

technique: acoustic

TG On the CD

TRACK 21

Back To The Old House as it appears on The Smiths' album *Hatful Of Hollow*. The original was recorded live on a session for BBC DJ John Peel. A studio version is also available on *Louder Than Bombs*, the Smiths' greatest hits LP. Our version plays once through the notated version as shown here; the original features many more repeats to accommodate the verses. The guitar used was a Takamine EN-10C, double-tracked on a Roland VS-880, which also supplied reverb

Guitars: Kit Morgan

THE LYRICS

I would rather not go
Back to the old house
I would rather not go
Back to the old house
There's too many
bad memories
Too many memories there

When you cycled by
Here began all my dreams
The saddest thing
I've ever seen
And you never knew
How much I really
liked you
Because I never even
told you
Oh, and I meant to

Are you still there?
Or have you moved away?

I would love to go
Back to the old house
But I never will

Back To The Old House

THE SMITHS

KIT MORGAN travels back through time to transcribe this popular acoustic Smiths tune. And **HARRY WYLIE** looks at the history behind one of Johnny Marr's best guitar lines.

THE Smiths were one of those bands that managed to write B-sides that were as good, if not better, than the A-side of the single. The excellent *How Soon Is Now?* was the B-side of *William It Was Really Nothing* (along with *Please, Please, Please Let Me Get What I Want*) and *Back To The Old House* was B-side to their third single, *What Difference Does It Make?*

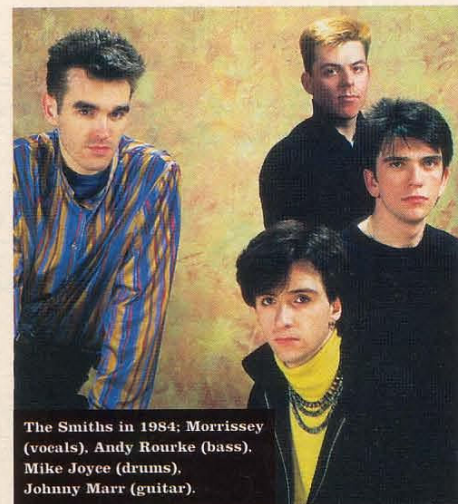
When a particularly idle-minded journalist put the idea to Thom Yorke of Radiohead that his band were the best pop band since The Smiths, Thom reacted vitriolically – the Smiths weren't a rock band, they were a folk band, he claimed. And if you stop and think about it, Thom is probably correct. The guitar lines played by Johnny Marr often involved complex fingerpicked patterns, and Marr himself cites folk players like Bert Jansch as the defining influences on his technique.

Some of the Smiths best tunes were played on acoustic guitar, and Marr is still a seriously under-regarded player on this instrument. *Well I Wonder* and *That Joke Isn't Funny...* from *Meat Is Murder* both featured great acoustic parts. But perhaps the best example of his finger-picking skills is *Back To The Old House*, originally recorded early in 1983, re-recorded for a John Peel session the next year.

TECHNIQUE

You'll need to use some form of fingerstyle technique to play the part accurately – thumb and two fingers will suffice, although occasionally Marr brings in the third (ring) finger to bring out the top notes of some of the chords. Hybrid picking (plectrum and two fingers) could also be used if you prefer, although it's harder to reproduce his soft tone on the bass notes.

The main theme is based around C shape chords and their relatives (Am, F, G etc), but on the F shapes there's no need to struggle with a first



The Smiths in 1984: Morrissey (vocals), Andy Rourke (bass), Mike Joyce (drums), Johnny Marr (guitar).

finger barre across the neck – the first fret of the 6th string isn't played at all, so why make life difficult for yourself? The middle section gets very curious – at the end of bars 4 and 5 there's an idea often used by folkies – a basic C major chord, which slides up two frets creating a pleasing semitone clash between the open third and fourth fret of the fourth string.

At bar 6 you'll come across that old C#m7 (Bm7 in capo speak) which rarely gets used outside a jazz club, and at bar 8 there's a distinctly jazzy sounding maj7 shape. After the middle section, we're into verse two, which is extended by going back to the intro and playing through the whole lot again, adding four extra bars to the verse.

After the second time through the middle section, simply play the first two bars of the theme eight times, and end on a D maj7 (Cmaj7 with a capo) chord – ie a normal C shape with one finger taken off. Full lyrics are printed on the left. **TG**

THE SMITHS: Back To The Old House

CD TRACK 21

Intro: 74

Chords: [C] D, [Am7] Bm7, [F/C] G/D, [G] A, [C] D, [Am7] Bm7, [F/C] G/D, [G] A, [C] D, [Am7] Bm7, [F/C] G/D, [G] A

Capo 2nd fret

Tablature: 0 1 1, 3 2, 3 2 0, 2 0 2 3 0, 0 1 0, 3 2, 3 2 0, 2 0 2 3 0, 0 1 0, 3 2, 3 2 0, 2 0 2 3 0, 0 1 0, 3 2, 3 2 0, 2 0 2 3 0



THE SMITHS: Back To The Old House (cont)

CD TRACK 21

Verse:

[C] D [Dsus2] Esus2 [Gsus4/C] Asus4/D [G] A [C] D [Am7] Bm7 [F/C] G/D [G] A [C] D [Am7] Bm7 [F/C] G/D [G] A

[C] D [Am7] Bm7 [F/C] G/D [G] A [C] D [Dsus2] Esus2 [Gsus4/C] Asus4/D [G] A [C] D [Am7] Bm7 [F/C] G/D [G] A

[C] D [Am7] Bm7 [F/C] G/D [G] A [F] G [G] A [Fadd9/C] Gadd9/D [G] A

[Fadd9/C] Gadd9/D [G] A [E7] F#7 [C] D [Dadd4] Eadd4 [Em7] F#m7 [Cmaj7] Dmaj7 [Dadd9] Eadd9

[Em7] F#m7 [Bm11] C#m11 [G] A [G/B] A/C# [Bbmaj7] Cmaj7