



## He's Just a Singer (In a Rock and Roll Band):

### John Lodge Returns to New Jersey

#### Transcript

Story by Gina Marie Rodriguez

[MUSIC: "A Little Wiggle"]

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (00:03):

This is Gina Marie Rodriguez and you're listening to The Jersey Arts Podcast.

"I'm Just a Singer (In a Rock and Roll Band)." "Ride My See-Saw." "Isn't Life Strange?" These are just a few of the mega hit titles by The Moody Blues, and John Lodge is their bass guitarist, vocalist, and songwriter. He has been performing and recording with The Moody Blues for more than 50 years while also pursuing a successful solo career. He's even been voted one of the "10 most influential bass players on the planet."

A native of Birmingham, England, Lodge has been playing the guitar since he was just 13 years old. He now considers the guitar to be his best friend. And why wouldn't he? They've done quite well together. Lodge is now on tour with his album "Days of Future Passed - My Sojourn." The tour was set to begin last year but unfortunately, he experienced what was described to the public as "a serious medical issue" and was forced to postpone. Thankfully, he is doing well and back to what he does best - performing. And lucky for us, his tour will stop at the State Theatre New Jersey this July 13th.

Today, I had the pleasure of speaking to Mr. Lodge about his return to the tour, his creative process, and how he might advise future musicians to pursue their passion.

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This episode will also feature the full song, Peak Hour, written and performed by John Lodge. If you'd like to focus solely on our interview, please refer to the timestamps within our chapter markers.

And now, onto our chat.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (01:34):

Congratulations on returning to the tour. I know that you had a little bit there where you had to postpone.

JOHN LODGE (01:40):

I've been with a physio for the last two months and getting fit for this tour, and I'm really looking forward to the tour and disappointed I didn't do this in the spring, but here we go. I'm ready now.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (01:59):

Well, I guess we can all say a big thank you to your physio.

JOHN LODGE (02:02):

Yes, I thank him every time I see him.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (02:06):

What's his name? We should give him a shout out.

JOHN LODGE (02:08):

Oh, give him- Ken. Just Ken.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (02:15):

Ken? Thank you so much. Big shout out to Ken, but let's get into the actual album, right? That's what you're touring for. So, "Days of Future Past," what does it feel like to essentially be going back in time? Right? You're revisiting this album from 1967-

JOHN LODGE (02:30):

About two years ago, I was thinking about what to do with my stage show. And as it was coming to a celebration of "Days of Future Past," an anniversary, I thought, I wonder if I could do "Days of Future

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Past” live on stage. So, I got in touch with my musical director, my keyboard player, Alan Hewitt, and said, ‘Alan, could we do a great version of Days of Future Past?’ And he said, ‘why not?’ And so I went to see Graeme Edge, the drummer of The Moody Blues, who wrote all the poetry for the Moodies. I said, Graeme, I'm thinking about doing Days of Future Past Live. I said, if you went into the studio and I recorded you and film you, would you do that? And you always have a place on stage for me. He said, John, I'd love to do that. And he said, I've never ever recorded my own spoken word and I would love it to do it.

JOHN LODGE (03:40):

And I like the idea of keeping The Moody Blues music alive. And so that gave me the inspiration to do it. So, when did rehearsals and after a year of rehearsals, we ended up with a live show and I thought we really should record this and have it as a live album, but not a live recording. But go to the studio and re-record it. And that's what I did. Went into the studio and re-recorded it. And while I was recording this, I realized it was a history of me, my life through “Days of Future Past.” And that's why I called it “My Sojourn” because it was the reason The Moody Blues happened was because of “Days of Future Past” to begin with.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (04:49):

I love that so much. And I love the title “My Sojourn” for that reason, it's very apt. So, I happen to be rocking out to “Peak Hour” just a few minutes ago. I wanted to talk to you about that. What is it like for you to write a song? What is your process?

JOHN LODGE (05:10):

Well, you mentioned “Peak Hour”. We were coming- we used to travel in a van, a Ford Transit van with all the equipment, and we had airplane seats, which we bought secondhand and installed them into the van. And Graeme was sitting in front of me one day and we were coming back from a gig. And as we drove along the motorway, the freeway in England, I heard the drumming of the concrete slats and it was given a fantastic beat in my head. And I said to Graeme, ‘Graeme, could you keep this beat up for about three minutes?’ And he said, ‘Yes, why?’ I said, I'm writing a song right now with this tempo. And that's where I got the idea from, by sitting in the van. I could do this drumming part and it summed it up, peak hour, all these people traveling on the freeways and the roads, and it's about all the people traveling, their thoughts, the dreams, the anticipation, everything else about driving during the daytime and nighttime.

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GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (06:44):

That is so cool. I love the way musicians think. It's not how I would operate, but I love that something very organic like that turned into a song for you. Does that mean that you wrote it in just a few minutes while you were riding along?

JOHN LODGE (07:01):

No. Once I have an idea, and I know it's like a door opens and when the door opens, you could see the rest of it. You don't have to do it right there. And then I think I dreamt about the song all the way home. And I went home and went to bed and I was still reliving the tempo of the song and what the song was about. And I was obviously turning over lyrical ideas in my head during that. And I think the next day I just wrote the song,

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (07:43):

What a story. Well, I have to say I love it. Like I said, I was genuinely rocking out. It's one of those songs where you kind of have to bop to it. It's just too high energy. You can't ignore it.

[MUSIC: "Peak Hour"] (07:52):

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (11:23):

I don't know if this really applies to you. I'm sure that because you love what you do, everything about it is thrilling. But I feel like when you've been in any industry for a really long time, there are parts of it that become really old hat. So, is there something that very specifically never fails to thrill you? Even having done this for many years?

JOHN LODGE (11:43):

Every time I pick up my guitar. Literally because I play every day and you find something out all the while, something you didn't know. And it brings a smile to your face. It really does. I did an interview many years ago. I said, playing a bass or playing a guitar, actually, any instrument really, it becomes your best friend. If you really enjoy and love what you are doing, it just does become your best friend. And that's how I see it today. I play every day and I'm exploring everything every day. And there's always something that comes out and explodes and you go, oh, I like that.

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GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (12:38):

Well I'm glad to hear that. I suppose it would be really sad if you didn't feel that way. I always like to ask successful artists what advice they would give to those who are just starting out.

JOHN LODGE (12:48):

If you decide to learn an instrument, I know your mom and dad always say, oh, I'll book piano lessons for you, violin lessons, everything. And sometimes it works, sometimes it fails. But the advice I give to people is listen to a record. And when you've listened to the record, ask yourself, what did you hear? Because when I was growing up, I listened to Rock All Jukeboxes and what I heard was always the left-hand side of the piano always. And that was the boogie part. Everybody played boogie: Fats Domino, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, they always the boogie piano. And I realized that's what I loved, and that's why I played bass because I really enjoy the energy. If someone had said to me, I've got to learn a violin, I would've been hopeless because I didn't hear it. But if you hear the instrument, that's the instrument you should learn to play because you'll understand it straight away.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (14:13):

That may be the best answer that I've gotten to that question so far. Is there anything that you'd like to say to New Jersey audiences who are looking forward to seeing you soon?

JOHN LODGE (14:25):

I enjoy New Jersey. We've met lots of friends and fans from New Jersey and they've been so loyal to The Moody Blues and to me. It's fantastic. I really enjoy playing golf as well. And so, I played many golf courses through New Jersey. Great times, so I'm really looking forward to it. And yeah, there's so many venues, the open-air venues, the performing arts, so many venues. But yep, looking forward to seeing everyone and rekindling the old friendships and hopefully making new ones as well.

GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (15:14):

Well said. And I hope that you've scheduled a little bit of time to squeeze in some golf also.

JOHN LODGE (15:19):

I hope so. Yeah.

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GINA MARIE RODRIGUEZ (15:23):

The Moody Blues' John Lodge will grace the stage of the State Theatre New Jersey on Saturday, July 13th at 8pm.

For more information be sure to visit [stnj.org](http://stnj.org).

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This episode was hosted, edited and produced by me, Gina Marie Rodriguez. Executive producers are Jim Atkinson and Isaac Serna-Diez. And my thanks to today's guest, Mr. John Lodge for his time. I'm Gina Marie Rodriguez for the Jersey Arts podcast. Thanks for listening!

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