

Andrew McMahon's Intimate & Inspiring Apple Store Performance

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by Lindsey Shaw

Any other day at the Apple Store on North Michigan Avenue would have drawn regular iPod purchasers and MacBook browsers, but on September 3rd the energy was charged with more than consumerism as fans gathered to spend some time with Andrew McMahon, the sole driving force behind Jack's Mannequin. Met with everything from a marriage proposal to birthday balloons, the former Something Corporate member and lead singer of Jack's Mannequin shared tales of his musical ventures along with unheard tracks off the upcoming album *People and Things*.

In a VH1 *Story Tellers* meets iTunes setting, McMahon shed light on what inspired the songs on *People and Things*, set to be released October 4th. Loyal listeners from all over the Midwest sat within feet of the musician they've let guide their romances and fuel their road trips, all in order to get a little closer to what motivates McMahon's art.

"I get a little sensitive when people enter my creative space," McMahon said after receiving critical feedback on the song "Television," influenced by a couple getting into a fight at dinner. He is not opposed, however, to being "true in a song" and pulling directly from life experiences. In "Amy I" he revealed he and a friend collaborated on the song, drawing from their opposing romantic situations at the time. "I was married and he was going through his own thing, and our ideas of love at the time just converged."

The audience also heard “My Racing Thoughts” and “Hostage,” while McMahon, eyes closed, moved to his own beats as if hearing the sounds for the first time to unveil true heart in his craft. He then went on to take questions from his admirers, letting everyone in on a trip into the desert where he and band mates sequestered to make previous recordings come from an organic place of band unity.

“I got with the band in a little spot outside of Joshua Tree, to be less selfish and less of a producer. We got to the nuances of each song in a collaborative form.” McMahon went on to explain a little more about his recording process and how it’s a very “physical thing.” “I have a song and I need to get it out of me, and then everything comes out at once at the piano,” he shared. “It’s connecting with the melodies that speak to the idea at hand.”

In a slightly sobering mood shift, McMahon was asked to elaborate on the film *Dear Jack*, a chronicle of the time and emotions that accompanied his battle with leukemia. “It was terrifying to let people into that time in my life,” McMahon admitted, and a bit of a silence hushed over the store’s occupants. The lull didn’t stick around as the session was wrapped with the song “Platform Fire.” Andrew revealed it’s the closest to his heart, and he undoubtedly left the hearts around him uplifted in that otherwise regular retail space.

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