

The Doors of (a Fan's) Perception

By Helen Marketti

"I had never seen anything like it. The way Jim Morrison moved around the stage with those black leather pants on. The band's music was mesmerizing and hypnotic. I was only 21 years old at the time but it was forever a life altering experience for me. It gave me a focus."

These are the reflective comments made by long time fan Ida Miller as she describes the first time she ever saw The Doors in concert at Asbury Park Convention Hall in New Jersey. It was August 31, 1968. "I saw The Doors in concert a total of five times. I still have all of my ticket stubs!"

Even before her experience of a lifetime, Ida had always been a music fan. She enjoyed listening to Johnny Cash and the rock-a-billy sounds of Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis and of course, Elvis! She also liked Dion & The Belmonts and Jackie Wilson.

Seeing The Doors in concert during the height of their fame and popularity was electrifying and no doubt an envious position to be in for any Doors fan.

Ida reminisces about calling the office for Elektra Records and talking to the secretary for the Promotions Department, "I would call on a monthly basis, sometimes less or more, depending on what was going on with The Doors. I think she could hear the desperation in my voice. We didn't have the internet back then or Ticketmaster, so it was my only way of finding out when and where they would be in concert again in my area."



Ida with John Densmore (2002)

"The next concert I saw was at Madison Square Garden in January 1969. The band members have called it one of their favorite shows because it was

such a large audience, but my least favorite. My friends and I were far up in nosebleed seats and saw small figures on stage."

As with many rock bands, things change, times change and events can leave a blemish that can alter where the next step will be.



Ida at Jim Morrison's grave at Pere Lachaise Cemetery in Paris, France (1991)

This held true for The Doors in Miami, Florida on March 1, 1969 due to lead singer Jim Morrison's drunken onstage performance which resulted in charges being filed against him several days later. This set off a chain reaction of cancellations of their shows that had been scheduled around the country. "I saw them six months after that in September in Philadelphia," Ida recalls, "Many of their shows were being cancelled after the Miami incident. They were going through the motions of being there. There was no energy. Jim was no longer wearing his black leather pants. He was wearing light color pin stripes, instead. The mood was totally different."

The next time Ida saw The Doors in concert was at the Felt Forum in New York City on January 18, 1970. She attended this concert alone. "My sister bought the ticket for me and she lived nearby in Manhattan, so I just stayed at her house after the show," Ida remembers. "When they began to sing 'Soul Kitchen,' I knew this would be their last song before the encore. So, I casually left my seat and walked toward the stage. I didn't want others to start rushing the stage before I could get there myself. It was a high stage, but I was right up against it as Jim Morrison danced along the edge of the stage, touching many outstretched hands but not mine!"

The last time Ida saw The Doors was on May 1, 1970 at the Spectrum in Philadelphia. "When I got there I hung around outside talking with a security guard. He told me that if I stayed there with him long enough I would see their limo arrive. Sure enough, the limo arrived and sped right past us. I then ran into the building to get to my seat. I wasn't sure the show would go on as the Fire Marshall wouldn't allow the show to begin until the aisles were cleared. Fans were in the aisles, chanting. It was bedlam."

She quietly recalls what she was doing when she learned that Jim Morrison had passed away. "It was about 6:00 am. I had the radio on as I was getting ready for work when I heard the news announced. I went into emotional hysterics. I

cried and cried. I wanted to call someone but who could I call at 6:00 am? I had to talk to someone, so I called my mother. I was so hysterical that she could barely understand me and thought something had happened to my son." Only a true fan would understand the impact of such a loss.

Ida has visited Jim Morrison's final resting place in Paris, France four times (so far). She has gone there to reflect, find peace and pay respects to a man who lived his life on the edge and made such an impact on her own life.

In keeping with being a devoted fan, Ida was also an "extra" for one day in Oliver Stone's 1991 movie, "The Doors" in which actor Val Kilmer portrayed Jim Morrison.

Over the years, Ida has collected many items of memorabilia on The Doors. Originally from New Jersey, Ida's collecting spirit really took off once she and her teenage son, David, moved to Los Angeles due to a job transfer in the early 1980's. Yes, Ida was now an official "L.A. Woman!" She would attend rock and roll flea markets and pick up what she could afford on anything pertain-



The Doors receiving their star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. (February, 2007) (left to right: Robby Krieger, Ida, an unidentified man, and Ray Manzarek)

ing to The Doors. Her collection has swelled to where the items need to be photographed and filed and now includes many treasured rarities. She has her own archiving system.

With the 40th anniversary of The Doors self-titled debut album and an exhibit at the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ida is able to share some of her prized Doors collection for the world to see.



The exhibit, "Break on Through: The Lasting Legacy of The Doors" opened on May 25 and runs through October 7. The exhibit at the Rock Hall includes items on loan from Jim Morrison's family, the three surviving members of The Doors (Ray Manzarek, Robby Krieger and John Densmore) and also many items from Ida's private collection. "40 items of mine are on loan for the exhibit and I am tickled that nearly all of the items are on display."

Fans will be able to see rare photographs, posters, tour programs, Ray Manzarek's Vox Continental keyboard, copies of Jim Morrison's self-published poetry books, hand written lyrics by Morrison, guitars and Morrison's last will and testament with newspaper stories about his death and other miscellaneous items. "I love the Rock Hall," Ida said, "If I lived in Ohio, I'd have to work there or volunteer there. I'd have to be part of it."

To sum up her reflections on The Doors and culture of the 60's, Ida offers these thoughts, "It was such an awakening time for music. The Doors music is timeless, no one gets tired of it."

To keep up on what's going on with The Doors, check out Ida's L.A. Woman Confidential Website at www.idafan.com

To find our more information about the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame and Museum including the current exhibits, log on to www.rockhall.com or call 216-781-ROCK.

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