."

Marr later added, "I seriously did not like him dropping our name. He picked the wrong band."

(The Guardian, 11 January 2013)

Johnny Marr was astonished when his former bandmate Morrissey issued a statement of support. That was the first time the nucleus of the most beloved indie band in history had publicly united their



PHOTOGRAPH BY OLI SCARFF

"Then I came home and heard this young girl on night-time radio. She was talking faster than you and me put together and used the word 'upstart'. I thought it was really funny and brilliant."

opinions on anything since the days of Smithdom. A reunion of The Smiths is the biggest wish of many fans and a recurring theme

in music magazines. But is it ever going to happen? That question is unavoidable in interviews, for Johnny Marr. "We won't be reforming this week. Maybe if the government stepped down,' he once quipped. 'If this government stepped down, I'll reform the band. How's that? That's a fair trade, isn't it? I think the country would be better off, don't you? I'll do it if the coalition steps down.'" (NME, March 1, 2012)

Whoever has any insight about what is going on in the UK political scene and what all those politicians with certain responsibilities and duties actually do to make citizens'

lives better, will probably agree with Johnny's thoughts on the matter. "The politicians think they're able to fool everyone through their mass media platform; I may be naive, but I think they're mistaken because more and more people are turning away from it. What's 2013 going to be remembered for? The bedroom tax? What a disgrace. Shame, shame, shame. Greedy and mean. And that's my problem with the government for the last few years: where's the kindness?"

— (NME, 2013)

Many admirers of The Smiths and Johnny Marr could barely wait for the day when his first solo album *The Messenger* would be released. The album was preceded by the single *Upstarts*: a catchy and intelligent song inspired by the Manchester protests of 2011. "I was in New York watching Cross Street in Manchester on fire on the news," Johnny says of the inception of the song. "Then I came home and heard this young girl on night-time radio. She was talking faster than you and me put together and used the word 'upstart'. I thought it was really funny and brilliant. She was

defending what had happened in town - so I crossed the two issues together into that song."

- (The Sun)

Years of living in the US inspired Johnny to write an uplifting and celebratory song about what it feels like to be European. Perhaps we Europeans do not think of Europe as something beautiful and unique; perhaps we take it for granted sometimes. *European Me* is a contemporary ode which should wake up our lulled love for this wonderful part of our planet.

So, should music only be considered as entertainment, or should it make people think of important issues? One would think Johnny would agree with the latter. Not only can music raise awareness, but it can be an instrument of political expression - and if anybody knows how to wield an instrument, it's Johnny Marr.

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By Lucija Naletilić



Extracts from Johnny Marr interviews for Mojo Special Edition: *The Inside Story of Morrissey & The Smiths* (May 2004) and Simon Goddard's *Mozipedia* (2009)

Artwork by Con Chrisoulis

Creator of the graphic novel biography *Tales of The Smiths*  
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# INFLUENCE

*under the*



My name is Oliver, I'm 13 years old and budding guitarist.

I have to say, I have had to re-write this article to do justice to Johnny's influence on me and so many others out there. I realised how to start this whilst (coincidentally) playing What Difference Does It Make on my 2013 Epiphone Dot cherry, a long way from Johnny's 1959 Gibson 355. These two facts show Johnny's inspiration on me.

I first heard Johnny's playing on This Charming Man which is possibly the best starting point for any first listener. The first album I downloaded

to feature Johnny's work was the career covering 'The Sound of the Smiths'. I then preceded to buy The Messenger at my local record shop.

When I first heard Johnny, my mind opened to so much more. I was playing unimaginatively but when I heard Johnny my style was changed to something better.

The jingle jangle on This Charming Man opened my mind on riffs. The tremolo on How Soon is Now taught me about effects and how to use them. Instrumentals such as the Draize Train gave me the lesson of it being OK not to have lyrics on songs.

Or maybe the melancholic playing on songs like The Headmaster Ritual gave personality to my playing.

It's like just listening to Johnny's playing teaches you lessons on how to play.

Despite this, this article isn't about me, it's about Johnny's effect on me. I've searched many books, tabs and chords to try and learn Johnny's songs. As I said earlier I received a cherry red Epiphone Dot guitar at Christmas as an homage to Johnny's Gibson 1959 ES-355 in cherry red. The 355 is my aim along with the Fender



PHOTOGRAPH BY ALEX VANHEE

*"When I first heard Johnny, my mind opened to so much more."*

Johnny Marr signature Jaguar. My two dream guitars. Even the other day I was trying a squier Jaguar (a bit more in my price range)

Ever since I heard This Charming Man I've been playing guitar with more enthusiasm. I have a friend at school (Hi Dan!) who is also a guitar player and we talk for long whiles about our favourite guitarists. A triumph of mine is introducing him to Johnny's beautiful playing.

I hope that Johnny knows that he is still inspiring kids to play guitar 31 years after he was first heard.

By Oliver Harper

# ALtERnAtIVE

## Yet Always Aligned:

### The Union of Johnny Marr and the Cribs



PHOTO BY SATEESH KHENSU ZANEMVULA

During the summer of 2006, Johnny Marr met Gary Jarman at a garden party in Portland, Oregon. The two musicians bonded over similar musical tastes, personal politics and their newly shared hometown. In particular, Johnny admitted that 'Hey Scenesters!', a song Gary wrote with the Cribs, represented the best 7" single he had heard during twenty-first century. The 2005 release, written by Gary, twin brother Ryan and younger sibling Ross, featured on The New Fellas, their second LP. Gary duly obliged with an appreciation of all things Smiths and support for his recent recruitment into Modest Mouse. Numbers exchanged, both parties went their separate ways. Gary continued writing his third LP Men's Needs, Women's Needs, Whatever with the Cribs, whereas Johnny geared up for the release and touring of the Modest Mouse album We Were Dead Before the Ship Even Sank.

Even by the end of 2007, both Gary and Johnny had not forgotten their encounter, and stood by

those words to meet again and play together. Johnny attended the December 2007 Cribsmas shows at the Brudenell Social Club in Leeds, West Yorkshire, watching the band thrill audiences with complete run-throughs of their three albums and accompanying b-sides over consecutive nights. Little did anyone realise that come the 2008 NME Awards Tour, a twenty date event taking place over the UK and Ireland that the Cribs would headline, Johnny moved from supporting his favourite band to playing with the Jarmans.

Rumours of the planned two-date, one-off collaboration shortly circulated before that fateful night, at the Barrowland, Glasgow, on 1st February, 2008. As a band, the Cribs consciously shy away from encores, and after playing their traditional set closer of 'The Wrong Way to Be' the night looked complete. Yet, as the feedback took leave, the band remained on the historic stage. Ryan took to the microphone and informed the audience about a special guest, the first 'official' non-Jarman to join the Cribs. Johnny



PHOTO BY PAT GRAHAM

then took the stage, and with the audience in raptures, they launched into 'Panic', the 1986 7" single he co-wrote when in the Smiths. Then, the jubilant crowd heard current Cribs 7" single 'I'm a Realist', a truly great turn of events for this fan and everyone else in the old ballroom. I left Glasgow for Edinburgh truly elated, and do everytime when thinking about the gig that night.

Interviewed the following night in Manchester, the four appeared on the front cover of

NME a few days later, where they also played together for a newly adopted hometown audience at the Academy. Sporadic appearances on the lengthy tour, including Leeds, Oxford, Bristol, Cardiff and South London, culminated in a Channel 4 rendition of 'Panic' for UK television and a seven-set at the main awards event. Then the parties went separate ways for a time, until another NME cover and two appearances at the Reading and Leeds festivals in August 2008. Now an official full-time four-piece, the

expanded Cribs mostly played songs from Men's Needs, Women's Needs, Whatever, a real treat for fans and a first true peak of popularity for them, headlining the second stage at the celebrated festivals. They also introduced an early draft of 'Victim of Mass Production', a song written together, that contained a vigorous twin-guitar attack with Ryan on lead vocals.

Despite the unqualified success of the shows, some queries remained. These included future paths, finding a method of incorporating and sustaining a dual-guitar sound and, as important, four opinions as opposed to three. Throwing caution to the less colourful, the Cribs opted for writing new material after the final three-piece dates in Mexico that autumn. The band headed for a studio Johnny owns near Stockport, Greater Manchester, writing and recording demos to a few songs, including the aforementioned 'Victim of Mass Production'. 'We Were Aborted', a raucous song firmly in the punk mindset featuring Ryan castigating

mainstream sexist attitudes, and 'Cheat on Me', a number full of emphatic lines sang by Gary on mental health issues, would go through several iterations over the next year. The band had no ideas about the use of these songs, except a fondness for the collaboration and interest in new sonic landscapes. The furthest idea involved an EP of some description, yet things fell flat for a few weeks.

Then, the call of the Pacific Northwest, the place where Gary and Johnny hatched the original plan, changed their outlook. The band announced a five-date UK tour over February 2009, and beforehand opted to work out more songs the preceding January in Oregon City, Oregon, the prospect of an album becoming a reality. Along side 'We Were Aborted', 'Cheat on Me' and 'Victim of Mass Production', I appreciatively experienced firsthand the new songs 'We Share the Same Skies', 'Hari Kari', and, significantly, a segment for a future untitled standout. All of these new songs, including 'Emasculate Me', which first appeared the



PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER MACLACHLAN

next night in Manchester, made their debut at the ABC, Glasgow on 4th February, 2009. They all significantly helped inform a live album released in September.

Ostensibly called *Live at the Ritz*, recorded at the two Manchester dates, the Cribs played an expanded setlist to the previous Reading and Leeds shows, principally featuring songs from *Men's Needs*, *Women's Needs*, *Whatever* and the aforementioned six new numbers, plus a few from the first two albums. 'We Share the Same Skies' defined their collaboration from this period, where the perfect melodic guitar lines by Johnny set the template four-piece sound, with Gary ruminating on personal

and relationship anxieties. 'Hari Kari' provided a sonic workout for the four, showing their strengths with Ryan on vocals, whereas 'Emasculate Me' represented a fine

stretch of drumming from Ross throughout and Gary singing in an authoritative manner. Overall, *Live at the Ritz* illustrates the four-piece sound in a perfect manner and perhaps stands without equal over their time together.

The Cribs then moved on to work with Nick Launay at a Laurel Canyon studio in Los Angeles, California. With six songs set, a seventh in progress, and ideas for others, the pursuit of an album became paramount. A visual record, *Secrets Saved*, documents the thorough process, which also features Ross breaking his wrist, Johnny cataloguing guitars, Ryan opting to swim with a duck and Gary showing off housekeeping

skills. Somehow, the band recorded an album in between, titled *Ignore the Ignorant*, which added five new songs, namely 'Last Year's Snow', the title-track, 'Save Your Secrets', 'Nothing' and 'Stick to Yr Guns', with 'City of Bugs' an eventual completion held over from adventures in the Pacific Northwest.

Gary serenades throughout the slow lilt of 'Last Year's Snow', whilst Ryan leads a guitar charge on 'Ignore the Ignorant', a phrase that the band thought deserved the album title too. 'Save Your Secrets' expands the repertoire emphatically on a Gary fronted number, whereas 'Nothing' notes the true Pacific Northwest musical influence, and the climatic, Ryan sung 'Stick to Yr Guns' leaves the album to wonder. Last to complete the set, and all four would agree as the best of all, 'City of Bugs' finds Ryan absorbed in recent dramatic experiences. Guitar and bass feedback,

fierce drumming, theatrical lyrics and complementary vocals make for not only the key song of the collaboration, but I credit as the greatest associated with the Cribs.

The band gave 'We Were Aborted' to BBC Radio Six for airplay and free download, before 'Cheat on Me' became the first official single on 31st August, 2009. Three releases, two on 7" vinyl and one CD single, and accompanying video, heralded all sorts of new four-piece treasures for fans to find. A handful of b-sides, 'Curse This English Rain' and 'So Hot Now', plus live versions of 'We Were Aborted' and 'Cheat on Me' from the Ritz show, preceded the LP on 7th September.



PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER MACLACHLAN

Again, all manner of extra items to investigate came enclosed, from the digital bonus track 'Is Anybody There?', the Live at the Ritz live CD, Secrets Saved documentary and The Serpent and the Peach, a silent 8mm film shot by Ryan. Despite no live appearances from the Cribs between February and September, a previously antithetical idea, all of these avenues provided a great deal of joy on a creative front.

The band undertook an extensive touring schedule to make up for this 'lost' time. A UK tour in autumn 2009 cemented the

four-piece agenda, supplemented by a few noteworthy media appearances. A BBC Radio One session, for example, in September yielded a cover of 'I Only Want to be with You', a 1963 7" single first released by Dusty Springfield, whilst a slot curating The Guardian culture section for a week proved highlights. North American, Japanese and South Korean dates, the latter as a top act within a stadium no less, took the four-piece line-up across the continents, before a support slot in northern Europe for Franz Ferdinand. Rounding

off touring for the year, 'We Share the Same Skies', plus artistic video, backed by a live rendition of 'City of Bugs', found release as a 7" single. The Cribs returned to the UK for large venue, night-on arena shows, justified by Ignore the Ignorant reaching the top ten of the UK album charts, the highest position for the band and essentially mainstream success.

The following year brought an even more intensive schedule, where lengthy tours of North America and Australasia during the early months of the year gave way to spring and summer festival slots across Europe. The band stuck to a similar set-up of Ignore the Ignorant plus selections from across the other three Cribs albums, a disciplined and rigorous process that worked astutely. 'So Hot Now', released by Kill Rock Stars as a 7" split single with previous touring partners the Thermals, came out on 17th April, 2010 for Record Store Day. This stands as a key song from the period, one I revelled in hearing through a full single release, although admittedly would have sounded out of place on the finished LP. After a

thrilling June Glastonbury festival slot, captured on film for UK and overseas television, somewhat surprisingly, the Cribs opened up for Aerosmith at two European arena shows, a ludicrous if somewhat brilliant turn of events.

Around this time, the band started deliberating over recording new material. Then, Johnny held an upcoming commitment in playing on the Inception film opening and soundtrack beside composer Hans Zimmer, which clashed with a Cribs gig that would celebrate ten years of Wichita, their record label. Johnny headed for the bright lights, the wonder of an orchestra and artistic ventures in Hollywood for the première, whereas the three Jarmans played a North London gig comprised solely from The Cribs and The New Fellas, an 'old skool' night that ardent fans and the band hold as an overall favourite show. The band surprised fans and interested parties with the release of the 7" 'Housewife' single, recorded at West Heath studios, North London, and ghoulish video, a song dominated by intense drums from Ross and Ryan reflecting on gender roles. The Cribs

PHOTO BY PAT GRAHAM



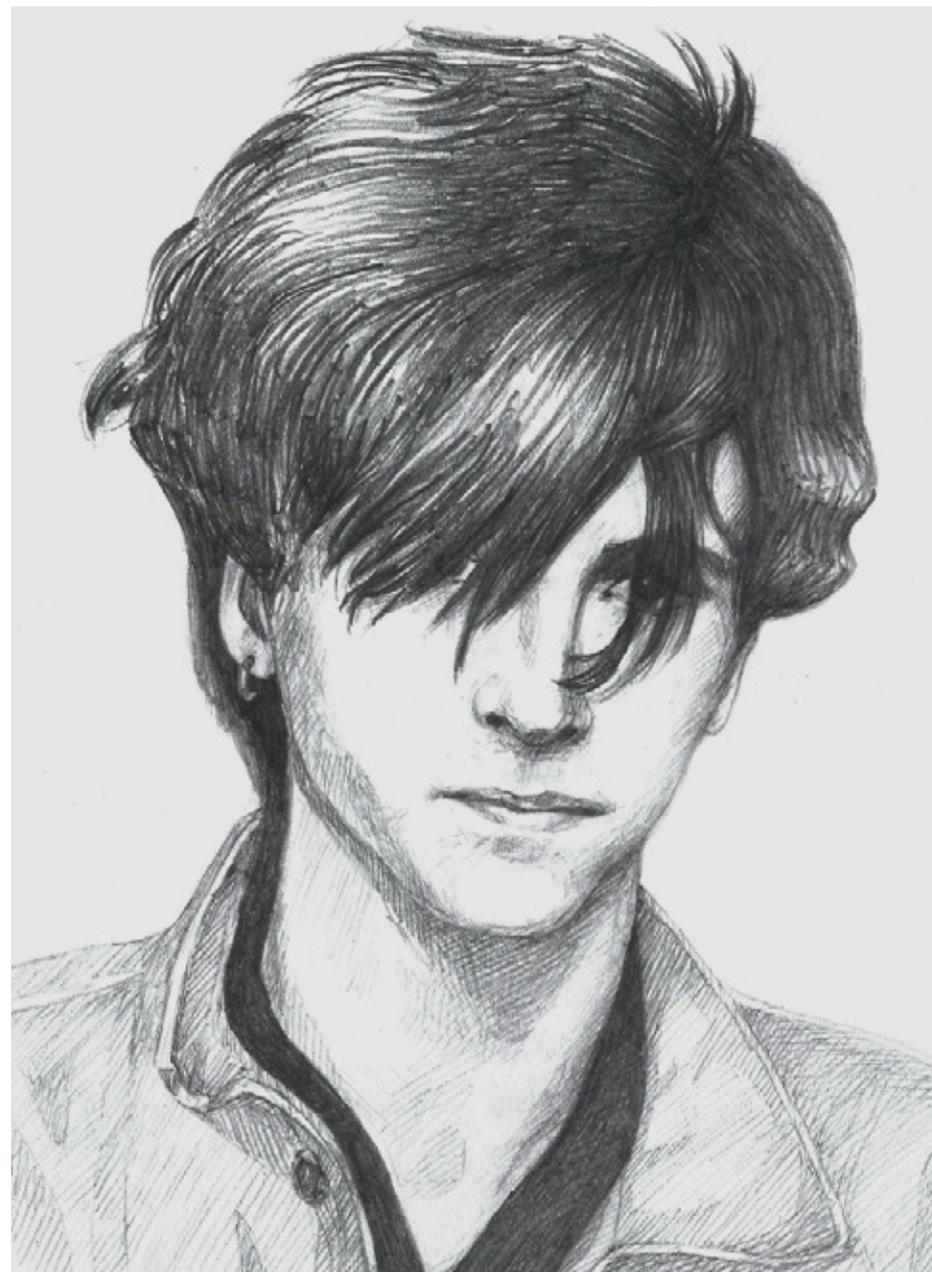
also attempted versions of 'Come on, be a No-One' and 'Don't Believe in Me', both utilised as a three-piece Cribs 7" in May 2012, 'Give Good Time', as yet unreleased, and one other song the band doubted would ever reach completion.

By the start of 2011, however, different opportunities emerged for both parties, and the Jarmans and Marr went separate ways. Johnny went to work on solo material, whereas the Jarmans paced themselves before aligning for a new album. Yet, a little over one year later, with the Cribs touring *In the Belly of the Brazen Bull* and Johnny working on *The Messenger*, a reunion occurred. Come 12th May, 2012, Johnny joined his musical siblings at the Academy, Manchester, scene of that 'hometown' show four years ago, on two songs, namely 'We Were Aborted' and 'We Share the Same Skies'. Furthermore, at the February 2013 NME Awards, the four teased working together again on the back of the song they started but doubted would release. 'Leather Jacket Love Song', essentially an addendum to

the period, found release on Payola, the Cribs retrospective.

Moreover, Johnny contributed his own list of 'top five' Cribs songs to *Kind Words from the Broken Hearted*, the Cribs 'zine I run, through a mutual friend. Finally, Johnny joined the Jarmans for the second night of the *Cribsmas II* shows at the Academy, Leeds on 19th December, 2013, again playing 'We Were Aborted' and 'We Share the Same Skies'. The outpouring of joy from all matched every other remarkable moment in many years following the Cribs. For future endeavours, Johnny and the Cribs shall no doubt play a show at some point over the next few years, any time really, and hope remains that collaborations prove the order of the day too. More than anything, both parties shall continue their devout indie and alternative lives in releasing challenging and good works. Longevity deserves them, as they do each other...

By Christopher Maclachlan



*Johnny Marr, Christmas Eve 1979*  
Artwork by Kate Hykava

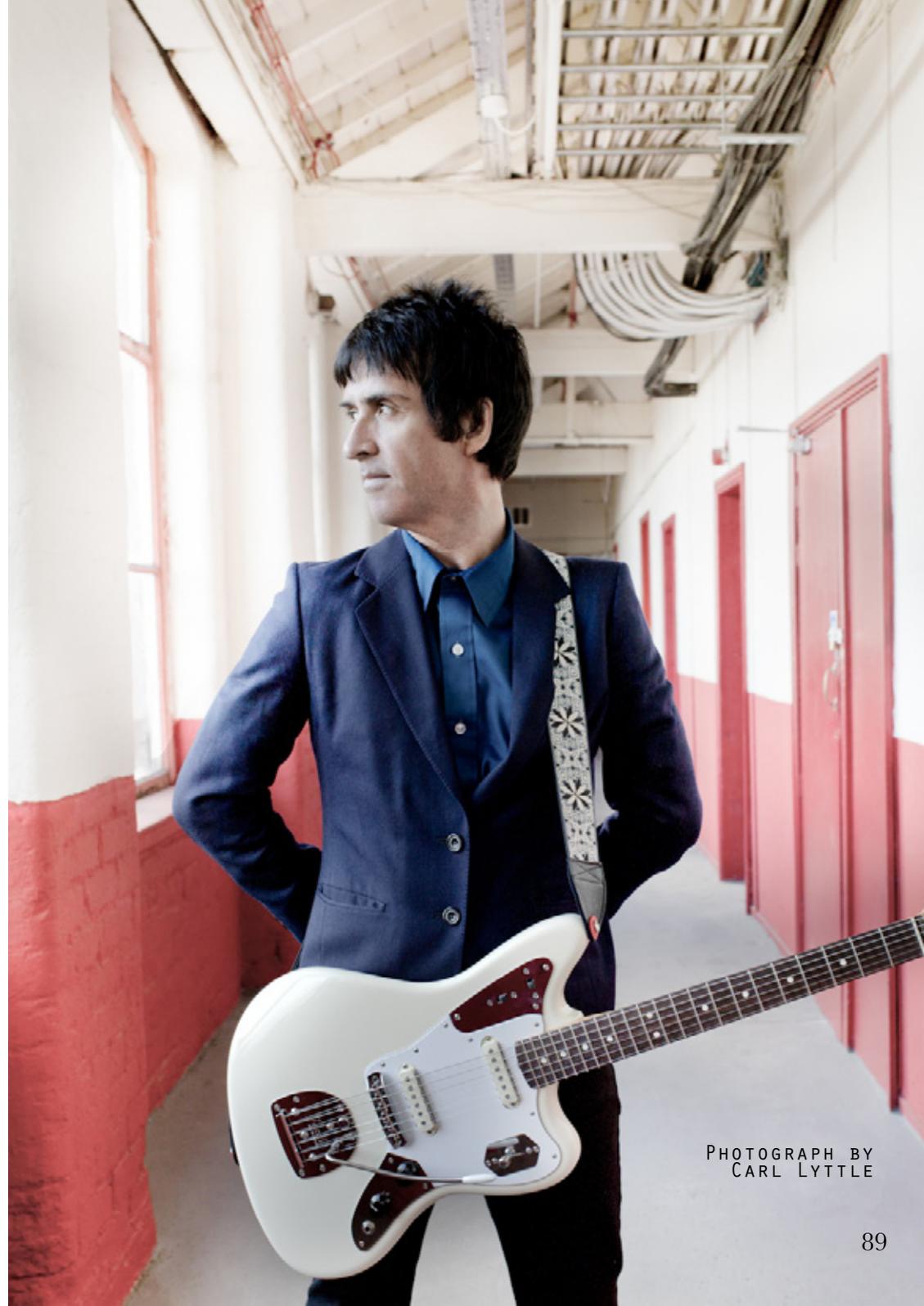
# MUSIC, MARKETING & Johnny Marr

In an age where music is ruled by major record labels and money-making giants such as iTunes, artists are becoming increasingly willing to sell themselves out commercially and ride the industry's gravy train to success. Ever since he burst onto the scene with The Smiths in 1982, this has not been a viable option for Johnny Marr, the band having been described as "the first indie outsiders to achieve mainstream success on their own terms" by Q Magazine. This is an ethos that has been strictly followed by the guitar legend throughout his career, continuing to speak out and fight for how he wants things to be rather than acquiescing in changes around him.

Due to the increasing popularity of Spotify and other music streaming sites in recent years, musicians have been earning a decreasing amount of money

from music sales, with casual listeners merely halfheartedly dipping in their toes and streaming songs and albums for free without purchasing them.

Johnny, along with Radiohead's Thom Yorke and Beck, has expressed distaste for this process as part of a backlash against the service, writing in his alternative 'Queen's speech' for NME that Spotify "hampers new bands" from achieving success. "I can't think of anything more opposite to punk rock," he wrote. "It's not just about pressing a button and getting something entirely for convenience." This disapproval of things being created exclusively for ease of use in terms of marketing music is a sentiment also echoed in Johnny's opinion towards the way a considerable amount of music is created today. Despite being a gifted multi-instrumentalist, he cites the guitar as being the "obsession of my



PHOTOGRAPH BY  
CARL LYTTLE

life”, also appearing to be an advocate of the view that despite other forms of music becoming progressively more popular and successful, guitar music will forever be of special importance to alienated young outsiders, who “will always bond over guitar bands”. The aesthetics of pop culture and rock’n’roll are similarly claimed to be a heavily contributing factor towards the eternal dominance of the guitar over synthesizers and digital technology, as Johnny says, “A girl comes up to you after a gig and says I like your laptop? It’s never gonna happen”.



PHOTO BY CARL LYTTLE

Johnny Marr is a counter-cultural icon not merely for his actions, but for his outstanding ability to reinvent himself.

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**“A girl comes up to you after a gig and says I like your laptop? It’s never gonna happen”.**

**- Johnny Marr**

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With The Smiths, Johnny appeared to put himself in a box stylistically, appearing at first to be almost limited by his trademark jangly guitar sound. However, before the end of the 1980s, Johnny had already recorded and performed with The The, Electronic and The Pretenders to much critical and commercial acclaim.

Fast forward 25 years and today his influence is still enormously extensive, with artists from Jake Bugg to Palma Violets expressing their indebtedness to him. Johnny’s career is not one of peaks and troughs, but of consistently strong output. The question is not whether or not his next project will be successful, but where he goes next.

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**By Harry Gold**

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# No time like the *First time*

To recall the first time I clapped my eyes on Johnny Marr, I have to go back a long way - a real long way - and believe me, for someone as sensitive about age as I am, this is a big admission to make.

The year would be 1984, and I'd tuned into Top of the Pops, as every teenager did. Usually the music wasn't really the stuff that I liked, but you'd get an occasional diamond in the rough. Watching openmouthed as The Smiths performed 'William It was Really Nothing', I knew that I'd stumbled upon something pretty special. From the off, Johnny was my immediate favourite. I liked the look of him. He looked slightly Mod and uber-stylish, and his guitar playing was out of this world.

It would be two years of listening, watching and obsessing about him before I would see him in the flesh. The atmosphere in the Concert Hall in Nottingham that night in October 1986 was what can only

be described as 'charged'...I have never been to a concert where there has been such a frisson in the air. It was truly electrifying. The Concert Hall is a seated venue, and counting my blessings that I'd been quick off the mark when booking the tickets, I'd managed to secure second row seats.

“I liked the look of him. He looked slightly Mod and uber-stylish, and his guitar playing was out of this world.”

Imagine my unconfined joy when the band bounded onto the stage, to find that I was not only so close to the stage, but I'd also managed to pick the correct side of the stage - and there he was - my idol, mere feet away.



Morrissey was thrusting a 'The Queen Is Dead' placard towards the audience with vigour and stirring up a whirlwind of fervour amongst the crowd, who were maniacally hurling themselves stage-ward.

Morrissey wasn't taking up much of my attention though. I stared in awe, marvelling at both the musical ability and cool style of Marr. I was transfixed throughout the whole gig.

During 'The Boy With The Thorn In His Side', factions of the audience

attempted a stage invasion. First one successful person and then the next, and soon the whole of the first row had attempted it. I wasn't going to miss out on this fun, and as I was on the second row it shouldn't be much of a problem...should it? What you need to know at this point is, I'm clumsy and although I've never had any broken bones (touch wood), anything requiring athletic ability usually ends up with me looking at best, ungainly, and at worst - injured. This was no exception. Climbing over the seat went well to start with until I tried to straighten up to step onto the stage from the top of the chair. I teetered tentatively, and gravity took hold. I grabbed the closest thing to me - then looked up and saw that the thing I'd actually grabbed to stop my fall was Johnny's foot. I yelped in half surprise and half excitement - then let go and ended up in a heap on the floor.

It would be 27 years before I can face to face (instead of face to foot) with Johnny again...and was no less obsessed than I was all those years before. I kept quiet about the failed stage invasion though.

By *Jackie Nutty*



PHOTOGRAPH BY BILL HINGE



Artwork by Ashleigh Scase

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# JOHNNY MARR,

the B-side &  
cultural creativity

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The B-side: was it an art form or was it a happy accident? Or the product of record executives shamelessly releasing singles in multiple formats all for the sake of profit?



The age old argument - at least until downloading and streaming of music led to a demise in artist productivity - 'it should have been an A-side', has always been a fan's favourite. The Smiths were the B-side band, and this led to several high watermarks in the release of the single during the '80s consequential of Johnny Marr's relentless work ethic from 1982 to 1987.

Now here's the problem, in my opinion:

It's an insurmountable issue that can never be solved. B-sides produce some of the greatest songs, not just the fan's favourites, but serious songs that entrain themselves in the nation's psyche (at least the members of the nation who know what's good for them!).

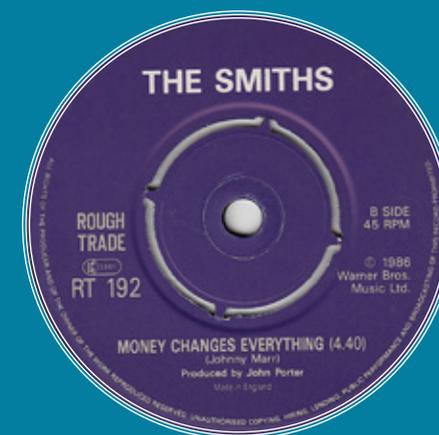
William It was Really Nothing was a huge moment for the Smiths, but look at the flip sides... Please Please Please Let Me Get What I Want has been covered countless times by numerous artists. Imitation is the greatest form of flattery, some might say. But 'woah', hang on a minute, what about How Soon Is Now? Dead

time in the studio enabled Johnny to construct a song based on a Bo-Diddley 1950s feel originally called Swamp - the band even changed the lightbulbs in a bid to capture the vibe. The track was presented to Morrissey, who produced timeless lyrics, vocals and vocal melodies. And may I just hasten to add: has a B-side ever been released as an A-side weeks later?



The instrumental is always a challenging composition. Furthermore, the B-side enabled Johnny Marr to use this as an opportunity for expression, experimentation and expansion of The Smiths' sound. Money Changes Everything, The Draize Train, and most notably, Oscillate Wildly, showcased serious songwriting sensibilities,

providing key milestones most artists won't match in a career, yet alone on the flip side of a single. The aforementioned tracks, I reiterate, were instrumentals. Would this have been possible if it weren't for the B-side?



Noel Gallagher's favourite Smiths' album is Hatful of Hollow: an album of A-sides, B-sides and Peel Sessions. Will any artists in the new millennium release a studio album that rivals Hatful of Hollow? Oh, I forgot: iTunes offer a bonus track or two if you download the album. Machiavellian marketing at its finest, because let's be honest - downloaders don't want the bonus tracks (an anaemic B-side proxy). It's the fans who invest in

physical formats who want the bonus tracks, so they have to invest in albums twice.

But I digress.

In summary, Johnny Marr used the B-side to develop the Smiths' sound, offering evolution in the style and substance in the material produced.

The B-side is no more. Bands no longer have the opportunity to unleash albums of rarities, interesting instrumentals, and above all timeless, exciting, influential songs. Indie discos up and down the land play How Soon Is Now? on a nightly basis, offering the opportunity for the younger generation to become fans of The Smiths. The Smiths are no more, just like the ethos that led to the creation of How Soon Is Now?. Future Johnny Marrs will not get the opportunity to unleash uncalculated, cultural and credible material through the B-side ever again. Indie discos may well have lost their star players...with music fans up and down the land paying the ultimate penalty.

By John Wilkinson



# Once in a Lifetime:

*the glorious union of*

## JOHNNY & TALKING MARR & HEADS

To many, a collaboration between Johnny Marr and The Talking Heads seems completely natural – a music making relationship that was almost inevitable. The Smiths and David Byrne's Talking Heads were at the peak of their powers by the mid 1980s; their powerful indie pop filling dancehalls all over the land. However, Johnny's appearance on Talking Head's 1988 album 'Naked' doesn't have the widespread recognition that perhaps his seamless guitar work warrants.



Thanks to his unique brand of melodic riffs and effortless cool, Marr was a hot target for session work in the late '80s. He saw this as an opportunity to further work on his musicianship – 'I wanted to develop what I had as a guitar player much more than a writing capacity. Sessions were a perfect way to do it'.



The band recorded the album in Paris, bringing international musicians to the studio for free-flowing, improvisational sessions. Of course, the transition from Manchester indie rock to New York experimental

new wave was a tricky one. At first, Johnny described working on the music for '(Nothing But) Flowers) and 'getting nothing from it'. Stuck for creativity in the Parisian streets, the Manc had an idea. He said, 'I pulled out the biggest sound I could - which was my Sunburst 335 12-string'. The rest, as they say, is history. The track turned out to be a glorious moment for the Talking Heads - a lyrical celebration of nature set to uplifting melodies and, as Johnny mused, 'a kinda Smithsy guitar part'.

Marr also featured on haunting album track 'Cool Water', 'Mommy Daddy You And I' and 'Ruby Dear'.

Johnny brought to the album a British pop sensibility which blended Byrne and co's intense creativity to write an album that is critically acclaimed to this day.



By Mark Hayden



Photographs by Adam Ellison

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# LOGICALLY SOUND

*Predicting and analysing  
the commercial success of Johnny Marr*

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HitLogic is a software application that can be used to help artists and others in the music industry to market their music to their fans. It is powered by a sophisticated algorithm that can analyse any piece of music based on its key components - such as tempo, energy, timbre, and so on. Once it's done that, it can start to make comparisons between tracks; we have around 20 million songs in our music universe at the moment, and it's constantly growing. It can show you, based on solid data not gut-feel or assumptions, the sonic similarities between songs and artists. It can show you the influence a musician or their work has had on subsequent performers. It can show you some surprising examples of how artists in one genre have been influenced by those from totally different genres. It can even show you how a particular producer has had replicated their success when working with different artists.

It's more than 30 years since the sound of Johnny Marr's guitar first caught the public ear. The opening riff of the Smiths' second single This Charming Man remains one of the most instantly recognisable musical motifs of all time.

Last year saw him release The Messenger, a solo album that became an instant success, and took him and his band on a worldwide sell-out tour. In the time between the demise of the Smiths and his more recent success, Marr was famed as a collaborator and session player – a musical gunslinger.

Using HitLogic, the music marketing tool for artists, we analysed two groups of songs. The first was made up of songs he'd played on. The second featured many of those artists he's collaborated with but looked at songs that Marr didn't play on.

We all know what an incredible talent he is. But the challenge we set ourselves was to see if, by looking at songs with him and songs without him, we could start to identify cold, hard evidence of what makes Johnny Marr stand out.

## THE WITH LIST



**Johnny Marr**  
Upstarts

**The Smiths**  
This Charming Man

**The Smiths**  
How Soon Is Now?

**Electronic**  
Getting Away With It

**Modest Mouse**  
Dashboard

**Modest Mouse**  
Florida

**The The**  
Gravitate To Me

**The Cribs**  
Cheat On Me

## THE WITHOUT LIST



**Morrissey**  
Suedehead

**Morrissey**  
Everyday Is Like Sunday

**The The**  
The Beat(en) Generation

**New Order**  
Fine Time

**New Order**  
Regret

**Modest Mouse**  
Float On

**The Cribs**  
Men's Needs

### *The hand that rocks the cradle*

There is a trademark Johnny Marr sound. It has a rich, warm tone with a bit of an edge to it and he uses it to create an unmistakable jangly guitar sounds. But if you think that means he's pigeonholed, think again.

According to HitLogic, a higher-than-you-might-expect proportion of the songs Johnny Marr has collaborated on crop up in other genres.

Rock was of course the top dog, with 41% of sonically similar songs in that genre. But we also found Marr's songs were, on average, sonically similar to punk/indie (18%), pop (8%) and dance/electronica (6%). There was even a similarity to rap and hip hop. And to think, we didn't even include Girls Aloud in the songs we analysed.

Either way, Johnny Marr is certainly no one-trick pony.

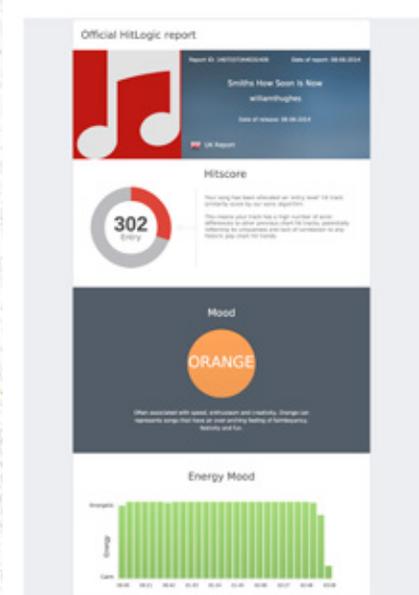
### *What difference does he make?*

Can adding Marr into the mix make you more popular..?

Short answer...yes.

Johnny's joined forces with some well established artists over the years; Bernard Sumner of New Order, Matt Johnson of The The, Modest Mouse and their mercurial frontman Isaac Brock, not to mention the one and only Morrissey. But what difference did he make?

The first Modest Mouse single featuring Marr, Dashboard from the album 'We Were Dead Before The Ship Even Sank', had a higher Hitscore than the band's previous big hit Float On. In fact, according to HitLogic Dashboard increased the band's chances of a hit by 14%.



The difference between Morrissey with and without Marr is also striking. According to HitLogic if their songs were released now, the Smiths would have on average a 22% better chance of having a hit.

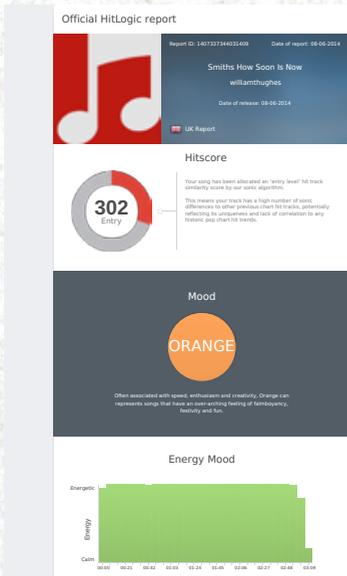


PHOTO BY CARL LYTTLE

### *The right thing right*

Some session-players get booked in order to leave their trademark sound on something, and of course Johnny has made plenty of that kind of contribution. But the true sign of musicality is the ability to be flexible, adaptable, and versatile.

In 1989 Johnny featured on The The's album 'Mind Bomb.' The first single from that album, The Beat(en) Generation had a Hitscore of 114 and the second



most sonically similar song was The The's own Heartland, from their previous album 'Infected' (a 63% match), according to HitLogic.

The one song co-written by Marr on that album, Gravitare To Me, was something of a departure. Its closest sonic match was a mere 5% ... that means it's a real stand-out song, with an almost unique musical fingerprint.

Can he produce something unique when he sets his sights on it? You bet.

We're not saying 'genius' but...

### *You are the magic*

When Bernard Sumner joined forces with Marr in 1989 to form Electronic, New Order were playing borderline dance music.

By the time their next album 'Republic' came out, they were playing pop rock. Surely Marr was an influence there? However, according to HitLogic, Republic's biggest hit, Regret, has some intriguing sonically similar matches: among Blondie's (I'm Always Touched by Your) Presence Dear and Further Away by the Inspiral Carpets is You're Gonna Need Someone On Your Side by none other than Morrissey.

It seems that the line "I love you more than you love me" needs to be examined.

### *There is a light that never goes out*

Bands like Oasis and the Stone Roses cite the Smiths as an influence, and that's not much of a surprise. But using HitLogic can be really illuminating.

How illuminating...? Well, shine your light in the direction of New Jersey.

Hello Jon Bon Jovi – what are you doing here?

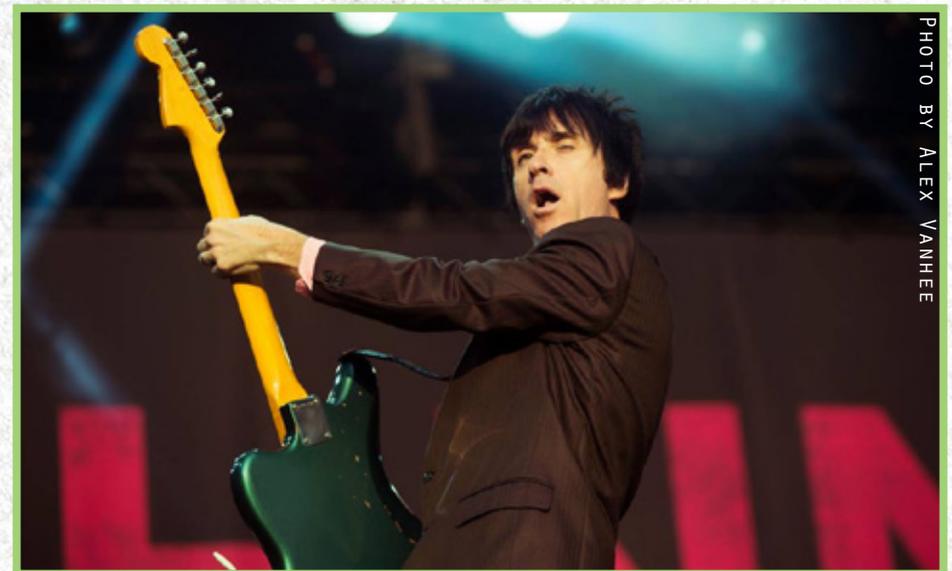
According to HitLogic, three songs from JBV's second solo album, 'Destination Anywhere', had a remarkably high sonic similarity to some of Marr's songs. Both Staring At Your Window With A Suitcase and Midnight In Chelsea bear resemblance to Electronic's Getting Away With It.

Another Jon Bon Jovi song, Queen of New Orleans, has a high sonic similarity to Marr's Upstarts – from his 2013 solo album 'The Messenger'.

If you thought was odd, the most sonically similar song to Modest Mouse's Dashboard is More Than A Memory by Canadian popster Carly Rae Jepsen. Another Marr convert could be coming up on your radio right now.

If you love Johnny's music, then you won't need much convincing that he's one of the true greats in the music industry. But what we've done using HitLogic is to prove that when you look at his contribution through the impartial eyes of a software tool, you find the proof that he is truly one of the greats.

By Sean Fleming [@flemingsean](#)





## JOHNNY MARR'S TOP TEN *Guitar Riffs*

Johnny Marr is widely considered to be the master of the riff. Throughout his 27-year career in the music business, he has crafted many fine riffs in his work from The Smiths and beyond. These ten best riffs have been selected for the following qualities; melodic content, overall effectiveness, the extent the song depends on the riff, aesthetic and emotional appeal.

## *The Messenger*

Johnny's first solo album proper (although the Johnny Marr + The Healers album preceded it some 11 years ago), *The Messenger* has guitar hooks and figures liberally scattered throughout. So much so, what to choose as a highlight is a troubling question. "New Town Velocity" is many a fan's favourite, the arpeggio picking by both Johnny and his son, Nile, an enormous element of that song's appeal. "Say



Demesne's" anguished guitars at the tail end of the song echo the despair of a woman selling her love for cold, hard cash. "Generate! Generate!" has sparkling rays of sunshine rounding out the final section of the song.

However, none of them are "riffs"; the sonic architecture of a song, driving the piece of music forwards. Hence *The Messenger*; who wants to be a messenger in this world of miscommunication and blindness, when it is so clearly an exercise in futility? The post punk, angular guitar work recalls Television and Blondie, with a touch of chime reminiscent of The Edge. Urgent and vital, it pushes forwards relentless, with a spirit that is contemporary yet rooted in punk rebellion.

## *Girl Afraid*

This song has been selected not so much just for a riff but for the whole glorious guitar part, running through the entire run time.

It's a beautiful fusion of early rock and roll rockabilly twang and folk arpeggio picking. It moves so fast, you can hardly work out what is going on. The lyrics and vocal melody supplied by Morrissey make this one of the greatest Smiths songs, but equally, this could have stood up as an instrumental.



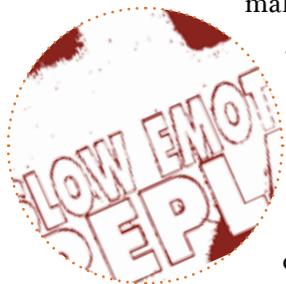
## Dashboard

Torn between this track and “People As Places As People” from the “We Were Dead Before The Ship Even Sank” album, this track has been selected since it is the backbone of the song in such an elemental way, based on partial barre chords and a whole lot of Johnny Marr flair. You can’t help but move to the muted funky groove of the main riff, it just worms into your psyche. Another somewhat frivolous reason for choosing this song is the unbelievable pink and yellow “mutant Sergeant Pepper” outfit Johnny wears in the video (do also check out the record player guitar made for him). It’s rad! Some readers will want to debate this list, but these choices are always difficult. However, one singular omission does deserve justification, that of “How Soon Is Now?”. This iconic track was left out because the guitars on that song are more of an achievement of recording, production and studio magic than guitar riffery. Johnny Marr and John Porter took the recorded guitar track and fed it through an array of reverb amps, messing with the volume controls while re-recording the results. A labour of love which literally took all night to put together, it isn’t really a “riff” in the usual sense.



## Slow Emotion Replay

If you don’t have The The’s album *Dusk*, then go and get it now! This song alone will justify the expense. The searing harmonica and stunning lyrics make this song a highlight on an already excellent album. But it is the guitar riff, running through like the silver line in a bank note, which verifies the authenticity of another genius moment from Johnny Marr. Pulling off the trick of sounding like rhythm and lead guitar at the same time is one of his greatest tricks, and here is a key example.



## The Boy With The Thorn In His Side



From the acoustic strummed intro to the rhythm guitar dipping in and out of the verse and chorus, this song is sonic joy. The riff which seals the deal is the upper register outro, played in a funky Chic style 16th rhythm.

As Johnny said himself:  
“If you listen to ‘The Boy With The Thorn In His Side’, the rhythm part from verse two onwards - that chick-a-chick part - it’s pure Nile Rodgers.”

Played on a Strat, as much of *The Queen Is Dead* was, this soars high in the sky. The riff has been described as “starbursts” of guitar, completely appropriately; more pure stellar Marr.

## Getting Away With It (The Messenger tour live version)

The original Electronic track had the central riff played on a piano, as in keeping with the ethos of that band. Johnny and Bernard would write the music on guitar and then either try to use effects to make them sound like keyboards, or actually play them on keyboard.

There is a lovely guitar break on the original record, but this list is including the live version that Johnny has been playing on tour.

The original piano intro is now being played on Johnny’s ever-present signature Jaguar. It’s hard to resist shaking your tail feather to this riff, drawing inspiration from Johnny’s much beloved Rolling Stones (think the intro to “Start Me Up”).

Anyone who has seen Johnny’s live show will attest to what a highlight this track is, particularly the guitar work performed in the “glitterball” section.



## Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now

This was, for many, the first song which raised an awareness of The Smiths.

Listeners would have certain questions: who was the sad man with the tear stained voice? Why was he miserable? Why does the music seem cheerful and euphoric in way which is both contradictory yet complimentary?

The guitar riff with its characteristic twang and sparkle is melodic and joyful, written on the famous red Gibson 355 Johnny was bought by Seymour Stein.

The gift of the guitar made Johnny play differently, using more jazzy chords. Johnny himself is “not that keen” on this song any more, describing it as being “a period piece to me”, but it remains an exquisite moment from the past.



## This Charming Man (Flatful of Hollow version)

Will this selection put some noses out of joint?

The punchy single version is the more well-known version, and many will have wanted me to feature it in this list.

This live version has been selected for several reasons. The loose feel of it, the timing just slightly slower than on record, allows the song to bounce to an almost jazzy tempo. It becomes a toe-tapping delight, rather than a race to the finish line. As a result

the single guitar can be heard, the notes distinct. There is no multi layering here; just the lone guitar, filling the space left for it with effortless style.

It had been said that it was influenced by the African Hi-Life style, but at the time Johnny Marr wrote this riff, he had never heard of it.



## Back To The Old House (Flatful of Hollow version)

Channelling Bert Jansch and Jackson C Frank,



Johnny Marr wanted to write something romantic, beautiful and wistful. He says that to do this, he thought of his childhood sweetheart and lifelong partner, Angie, who he married just under two years later. Of course, he succeeded in his aim, completely and utterly. The acoustic guitar evokes wistful and melancholic emotions, the fingerpicking precise yet soulful. You can even hear the fingers of his left hand slide up a couple of frets on the bridge, so accurately has the guitar playing been recorded.

## Still Ill

Possibly the quintessential expression of the Johnny Marr “jangle” sound from the Smiths days? Deceptively simple

sounding, it bounces, darts and dances in and out of Andy Rourke’s bass guitar work. It is the lightness of the touch which makes this riff sound so effortless.

“Does the body rule the mind/ Or does the mind rule the body?” Like Morrissey, one may ponder that philosophical question, but this guitar riff has regal power, one of Johnny’s crowning glories (along with his many excellent haircuts, of course!).



I hope this list will have you digging through your own collections to re-listen to these riffs and perhaps putting together your own lists.

By Snigdha Nag | [Twitter](#) @snigskitchen

# SPEAK OUT, REACH OUT

With a career spanning 30+ years now, it's unsurprising that Johnny Marr attracts a wide variety of fans. We interviewed some about their discovery of, and feelings towards, our favourite godlike genius.

## Ruby

Age 23, Basingstoke, UK

### How did you first get into Johnny's music?

I have always been a huge fan of Talking Heads, as are both my parents. I listened to the 'Naked' album a lot growing up because I was named after one of the songs on it (Ruby Dear) and when I found out Johnny played guitar on it and several others, I decided to look him up online. From there I discovered his work with other bands and became hooked on finding and listening to everything he's played on or written.

### What is your favourite track from 'The Messenger'?

'Sun and moon'

### What are some of your other favourite songs that Johnny has written/played on?

Talking Heads - 'Ruby Dear'; Talking Heads - '(Nothing but) flowers'; Johnny Marr + The Healers - 'Down on the corner'

### Have you met Johnny before?

I haven't had the pleasure yet but I would love to one day!

### What is it that makes Johnny so special to you?

Johnny is a musical genius. Nobody can play like him, and nobody can write songs like him either. His songs are all so beautiful crafted. Also, although I haven't met him myself, he seems like such a lovely person, very kind and down to earth and humble. He seems like the sort of guy who really cares about his fans.

## Kenny

Age 42, Wiltshire, UK

### How did you first get into Johnny's music?

I first got really into Johnny's music back in 1986 when I borrowed The Smiths debut LP from my local library. It was unlike anything else I had heard to that point, which was a pretty life changing event when I think back on it now.

### What is your favourite track from 'The Messenger'?

'Generate! Generate!'

### What are some of your other favourite songs that Johnny has written/played on?

The Smiths - 'Some girls are bigger than others'; The Smiths - 'How soon is now?'; The Smiths - 'Paint a vulgar picture'

### Have you met Johnny before?

Yes, after the gig in Bristol, October 2013. A special moment with my wife and son also there.

### What is it that makes Johnny so special to you?

Johnny inspired my 11 year old son Ethan to learn Guitar and he has responded several times on Twitter since we met with encouragement. The fact that a new and young audience love to listen to his music as much as I do demonstrates his obvious appeal.

## Andrew

Melbourne, Australia

### How did you first get into Johnny's music?

In Australia we have a TV program called RAGE, which plays music videos all night on Fridays and Saturdays. On Saturday nights a 'guest programmer' - usually a musician or a band touring Australia - selects the videos to be played. One Saturday night in 2004, a guest programmer played that grainy, blue-hued video made in 1984 for The Smiths' track 'How Soon Is Now?' I was only 18, and my initial response was 'Oh... So the song from Charmed was a cover.' But I listened, and grew deeply absorbed by the throbbing guitar, the slide and the harmonics - what an intense vibe! After a chorus, the song had hooked me. The following day I bought Meat Is Murder (at the time that album's tracklisting included How Soon Is Now?, in line with the US releases). When I think now of my first encounter with JM's music, I think of my parents' living room, flashes of blue from our tiny TV leaping around the walls at 2AM, accompanied by the life-affirming throb of How Soon Is Now? I'll never forget it.

### What is your favourite track from 'The Messenger'?

It changes of course! But 'Generate! Generate!' is one I love. The louder the better.

### What are some of your other favourite songs that Johnny has written/played on?

The Smiths - 'Some girls are bigger than others'; The Cribs - 'We were aborted'; Electronic - 'Second nature'

### Have you met Johnny before?

I met Johnny at the Northcote Social Club in Melbourne on January 5, 2014, after his show there. He was really nice, and had time for everybody there. He just hung out with us! I blurted out that I was in a band. He said 'Oh you're a musician' then looked me up and down, and said 'Oh of course you are!' I think he liked my outfit!

### What is it that makes Johnny so special to you?

In my emotional vocabulary, if I can put it that way, a great deal of the language is Johnny's music. His music is just a perfect fit for me, emotionally, and attitude-wise. So many of the records he's made or played on felt familiar to me when I first heard them, from Hand In Glove through to The It-Switch. And he also gave me a musical education: through Johnny I found out about Iggy and the Stooges, T.Rex, CHIC, Pretenders, The Gun Club, Wire and loads more. Not to mention an education in fashion, pop culture and lessons on how to be in a band - I write music, play guitar, start bands and play gigs because his riffs, attitude and outlook continue to inspire me.

## Elena

Age 44, Florence, Italy

### How did you first get into Johnny's music?

The first time in 1986, when I was sixteen years old. I bought The Queen Is Dead and I immediately fell in love with the Smiths. The second time in 2012, when I heard the song "The Messenger" for the first time and I started to go backwards listen to Johnny's solo work (The The, The Healers etc.)

### What is your favourite track from 'The Messenger'?

'European me'

### What are some of your other favourite songs that Johnny has written/played on?

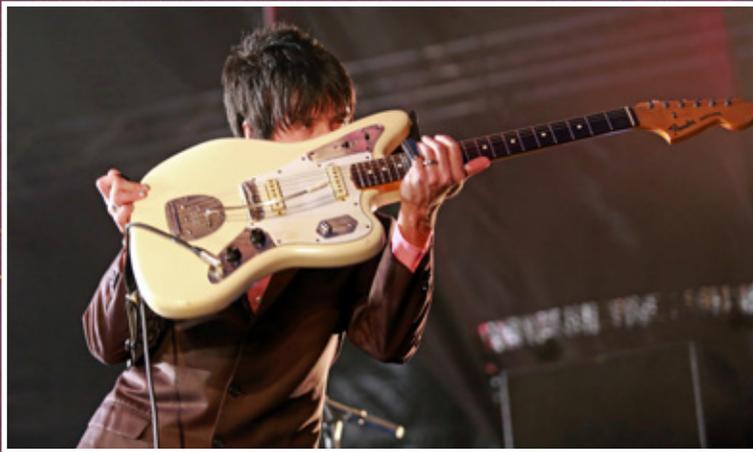
Johnny Marr - 'New town velocity'  
The Cribs - 'We share the same skies'  
The The - 'The beat(en) generation'

### Have you met Johnny before?

Unfortunately not (yet).

### What is it that makes Johnny so special to you?

I love him because he's a talented artist and has a very strong personality. He does the things he like to do and do not bother of whatever other people think, he's very dedicated to his work and to his family. And he's the coolest guy I've ever seen!



PHOTOGRAPH BY SIMON GODLEY

## Steven

Age 47, USA

### How did you first get into Johnny's music?

When I heard the beginning of How Soon Is Now? back when it was initially released I was hooked.

### What is your favourite track from 'The Messenger'?

'European Me'

### What are some of your other favourite songs that Johnny has written/played on?

The Smiths - 'Shakespeare's Sister'  
The Smiths - 'Nowhere fast'  
Bryan Ferry - 'Kiss and tell'

### Have you met Johnny before?

I met Johnny at the Gothic Theatre in Denver on the Messenger tour. We came early, parked in the small lot toward the alley and when we got out of the car, there was Johnny standing between his bus and the backstage door. We walked right up to him, asked if we could bother him for a quick photo and he obliged. He introduced himself (!), asked what we thought of the new album (love it), and we got our photos and enjoyed a very energetic, loud and moving concert! It was one of the best nights of my life so far.

### What is it that makes Johnny so special to you?

He wrote some of the most incredible music I've ever heard. His songs with the Smiths are literally the songs that saved my life. He is an incredibly inspired musician and he also inspires me. He is also vegan like me. I respect him immensely.

## Lucija

Age 32, Bosnia and Herzegovina

### How did you first get into Johnny's music?

I got into The Smiths pretty late, about six years ago. My sister was their admirer and one day she bought their compilation album 'Louder than bombs'. Perhaps I was bored, with nothing smarter to do. Anyway, I've decided to listen to that CD and see what it is all about. I was so amazed by Johnny's melodic guitar chords. It was indescribably wonderful experience, love at first sight. I was instantly enamoured with this music which I accidentally discovered.

### What is your favourite track from 'The Messenger'?

'New town velocity'

### What are some of your other favourite songs that Johnny has written/played on?

The Smiths - 'The boy with the thorn in his side'  
The Smiths - 'This night has opened my eyes'  
Johnny Marr + The Healers - 'Down on the corner'

### Have you met Johnny before?

No, I haven't met Johnny, but I truly hope that there'll be a chance to meet him.

### What is it that makes Johnny so special to you?

Aside from the fact that he is the best and most innovative guitarist of his generation, Johnny seems like an atypical rock-star: very open, down-to-earth kind of a person. He does not live on laurels, he's always creating something new.

## Gabe

Age 46, Tampa, USA

### How did you first get into Johnny's music?

From the first time I heard "This Charming Man", I knew I'd discovered something special. I was 16 years old and living a pretty alienated, detached existence while in high school. I had a select group of friends who I could relate to but it wasn't a large group. We reveled in each others quirks and uniqueness and The Smiths provided the perfect soundtrack for our existence at the time. I bought the debut Smiths album and listened to it over and over. It was a marvel and a godsend. The music and the words resonated with me and took me places I'd never been before. Johnny Marr's work and music has never left my side or my turntable ever since those integral days.

### What is your favourite track from 'The Messenger'?

'Generate! Generate!'

### What are some of your other favourite songs that Johnny has written/played on?

The Smiths - 'There is a light that never goes out'  
Johnny Marr - 'The It-Switch'  
Crowded House - 'Don't stop now'

### Have you met Johnny before?

Yes. We had a nice chat after his show at Orlando, Florida's Beacham Theater last November. He was very friendly, talkative, personable and pleasant. He signed a few records for me and my group of friends and seemed happy and pleased to talk to all of us as well as to the group of fans who'd gathered around the back of the venue after the show. I don't know if he fully realized how much that small amount of time meant to all the long-time fans who were elated to spend a few minutes with someone whose music has meant so much to us for so many years (myself definitely included). Although I think he is fully aware of the impact he's had on the lives of so many fans and listeners.

### What is it that makes Johnny so special to you?

He's a great writer and performer; his guitar style is unique and distinctive and has influenced so many more musicians. He's remained active and vital for over thirty years and he seems downright pleased and enthusiastic about what he does. He's good and grateful to his fans and is more than friendly to all of them. He's down to earth and the fact that he's a "regular guy" really comes through and makes him more endearing to his fans. His music and talent continues to flourish and he's making some of the very best music of his career at this point. He's someone to look up to and to draw lots of inspiration from.

## Rebecca

Age 27, Darwin, UK

### How did you first get into Johnny's music?

Heard "How Soon Is Now" on a music channel as a teenager, and soon after fell in love with the music of The Smiths.

### What is your favourite track from 'The Messenger'?

'Upstarts'

### What are some of your other favourite songs that Johnny has written/played on?

Electronic - 'Get the message'; The Smiths - 'The queen is dead'; Johnny Marr + The Healers - 'The last ride'

### Have you met Johnny before?

Not yet!

### What is it that makes Johnny so special to you?

He is everything you could want in a musical idol, he is a fantastic guitarist and songwriter and he always has this effortless, perfect style. Plus he's vegan and seems so down to earth. To be honest it's difficult to imagine anyone stealing my heart away from him!

## Edward

Age 20, Chicago, USA

### How did you first get into Johnny's music?

I was always into music/bands that were centered around a great guitar riff and The Smiths were just that. Just as I turned 17 I had finally found "my band" without looking for it. The first record I heard with Johnny was "Strangeways"... specifically the first song I heard was "Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me" It's interesting in hindsight because Strangeways isn't a heavily guitar based record compared to the other Smiths records. It was also this time where it forced me to listen to records in its entirety (as opposed to what a lot of teenagers including myself did at that time which was listening to just singles). Shortly after this, I had to pick up the guitar. I dove straight into learning Smiths songs. Specifically, This Charming Man and There Is A Light. My friends looked at me like I was out of my mind. Tackling Smiths songs before learning scales? But I was on a mission to emulate Johnny. His music and philosophy has changed my life drastically.

### What is your favourite track from 'The Messenger'?

'Generate! Generate!'

### What are some of your other favourite songs that Johnny has written/played on?

The Smiths - 'Last night I dreamt that somebody loved me'  
Electronic - 'Getting away with it'  
The Smiths - 'London'

### Have you met Johnny before?

I missed him outside The Metro (Chicago) just by a few minutes.

### What is it that makes Johnny so special to you?

Johnny makes the guitar sound like many different instruments. He makes this ancient stringed instrument anthropomorphic. The sound that flows out from his mind to his fingers out the amp/guitar, conjoins with my universe and consciousness.

I become inspired by Johnny's records and interviews. I strongly believe that what you give out to the world, in this case music, is highly reflective of your mindset at that time and also your philosophy.

I think the best way I can conclude my thoughts on the question asked is to cite a passage from "The Myth of Sisyphus" by Albert Camus:

"It is certain that apparently, though I have seen the same actor a hundred times I shall not for that reason know him any better personally. Yet if I add up the heroes he has personified and if I say I know him a little better at the hundredth character counted off, this will be felt to contain an element of truth. For this paradox is also an apologue. There is a moral to it. It teaches that a man defines himself by his make-believe as well as his sincere impulses".



PHOTOGRAPH BY SIMON GODLEY



Interested in  
contributing to issue #2?

Drop us an e-mail at  
[admin@johnnymarrvellous.com](mailto:admin@johnnymarrvellous.com) to discuss  
your ideas! Articles, original photos and fan  
art all welcome and encouraged.

Also, don't forget we're giving out 'I ♥ Johnny Marr' badges  
at all gigs on the upcoming UK/Europe tour, so come say hi  
and get yours!



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