



DYNAMICS

A JOHNNY MARR FANZINE

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MARR'S METHOD

How DOES HE DO IT? Anyone reading this publication has probably pondered this many times. How has Johnny Marr been able to continually produce music of such brilliance and relevance over four decades? One point which must be immediately considered is that he was just so young to begin with. By the time he left the Smiths he was only 23. With a prodigious nature and an extremely driven nature, Marr always far outstretched his limited years.

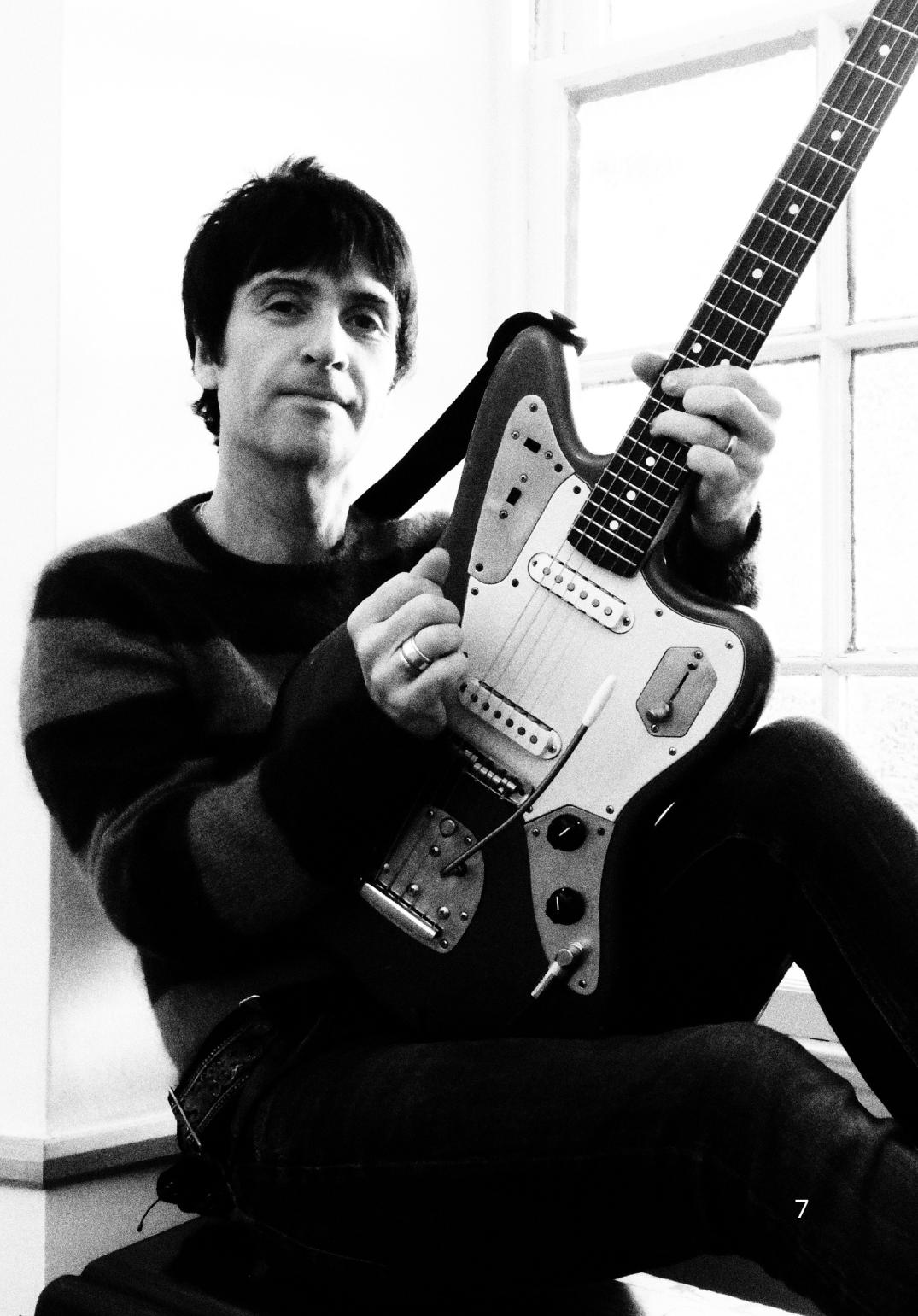


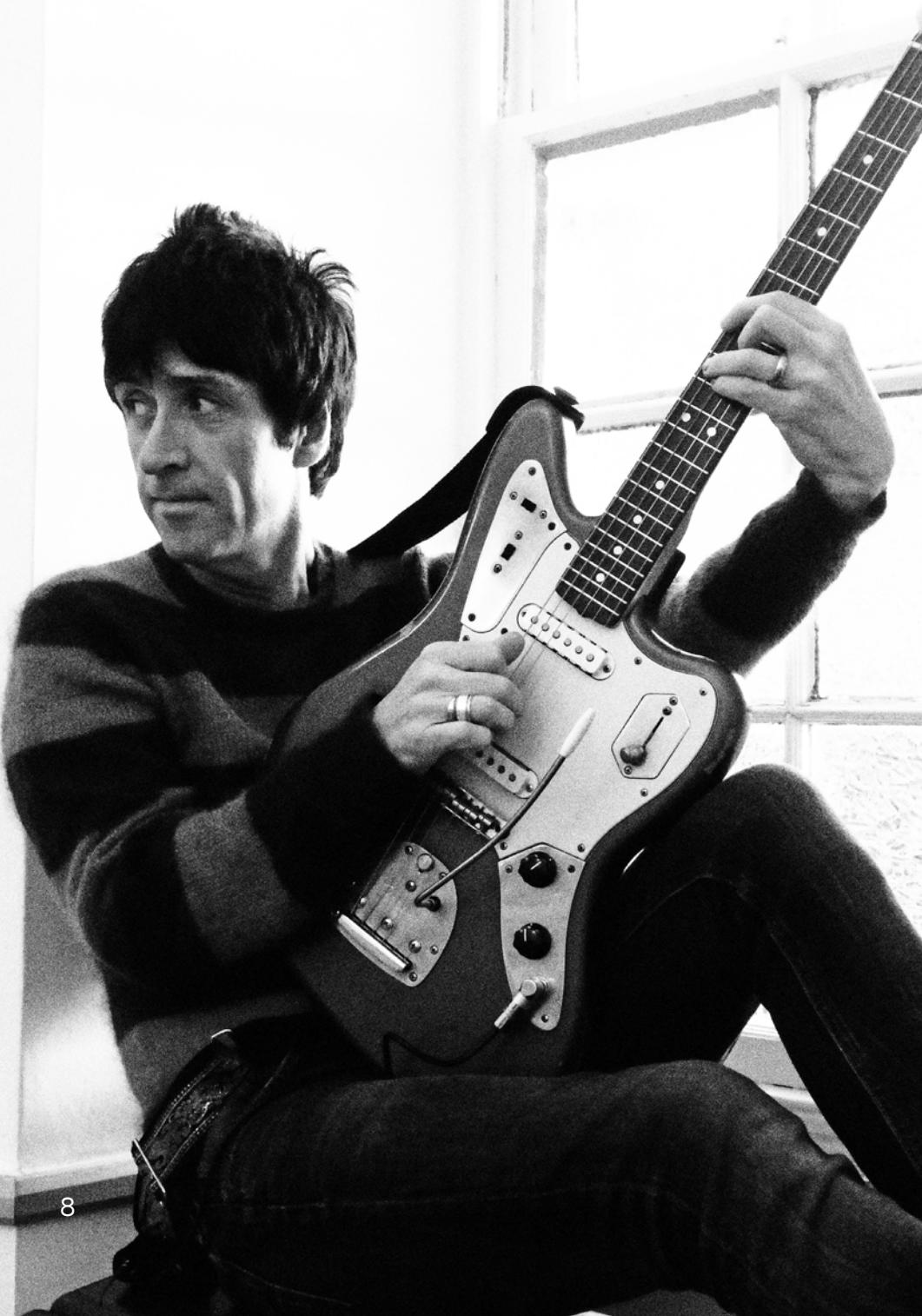
Johnny was known locally as an amazing guitarist, as young as 13. At 15 when he "left school for poetry", he was well on his way to becoming an icon before he was even an adult. Obsessed with the guitar, its appeal was all-encompassing in the young Johnny Marr's life. To have then been the architect of such a fanatically loved band which altered so many people's lives whilst at such a young age, and, for that band to have been so prolific with songs of such continued quality and class, is hugely awe-inspiring.

But perhaps even more warranting our awe is his continued relevance since leaving The Smiths. That he has continued to be enthused to be creative. To have moved from The Smiths to The The and then Electronic is amazing. To have then joined Modest Mouse and The Cribs is astonishing. That he managed to take so much of his audience with him is sheer genius. But its genius isn't simply miraculous. For want of a better term: Johnny really means it, man. A student of pop rock history, Johnny Marr has a keen appreciation of what makes a great pop star. His appreciation of those that went before him as well as his peers is his true motivation, not ego. There's fun to be had in "the lifestyle", but the lifestyle, even in the early days, was always secondary to the art.

Having seen first-hand the negative aspects ego can bring to musical endeavour, it is not surprising that Johnny Marr has shunned ego from view in most aspects of his musical career. You almost get the impression that every decision he has made as he has gotten older was made with creativity in mind, to ensure he is able to be as 'super creative' as possible. This requires dedication most people could never muster. An absolute need to be creative seems to permeate the Johnny Marr story throughout the years.

One of his favourite quotes (and now one of mine) is, 'Inspiration Exists, but it has to find you working.' This mentality is the key to his obviously deeply held belief that a working mind is a creative one. His constant wish to work and continue to alter, metamorphosise and progress has ensured that the journey has been a joy for artist and audience alike. This has led to Johnny being driven to ensure that he's not simply resting on his quite considerable laurels, but that he strives to grow as a guitarist and artist. The thought of allowing himself to be typecast, unforgivable: 'If you've been put in a box marked 'jingle jangle indie pop blah blah' then it's your responsibility to break out of that, otherwise you're creatively dead. You might as well write your own tombstone, with diminishing returns.'





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Recent evidence of this desire to remain truly creative and relevant can be most clearly seen in his touring schedule since announcing his first solo album and tour. At that point, no one really knew what his plan was. So it has become hugely pleasurable to see Johnny grow into himself. To take on the mantle of 'being Johnny Marr' with gusto and to ensure that he is releasing music and touring at a frequency on a par with his time in The Smiths. It seems that apart from a few weeks off here or there, he has toured the world almost constantly. There is

barely a festival or venue that he hasn't played at and again, even more impressive is the consistent quality he has performed, never leaving an audience feeling short changed and always bringing something new to the party with every new tour. The thrill of hearing genuinely loved new material played alongside classics that for years many thought would never see the light of the stage again. 'I like the idea of modernity. I feel quite lucky to have a back catalogue that people like so much, but I wouldn't really feel quite so good about it if those songs were propping up the rest of my live set.' But then, as I say 'he means it, man'. He understands the importance of effort in the endeavour of constantly being a better musician. That the path to (further) greatness is found on the road, on the tour bus and in front of another set of fans brimming with enthusiasm to see their hero in all his glory.

Johnny's lifestyle is all important too. He has been vegetarian since 'Meat is Murder', but became vegan in 2005 whilst living in Oregon. 'I'd been getting more and more health conscious and at that time I wanted to take things as far as I could. I like the idea of progress, and being progressive' He is famously also now a teetotaller. 'I started to think of it (alcohol) as a bit of a counterproductive drug. I don't have any problem hanging out



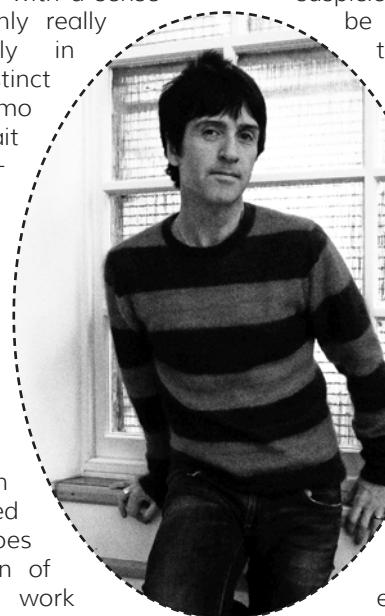
with people who are drinking, but things can get a bit...predictable'. So clearly, this is no puritanical exercise in self-betterment for its own sake. This lifestyle is employed as much for its allowing him to be as creative as possible as it is to save him from becoming a rock and roll cliche. 'That kind of Rock'n'Roll lifestyle would really slow me down and it'd be pretty corny', Marr told a recent interviewer. He is also a hugely keen runner: 'I equate running

with being progressive, so to speak. I don't see it as a discipline or "straight" or anything. I think of the typical rock n roll lifestyle as being somewhat obvious and cliched for me these days.' Living both clean and lean ultimately ensures that he is as prolific as possible. To Marr, you get the sense that work is everything. 'All of these things have made me more focussed and energised', he recently enthused.

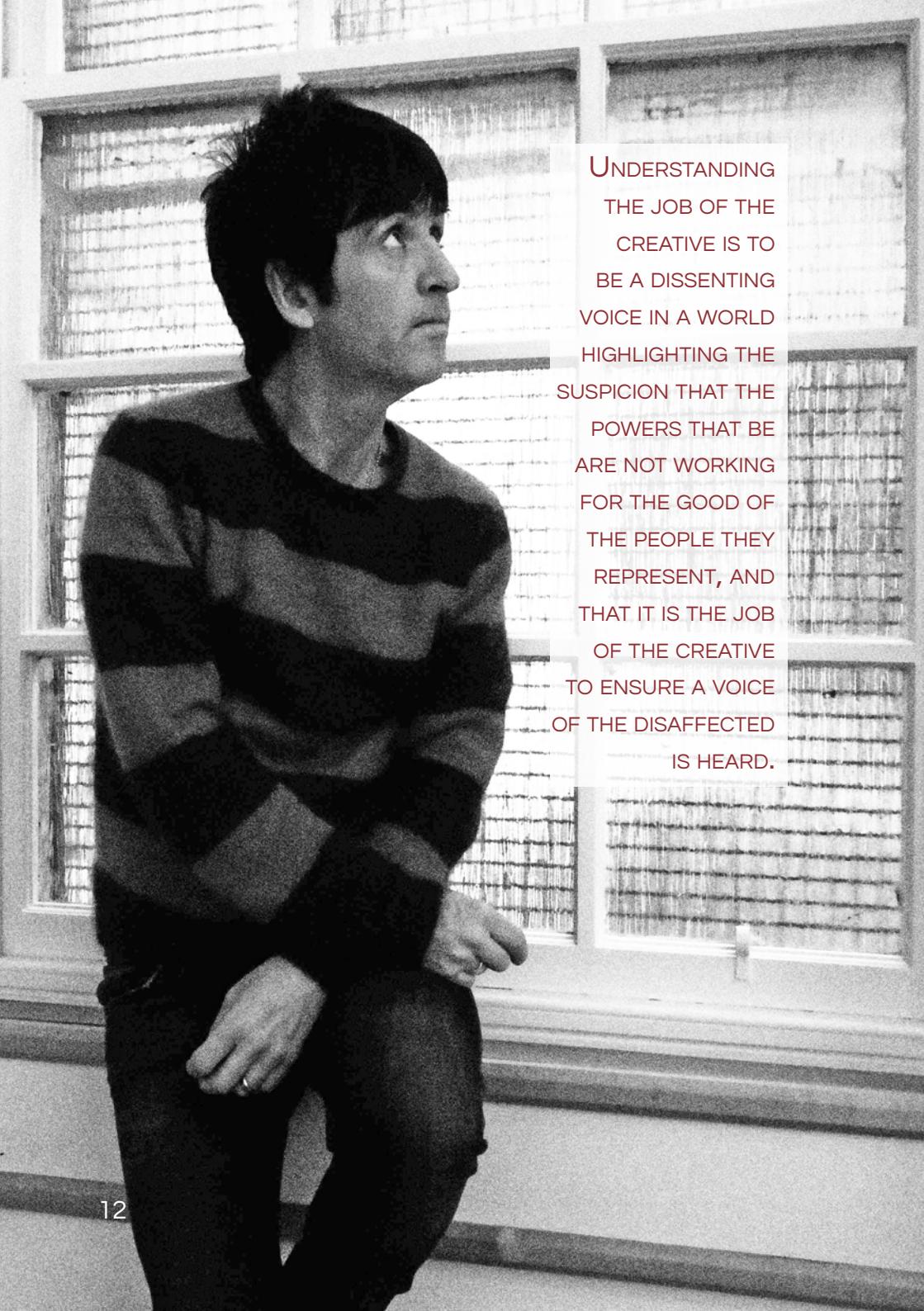
Alongside this herculean work ethic is his long term dislike of 'rockism'. The main tenet of 'anti-rockism' being that one music should not believe itself to be better or more authentic than another. As such, Johnny Marr is vehemently pro-pop, believing himself to be making pop music rather than rock music. This despite the fact that he is seen by many as a guitar hero. But, not in the common sense of the term and all that bloated sense of majesty and authenticity the term engenders. No band standing. He is a guitar hero by quiet virtuosity. Ploughing his own post-punk path which has almost become the prototype for indie music. A music that combines elements of classic rock, but with a sense of femininity only really seen previously in Glam rock. A distinct lack of machismo is a defining trait of your post-punk indie artist. Punk had washed away a lot of the excess of 70s rock, but some homophobia and sexism remained. This ethos wasn't a mistake or a plan he has floundered onto as time goes by. The decision of The Smiths to work

with Rough Trade rather than the lure of a big money, big company deal shows how he saw and still sees his place in the world. His politics, though not always taking centre stage, are hugely important to him. 'If you were an alternative musician, you were political, because of the times (think 1980s Thatcherite Britain)' and it seems he would like his audience to embrace politics and share his belief that they have a definite place in rock and pop. He tastefully allows his audience to know how he feels, while forgoing the temptation to preach.

Understanding the job of the creative is to be a dissenting voice in a world highlighting the suspicion that the powers that be are not working for the good of the people they represent, and that it is the job of the creative to ensure a voice of the disaffected is heard.



Marr also, it seems, isn't one for resting on his laurels. His spare time spent reading philosophy, learning about architecture and morality and exploring his own



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spirituality. Aldous Huxley and his progression as a writer from satirist to philosophical mystic being a subject he is immensely interested in and whose progression reflects his own desire for artistic creation with a sense of forward motion. Even when not in the studio or playing, everything is about being creative. 'I realize that the search is the thing and that's fantastic. I'm not saying the journey. That would just be too New Age. I'm not saying that. It doesn't matter if you find it, the search is the thing.' When he needs to relax he takes in his surroundings, often walking or running for miles around the area he finds himself in, but he never quite turns off. 'I will go and have a walk around the city, but I'm always taking in information, I can relax. I'm a relaxed person, but the wheels are always turning.'

So it's clear, what he does or is exposed to can have a direct influence on his music "I know myself pretty well and I'm very affected by my environment. I'm like a sponge and that's not always a good thing so I just have to try and be aware, at least, of what input I get from the media, television, my environment, the people I'm with. I just soak everything up and as life goes on I try to be as selective about my input as possible". So no idly fiddling with his phone or directionless trawling of the internet for Johnny: this would simply be a waste of time. 'I see

people at bus stops playing with their phones, and I understand because they're bored, but boredom really has its uses. If Picasso was online all the time what would've happened?'

A keen interest in Buddhism contributes, it would seem, to money never having been a deciding factor in anything Johnny Marr has worked on. His house he calls the indie pad; he has never felt the need to become one of the landed gentry as is so often the case with successful rock stars of a certain age. But then isn't that the point. He isn't your archetypal rock star at all. And he has only just hit 'that certain age': he is still only 52.

When NME bestowed upon him the mantle of 'Godlike Genius' in 2013, though it is probably something he would take with a pinch of salt and a dose of humility, the unavoidable fact is that the term is really not too far from the truth - and the reason for this has to be in part that he has remained a servant of pop music, remained totally in awe of its effect, influence and power. His "searching personality" has led him through what for others would be three lifetimes of collaboration and musical partnerships, with ease.

By all accounts Johnny Marr is incredibly friendly, one of the nice guys of popular music. But that is

not to suggest that he is anyone's fool. He knows how he likes to present himself and his music. He is modest, but not falsely modest. He knows his place in the world and that can only ever make for a more ultimately confident - but not arrogant - performer. Evidence of Johnny's simple love of being collaborative, and of his undoubted value as a friend, is seen in long lists of collaborations that offered little chance of mainstream success or media coverage. Collaborations accepted purely to add something extra to a record produced by a hero of his, with friends, or a project which affords him the opportunity to grow as an artist. A policy which aims to ensure making music never becomes stale. 'I'm glad I didn't spend 35 years in the same band. It's just not me'.

The art of collaboration is also something he excels at and that allows him to get the best from himself. Marr exudes, and is rightly lauded for, the possession of a featherlike, unobtrusive ability when collaborating. This can most clearly be witnessed on his atmospheric turn on his hero Bert Janch's 2000 album 'Crimson Moon', but is evident everywhere you look at his collaborations.

When Marr collaborated with Oasis on their 2002 Album 'Heathen Chemistry', it was not his so-called trademark sound that

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appeared on the record. Instead he lent sonic heft to some of the denser, mostly Liam-penned, songs on the album. No doubt being asked specifically to play slide guitar on 'Born on a Different Cloud', giving the track the unmistakable Beatles vibe Liam was clearly vying for. Noel even later suggested that 'someone' in the studio aided Liam in the writing of some of his songs.

A defining characteristic of Marr's choice of collaborators is his being drawn to work with musicians with a strong sense of self and a very singular and specific vision.





Central to this desire for working with people with such a definite view of what they are trying to create means he can truly aid the creation rather than obscure it - or worse, control. He has always been absolute in his desire to ensure it is never about Johnny Marr.

When announcing his decision to work under his own name for his most recent albums, it was clear he was happy to accept the influence and shadow cast by his previous incarnations. Now allowing himself to be an influence on his own writing. Becoming accepting and even gracious that he has a recognisable 'sound'. 'Sometimes I just want to play the guitar and collaborate with someone else's lyrics - and now's the time where, luckily for me, I have ideas for the whole picture'. Such sentiments may have signalled that collaboration was to take a back seat for a while, but that didn't quite happen either. He ended up forming a group: collaborative, but with Marr calling the shots. His relationship with and decision to include long time collaborator and producer James Doviak in his new band shows that even when you have a clear vision of what you want to create, there is never any harm in having people around who know you and can aid the creation of that vision.

More recently his foray into soundtrack work with film composer Hans Zimmer looks to be a constant fixture of his career in the future. Offering further scope for his development as a guitarist and the examination of how the guitar can be used in other possible situations far beyond what would be considered by lesser pop mortals. This might possibly hint at what we can expect from him beyond the point where he feels comfortable being a pop star... shudder at the thought.

Ultimately, his hunger to collaborate can be traced to a desire to simply work in a different way from day to day. To make sure that his love of making music and of creating art never gets stale. To be as creative and as prolific as he can. The very idea that more can be learnt from creating art together than working repeatedly through 'your sound'. 'When you can work with Gary Jarman and Hans Zimmer in the same year, why would you want to be stuck looking at the same flippin' bass player for 25 years?'

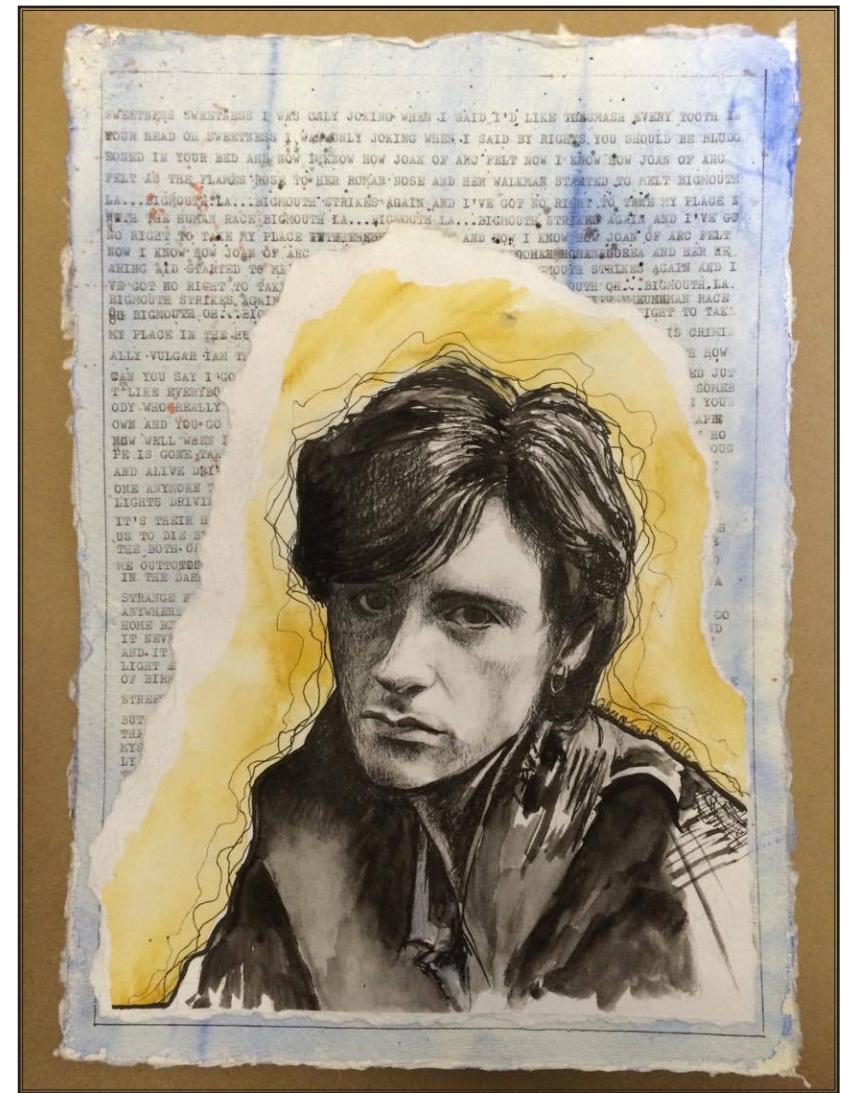


It could even be suggested that his recent decision to accept a professorship at Salford University, awarded for "changing the face of British music", is in part informed by his belief in collaboration. Alongside a genuine desire to help the students, he is open to the idea that the learning can be reciprocal, himself remarking hopefully when being interviewed on the subject of his appointment that 'it can be a two-way thing'.

His appointment at Salford Uni and his many collaborations surely exhibit a work ethic unmatched by most. A simple Google search for 'Johnny Marr Collaborations' really illustrates just how busy Johnny Marr has been since (and even before) leaving The

Smiths. He has always been a ramped up, hyperactive ball of energy. However, this would be to judge the man by our standards. I suspect he could live no other way, and frankly we should all be immensely glad he is so driven. Collaboration and hard work gave him a voice when the World Wouldn't Listen, but over the years it has helped him become The Messenger, showing us the true extent of the man's talent and desire to keep on moving, keep creating, Keep on Keepin' On. So for now, just as the muse found Pablo Picasso, Johnny Marr can be found...working.

By Paul Plimmer



Artwork by Catherine Smith



WE COULD BE HEROES

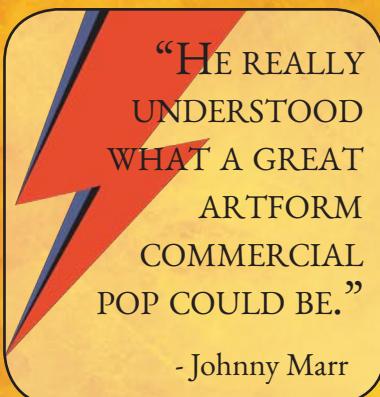
David Bowie & Johnny Marr

In the days after David Bowie's surprising and tragic death, I did almost nothing other than voraciously listen to his music and go down the Bowie research rabbit hole. Of course, at some point that led me to investigate how Bowie might have influenced Johnny Marr and not surprisingly, I came up with a few interesting connections, other than the obvious one of their singular style and fabulous hair!

In 2012 Johnny told NME, "David Bowie is easily the most influential and important artist to come out of the UK, for so many reasons - there are musicians who are influenced by him who don't even realise it. 'Ziggy Stardust' and 'Hunky Dory' liberated so many people from the straight sensibility in the suburbs. People who I grew up admiring, like Pete Shelley from the Buzzcocks or

Ian Curtis, were hugely influenced by Bowie. No Bowie, no John Lydon - or lots of other people.

I first heard of him in the glam rock days with the amazing run of RCA singles - I think 'Suffragette City' was played at my youth club. What was fantastic was that it was this tough, tight rock music, but the cool girls liked it, because back then, a lot of rock music was good guitar players but was just guy-zone - music for spotty, greasy boys. So many parents hated that 'Ziggy Stardust' and 'Aladdin Sane' period, because it was so obviously sexually loaded and erotic. That was really liberating. It was naughty, and it was illicit. It was about a world that I just couldn't wait to join - he really understood what a great artform commercial pop could be."



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- Johnny Marr

Bowie's glam rock style of music, with his strong vocal melodies and confrontational, individualistic performance resonated with a young Marr (and Morrissey) as they listened to T. Rex and the New York Dolls. His cheeky lyrics and harmonic songwriting had a profound affect on the Manchester lads as they were just beginning to put together The Smiths. Glam is truly the underpinning of Marr's formative years in music and he has spoken often about the importance of peeling back the machismo of rock to reveal a side that is just as energetic and exciting without all the crazy guitar-solo "grrr-ness." And David Bowie was the master of demonstrating this new brand of pop music mixed with great artistry and flair that Johnny Marr's music, to this day, beautifully displays.

David Bowie, with Mick Ronson, also modeled the singer/guitarist template that would prove so successful for Morrissey and Marr. Bowie didn't want a Keith Richards to his Jagger, but when he heard Mick Ronson, he thought, "Yes, that's the kind of guitarist sound and partnership I want." It's a system that propagates as a specific outline for songwriters who are singers who need a musician who can match them and push them. Morrissey and Marr would create a certain similar alchemy based on this very concept and have since had similar influence on a vast array of other singer/musician combos. The Bowie/Ronson continuum moves through the now-considered "gold standard" of Morrissey and Marr and on to Suede's Brett Anderson and Bernard Butler, Blur's Damon Albarn and Graham Coxon and even to Oasis' Gallagher brothers.

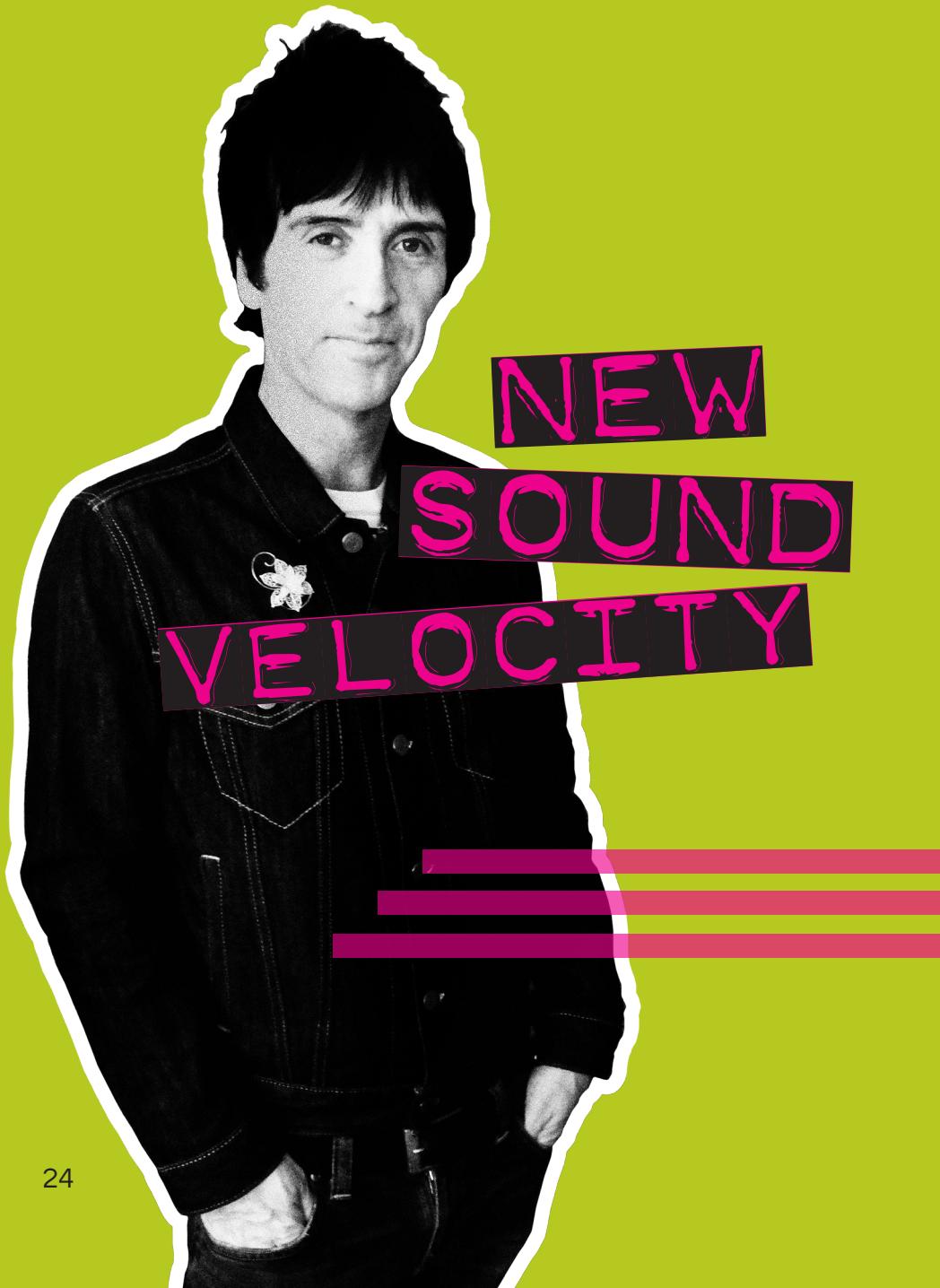
More in depth listening to Bowie's music and studying his life led me to a couple of other observations. Both Bowie and Marr are more than consummate musicians; they are true artists in that they surround themselves with culture and the Arts (with a capital "A") as a matter of course. It's not even a choice they make, it's just who they are. Bowie was an actor, a writer, musician

and composer, and a visual artist working in several different media. Marr, too, engages with the world as a writer, musician and composer, and a visual artist with a sense of observation and wonder about the world that is purely artistic. They both are constant creators, and see the world through a special lens of infinite creative possibilities. That restlessness of image and pop is present in both Bowie and Marr, that ongoing need to push boundaries, try new things sonically and visually. For Bowie, his edgy Berlin Trilogy (albums "Low," "Heroes," and "Lodger") could very well have had a some real influence on Marr's ongoing exploration of electronic music (working with Bernard Sumner on Electronic and Hans Zimmer on the soundtracks for "Inception" and "The Amazing Spider-Man 2.") David Bowie, very obviously, negotiated between art and pop throughout his career, and while Johnny Marr has most often returned to his signature brand of guitar tones, his choice to delve into more experimental sounds may very well have been validated by what he heard from Bowie.

I expect that the excitement Johnny felt when he first heard Bowie's singles in the clubs - "Changes" and "Life on Mars?" as well as "Starman"

and "Moonage Daydream" (which he and Crowded House so beautifully covered) resonated with him during his formative years with The Smiths, and as Bowie experimented and grew with both sound and vision (!) Johnny was taking it all in and factoring his genius into his own very personal brand of Marvelous musical treats. As Johnny so poignantly tweeted on the day Bowie's death was announced, "Deepest respect and thanks to David Bowie who changed the music world and my life."

By Ellen Leerburger



NEW
SOUND
VELOCITY

Music is, was, and always will be, a huge influence on society. A truly good track has the ability to transcend generations and reach out to people not only across the world, but across time itself. It's a given that Marr's jangle inspired an entire generation of youngsters in the 80s, but perhaps those very same youngsters are now a little worried that Johnny's appeal is a little lost on the candidates of 2016. But fear not. Johnny continues to inspire people across the country and stands out as a true stalwart of indie music for all to see. Whether it's his life-choices, dress sense or the music itself, Johnny is still just as influential as he's always been.

Throughout his career, Johnny has been a huge inspiration to many. However, despite picking up NME's 'God-like Genius' award in 2013, it seems that the unfair stigma of depression that has been bolted firmly to both The Smiths' and Johnny's guitar seems to deter some listeners when they hear of his new releases. But in fact it's quite the opposite: Marr's sound may have changed slightly over recent years, but it's still just as amazing (and not depressing in the slightest). Classics such as 'This Charming Man' and 'What Difference Does It Make?' may have been born out of another time, but rather than forget the floral sound of old, Johnny has effortlessly adapted in recent years, and new songs like 'Easy Money' have seen his "Rickenbacker Jangle" take a back seat to more contemporary indie noise. But that isn't to say the perfect picking and beautifully crafted arpeggios of old haven't remained and continue to inspire people, time after time.

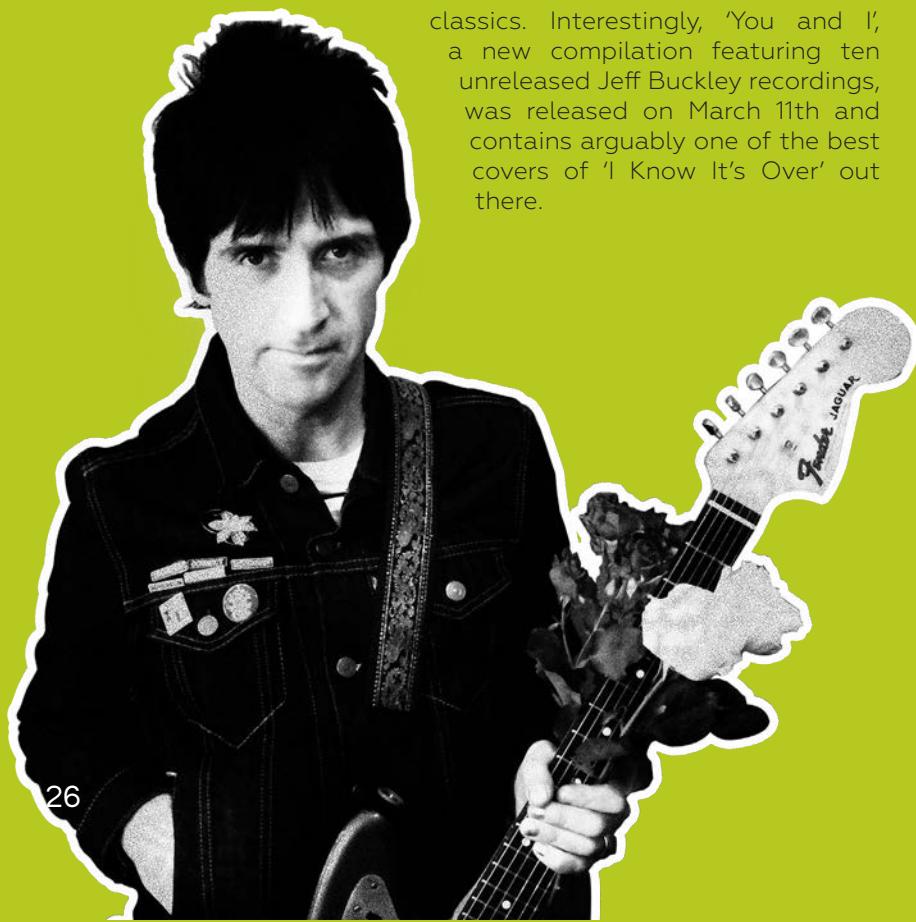
The release of his brilliant live album 'Adrenalin Baby' in October 2015 took us by storm and was recorded live on his 'Playland' tour in 2014. The album, like the gigs, is reminiscent of the lyrical genius of old while still maintaining that same Johnny touch that so far it

"WHETHER IT'S HIS LIFE-CHOICES, DRESS SENSE OR THE MUSIC ITSELF, JOHNNY IS STILL JUST AS INFLUENTIAL AS HE'S ALWAYS BEEN."

seems nobody can replicate. And with over 130,000 monthly listeners on Spotify, along with the masses of teens flocking, just as they did before, to buy Marr's records, you can be sure that whether its analog or digital, cassette or concert, our vegan virtuoso is far from finished.

Even the story behind The Smiths' fame is an inspiration: A story told and re-told time and again. A working class teen of Thatcher's Britain with a passion for music and a desire to change things, Johnny defied the grim north and sought to create music that resonated, and still does resonate, with everybody. So the band did just that. Choosing a name to reflect their unique quality (normality) in the polysyllabic realm of 80s music, The Smiths inspired, and continue to inspire, almost all who hear them. This influence is such that many new (and not so new) musicians have covered and referenced their songs in their work. Belle and Sebastian, Placebo, Arcade Fire

and Panic! at the Disco to name but a few, have all released covers of The Smiths' classics. Interestingly, 'You and I', a new compilation featuring ten unreleased Jeff Buckley recordings, was released on March 11th and contains arguably one of the best covers of 'I Know It's Over' out there.



But, not only does Marr's music influence youngsters everywhere, his impeccable dress sense does too. A self-confessed fashionista, Johnny often dons blouses to create his iconic look. Vans, Levi's and Birkenstock also feature prominently in Johnny's clothing - and the fans know it. Take a look in any indie disco and you're sure to see somebody trying to pull off a Johnny-esque look. Whether it be a floral shirt or classic Manc hair-do, desert boots or denim jacket, Johnny's fashion sense is emulated by teens all over the country and has remained indisputably trendy through the ages."

Some things that perhaps aren't so trendy, in a world such as this, are Johnny's Socialist, Humanist and vegan beliefs. Now, set aside any preconceptions here and look at this on a deeper level. Johnny holds firm to said beliefs and, what's more, isn't afraid to stand up for them (See Albert Hall October 7th 2015 for proof). To quote what was said during the euphoric address of David Cameron, "It doesn't matter if you're a red, or a blue. If you're Tory or you're Labour" surely an artist with such firm beliefs, regardless of others' opinion is exactly what's missing from popular music today. Marr's bequiffed counterpart has voiced this opinion many times and it seems that the lyricist is onto something.

So, with a large following of both old and new fans that gets larger day by day, its clear that Johnny remains just as inspirational as he always was. But, with a Tory government, mass unemployment and pop music spiralling out of control, surely the stage is set for the rebirth of true indie! So long as Marr's music is heard, there is always hope for the future.



got it Covered



PHOTO BY KIERAN FROST

WITH SUCH A MASSIVE AND IMPRESSIVE CATALOGUE OF SONGS HE'S RECORDED TO CHOOSE FROM, YOU'D THINK JOHNNY MIGHT NOT HAVE ROOM FOR COVERS IN HIS LIVE SETS. BUT NOT ONLY DOES HE MAKE ROOM, HE FINDS SOME CRACKING TUNES TO SLOT IN.

Becoming a staple on The Messenger tour, his version of 'I Fought The Law' proved to be a firm crowd pleaser. Originally released by The Crickets and given a whole new lease of life by The Clash, it's a solid singalong track. It's also the subject matter of a lovely moment I witnessed at the Teenage Cancer Trust show last year. In what sounds like the opening line of a bad joke, there were these two security guards...one was determined that it wasn't going to be his cup of tea while the other was keen to change his mind. Song by song, the first guy went from a look of general disinterest to an occasional head nod and a raised eyebrow expression that suggested

he could just be convinced. Then out of nowhere he was singing along with 'I left my baby and it feels so bad...' and I'm not sure which one of them had the bigger grin on their face.

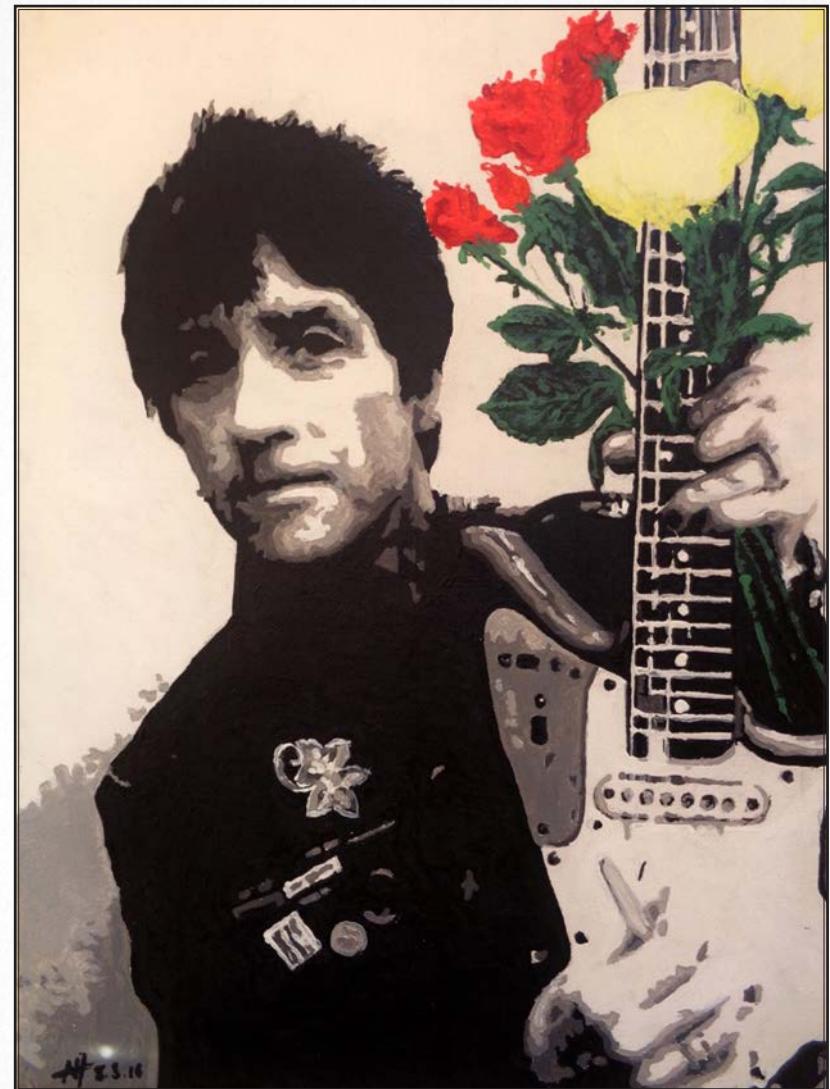
So onto the Playland tour and the instantly recognisable intro to Iggy Pop's thumping 'Lust For Life' filling the room. There can't be many people who could give a classic Iggy song a fair hearing but for those who knew the track it seemed like a brilliant meeting of minds and talent. And for those who didn't - what an excellent gift!

On more than one occasion Johnny's covers have opened up the songs to a whole new audience. Personally, although I was aware of a lot of Depeche Mode's work, 'I Feel You' had never really hit my radar until it was added to the setlist. It's a dark, hypnotic tune in stark comparison to their earlier electro-dance offerings and Johnny's version received such a phenomenal response to YouTube posts that it was released for Record Store Day 2015. (Ironically this resulted in many of us queueing in the dark in a fairly hypnotic state to buy it).

Ever full of surprises, at his warm up show in Southampton for the Adrenalin Baby tour, Johnny presented his latest cover. The Primitives' indie pop wonder 'Crash' was given a sharper edge through its dedication to the damage caused by David Cameron and his troupe of bellboys. Funny how you sometimes can't remember the details of something really recent but you find you still know all the words to a song released in the late 80s! Dancing shoes all round in the crowd and throughout the tour the track was made more special by becoming a duet with Nile. Lovely to see that kind of mutual respect between father and son; I think they'll both go far...

So here we all are, knowing that Johnny never stops working and could probably use a break but still hoping really hard for more live shows soon. Another tour, another cover? Fingers crossed.

BY SIOBHAN O'DRISCOLL



Artwork by Adrian Harrold



“ Does anybody
have any
QUESTIONS? ”

Who are some of Johnny's favourite female guitarists?

What foreign language would he like to learn?

Does he sing in the shower?

We asked our readers to submit their own questions for Johnny to answer - and being the good sport that he is, our guitar hero kindly obliged. Read ahead for his responses to the top, hand-picked dozen...

Hey Johnny, I just got my first Rickenbacker and it's becoming more essential to my kind of sound. What guitar helped you the most in finding the sound that you wanted, and what was the draw to that particular guitar?

- ETHAN MURRAY,
Oklahoma City, USA

I was half-way there with my Gretsch at the start of The Smiths but then I got the Rickenbacker and that sealed it. I got it because I thought it would send me down the right road and it did. ■■■

As a musical inspiration to many women like myself, and of all ages, who do you rate amongst your top female guitarists to encourage us to take it up and keep going?

- CATHERINE SMITH,
Aberdeenshire, Scotland

There are plenty of great female guitar players. Joni Mitchell was original and innovative, a total one off. Listen to the first Pretenders LP to hear just how good Chrissie Hynde is. She changed a lot of things for girls and doesn't get enough credit for that. Wendy

Melvoine is one of the best guitar players I've ever played with. PJ Harvey has done some good things. Tina Weymouth on bass and Kathy Foster from The Thermals. Janet Weiss in Sleater-Kinney is an amazing drummer. ■■■

Have you ever suffered from nerves before a gig? If so, how did you deal with it?

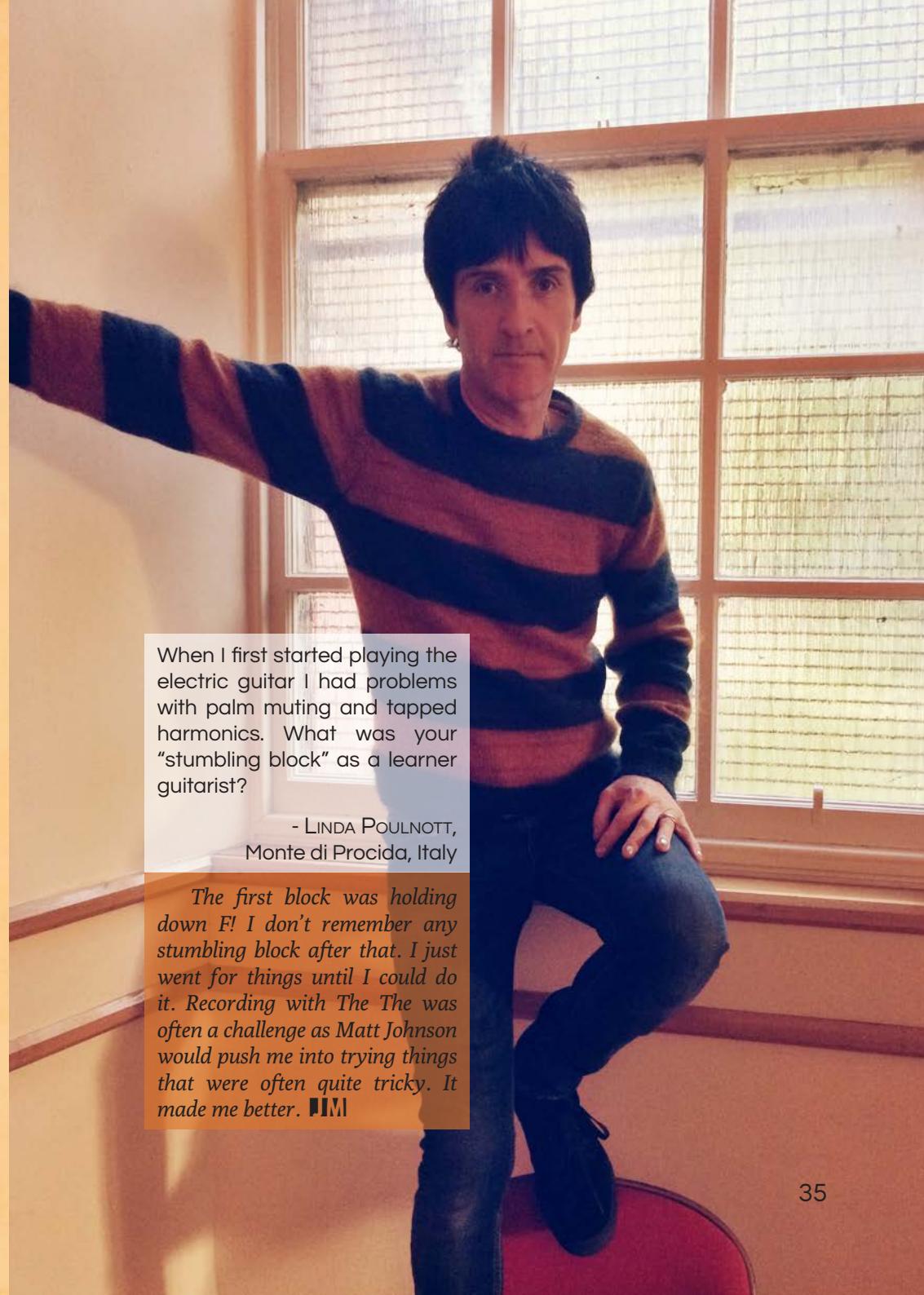
- DAVID HOBAN,
Rhondda, South Wales

Yes, plenty when I was younger. I dealt with it by throwing up! It always worked out OK in the end though. You know they say imagine your audience naked. I've done plenty of that. It's worth it even if it doesn't work. ■■■

Do you meditate and if so, how often?

- RISHI CHOPRA,
London, England

I have done a fair bit of meditating and I'm able to go into a required state fairly easily now. Like a lot of people I feel I should practice twice daily but I don't seem to do get around to that. I go through phases. ■■■



When I first started playing the electric guitar I had problems with palm muting and tapped harmonics. What was your "stumbling block" as a learner guitarist?

- LINDA POULNOTT,
Monte di Procida, Italy

The first block was holding down F! I don't remember any stumbling block after that. I just went for things until I could do it. Recording with The The was often a challenge as Matt Johnson would push me into trying things that were often quite tricky. It made me better. ■■■



Do you sing in the shower, and if so, what are your favourite shower songs? Do you ever sing your own songs in the shower, to see how they sound?

- BERNADETTE RUMSEN,
Manchester, England

I don't think I've sung any of my songs in the shower, maybe "The Messenger". That rings a bell and would probably sound good. I've sang plenty of Four Tops though. "Reach Out I'll Be There". You should try it. It's not easy. No. ■■■

Is there a Smiths song you would like to play live or miss playing live, but can't fit into the set for whatever reason?

- DAVE JASPER,
Gloucester, England

There were a lot of Smiths songs that were good live, "I Know It's Over" was a favourite. I used to play "Sweet and Tender Hooligan" with my band but others took over. Maybe that would come back, and "The Queen Is Dead" too. ■■■

What foreign language would you like to learn?

- ELISABETTA BONUCELLI,
Milan, Italy

Japanese. German too so I could read Schiller and Goethe in its original form. That would be good. ■■■

What famous painting do you wish you could have painted yourself?

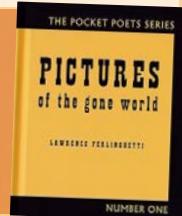
- STEPHEN FITZPATRICK,
Sheffield, England

"The Arrival of Spring in Woldgate, East Yorkshire in 2011 (twenty-eleven)" [by David Hockney] is a wonder. I stood in front of it so I'm sure of that fact. ■■■

If you were asked to set any poem to music - which poem would you choose?

- ALISON MOORE,
Preston, England

'The World Is A Beautiful Place'
by Lawrence Ferlinghetti. ■■■



As a vegan and healthy lifestyle advocate, what is your favourite guilty pleasure dessert (or food in general)?

- DEREK SCHUMACHER,
Wiesbaden, Germany

There is such a thing as Vegan Ice Cream you know, and in all sorts of exotic flavours. You can imagine. ■■■



If you could bring back to life one famous or historical figure for one day, just to hang out, who would you pick and how would you spend the day with them?

- LUCY RYAN,
Dublin, Ireland

I would very much like to hang out with Marcel Duchamp. We could go shopping then discuss things all day which would be fabulous. He could whup me at chess but I could skin him in a running race and playing The Cribs songs. ■■■

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, JOHNNY!



If you're reading this fanzine, you probably don't need me to tell you what a nice, friendly guy Johnny Marr is. Everybody says so, and of course it's true. He's well known to be warm and accommodating, and generous with his time and kind words. And in the past few years I've also learned, so are many of his fans.

Whether we've met at gigs or online, all the Johnny Marr fans I've met to date have been genuinely decent people. They're approachable and funny and sincere, and I've seen none of the hostility, belligerence or snobbery that has plagued other fan communities I've been associated with in the past.

In this age of accessibility, with artists directly communicating with their fans via social media, and people afforded the anonymity of the cyber-world, fan communities can be breeding grounds for competitiveness and even bullying, as much as they can be a means of forging friendships. Johnny's fan community very clearly falls into the latter camp though, and in my (very humble) opinion, for the following reasons:

1. THERE'S A STRUCTURED FAN COMMUNITY

Through a Facebook group as well as many fan-coordinated projects (such as scrapbooks, birthday cards/gifts, and yes, this fanzine!), Johnny Marr fans have a clear "base camp" that helps everybody connect to each other, and even sometimes Johnny himself. This helps build a sense of belonging as well as a "safe space" where everybody knows that their interest in All Things Marr is shared.

Last year, interviewer Ali Molina spoke to the JohnnyMarrvellous founders Ory Englander and Aly Stevenson, who said: "Fostering a sense of community and camaraderie amongst fans was always the goal. We wanted everybody to feel welcome and included and for there to be as small a chasm as possible between fans."

Personally, many people I have met through the Facebook group alone are now people I meet up with in person from time to time, and attend other gigs with (when Johnny's not touring, of course!). There is definitely a sense of belongingness that helped build those friendships.



2. THERE'S NO OBVIOUS HIERARCHY

The fans I've interacted with have been from all walks (and stages) of life. Some are "veteran" Smiths fans who have followed Johnny for literally decades and met him many times over those years, others are younger new fans who have yet to even go to their first Johnny gig, and there's all manner of varieties in between. But one thing I've noticed is that there's no noticeable hierarchy or caste system. There are never proclamations from anybody claiming to be a "better" fan, or being condescending towards others. When newer fans post on the Facebook group to excitedly share a song of Johnny's they've just discovered, nobody replies to ridicule them for not already knowing it. Nobody mocks the kid who shyly asks what the bassist's name is, or wonders if Johnny's ever worked with Noel Gallagher. There's a sense that, perhaps owing to the vastness and constant evolution of Johnny's life and career, his older or more knowledgeable fans realise that there are always going to be others who are just discovering the World of Marr, and that not everybody can be expected to know everything right away. The same goes for fans who've never been to a gig before, or never met Johnny in person. The more privileged fans show an understanding that lack of opportunity is nothing to look down on another for. The odd show-off who won't let anybody forget how many gigs they've been to or how many times they've met Johnny is far outnumbered by fans who share Johnny's own attitude of humility and non-elitism.

"Nobody mocks the kid who shyly asks what the bassist's name is, or wonders if Johnny's ever worked with Noel Gallagher."

3. GENEROSITY & HELPFULNESS IS ENCOURAGED

Just like Johnny himself, I've observed his fans to be very generous with their time and resources. This is particularly evident between the guitarists in the community, who are always happy to advise on gear, or to share tutorials for playing some of Johnny's songs (no easy feat, as I've discovered by experience!). But even beyond the more musically inclined, Johnny's fans seem to love helping each other out: helping track down records in others' local shops; finding that interview or YouTube video you forgot to bookmark; sending little gifts, and even organising carpools for gigs. Considering many of these exchanges occur between people who don't even know each other particularly well, it says a lot about the sort of kindly attitude the fan community encourages, following their hero by example. It would seem that Johnny's influence on his fans extends beyond imitating his haircut or wearing Modernist badges: they adopt his positive behavioural traits as well.



Of course I'm not naive enough to assume that there is never any drama or hostility between Johnny's fans - all fan communities have a bad apple or two, but the Johnny Marr fan community as a whole is so entirely warm, positive and friendly that it's safe to assume that any issues between individual fans occurs only on the outer fringes of it. The combination of an enthusiastic, structured community and Johnny's positive influence has created a fun and loving fan group that almost feels like a family sometimes, such is the affection and genuine care its members show for each other. I would like to think that Johnny is proud of his fan base. I know I'm proud to be a part of it.

By Dylan Roberts

NIGHTCLUBBING

Shopping for music with the *Angel of Radness* on your shoulder

A regular feature where Andy Campbell takes a look at pop and rock classics discovered through the tutelage of Professor Marr.

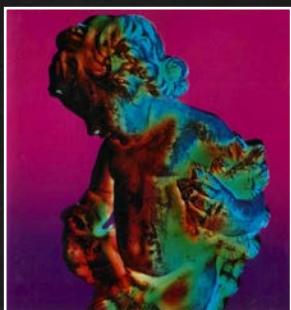
This issue's focus: electronic music (whatever that means in 2016 – I say it means music with fewer guitars than usual!)

A fan recently asked Johnny via Twitter what his favourite Boards of Canada album is (Boards of Canada are a Scottish duo who make sublime electronic/ambient music). He replied that it is Music Has The Right To Children. A great record to stay up late to: I'll usually have it on when I'm up all night with a uni assignment due the next day. If you haven't heard the album, I recommend youtubing 'Roygbiv' as an introduction. A friend gave me the album years ago, and I had no idea Johnny was a fan. It made me sit down and think of what other electronic acts Johnny had inadvertently turned me on to. New Order is one, Kraftwerk another; he also inspired me to revisit Depeche Mode with his stunning cover of 'I Feel You.' Electronic or ambient music is still a new arena for me, but here are my tips so far.



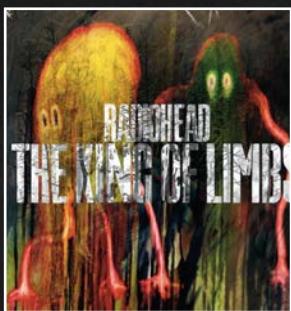
1 NEW ORDER – ‘VANISHING POINT’ ‘TECHNIQUE’

I bought Technique after digging Electronic: I wanted to hear more of what Bernard Sumner, and New Order, could do. This LP has one of the coolest covers in music (another reason I bought it, I admit). ‘Vanishing Point’ is an example of something New Order are brilliant at: a classic, long-form rock song, but with electronic elements. According to Bernard, although the band absorbed some aspects of Balearic Beat while recording Technique in Ibiza, he still wanted them to be a rock group. The chorus is as fine a meeting of minds as you could hope for: funky clavichord, keyboard chords pounded on the offbeat, and a supple bassline from Peter Hook. One of New Order’s many Imperial moments, and not a boring moment in it.



2 RADIOHEAD – ‘BLOOM’ ‘THE KING OF LIMBS’

Johnny's pointers about Radiohead didn't strictly lead me to them; rather, they helped me consider Radiohead anew - as an adult, rather than the blinkered teenage obsessive I once was - and gave me some new insights about the kind of band Radiohead are: a collaborative band, and maybe even an egoless band. A band

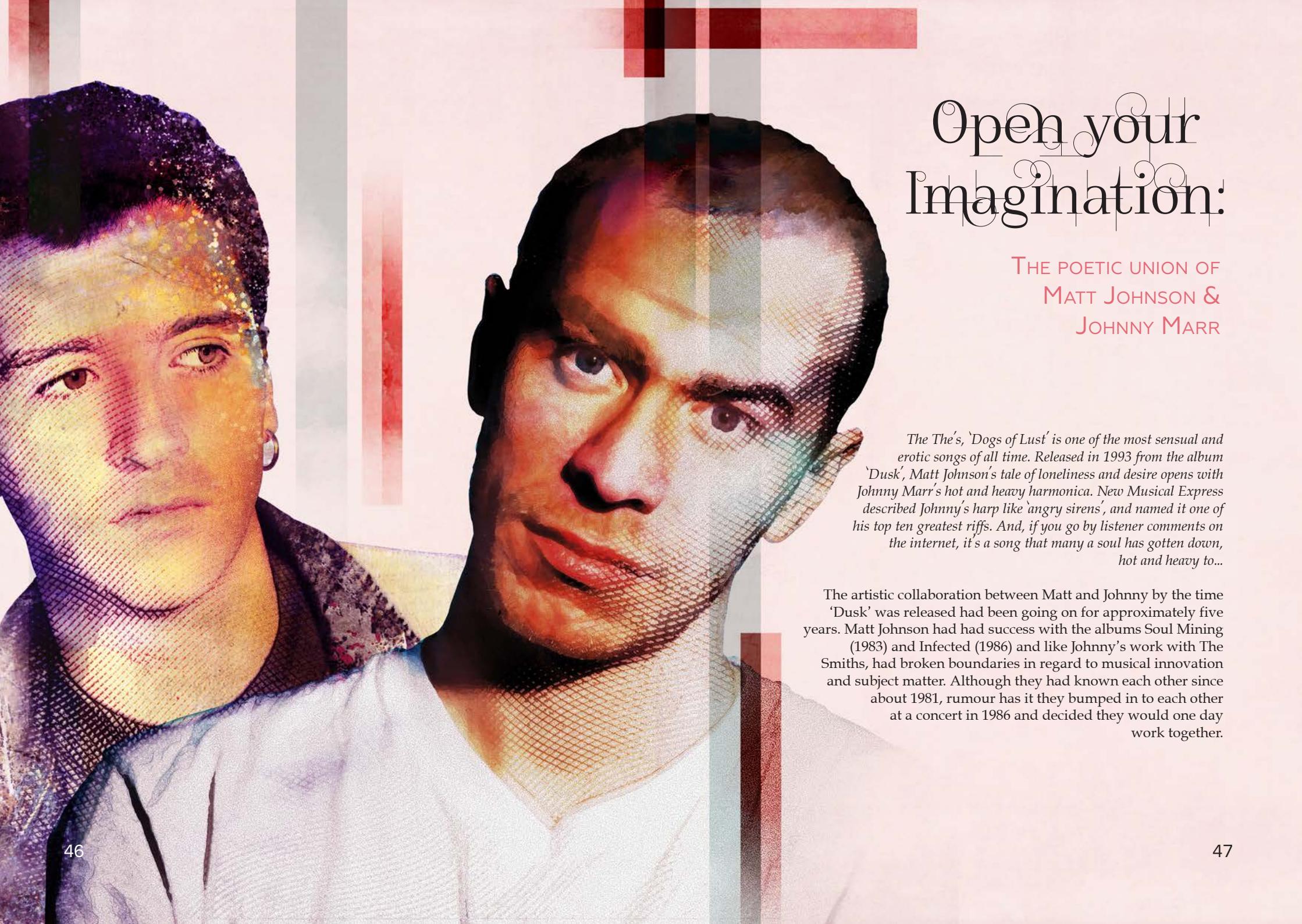


that records tracks influenced by each member, but on which not every member plays. Johnny is credited in the sleeve on Radiohead's 2007 LP In Rainbows with providing 'Guitars and Counsel'; Ed O'Brien also used the Johnny Marr Jaguar when Radiohead toured The King Of Limbs. When they play 'Bloom' live, Ed uses the Jag to emulate a computerised bleep-part from the record. Bloom is a strange record, an intimate, meditative ramble with a clattery drum loop and a delayed piano figure, but with wonderful composure in the bass and vocals, which hold the whole experience together.

3 ONEOHTRIX POINT NEVER – ‘REPLICA’ ‘REPLICA’

From New Order to Cut Copy, who when programming Rage one night on the ABC, selected the video for ‘Replica’ by Oneohtrix Point Never. This track has a lot in common with Boards of Canada, in terms of both sound and emotion: the sustained, languid synths, the melancholic, sparse piano chords, and especially the warbling, pitch-bending keyboard melodies. (The two acts also share a record label in Warp Records). This is comedown music at its most blatant and seductive: a 3am record, and one worth staying awake and lucid for. I recommend watching the accompanying music video as an aside: it's composed of looped and isolated stills from a Russian (and Soviet Union) cartoon series called Nu, pogodi! - the combination is deeply affecting.





Open your Imagination:

THE POETIC UNION OF
MATT JOHNSON &
JOHNNY MARR

The The's, 'Dogs of Lust' is one of the most sensual and erotic songs of all time. Released in 1993 from the album 'Dusk', Matt Johnson's tale of loneliness and desire opens with Johnny Marr's hot and heavy harmonica. New Musical Express described Johnny's harp like 'angry sirens', and named it one of his top ten greatest riffs. And, if you go by listener comments on the internet, it's a song that many a soul has gotten down, hot and heavy to...

The artistic collaboration between Matt and Johnny by the time 'Dusk' was released had been going on for approximately five years. Matt Johnson had had success with the albums Soul Mining (1983) and Infected (1986) and like Johnny's work with The Smiths, had broken boundaries in regard to musical innovation and subject matter. Although they had known each other since about 1981, rumour has it they bumped in to each other at a concert in 1986 and decided they would one day work together.

It was a musical union that seemed to come just at the right time professionally for each. Johnny had come out of The Smiths exhausted at age 24 and in the following couple of years enjoyed writing and playing with the likes of The Pretenders, Talking Heads and Bryan Ferry, amongst others. For Johnny, it was time for him to seek out a longer-term post Smiths project. For Matt, he wanted to play his music live, but he needed like-minded individuals to come on that journey with him. He once said he had always been more interested in writing and producing than playing live. "I resisted having a permanent line up because I've always been quite a loner as a person in the way that I work. I've always tried to do things in an unorthodox manner." This all changed when Johnny entered stage right...

Matt knew the timing was right and said that he knew the final days of The Smiths were depressing for Johnny, but felt the experience ultimately did him a lot of good. "Situations like that can only benefit you in the long run," Matt said. "We'd always admired each others' work from a distance. But when I contacted him, he came around about nine in the morning and we sat up until nine the next morning because we had so much in common and so many ideas!"

Johnny initially played on 'The Beat(en) Generation', which ended

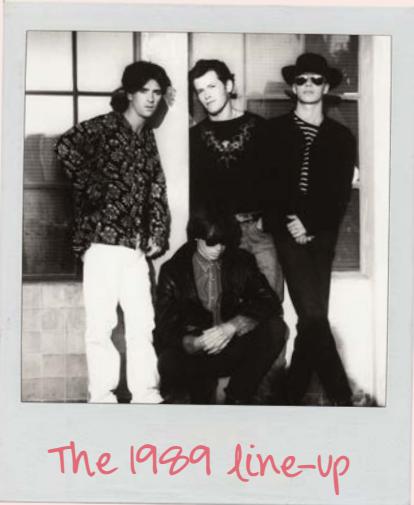


PHOTO BY JEFF KATZ
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up as the fifth song on the brilliant *Mind Bomb* (1989) Matt said; "We both didn't want to say anything, but he wanted to join and I wanted him to join. But we didn't know to broach it but it kind of came out... And it just came together like that." With Johnny in the group, Matt got ex Nick Lowe bassist James Eller and David Palmer ex ABC to complete the band. "Matt pulled in David, James and me independently, so the three of us found ourselves together and figured it to be the most natural thing in the world," Johnny said in 1990. "What Matt said he wanted in a guitar player sounded perfect to me. I think he knew instinctively that I wanted to get into a new area of playing."

"What Matt said he wanted in a guitar player sounded perfect to me. I think he knew instinctively that I wanted to get into a new area of playing."

- JOHNNY MARR

not," Johnny explained. "With The The now I can lay back a bit and watch what I'm doing. I don't have to be a one-man band. Now I can get more dynamics in my playing." It is an album, as the sleeve notes suggests, to play very loud, very late and very alone. And, if you have never done this — you need to!

With the addition of keyboardist D.C Collard, The The undertook a lengthy world tour aptly titled 'The The Versus The World'. The tour covered the UK, Europe, the United States, South America, New Zealand and Australia, and this writer was lucky enough to be standing front of stage at the Sydney gig at the Hordern Pavillion on 4 August 1989 (and meeting Johnny Fuckin Marr afterwards). If you want to check out how incredible this tour was, get yourself a copy of the Tim Pope directed concert feature, *The The Versus The World*, which is comprised of three shows filmed at the Royal Albert Hall.

Mind Bomb, which delved further in to Matt Johnson's fascination with politics, religion and love, was a commercial success for the band, debuting at Number 4 on the UK charts. Besides 'The Beat(en) Generation', it also featured Sinéad O'Connor's powerful vocal on 'Kingdom of Rain', 'Gravitate to Me' — a song co-penned by Matt and Johnny, and what can no doubt be one of Johnny's all time greatest guitar riffs (or according to Johnny, 'the best riff Jimmy Page never played') on 'The Violence Of Truth'. Johnny said at the time of making of *Mind Bomb*, that there were a lot more lyrical things to interpret, in regards to Matt's music. "There are a lot of guitar parts on 'Mind Bomb', which people think are synthesizers or samples, but they're



The The in 1989, L-R: Dave Palmer, Matt Johnson, James Eller, Johnny Marr

PHOTO BY JEFF KATZ © JEFFKATZPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

to perform. Now it just feels like a bit of a grown up group. We have all come to the same point in our careers and our lives. What I want as a guitar player, James as a bass player and David as a drummer is pretty much the situation with The The. It's quite unusual for people of our age and experience having

made records for seven or eight years to all be completely in sync at the same time."

Matt agreed and said at the time, "The creation of the live show, brought together powerful individuals. I like simplicity and strength. The songs are strong,

"The songs are strong, the musicians are so good and the personalities are so powerfully evolved. That is what comes across. It's a band with no gimmicks."

- MATT JOHNSON

the musicians are so good and the personalities are so powerfully evolved. That is what comes across. It's a band with no gimmicks. What you see is what you get."

With the tour ending in 1990, The The returned to the studio and recorded an EP entitled 'Shades of Blue'. This was followed up with the release of *Dusk*, a critically and commercially successful album boasting three Top 40 singles in the UK. Uncut Magazine said Johnny's contribution to this album, '... ranged from playing only harmonica on Johnson's acoustic elegy to the brother he'd recently lost ('Love Is Stronger Than Death') to the bleating wah-wah and funky wicka-wicka that fills out 'Sodium Light Baby', which suggests The The as the sophisticated Happy Mondays.' *Dusk* reached Number 2 on the UK charts and a tour and full length Tim Pope feature *From Dusk Til Dawn*, followed. By 1994, it was time for Johnny to step away from The The and on to new ventures. Johnny said in 2012 that his role

in The The was to be as inventive a guitar player as possible. "It was an opportunity to do things in a different way than I'd done before, with more varied guitar sounds, particularly live. It was Matt's thing, he ran it and wrote the songs but it was very much a band."

In the 2004 novel 'Love Is The Drug' by American author Sarahbeth Purcell, she lists (via her broken hearted protagonist Tyler Tracer) her 'Top Ten Most Irresistible Sexual Songs', which includes 'Dogs of Lust' at number two. Tyler writes; "I once read that the lead singer of The The turned up the heat in the studio, to like a million degrees, to simulate, I dunno, being in heat or what have you, and Johnny Marr was frickn' dying in there, playing his guitar over and over - but once you hear this, its all worth it!"

BY BELINDA HOGAN

PHOTO BY GREG CHOW /
THREEMATCHBREEZE.COM

REVIEW

San Francisco

The Independent, 29/2/2016

On a cool, drizzling Monday night San Francisco turned out to see Johnny Marr and band. Undeterred by Visa issues that threatened to scupper the start of their California tour, Marr and Co. forged ahead and landed on Leap Day to thrill a sold-out crowd.

Starting the show only a half hour late after all the mad travel scramble, Portland's Mimicking Birds opened. They wove together a dreamy sound of complex guitar interplay, ringing harmonics swirling around almost jazzy drumming -- a perfect soundtrack for a wet winter night.

After the lulling sounds of Mimicking Birds, Johnny Marr took the stage like a jolt of raw energy, leading the band into "Back in the Box." The song pulsed on Iwan Gronow's throbbing post-punk bass (reminiscent of fellow Mancs, Magazine) while the guitar carved through the dense sound in huge arcs, contrasting with a cold synth line. The band accelerated into the curves and brought it home with a roar. Then offering a little bon bon to the locals who braved a Monday night show in the rain they snapped right into "Still III". The familiar guitar rippled through The Independent, and everybody sang along to every word. Grins all around among the faithful. Off came Johnny's famous blue...well, not raincoat, but denim jacket (perfectly accessorized with badges proclaiming him a Modernist and Brutalist).

The first part of the set focused heavily on Playland and "Easy Money" kept the crowd moving, chanting along with the chorus, driven by the insistent riff. I was parked up close to the stage directly in front of James Doviak and marveled at how his playing dovetailed so beautifully with Johnny's, the Goldtop Les Paul entwined with the Fender Jag. You could really sense the



PHOTO BY GREG CHOW / THREEMATCHBREEZE.COM

trust and musical telepathy in this band which played with both sensitivity and swagger.

The pace slowed as the band reined it in with "Speak Out, Reach Out" which reminded me in parts of the Cure, playing the keyboards off the guitars. Jack Mitchell's drums powered "25 Hours" stopping and starting and turning on a dime and "Candidate" drew out a tart aside by Mr. Marr about Donald Trump before he picked out the beautiful, somber melody.

The band shifted gears with the immortal guitar figure of "The Headmaster Ritual", delighting an audience who yodeled along gleefully. At this point

the band took off and soared through the end of the set, lifting everybody with them. "Dynamo" sounded like an instant classic with its big open-hearted melody in the chorus. The unreleased song, "Spiral Cities" turned out to be a huge, almost psychedelic guitar showcase, as the melody circled and (inevitably) spiraled as Johnny stretched out.

"Getting Away With It" was the only nod to Johnny's time with Electronic. Iwan pushed it forward on bass while James layered in the synthesizers, but it was Jack's drumming that really distinguished this version from its original incarnation. It just rocked harder, with Johnny's guitar riffing away and propelling the whole thing with an irresistible groove that had the audience dancing. Then the band galloped into "Bigmouth Strikes Again", whipping the crowd into a joyous frenzy. "Generate, Generate" kept the energy high, the room chanting along with lyrics, tumbling and rumbling with the drums, and "Boys Get Straight" raced at high speed. Finally a dip back to The Messenger with the Beatlesque "Word Starts Attack", followed by a brief pause and then the big belated Valentine of "There Is a Light That Never Goes Out", which had strangers turning and singing the lyrics to each other as if they all ought to fall in love right then and there.

We didn't have to wait long for an encore as the band returned with "You Just Haven't Earned It Yet Baby" (a cheeky choice for a first encore) - a song I associate more with Kirsty MacColl now than with The Smiths. "New Town Velocity" proved to be another keeper from The Messenger, and then the band launched into Johnny's Record Store Day single, their cover of Depeche Mode's "I Feel You." This version oozed raw, thick swampy sex, an incredibly dense and powerful sound that paired perfectly with "How Soon Is Now" to wind up the show perfectly. The crowd left sweaty, spent and giddy - a Leap Day to savor and nothing Brutalist about it.

By David Smay

REVIEW

POMONA

The Glass House, 4th March 2016

After making the hour and a half drive from my hometown to Pomona, I was buzzing with the excitement of finally seeing Johnny Marr live. After his announcement of the cancellation the California leg of the Playland tour more than a year ago, I was saddened but knew that he would eventually come back to California. Lo and behold a little over a year later, the "California Jam" tour was announced and my brother and I bought our tickets as soon as they were available for sale. Arriving at the venue almost two hours before the doors opened, my expectations were mostly based on conversations that I had with a friend of mine when they attended Johnny's show at the Manchester Apollo last year in October. Waiting for the venue to open its doors, people arrived in their Johnny Marr memorabilia, from shirts and badges to their vinyl and sharpies in the hope that Johnny would sign it.

The venue had sold out a few hours before Johnny's stage time and the inside was packed shoulder to shoulder. Mimicking Birds opened first, playing their guitars soaked in special effects such as reverb and delay. Their setlist was strong and helped ease the crowd while waiting for Johnny to appear on stage. After finishing their set, they thanked the crowd and wished us a good time for the rest of the night.



PHOTO BY JOE CORTEZ

Soon the stage lights began to flicker and the opening sounds to Johnny's live album "Adrenaline Baby" began to play when finally Doviak, Jack, Iwan and Johnny himself walked onto the stage, ready to play for an hour and a half in front of a sea of cheering fans. Beginning with the opening track of "Playland", "Back in the Box", the band performed it with energy. Much to the crowd's delight, Johnny began playing the Smiths' "Still Ill" almost immediately after and breathed new life into the song. The next few tracks come straight off of "Playland", "Easy Money", "Speak Out Reach Out", "25 Hours" and "Candidate" and were performed strongly and with passion.

After "Candidate", in what some (including I) considered to be the highlight of the entire night, Johnny took some time to speak to the crowd about the unfortunate delay caused by the U.S. embassy not issuing the band's visas on time and gave his own take on what caused it. While giving an interview on British television, Johnny had stated that a certain United States presidential runner was nothing more than a "fascist billionaire," and the crowd exploded in

cheering and applause. However though, Johnny had more to say. Giving a second interview the next day, Johnny further stated that said U.S. runner had "an omlette on his head", and shortly afterwards, there was the mysterious delay in the issuing of the visas. In Johnny's own words, "Coincidence, I think not."

After his highly amusing story, Johnny played "The Headmaster Ritual" from the Smiths' album "Meat is Murder". Unfortunately, some people in the crowd began to fight, but thankfully the venue's security dealt with the matter, leading a smooth performance for the rest of the night for the crowd and for Johnny. The rest of the set was a mix between "Playland", "The Messenger", Electronic's "Getting Away With It", some Smiths, and a new song, "Spiral Cities", to which each performance earned nothing more than acclaim from the audience. After dedicating and performing the Smiths' "There is a Light That Never Goes Out" to everybody in the room, the band walked off but the crowd was still hungry for more. After chanting "Johnny!" for a short while, the band returned onstage for an encore consisting of "You

PHOTO BY JOE CORTEZ



Just Haven't Earned It Yet Baby', Depeche Mode's "I Feel You", "New Town Velocity" and finally an electric performance of "How Soon Is Now?". I believe that it's easy to say that my brother and I pretty much lost our fucking minds [and a bit of my hearing] after the show.

Afterwards, some of us in the crowd waited behind the venue to meet Johnny and we all talked about whether if it was our first show and where we came from. Two lovely people I met had even made a seven hour drive from Arizona to

see Johnny, and one of them had even managed to retrieve the setlist, to my slight envy. Unfortunately though, security pushed us back towards the street and Johnny left in a car, with Doviak, Iwan and Jack taking leave only a little later in a different vehicle. It may have been for security reasons due to the fight earlier but we were still buzzing over the show and we knew that there would still be plenty of chances to come. If the opportunity arises, grab your friends, and take that chance because it will be a night that you would never forget.

By Erik Gutierrez



PHOTO BY JOE CORTEZ



Pattern Art by Holly Flynn



so good, so what

REVIEWING THE JOHNNY MARR SOLO B-SIDES

THE MEASURE OF AN ARTIST sits with the quality of the work not initially used. To utilise sporting terminology, this includes work not deemed fit as a contender for the starting line-up. Musicians consciously prioritise their work through two avenues, whether as a single, well, candidate, or worthy of an album place. In old, but not necessarily easy, money, the b-side of a 7" release, or in modern times, a digital bonus track, provides an outlet for work that does not match the requisite criteria on the aforementioned single and LP formats.

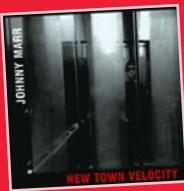
Johnny Marr, whether in The Smiths, The Cribs or solo, and everything in between, has always released new compositions, and occasionally different versions, as B-sides and bonus tracks. On one basic level, he challenges the notion of a lazy musician only releasing music every few years. Above all else, though, Johnny has done so to keep both audience and himself interested. This article investigates the flip side material Johnny has released whilst promoting *The Messenger* and *Playland*, and posits whether these songs should have made their parent albums at the expense of others.

Working chronologically, then, Johnny released 'Upstarts' in

February 2013, the first physical release, and second single overall, from *The Messenger*. 'P s y c h i c Beginner' opens with a spirited, if slightly dizzy, guitar riff, before the bass notes infiltrate along side some fine drumming. Johnny notes "let's go in the wrong direction, there's always a first time", almost leading the audience, whether an inquisitive Marr fan or critic, to wonder if Johnny can foresee responses to his solo output. The highlight of this song comes from his singing voice, with added effects, perhaps the most welcoming tone developed on record to date for the



listener. A tale of ‘more to follow’, ‘Psychic Beginner’ makes for a good B-side, although one that would struggle to displace any of the other strong songs on the parent album. He dutifully agreed, a decision supported by the fact that the song would not feature in setlists when touring for *The Messenger*.



Next, ‘The It-Switch’, a B-side to the third and final single from *The Messenger*, namely ‘New Town Velocity’, which found release in July 2013. This song feels like one long chorus, from the infectious handclaps, classic rhythm section arrangement, precise vocals and emphatic guitar riff. I would offer that the song possibly features his most joyous guitar lines on tape, and Johnny may even agree as much, where “it always feels good” provides a knowing boast that the listener can take to heart. The song received choice outings during gigs in the latter half of 2013 when promoting *The Messenger*, in an encore slot no less, and even made select appearances in the *Playland* shows of March 2015. Considering that a number of songs from the first LP took leave for new compositions, the infrequent, but welcome, performances by Johnny stress the worth of this B-side. Given the chance, I would allow ‘The It-Switch’ to close the album at

the expense of ‘Word Starts Attack’, following the A-side the song calls home.

A trailer for *Playland*, the October 2014 single release of ‘Easy Money’ bestowed a song in the shape of ‘Use Me Up’. Sonically different to not only the flip side but what would follow on the LP, ‘Use Me Up’ reveals the band fresh from a great deal of touring and practice, eager for the next move. Accordingly, the guitar work, bass lines, drums and lyrics race to a false finish, with a thoughtful instrumental passage allowing one final blast. Picking up any set of words during the song proves a challenge, but this opaque narrative only adds to the intrigue, and, appropriately enough, Johnny states, “see you’ve got something to say”. The potential for this song remains unfulfilled at present, an upstart if you will, as Johnny has yet to play on a night, granting ‘Playland’ centre stage on the titular tour. ‘Use Me Up’ would carry the momentum of ‘Playland’ through to ‘Boys Get Straight’ in a hypothetical album sequence, replacing ‘Speak Out Reach Out’ in doing so.

Following on, Johnny released ‘Dynamo’ in February 2015, the song holding particular resonance with readers of this titular publication. The B-side, ‘Struck’,

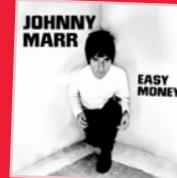
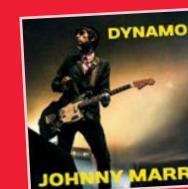


PHOTO BY MAT BANCROFT



sounds disparate in nature to the single, and even in fact recalls *The Messenger* in tone more than the proposed parent album. The frantic vocal delivery stands as the main feature, with the overdriven bass a worthy foil, and touches, “I let control come through”, an ambiguous yet enticing phrase for the listener. The chorus repeats several times over to a close, as the band, all things considered, take the opportunity to have a great deal of fun. Both in approach and scope, ‘Struck’

fits the bill, but not as an album track, something Johnny perhaps understood, as he decided not to feature the song on any setlist, as an escort to the A-side or others, upon release.

In April 2015, the band decided to diverge from the *Playland* campaign. However, Johnny, Iwan Gronow, Jack Mitchell and Doviak do not like to take any shortcuts, and instead put their collective creative talents towards a new single. Released in conjunction with Record Store Day 2015, ‘I Feel You’, a Depeche Mode release in 1993, proved an unexpected, albeit



appealing choice for an A-side. On the flip side, a live version of 'Please, Please, Please Let Me Get What I Want', taken from the October 2014 show at Manchester Apollo. This version captures a stolen moment from the tour, a touching treat for the hometown audience. The two cover versions on either side of this single, whether featuring Martin Gore or Morrissey as lyricist, present a different author for Johnny to recite, something to relish on occasion.

The most recent single from Johnny, 'Candidate' found release in July 2015, and returned to the *Playland* trail. 'Exit

Connection' provides a false start, slow waltz and all, before suddenly launching into full operation, the guitars seemingly desperate for noise. An early instrumental section provides one interesting feature, with another involving the repeated references to the title, yet never revealing a comprehensive meaning. Some exciting guitar embellishments appear throughout the composition, as Johnny makes a request, "all I want is to know I'm there". 'Exit Connection' offers an intriguing addition to the set of



B-sides, as well as the increasing back catalogue, but one that Johnny sagely kept back from the parent album and corresponding tour. The song confidently closes *The Messenger-Playland* period, but also has strong prospects for the future, notably as an indicator of forthcoming material.

Chances, hypotheticals, dreams and substitutions aside, Johnny has an abundance of extra material for fans to explore. The mere fact that he utilises this opportunity, one that a resourceful dynamo can embrace as either a test-run for future work, an experiment in sound variance, or merely to sustain creative momentum, suggests the man knows his art. He did the same in Electronic and similarly Modest Mouse, so this does not constitute a surprise, but the speed, or rather, velocity, new town preferred, Johnny takes to the task proves impressive. Five B-sides, plus a non-album single and a live standard, to support two LPs in two-and-a-half years underlines this proficiency. I would love to read how other Dynamic readers perceive his B-sides, and also whether this would make a difference in accordance with *The Messenger* and *Playland* running orders. Put those thinking caps on and give Aly and Ory the light...

By CHRISTOPHER MACLACHLAN

THE PLAYLAND MUSE

25 hours clicking adverts
Boys get straight upgrades
Dynamo revolving melodic
Candidate enlightenment

Easy money easy money
The trap easily mistaken
Back in the box repeatedly
This tension cranks home

Playland commutes
Speak out reach out
Little king plays jaguar
Vinyl messenger pursuits

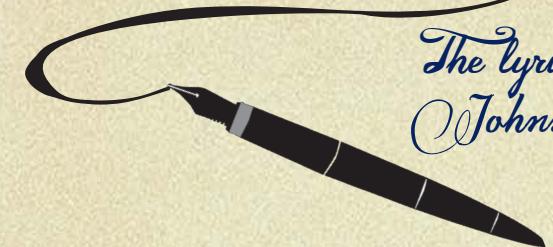
- Craig Spence





Here comes our
poetry

The lyricism of Johnny Marr



Part Two

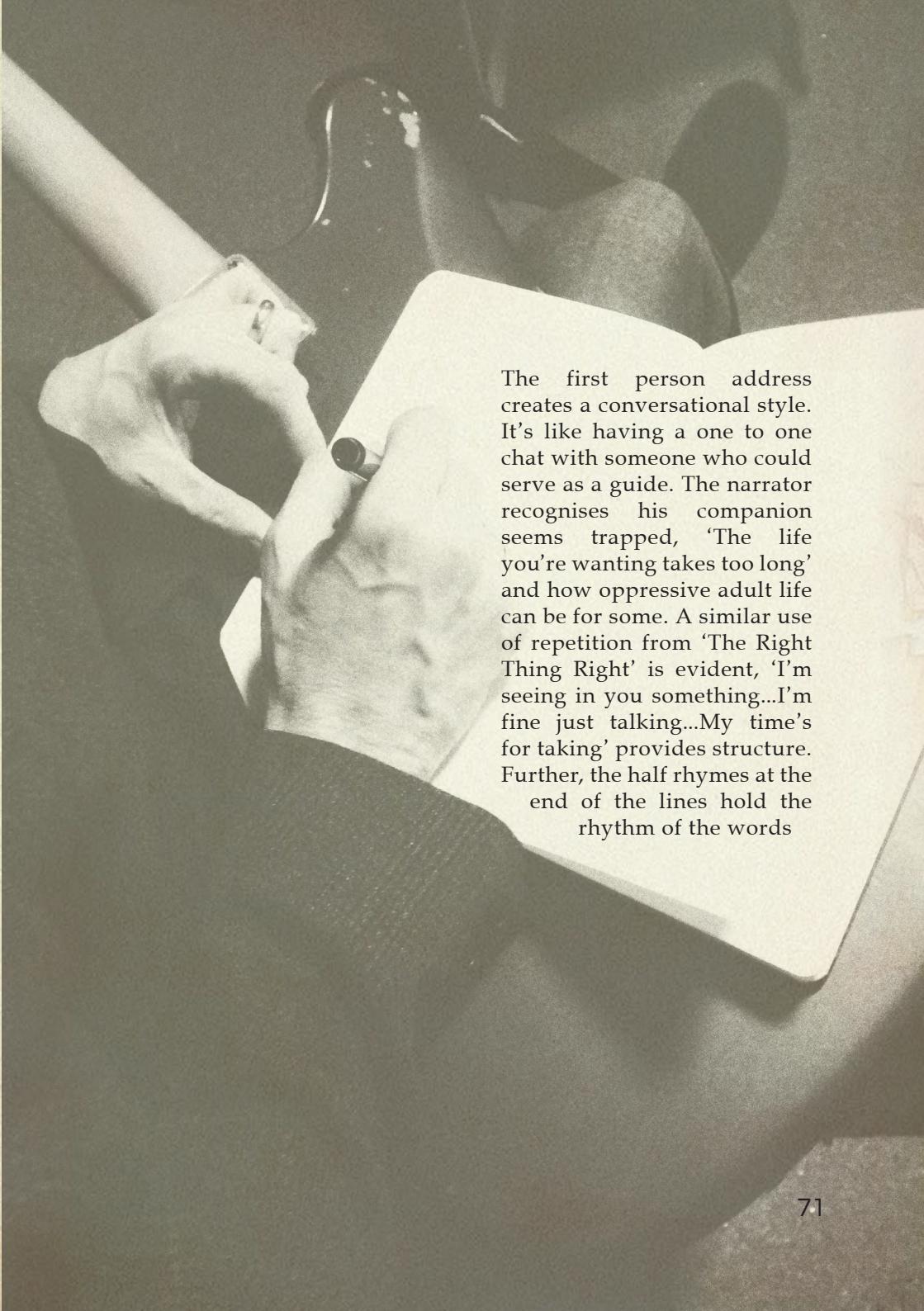
In this second part I wanted to offer some individual interpretations of Johnny's lyrics. And that's all they are; individual ones. Not definitive and probably with little bearing on Johnny's original intention but, in the end, that's how art speaks to us — a message and a meaning, received individually at the receiver's end. I love words — more so than music — and I thought it would be interesting to subject one or two of Johnny's lyrics to a little bit of linguistic scrutiny.

Our first foray into Johnny Marr's solo world is 'The Right Thing Right'. Despite being seemingly torn between the north and the south, ultimately the narrator is 'on the right thing'. The song captures the exhilaration of plans coming to fruition and knowing the decisions you have made are the right ones. This winning streak is emphasised in the lines 'Take it/Life just got a hit' and 'Hear it/The signs just won't quit'. The imperative verbs encourage us to get a move on and not let life pass us by, to use our talents well. It is a fine message for the opening track of the album and sometimes the opening song at his shows. These lines are also typical of Johnny's lyrical style. He often sticks with a linguistic pattern and alters it slightly at later points in the song, a strategy echoed in his guitar playing where he uses different effects for different sections — the same and yet different. The end of line rhyming acts cohesively in these sections, a monosyllabic full stop like a verbal punch. Elsewhere the lyric is lifted with imagery of enlightenment, 'the star just got lit' and 'love finds love', an optimistic message

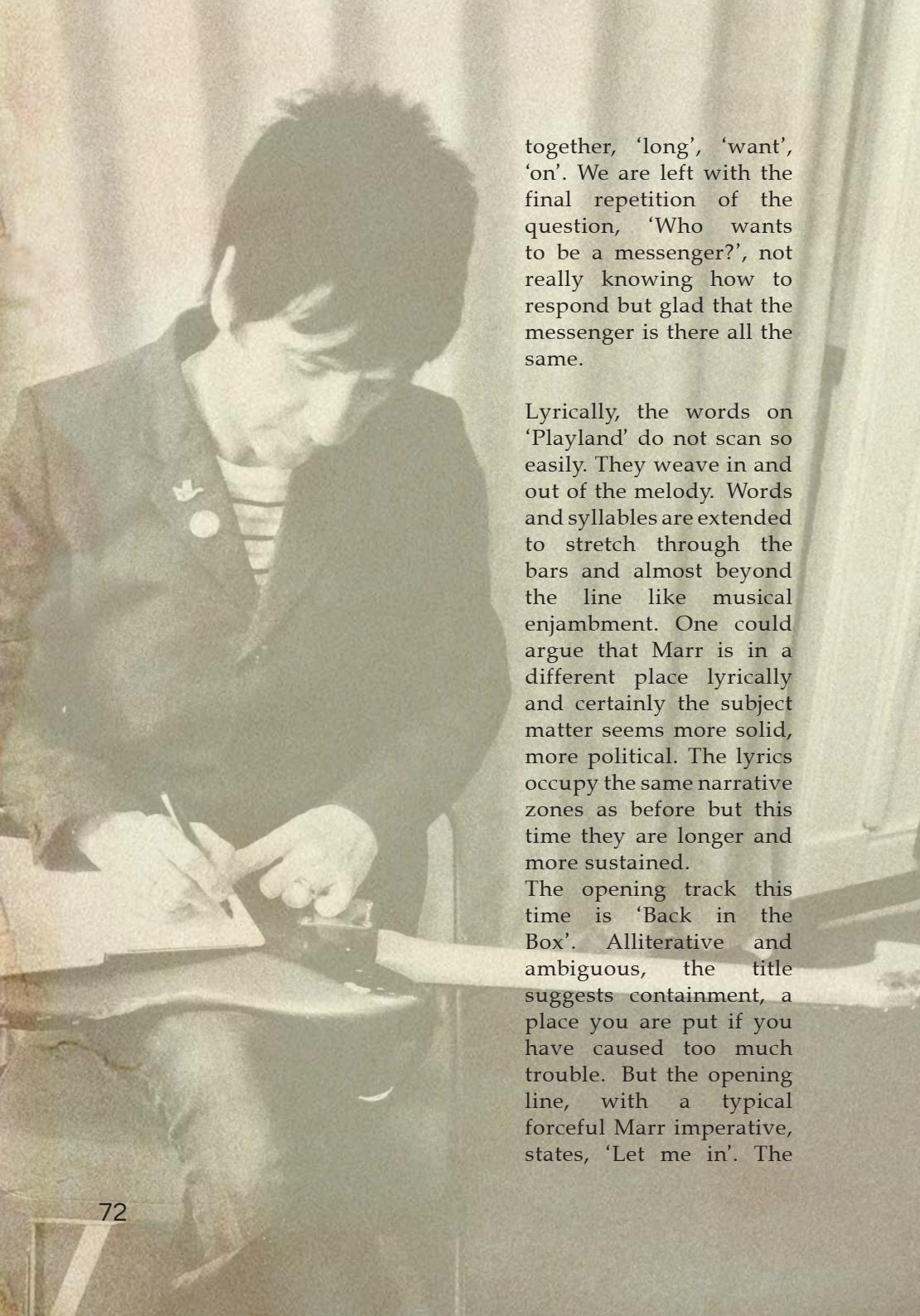
"He often sticks with a linguistic pattern and alters it slightly at later points in the song, a strategy echoed in his guitar playing."

to lonely souls everywhere and a universal message of loving thy neighbour. It is also a shift from the more ambiguous opening line of 'Love fights love'. In the end we are 'individual citizens' with our own battles and responsibilities to society.

Of all the songs on both albums the lyrics of 'The Messenger' stand out. Significantly shorter than the others, it looks most like a poem and reads like a love letter. It is reminiscent of the succinctness of 'Back to the Old House'. The narrator is in a similar thoughtful mood questioning his role as mediator and 'messenger', reflecting on the responsibility and disadvantages of being cast in this role.



The first person address creates a conversational style. It's like having a one to one chat with someone who could serve as a guide. The narrator recognises his companion seems trapped, 'The life you're wanting takes too long' and how oppressive adult life can be for some. A similar use of repetition from 'The Right Thing Right' is evident, 'I'm seeing in you something...I'm fine just talking...My time's for taking' provides structure. Further, the half rhymes at the end of the lines hold the rhythm of the words



together, 'long', 'want', 'on'. We are left with the final repetition of the question, 'Who wants to be a messenger?', not really knowing how to respond but glad that the messenger is there all the same.

Lyrically, the words on 'Playland' do not scan so easily. They weave in and out of the melody. Words and syllables are extended to stretch through the bars and almost beyond the line like musical enjambment. One could argue that Marr is in a different place lyrically and certainly the subject matter seems more solid, more political. The lyrics occupy the same narrative zones as before but this time they are longer and more sustained.

The opening track this time is 'Back in the Box'. Alliterative and ambiguous, the title suggests containment, a place you are put if you have caused too much trouble. But the opening line, with a typical forceful Marr imperative, states, 'Let me in'. The

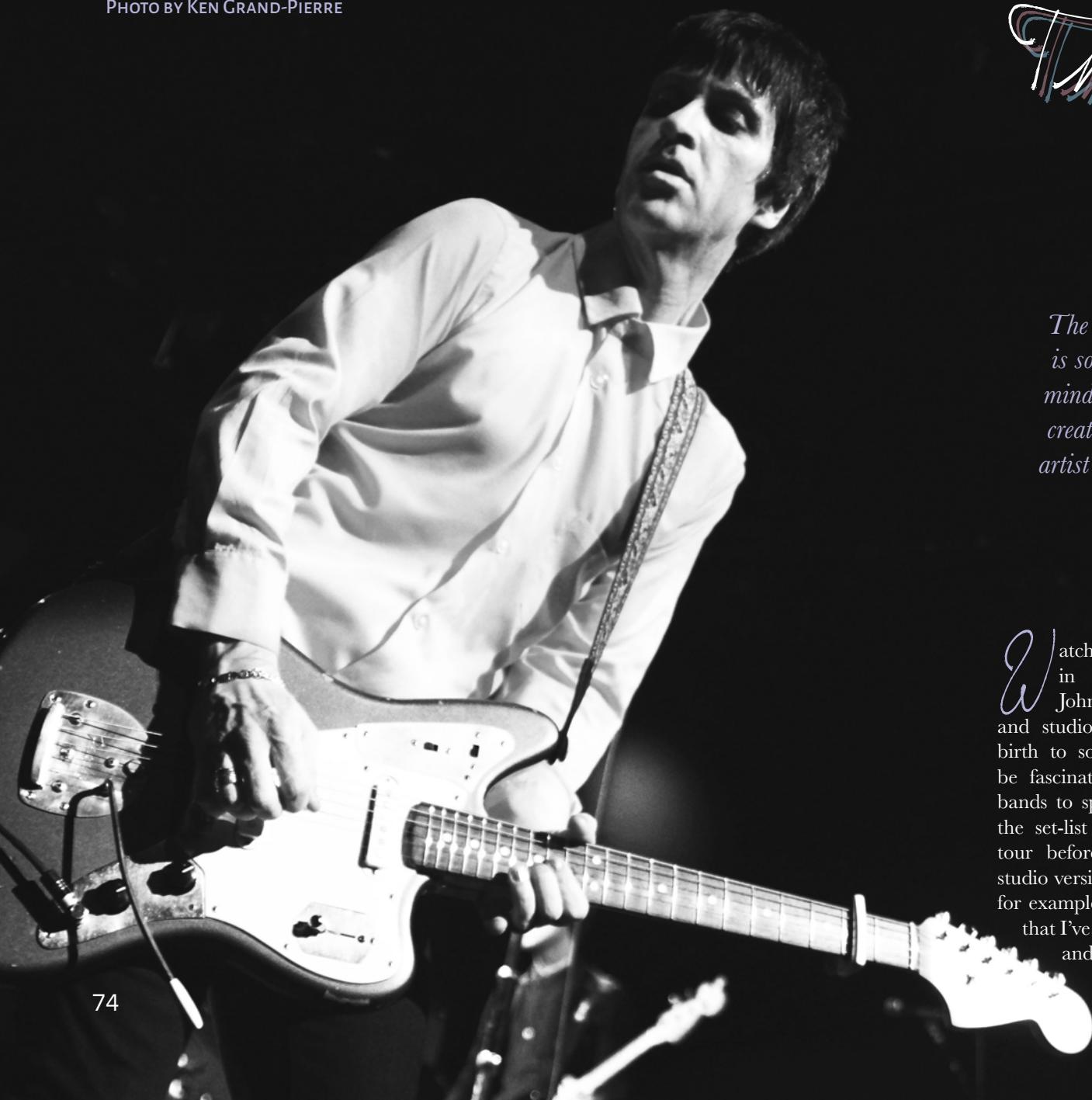
main imagery that follows is spacey and fast-paced. We are caught on a breathtaking journey that sees us confronting the elements, 'Walk on the wind...A shock front...Hold the whirlwind'. We're out somewhere stratospheric being awoken as, 'The universe explodes.' It's all quite fitting mental preparation for the rest of the record. Ever keen on dynamic verbs, this track is littered with instructions, advice and guidance, 'Hang on... Come on'. Some just serve to describe the sheer physicality of the experience, 'Breaking... Rocked and blocked...Chase'. And the hallmark repetition with a twist works like linguistic glue, 'Rocked you and rocked you...Rocked and blocked me', 'Hold the whirlwind...Chase the whirlwind' and 'The universe explodes... The universe exposed'.

In a change of tone entirely, 'This Tension' is far shorter and seems more reflective. The lyrics are enigmatic and I think it is how the words punctuate the music that makes them appealing to me. Musically this one strikes a similar emotional note in me

as 'New Town Velocity'. I'm sure someone could explain how the chord sequences do that! Structurally, this lyric makes use of one or two word lines that hang together through the rhyme scheme, 'Protection...Resolute representation...Act one (close enough!)...This tension'. The use of the shorter line creates dramatic pauses, separations and yet connections between the meanings of the words. The repetition of 'Gotta get on/Got to get on/Gotta get on' sounds obsessive and driven but also like an internal voice, the voice you use to encourage yourself when you really can't be bothered. The 'getting on' isn't any specified job, though. Instead, by keeping going you get 'To the future'. As ever with Johnny Marr, progressive and forward-looking.

Can't wait to read the prose!
How is the autobiography coming on?

By Helen Angell



The Many-faced God

The beautiful and chaotic embryonic stages of a record is something that is very difficult to transplant into the mind of someone who was not present at the time of its creation. How many different possible universes did the artist adopt when writing the record? Chicken or the egg? What is considered first?

atching and listening in lethal doses of both Johnny's live performances and studio work eventually gave birth to something I've found to be fascinating. It is common for bands to sprinkle in new songs in the set-list towards the end of a tour before officially releasing a studio version of the single(s). Take for example 'Spiral Cities', a track that I've only heard via YouTube and that is where the song lives and dies for now to me. I have no idea how the track will sound when released officially from the studio. But let's then paint a better picture by discussing a song we have a plethora of examples to analyze. Listen to the record version of the song 'Playland' and it is introduced by lots of attitude from Jack on the drums and Doviak with his alien-like synth sounds. Thunderous and harmonious guitars blast from each side of the speakers as Doviak and



PHOTO BY SHIRLAIN FORREST

Johnny synchronize throughout the song. Then it showcases an e-Bow solo by Johnny. A brilliant track on the record, but I believe it reveals its true form and message when played live. A carefully planned out introduction to the show starts with an array of lights flashing every which way with the sounds of slot machines playing alongside that makes you feel as if you were in the 'Easy Money' music video. As the band enters, Johnny is the last one to set foot on stage. Jack starts his

tribal-like drums as Doviak soon joins him on his keyboard. Johnny this whole time has not faced the crowd, and all you can see is a figure jiving sporting a perfectly sculpted haircut, smart jacket, drainpipe jeans and slinging a Sherwood Green Fender Jaguar.

Johnny then faces the crowd and skips over to the front of the stage without missing a single note. This to me, is where the question rises; was the song written with this sort

of stage presence in mind? I look at it like this; what I heard on the record was almost like submitting a resume to a potential employer. What my body experienced live was the face-to-face job interview. Can the employer truly grasp subtle mannerisms, intentions and passion for the job via words on a piece of paper? The interview in person is almost a victory in itself, where the applicant now has the opportunity to really showcase what his or her message is. And this is how I felt most appropriately described the dichotomy of Johnny's live performances vs. studio work. Now you listen to the studio version of the song again and all the spectacle you saw live is now ingrained with every second of the album version.

Another example of this would be the rebirth of the song 'Getting Away With It'. A song originally written by Johnny, Neil Tennant & Bernard Sumner in Electronic is now arguably one of the most anticipated tracks to be played live in Johnny's solo career almost twenty seven years later. Why is this? The guitar is most prominent during the short ten to fifteen second solo on the acoustic guitar. The entire track is heavily relied on the synth and Bernard leading in vocals. On paper this seems so far away from the purely guitar driven world that

Johnny has been in. What has he done live then with this synth-pop track? The main synth "riff" was transcribed to be played on the guitar, which was just as effective, if not more, to the whole mood of the song. The original version of the song made you want to dance and jig. I think I wouldn't be alone by saying the current version of the song is just as danceable, if not more. And instead of a ten second acoustic guitar solo it is now replaced by a disco-ball illuminating the venue only showing glimpses of Johnny's fingers in the dark as he's speaking through his guitar during a two-and-a-half minute solo before going back to the chorus. What has happened to this one track is simply brilliant and in my opinion it shows every facet of Johnny's DNA.

A good musician can replicate the studio sounds live and make you feel as if you were transported back onto your bedroom floor listening to the song at 2 in the morning writing a paper. Or on the highway with your mates on a long road trip. A good artist can not only replicate the sounds of the album live, but also make you feel like you've never heard the bloody songs ever before in your life.

BY EDWARD KIM

TOP 12 UNDERRATED JOHNNY MARR GEMS

Since he first rose to fame with The Smiths in 1983, Johnny Marr has written and recorded literally hundreds of songs with dozens of artists, across many genres. From Bryan Ferry to Oasis to The Pet Shop Boys to Hans Zimmer and beyond, Johnny's magical touch has been added to many other artists' work as well as recordings under his own name.

With a back catalog so extensive though, it's natural that some songs will have gotten more exposure than others. In this feature we will look at some of the lesser-known, more underrated gold nuggets of Johnny's repertoire.

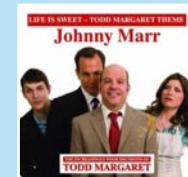
1



'Run In The Dust'

'Run In The Dust', from 7 Worlds Collide's follow up album, *The Sun Came Out*, saw singer/songwriter Neil Finn gather a fantastic 'small army' of musicians in support of Oxfam. Recorded at Finn's Roundhead Studios, 'Run In The Dust' was co-written and sung by Marr, along with alumni 7 Worlds Collide members Ed O'Brien, Sebastian Steinberg, Phil Selway, Jeff Tweedy, Pat Sansone, Lisa Germano, and of course Neil Finn himself. In Johnny's own words, 'Run In The Dust' has a 'spooky', 'nice, distant weird Mississippi at 2 AM feel to it.' Marr's mysterious voice illuminates the track in a beautiful haunting light, complimented by Sansone's reverbed organ. Once again Marr proves an outstanding vocal and musical versatility - ranging from shimmering punky guitars to dark synth strewn paragons.

2



'Life Is Sweet'

This sweet, leg-boppin' track was written and performed by Marr as the main theme for IFC's sitcom *'The Increasingly Poor Decisions of Todd Margaret'*. 'Life Is Sweet' displays one of Marr's most optimistic guitar riffs yet, with 'Marr-esque' swift lyrical delivery, leaving the listener with an appetite for more.

Marr, in my opinion, has cracked the winning formula of a light-hearted yet cultivated/refined pop song that leaves you smiling as you're humming along. It's a guilt-free convivial pop song for the intelligent and discerning listener.

Fun trivia fact: catch the season 3 finale of the show to see Johnny himself make a small cameo as a busker. I think I could spare a quid or two for him, couldn't you?

3



'Tendency To Be Free'

Released as a charity single for the homeless charity Centrepoint, as part of a compilation called '1969: Key To Change', which featured musicians performing classic songs from 1969. Originally recorded by Rabbit Mackay and the Somis Rhythm Boyze for the album 'Passing Through', in retrospect this cover seems the perfect predecessor to 2012's 'Upstarts' - another joyful, fast paced and fist-pumping track that fits Johnny's voice perfectly. Johnny is an icon of a forever young spirit, and a living sign of optimism and exuberance - and therefore feels satisfyingly apt on this compilation.

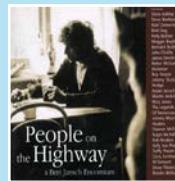
5



'Ordinary Millionaire' (ROBYN HITCHCOCK AND THE VENUS 3)

Some of Marr's most graceful guitar work to date, in my opinion. Paired with Hitchcock's finespun lyrics and eccentric vocals, 'Ordinary Millionaire' is a delectable gem off 'Propellor Time'. Bizarre, mysterious, and therefore - a perfect match. In 2014, Portsmouth saw a few moving moments as Hitchcock joined Marr onstage for a duet of 'Please Please Please Let Me Get What I Want' and Hitchcock's own 'Tell Me About Your Drugs'.

4



'A Woman Like You'

Recorded in 2000 as a part of a tribute album for Bert Jansch, Marr immersed Jansch's wispy acoustic ballad in a slow, sensual beat. Fittingly weaved in with his tranquil vocals and deft acoustic artistry - 'A Woman Like You' has turned in to a beauteous, almost erotic, love chant.

On the sad untimely passing of Jansch, Marr described him as 'an incredible musician, totally uncompromising as a person and as an artist. He lived only for the things he cared about and stayed true to his belief that artistry was more important than the mainstream.'

Personally, I feel that Marr turns particularly fascinating as he nips and dips into the darker spectrum of music - as can be seen on this track as well as 'Say Demense', 'Candidate' and his cover of Depeche Mode's 'I Feel You'.

6

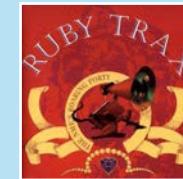


'The Big Bang Dig'

'The Big Bang Dig' is a track from the soundtrack Marr composed for film 'The Big Bang', starring Antonio Banderas. Marr was approached in L.A. by director Tony Krantz, who had mentioned his love of the The Healers' album 'Boomslang' to Johnny, using (in Marr's words) 'terminology not normally associated with me- things like 'trippy', 'heavy', 'psychedelic'.

Those familiar with 'Boomslang' will notice that 'The Big Bang Dig' is actually an instrument remix of The Healers' excellent 2003 single, 'Bangin' On'. The revised track fits perfectly with the neo-noir feel of the movie, and is a fantastic addition to the filmscore section of Marr's CV.

7



'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' (WITH BILLY DUFFY)

Johnny and Billy first befriended each other whilst at school in Wythenshawe, and bonded over rehearsals at Rob Alman's house.

Billy said in an interview once that Johnny had 'an insatiable appetite for observing what was going on, asking the right questions and hanging out with the right crowd.'

'...At that time I felt quite paternal toward him and I sold him the first amplifier that I'd bought.' He added.

Johnny described their hanging outs as 'a salon for aspiring guitar players; encouraging and competitive in a good way, very funny too.'

Recorded in 1992 for NME's 'Ruby Trax' compilation, Johnny and Billy's version of 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' is a fabulous contemporary electric take on the Morricone spaghetti theme classic - an obvious influence of his current project then, the irreplaceable supergroup Electronic.

8



'Imitation Of Life'
(ELECTRONIC)

This criminally hidden sparkler was co-written by Marr along with Bernard Sumner and Karl Bartos, and was included as a B-side to the ever-dazzling 'Forbidden City'. Fierce, buzzin' techno sounds dominate the intro and throughout the song, enveloping the listener in a nipping metropolitan breeze. Sumner's wonderful, somber vocals fit perfectly with the skilfully constructed lyrics ('you captured me for an instant still in your camera, emptied of light'). Almost in a direct path, right from the days of the Smiths - the B-sides Marr wrote were always a feisty contender to their 'Rival' A-Sides. The same goes for Electronic's B-Sides.

9



'Heisenberg'
(CHRIS SPEDDING)

One of Johnny's most recent collaborations, from Chris Spedding's 2015 album 'Joyland', 'Heisenberg' is a shimmering, understated beauty. An acoustic instrumental track with a shrinking, ghost-town feel to it, 'Heisenberg' transports the listener back to a world of classic spaghetti western films. You can almost see Clint Eastwood strutting about with a pistol and leather cowboy hat in your mind's eye as you listen...

Although Johnny had already paid homage to the work of Ennio Morricone through his cover of 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' with Billy Duffy in 1992 (see #7), 'Heisenberg' is a much more subtle nod to his influence, still maintaining Johnny's own trademark twangs. Morricone should be proud.

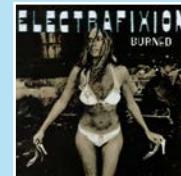
11



'When Will I See You'
(PRETENDERS)

There's a beautiful story behind Johnny Marr and Chrissie Hynde's friendship that not many folks are aware of. Johnny was invited by the Pretenders' manager Paul McGuinness to join the band in support of U2 on their American tour. He met up with Hynde - and they got on really well. At a time where Johnny was still battered from the Smiths' split, Hynde managed, with her great sense of humour and a bit of a 'ballsy, no-nonsense' attitude, to be a good support net for Johnny at a time when he needed it the most. 'When Will I See You' was co-written by Johnny, and is a fine display of Hynde's distinctive voice symbiotically laid on top Johnny's tender melody.

12



'Too Far Gone'
(ELECTRAFIXION)

Electrafixion were an alternative rock band formed by former Echo & the Bunnymen members Ian McCulloch and Will Sergeant in 1994, along by bass guitarist Leon de Silva and drummer Tony McGuigan. Around 92' or 93', McCulloch and Marr reportedly recorded 'an album's worth' of songs, a few of which saw the light of day under the name of Electrafixion. In a strange chain of events, including a hijacking of a van(!) the master tapes resided in, the project ended and the tapes were sadly never returned. 'Too Far Gone' displays an interesting juxtaposition between McCulloch's agonized vocals and dark, heavy guitar work by Marr, who described working with McCulloch as 'very creative'.

10



'Get Me Wrong' (THE HEALERS)

The Healers saw Marr getting down with groovy, 'philosophical rock n' roll'. 'Get Me Wrong', a second B-Side to 'Bangin' On', (along with the also-excellent 'Here It Comes') is a perfectly structured tune,

layered with astoundingly sexy guitars. Marr's vocals, throughout the entire 'Boomslang' album are hypnotic and sensual. Yours truly pleads the subject of this publication to release 'Boomslang' as a vinyl reissue, or perhaps even grace us with Down on the Corner live again, before sending us off to the cool night air.

By Christine Marker



PHOTO BY
ELSPETH MOORE

Song spotlight:

BACK IN THE BOX

FOR THIS ISSUE'S SONG SPOTLIGHT I'VE PICKED 'BACK IN THE BOX', ORIGINALLY THE FIRST TRACK FROM JOHNNY'S SECOND ALBUM, 'PLAYLAND'.

IT'S ALSO FEATURED ON 'ADRENALIN BABY', AND THIS IS THE VERSION I'VE CHOSEN TO REVIEW.

I've seen Johnny perform live on five different occasions (twice on The Messenger Tour and three times on The Playland Tour), and 'Back In the Box' has become a regular staple on the tour's current live set; its pace, energy and drive magnetic in engaging and lifting the audience. It's a powerful set opener that also serves as a mid point pick-me-up when the tempos have subsided, its style, sound and direction indicative of the characteristics found in Johnny's solo work. Sitting somewhere between

New Wave, Post Punk and Pop with a Rock edge, it forges its own identity along the way with Johnny's voice and trademark guitar playing.

A moody syncopated driving rhythm section sets the tone on this track, courtesy of drummer Jack Mitchell and bass player Iwan Gronow; the pulse and heartbeat of the band keeping things moving whilst James Doviak adds an eerie synth line to enhance and complement the atmospherics. Hard edged overdriven rock guitars enter

the foray in the shape of a tremmed out linear riff courtesy of Johnny, followed by brittle percussive rhythmic stabs as we enter the verse. Some superb interplay here from Johnny and Doviak on additional guitars, with punchy, fragmented chords intertwining between the rhythm section, keeping things colourful, interesting and dynamic.

A soft downbeat vocal brings tension to the verse, leaving enough scope to soar into the chorus section where we are given the hook and catchy pop refrain of "Hang on, Hang on, The Universe Explodes! Hang On, Hang On, Confusion Controls..." All the while, punctuated by the drums and bass of Jack and Iwan as Doviak and Johnny use texture and creative guitar themes to bring a sense of drama to the proceedings.

The guitars are stripped back slightly as we enter the second

verse to create space and juxtaposition, with a layer of synth bringing a deeper feel to the sound and the melodic guitar themes returning as we enter the buoyancy of the chorus once more.

Johnny keeps things quite simple during the middle eight guitar break, not straying too far away from the melody - pounding New Wave rock guitars which imply and underpin the chord movements, as opposed to venturing into other unnecessary grandiose territories.

We enter the final chorus with more urgency, bringing the song's message home. Some clever arrangements here, borrowing elements of the intro and verses and bringing them back into the mix at unexpected points. The eerie keyboard theme at the start, the punctuated stop/start at the end of the choruses, the catchy

"Sitting somewhere between New Wave, Post Punk and Pop with a Rock edge, it forges its own identity along the way with Johnny's voice and trademark guitar playing."

guitar motifs, and the spacious element that is somewhat reminiscent of the intro/outro of The Smiths' 'Still Ill', dare I say.

When asked about the song, Johnny himself went on record saying: "When I wrote the song 'Back In The Box', I knew it would be the opener because it's a celebration of euphoria and ecstasy. I'm singing about transcendence, euphoria and ecstatic states, either hearing a record you like, waking up on a sunny morning, being in love. Or schizophrenia, drugs, all these things that can make you have a euphoric experience." I certainly feel, as a fan and listener, that Johnny has managed to successfully transcend those very feelings and emotions artistically.

I'm lucky enough to have seen this song performed live three times, and it never fails to move the audience. We now have that live listening experience bought to us via the medium of a recording, which is one

to savour: 'Adrenalin Baby'.



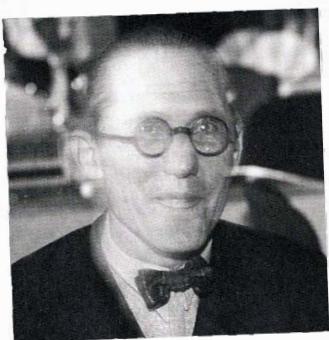
'Back In The Box' is a solid representation of how I see Johnny Marr the artist in the here and now: crafting catchy guitar-driven arrangements, leaning on particular styles and elements that no doubt influenced him on his journey, tapping into the mythical and the modern for inspiration and occasionally saluting the past, - all the while moving forward and keeping his stylistic trademarks and identity intact.

Johnny, we look forward to hearing more new material from you soon, but in the meantime we shall continue to delve into the treasure trove for enjoyment, enlightenment and inspiration.

Waking us up for the first time and the last time...

By Chris Barry

Step out to... Le Corbusier



LE CORBUSIER IN 1955



ONE OF LE CORBUSIER'S MOST ICONIC BUILDINGS: VILLA SAVOYE

himself was a master of self-invention (and reinvention); a quality that would not have been lost on Johnny as a fellow self-created visionary whose talents span multiple mediums (beyond architecture, Le Corbusier was also an accomplished painter, writer and designer of furniture).

In the 1950s, Le Corbusier was invited to prepare master plans for the city of Chandigarh in India, which allowed for some of the Radiant City's ideas and principles to be realised

Johnny Marr's creative influences are both plentiful and eclectic, yet few are as subtle and unexpected as the impact made upon him by the work of Swiss architect Charles-Édouard Jeanneret-Gris - better known as Le Corbusier.

Considered one of the founding fathers of Modernism, as well as one of the first architects to design in the Brutalist style (Unité d'habitation in Marseilles, 1952), Le Corbusier's work as not only an architect, but also as an urban planner and theorist, has had a lasting impact on modern architecture. He was a unique visionary whose proposed urban planning projects such as Ville Contemporaine and Ville Radieuse, although unrealised in their original forms, introduced key ideas about affordable and sustainable housing that have been implemented in countless designs and projects since.

The latter of these aforementioned projects, Ville Radieuse - The Radiant City - inspired Johnny's first overt reference to Le Corbusier's work, in a spoken word piece created for Ray Ban's Raw Sounds project in 2011, aptly titled 'I Know The Radiant City'.

"Le Corbusier helped us to invent ourselves", he writes, and it's a fair claim. Le Corbusier



LE CORBUSIER BOOKS POSTED BY JOHNNY ON INSTAGRAM

on a grander scale than previously possible (the five Unité d'habitation buildings, which were based on the Radiant City's housing block designs, were the only previous examples). In addition to personally designing many of Chandigarh's government buildings, such as the Secretariat Building and High Court, the city also houses the largest of Le Corbusier's Open Hand sculptures - a recurring symbol in his work that Johnny also frequently wears as a lapel badge.

"The hand is open to give and receive," Le Corbusier explained, "It's a sign of optimism in this world." Seen primarily as a symbol of peace, the Open Hand also represents the exchange of ideas and creative energy; a concept that surely resonates with Johnny.

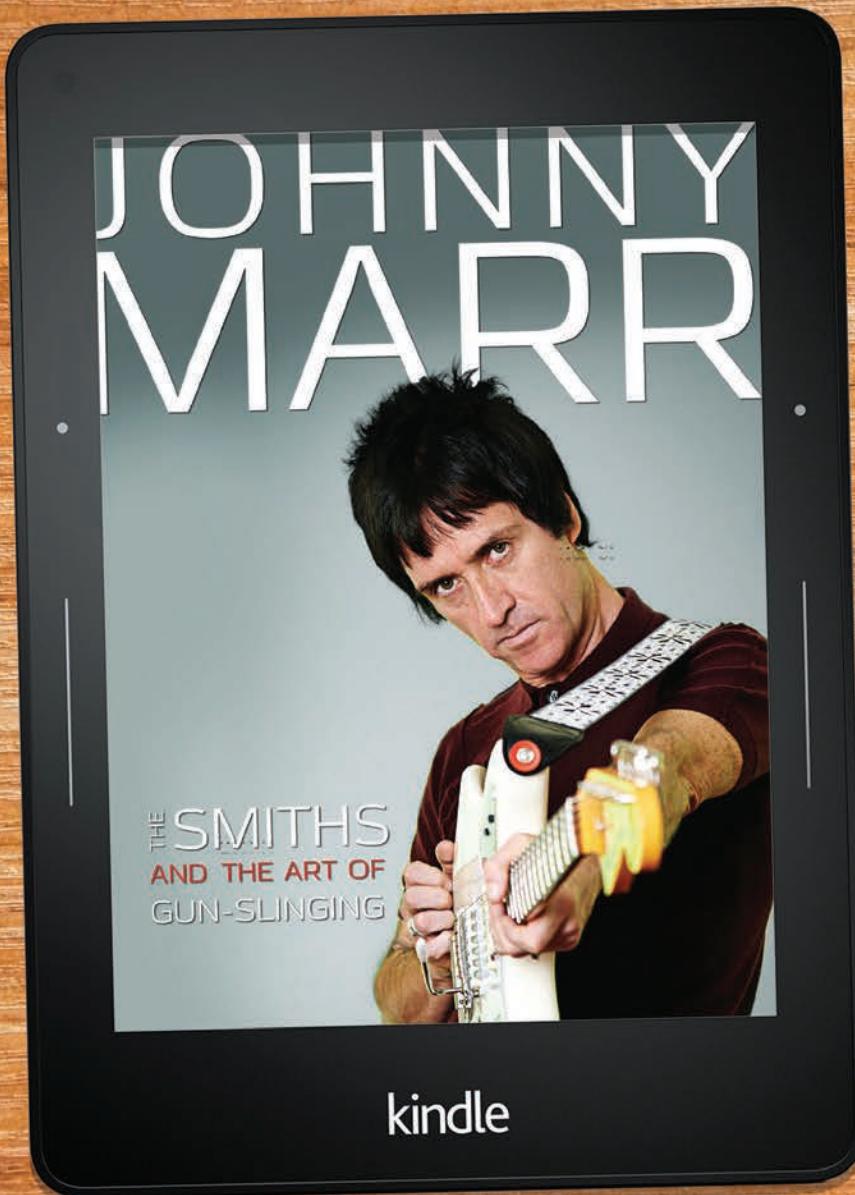
Another Le Corbusier-themed badge, that Johnny wore onstage during the Adrenalin Baby tour, features the "Modular Man" - the symbol of Le Corbusier's own scale of proportions designed to unite the imperial and metric systems of measurement, and widely used in his own architectural designs.

As Johnny's interest in architecture has become more conspicuous in the past couple of years, it's natural that more of his solo songs would be inspired by the topic. Early 2015 single 'Dynamo' - described in press releases as "a love song for a building which features phrases informed by Le Corbusier" - is a fine example, as is his newest and currently unreleased track, 'Spiral Cities', which could very well contain a more transparent reference to Le Corbusier still, with its line of "on vertical streets we go up, up" echoing his concept of vertical cities. With a third solo album on the horizon, it will be interesting to see what continued subtle influence Le Corbusier might have on Johnny's work in the future. ■■■

RECOMMENDED READING:

- ❖ Le Corbusier - The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning
- ❖ Le Corbusier - Towards An Architecture
- ❖ Le Corbusier - The Radiant City
- ❖ Jean-Louis Cohen - Le Corbusier Le Grand
- ❖ Nicholas Fox Weber - Le Corbusier: A Life
- ❖ Geoffrey Baker - Le Corbusier: An Analysis of Form
- ❖ Le Corbusier - Le Corbusier Talks with Students
- ❖ Andre Wogensky - Le Corbusier's Hands





A collage of items arranged on a light-colored wooden surface. From left to right: a black guitar pick with 'JOHNNY' written on it; a Polaroid-style photograph of Johnny Marr; a circular button with a red heart and the text 'I ❤️ Johnny Marr'; a black pen; a pair of black-rimmed glasses; a black and white photograph of Johnny Marr playing a guitar; and a small glass bowl filled with a brown liquid, likely tea. In the center, there is a torn piece of paper with the word 'Review' written in a cursive script.

Review

Richard Carman:
**JOHNNY MARR: THE SMITHS
AND THE ART OF GUN-SLINGING**

Finding the time to sit and read a book has been the most challenging thing for me. Always having something on the go, there's never a time where I just get to sit and read, so I took the bull by the horns (not sure that that's the correct expression to use when reading and reviewing a book about a vegan!) and embraced the challenge. The challenge of finding enough 'me' time to lose myself in the book 'Johnny Marr - The Smiths and the art of Gunslinging'...

The book is basically made up of interview quotes and interviews with various people who have featured in the Johnny Marr journey at any point in his life, and there are many amusing and interesting soundbites and anecdotes. But the fact that Johnny has not contributed to this book makes it feel less of a personal experience.

It covers, as you would expect, Johnny's early family life and goes through to the meetings with most influential and constant people in his life - namely Angie and Joe Moss. It also touches on Johnny's early musical influences such as T-rex and Sparks, and gives amusing information about Johnny's job in Joe's shop being to "look cool" to bring other cool people into the shop, which obviously worked.

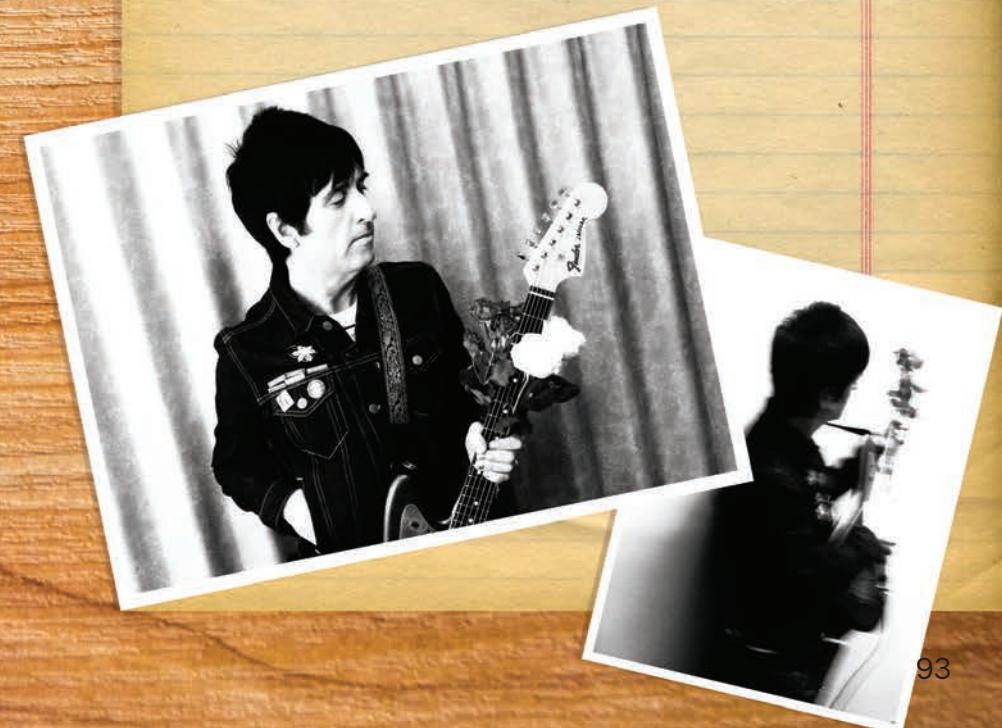
It covers the areas you would expect from a Johnny Marr book: the many collaborations from the post-Smiths area are all covered, with his time in the Pretenders, Electronic, The The, The Healers and Modest Mouse and The Cribs being the most discussed. Finally the book then goes to focus on Johnny's first solo album, 'The Messenger', and the tour that accompanied the release of his debut.

My favourite thing about the book however, is the fact that it talks about Johnny's many friendships in the music business, including people such as Matt Johnson, Billy Duffy, Billy Bragg, Kirsty MacColl and Noel Gallagher, and therefore gives you an insight into his personality; his loyalty, his willingness to help bands who he heard and thought people needed to hear - in the case of Oasis who he helped via Noel meeting Johnny's Brother Iain in Manchester's legendary Hacienda venue. His humour is evident via the various tongue-in-cheek stories that are told through the book. I feel that Johnny's warmth of character is truly reflected.

This is a pleasant and nostalgic read, but if you've been a Johnny fan for a while it probably won't tell you anything you don't know. That's not to say it doesn't have its place though. It's great as a starting point for fans who have only just been introduced to Johnny's music and want to delve in to find out more about the man behind the guitar. The writer is obviously a big fan of Johnny's and this shines throughout the book.

Of course, Johnny's eagerly awaited autobiography is due out later this year and so we will get a 'straight from the horse's mouth' account of his life then, and for that I truly cannot wait.

By Jackie Nutty





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JOHNNY MARR:

*Role Model and Crusader
for Social Justice*

As a musical savant and trailblazer, Johnny Marr is well known for his seminal work as an architect of the British indie music scene and continues to flourish in his progressive and unrelenting evolution as an artist. Marr has also been unwavering in his exploration and intense study of the visual arts and literary arts, philosophy, psycho-geography, architecture, and theatre. In light of his multi-faceted personality, Marr is the contemporary quintessential Renaissance man. Sometimes understated, Marr's role as proponent for calling out social injustices embodies his multi-faceted and well-rounded nature.

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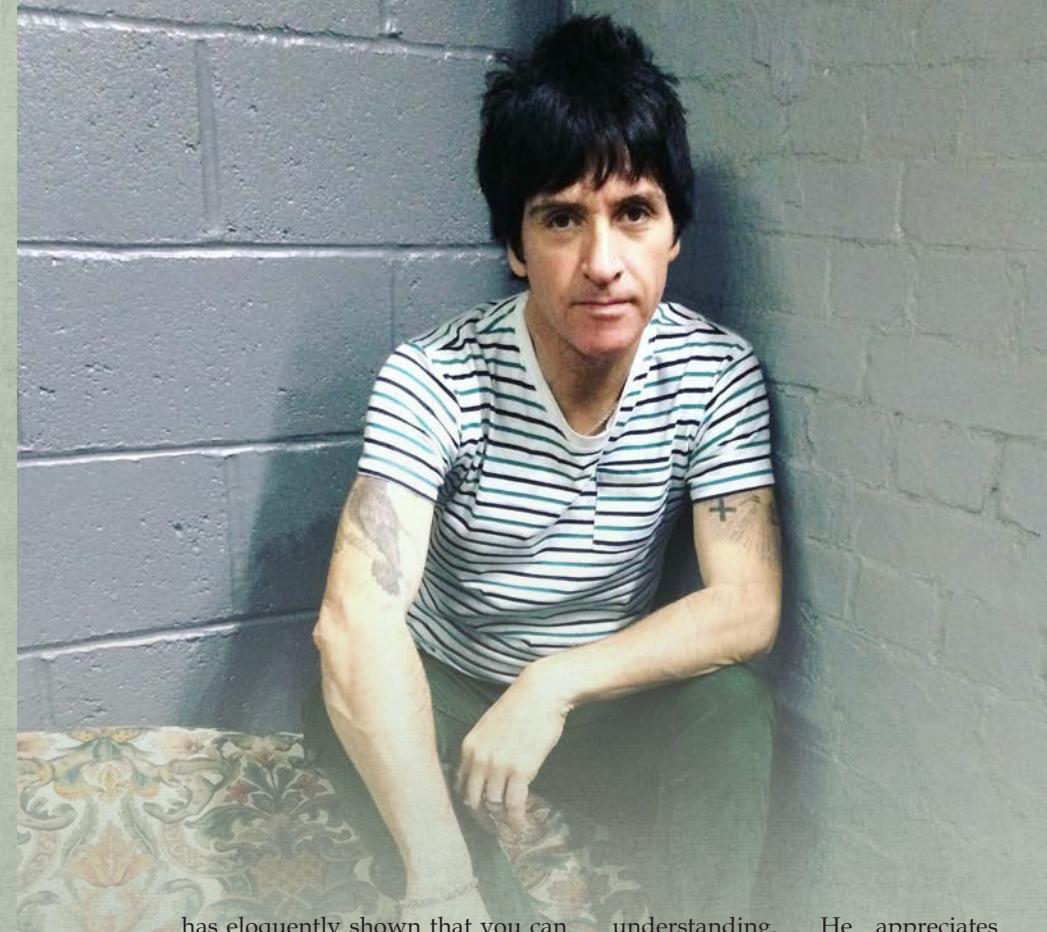
Social justice is based on the concepts of human rights and equality, and can be defined as "the way in which human rights are manifested in the everyday lives of people at every level of society." Marr appears to have a very deep understanding of the personal and global implications of societal inequalities. His keen awareness of the implications of the human condition is evidenced by his unwavering critique of political mandates that cause irreparable harm. Marr is a champion of supporting individuals who are often socially and financially vulnerable and disproportionately affected by political agendas and their invariable funding cuts.

Marr has openly expressed his concerns regarding social and economic inequalities via Twitter to call attention to David Cameron and the Tory party's conservative policies. In 2010, Marr publicly called out Cameron's and the Tory party's proposals to cut funding for university and benefit cuts as well as rising unemployment. Marr blasted Cameron by asserting, "we can't believe what we say when we know what you do." More recently, Marr did not hold back when calling out George Osborne and David Cameron for their condescending comments regarding England's North by tweeting, "Do Cameron and Osborne actually think that people in the north are ok with the term "Northern Powerhouse ?". Patronising and thick or what ?"

Why yes. Thank you for calling this out!

In October 2015 during his Manchester performance, Marr railed against the conservative initiative to eliminate transport funding for children and adolescents with disabilities at the Brentwood School in Manchester. Marr was fierce and passionate as he spoke to the crowd, outlining the inherent cruelty of these initiatives, as they compromise students' education by unfairly eliminating safe and reliable transport to school. Recently, Marr joined the 'SOS' (Save Our Schools) protests at the Brentwood school. Marr spoke out against these cuts with students and parents alike in their fight for equitable treatment and the fair allocation of community resources in their fight for safe and reliable transport. Marr's willingness to "speak out and reach out" demonstrates his continued willingness to speak out and bring attention to challenging injustice.

Johnny Marr's social advocacy gives credence to fighting against what may be perceived as an ethical dilemma or unjust mandate. Marr also holds himself as a role model in the manner in which he conducts himself personally and professionally. Marr challenges and fights perceived injustices, but with that, does so in a respectful and non-demeaning manner. He is passionate and unfaltering in his views, but never mean-spirited or uncontrolled in his demeanor. Marr



has eloquently shown that you can be unwavering in your beliefs and passionate in your fights while simultaneously electing to take the high road. This is admirable within a world-view of disrespect and extremes.

Marr also demonstrates a true and genuine interest in his fans and community. He interacts often with fans on social media, and appears to show a particular interest in responding to his very young fans and their parents. He appears open to learning and deeper

understanding. He appreciates diversity of experiences and inherent respect. He acts like a bona fide adult (a rare phenomenon, indeed). Many fans have expressed Marr's down-to-Earth nature, friendliness, and kindness upon meeting him after gigs. Johnny embodies the concept of unconditional positive regard.

For all of these reasons and more, Johnny Marr is the ultimate role model.

By Jeanne Abicht

GENERATION J.



Forget the media stereotype that today's kids are all Beliebers and Directioners - the next generation of Johnny Marr fans are here to prove that exquisite taste in music knows no age. We chat to some of The Marrmy's youngest recruits...



PAURIC

Age 4

"Belle's favourite Johnny Marr song is 'Easy Money'. Every time she hears it she dances, and every time we are in the car she asks me to play 'money money' for her."

- Belle's mum, Samantha

"I like Johnny because my daddy paints pictures of him which go next to my pictures. My favourite song is the I love you more than you love me one that Daddy plays in the car. Daddy plays a lot of Johnny and his other band in the car."

- Pauric



BELLE

Age 2

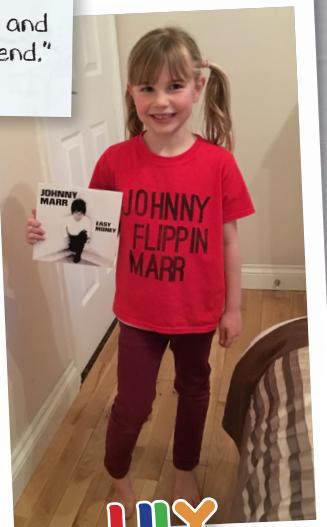


ALFIE

Age 3

"What's your favourite thing about Johnny Marr?"

ALFIE:
"He plays guitar and he's my best friend."



LILY

Age 6

"His songs make me feel really good and make me want to dance!"

- Lily



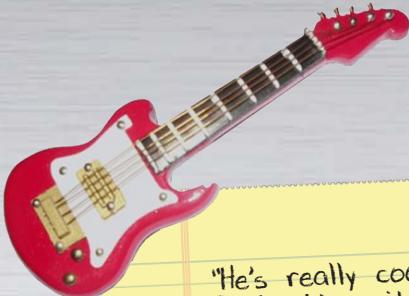


HARRY ADAM RUBY

Age 10

Age 6

Age 8



"He's really cool.
I like his guitar
and his singing."

- Ruby



RUBY
Age 5

What do you like most
about Johnny?

HARRY: "His guitars.
Especially the Jaguar he
plays."

ADAM: "Everything! He's
really cool and he's
awesome."

How does Johnny's music
make you feel?

RUBY: "Happy and joyful.
Ecstatic!"

ADAM: "I scream because
I'm super happy then I have
to sing!"

"What's your favourite
thing about Johnny
Marr?"

EHREN:
"How energetic his songs
are, and how generous
he is. He gave me his
plectrum."



ELSPETH MATILDA

Age 11

Age 13



EHREN
Age 8

"He's really cool,
I love his music
and always come
out of a concert
having had an amazing
night."

- Matilda

"I love the way he
plays guitar."

- Elspeth

Thank you so much to all the awesome kids (and their parents) who
made this feature possible. Rock on, fellas!



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