

Johnny Marr – Spirit Power review

Johnny Marr's solo career is already celebrating a decade with this timely double gatefold heavyweight album packed with killer riffs and electronic hooks.

His 2019 single *Armatopia* sets the tone opening up this 21-track collection with what Marr described as “eco-disco”. Its infectious groove and message stays with you long after the needle has left the grove.

Tracks such as *New Town Velocity* or *Hi Hello* summon elements of his former bands but the work stands up on its own, Marr's voice has a charm and essence that is integral to his solo years. *Easy Money* is a radio-friendly banger, his lyrics are also a refreshing break away from the usual indie or guitar rock fare commemorating hedonism. Epic tracks such as *Walk Into The Sea* give us a sense of a beating heart and conscience driving the work.

The Messenger remains one of his most hypnotic cuts, it's catchy new-wave riff and dreamy voice perhaps suggest how a partnership between The Smiths and R.E.M might have sounded around 1984. A cover of *Depeche Mode's I Feel You* works well in the collection with Marr's drawl taking on the vocals with plenty of Mancunian attitude. Also included is his collaboration with the actress *Maxine Peake* and *Joe Gallagher*, who had documented a period of sleeping rough in Edinburgh.

Peake's spoken-word reading and Marr's affecting guitar work

on The Priest provide yet another stand-out track. Marr turned 60 on Halloween but is showing no sign of slowing down. It has been a prolific time for the singer with the release of his magnum opus Marr's Guitars which features lavish images of his expansive collection and the stories behind them. He is also preparing to hit the road for a UK tour in April 2024.

