



Set the Boy Free: The Autobiography

By Johnny Marr

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Set the Boy Free: The Autobiography By Johnny Marr

The long-awaited memoir from the legendary guitarist and cofounder of the seminal British band The Smiths.

An artist who helped define a period in popular culture, Johnny Marr tells his story in a memoir as vivid and arresting as his music. The Smiths, the band with the signature sound he cofounded, remains one of the most beloved bands ever, and have a profound influence on a number of acts that followed—from the Stone Roses, Suede, Blur, and Radiohead to Oasis, The Libertines, and Arctic Monkeys.

Marr recalls his childhood growing up in the northern working-class city of Manchester, in a house filled with music. He takes us back to the summer of 1982 when, at eighteen, he sought out one Stephen Morrissey to form a new band they called The Smiths. Marr invites fans on stage, on the road, and in the studio for the five years The Smiths were together and how after a rapid ascent, the working-class teenage rock star enjoyed and battled with the perks of success until ideological differences, combined with his much publicized strained relationships with fellow band mates, caused him to leave in 1987. Marr's "escape" as he calls it, ensured the beginning of the end for one of the most influential groups of a generation. But The Smiths' end was only the beginning for Marr. The bona-fide guitar hero continues to experiment and evolve in his solo career to this day, playing with Paul McCartney, Pretenders, Modest Mouse, Oasis and collaborating today's most creative and renowned artists.

Rising above and beyond the personal struggles and bitter feuds, Marr delivers the story of his music and his band, sharing the real insights of a man who has made music his life, and finally giving fans what they've truly been waiting for.

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Editorial Review

Review

“The preeminent guitar stylist of his generation. Glam, folk-rock, post-punk, funk, rockabilly, and a certain ineffable Marrness—that ringing, swinging, intricate, atmospheric, hook-dripping soul—all dovetailed into a sound that still stuns.” (Pitchfork)

From the Back Cover

Johnny Marr was born in 1960s Manchester to Irish emigrant parents and knew from an early age that he would be a musician. Forming his first band at thirteen, Marr spent his teenage years in public housing, playing guitar, devouring pop culture, and inventing his own musical style.

It wasn’t until the early eighties, when Marr turned up on the doorstep of a singer named Steven Patrick Morrissey, that both a unique songwriting partnership and the group recognized as one of the most iconic bands of all time were formed. In 1983, The Smiths released their first single, and within a year their eponymous debut album reached number two in the UK chart, paving the way for mainstream and critical success on their own terms. Fame in America, where The Smiths were beloved by fans desperate for a musical alternative to the power rock dominating the airwaves.

For Marr, tensions within the band and desire for a wider musical scope led to his departure from The Smiths in 1987, ensuring the end of one of the most influential British groups ever.

But the end of The Smiths was just the beginning for Marr. *Set the Boy Free* explores a musical journey that has spanned decades, styles, and genres—from forming Electronic with Bernard Sumner of New Order and then The Healers, to playing with Bryan Ferry, Talking Heads, Pet Shop Boys, Billy Bragg, Nile Rodgers, The Pretenders, The The, Modest Mouse, and The Cribs to collaborating with Hans Zimmer and receiving acclaim and worldwide success in his own right as a solo artist, Marr has never stopped making captivating music. Here, for the first time, he tells his own side of the story.

From roaming the streets of Manchester to constantly pushing musical boundaries as a true icon and one of the most revered guitarists in the world, *Set the Boy Free* is a memoir that fans have been clamoring for, and one that will share the history of a band, and a man who has followed his dream and made himself a legend.

About the Author

Johnny Marr is a musician and songwriter. Between 1982 and 1987 he was the co-founder of and guitarist for The Smiths. He is now an established solo artist who has released two albums, *The Messenger* and *Playland*, to date. He currently lives in Manchester, England.

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Nathan Ramsey:

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