

# Mr. Smiths Goes to Modest Mouse

In the strangest music pairing in a while, legendary guitarist Johnny Marr joins an acclaimed alt-rock outfit. And he doesn't have to do cemetery songs!

When Modest Mouse's lead guitarist, Dann Gallucci, retired from the band in the wake of their hit 2004 album, *Good News for People Who Love Bad News*, the rest of the group could have gone the usual route and held a cattle-call audition. Instead, lead singer Isaac Brock called Johnny Marr. Yes, that Johnny Marr: ex-guitarist of the legendary act the Smiths and one of Brock's all-time heroes. "I was thinking, Why don't I just give it a try and go for it?" says Brock. "I'd just really like to play with Johnny Marr."

It turned out Marr was surprisingly game to Brock and Modest Mouse's proposal, and in the summer of 2005 the 43-year-old rocker traveled to Portland, Oregon, for what would be a ten-day trial with the band. "It was kind of an experiment" says Marr. "I just figured, I liked the band, it was ten days of my life, hanging out with some interesting musicians." But on the very first night, the ensemble clicked, and the band ended up writing what would prove to be the first single, "Dashboard," on Modest Mouse's new album, entitled *We Were Dead Before the Ship Even Sank*. Before the ten-day trial was up, Marr had signed on as a member. "I just said to all the guys, 'I'm in.' There weren't any firecrackers



Johnny Marr (second from left) sits down with Modest Mouse for *We Were Dead...*

or streamers or anything. There were a couple of people who muttered, 'Cool.' It's a pretty laid-back band." Meanwhile, Marr graciously fields the usual retinue of

questions about the Smiths. "Why wouldn't anybody be proud of having formed a group that recorded seventy-odd songs and was still really liked by a bunch of people?" he asks. He

even has fun with the hoary query about the chances of a reunion with his old songwriting partner Morrissey and bandmates Mike Joyce and Andy Rourke. "I just try

to amuse myself by answering it a different way every time," Marr says. His response on this occasion? "We already reunited this morning." —BRYAN THOMAS

>The List



## 13 New Tupac Albums

Upcoming releases from the shamelessly prolific dead rapper

- >The Very Best of Tupac from the Last Three Weeks
- >Tupac Sneezes and Coughs
- >The Ghost of Tupac Versus R. Kelly
- >Walt Disney Presents Tupac: Frozen in Time
- >Tupac Live from Argentina
- >Tupac Dead but Still from Argentina
- >The Ghost of Tupac Versus R. Kelly and Bow Wow
- >Tupac: If I Did It
- >Tupac & Gerald Ford: At Last
- >Tupac Cuddles Hannah Montana
- >Tupac's Ramones Reunion
- >The Ghost of Tupac Versus R. Kelly, Bow Wow, and Michael Tilson Thomas and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
- >FutureSex/GraveyardSounds

The 94% Guaranteed Recommendation

Dr. Dog  
'We All Belong'



Yes, we're only three months into 2007, but we'll say that Dr. Dog's latest record, *We All Belong*, is one of our favorites of the year. It's so good that we're willing to overlook the annoying things about the Philadelphia-based band, like how one of the lead singers performs in Ray-Ban Wayfarers as if he were a long-lost Blues Brother and how the members are nicknamed Taxi, Tables, Text, Trouble, and Thanks. After you listen to their mix of Beatles-era psychedelic pop and NRBQ-style blues, all of those things become a little endearing. —KEVIN SINTUMUANG