

## Accept this substitute

### Rock band pays tribute to Morrissey, The Smiths

By Roger Hillis  
Staff Writer

While there are a ton of tribute acts that devote themselves to honoring Elvis Presley, The Beatles and KISS, a Rehoboth Beach nightspot will host a more eclectic performance Saturday.

New York-based rock group The Sons & Heirs is dedicated to recreating the concerts of alt-rock icon Morrissey and his former group, The Smiths.

▼ADVERTISEMENT ▼ The Sons & Heirs will perform a free 10 p.m. show at the Dogfish Head brewpub on Rehoboth Avenue.

While Morrissey is still a touring juggernaut as a solo act, countless Smiths fans wish he would put his very public bitterness aside and patch things up with his old bandmates for a Smiths reunion.

A concert by the Sons & Heirs is about as close as you're going to get. The band consists of lead vocalist Ronnissey (portraying Morrissey), guitarist Ravi Marr (as Johnny Marr), bass-guitarist Jonny Rourke (Andy Rourke) and drummer Kevin Joyce (Mike Joyce).

As per their stage names, the members emulate both the look and sound of The Smiths. Ronnissey sports Moz's pompadour, while the other three members use music gear that is nearly identical to The Smiths' old equipment to replicate the sounds fans are familiar with from the albums.

The Smiths made a major dent on the history of alternative rock within a short period of time. It formed in England in 1982 and had disbanded by 1987. Songs which ruled the airwaves in England but were received mainly by college radio stations in America included "How Soon Is Now?," "Bigmouth Strikes Again," "Girlfriend In a Coma" and "Sheila Take a Bow."

Morrissey's post-Smiths singles include "Every Day Is Like Sunday," "Last of the Famous International Playboys" and others.

Ravi "Marr" Krishnaswami is a successful film and television composer when not playing guitar with The Sons & Heirs. He said crafting a setlist for The Sons & Heirs can be a juggling act; their stage show focuses mainly on The Smiths, but usually includes a few songs popularized by Morrissey during his solo career.

"We respect the notion that Morrissey is currently a touring artist and deserves your money," he said. "We also have a deep appreciation for the unique musical, sonic, political and aesthetic moment that was The Smiths and believe they left a gaping void in music when they split."



Chris Cassidy photo

**The Sons & Heirs, a tribute to Morrissey and The Smiths, play Dogfish Head in Rehoboth Saturday.**

#### If you go

WHAT. The Sons & Heirs (a tribute to Morrissey and The Smiths)  
WHEN. Saturday, Jan. 26, 10 p.m.  
WHERE. Dogfish Head Brewings & Eats, 320 Rehoboth Ave., Rehoboth Beach  
HOW MUCH. Free  
CALL. 302-226-BREW  
BROWSE. [www.dogfish.com](http://www.dogfish.com);  
[www.thesonsandheirs.com](http://www.thesonsandheirs.com)

Requests are welcome -- as long as they're in advance.

"If we can do a song justice, we may," Ravi said. "If it hasn't been rehearsed in a while or is too obscure to be in our regular rotation, we'd rather not offend you by giving it a hapless attempt. If you'd like to hear something in particular, please feel free to reach out to us."

Those who wish to make a request for the Rehoboth show are encouraged to e-mail the name of the song they want to hear to [band@thesonsandheirs.com](mailto:band@thesonsandheirs.com).

Bassist Jonny "Rourke" Taylor said the band has had a close encounter with an actual Smith recently. "We met Andy Rourke at a Q&A session (promoting a new Smiths documentary) in New York a few months ago," Taylor said.

The Sons & Heirs have also befriended ex-Morrissey drummer Spencer Cobrin. "He visited one of our rehearsals recently and sat in with us for a few songs," Taylor said. "He'll actually be deejaying at our show at the Canal Room in New York on Feb. 16 and he might even sit in on drums for a few songs at that show."

Being a tribute band has led to some interesting pairings while on the road. "Last year, we played a double-bill with an all-female Depeche Mode tribute band called Violator," Taylor said. "We prefer to play shows with bands like that, which share some sort of musical kinship with The Smiths and Morrissey. There aren't very many tributes out there right now that fit that description, so we usually headline our own gigs with DJs sharing the bill."

Morrissey is known for his fanatical following, and some of that fervor has rubbed off on The Sons & the Heirs; their Web site includes video footage of a recent show at B.B. King's club in New York in which dozens of fans swarmed the stage. While some KISS tribute bands play beer-soaked barrooms, the stage smells much rosier when The Sons & Heirs perform. "We've carried on the tradition started by The Smiths of the audience blanketing the stage with flowers by the end of the show," Taylor said.

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