



**“It’s always an odd thing to play music that you’ve heard on a record so many times. You have to take something that is so firmly established in your head and play it live in a way that is true to the original spirit, but also bring a fresh look on it.”**

About a week or two into it, I got a call from my friend Chad Gilmore, who plays drums for an artist named Marc Broussard. He said that they were playing the Roxy and asked me if I wanted to sit in. I have played on Marc’s records and done some touring with him in the past, so knowing that I would be out of rehearsal in time, I agreed. I went from playing KISS and Paul Stanley songs on guitar, to playing soulful pop songs on a Wurlitzer (piano). To do that in the span

of ten hours was one of the best musical days I could ever ask for. And one I won’t forget anytime soon.

Of course, after all the rehearsals came the live shows. Our first show with Paul was in Atlanta, GA at a great theatre called the Tabernacle. It has a huge old pipe organ and a great rock n’ roll vibe. Most first shows can be a bit troublesome. During any show, a lot of things can and will go wrong. Everything from getting a good mix on stage, to just plain remembering the songs and transitions can be a challenge. But this one went off without a hitch, and I think it was the best opening show I have ever been a part of.

Having a front man like Paul Stanley gives you a lot of confidence. This guy has been killing it for 30 years and you know that he won’t be the one to mess up. It was also very different for us because there were no cameras rolling. For the past two years, working on *Rock Star*, every time we played a song, we knew it was being filmed and recorded. Every little note and nuance is picked up. That can be stressful. Working with Paul was a return to the live roots that most of us are used to. That made it fun.

Speaking of fun, one of the best things about working with Paul is watching how he commands an audience. He literally has them eating out of the palm of his hand. Most nights, people in the

crowd will yell out song names for him to play. Sometimes he will acquiesce, but we usually stick to the set. It is a set that he created to have a flow – and it works. However, one night in Portland (or was it Seattle? I’m not really sure...) there was a woman who would not stop yelling out the title of a song that we don’t normally play. After repeated requests, Paul said, “How much did you pay for your ticket?” She replied “\$45,” and he said, “You’ve gotta pay at least \$50 for requests.” She then outstretched her arm with five dollars in it. He went over to her, took the five dollars and started to play the song she asked for. With no accompaniment from the band (as we hadn’t rehearsed it), he played almost the whole song. When he finished and the crowd calmed their cheers, he said, “I’m keeping the five bucks!” The place exploded with laughter and we went on to the next song.

Though it was only a three and a half week tour, it was one that I will always remember. For a kid from Philadelphia who used to fantasize about being a rock star, this experience was very close to a dream. Thanks, Paul for asking, “Can Jimmy come out and play?”

