Kieron Tufft Musicmoments1

So I got this email from the powers that be, telling me that they are wanting to run this thing called ‘Musical Moments’. A chance for us writers to share with you a slice of musical memory and relive some of the most iconic gigs in history.

Now, my experience with iconic gigs is pretty limited. But I pride myself on the sheer number of bands I have seen live. Five Leeds Festivals under my belt and too many bands to count. All since the age of fourteen (I’m now twenty one).

Given that my experience with the iconic is limited, I thought I’d share something a little more personal. Allow me to set the scene.

It was the summer of 2007. I had finished my GCSE’s and done surprisingly well (no one more surprised than me, let me assure you). I was sixteen and it was my first Leeds Festival. I had arrived on the Thursday to set up my tent and illegally drink an enormous quantity of cider. That Friday I saw my favourite band at the time. The Smashing Pumpkins. I was gobsmacked. Right at the front. A skinny little teenager who could barely keep upright in the crowd.

But that isn’t the moment I want to talk about.

I woke up the next day. It was hot. I wasn’t hungover from the nights adventures. I was ready to start again.

Now let me put this into context for those of you who haven’t been to a festival before, especially those who haven’t been as underage teenagers.

The sheer thrill of walking around with a drink in your hand, with no curfew, no police, no parents, just pure, unadulterated fun was an amazing feeling. I spent the whole day wandering round in a daze, seeing great bands and celebrating my results (personal highlights include upside down drinking of shots of vodka and throwing various cups of water over myself whilst drunkenly sprinting to go and see Capdown in the Lock Up Tent.)

It was at this point, about five o’clock in the afternoon that we took a seat on the grassy verge in front of mainstage to relax our knackered legs. It was at this moment that a friend of mine excitedly told us that ‘The Kings of Leon’ where playing next.

This was before ‘Sex on Fire’ and ‘Only by the Night’ so these guys were just starting to pop. They had just released ‘Because of the Times’ and I think they were on a promotion tour.

And this was one of the first bands I had heard all weekend who I didn’t know a thing about. No knowledge of their discography or previous albums.

They took to the stage and launched into a furious opening with ‘Black Thumbnail’. It had me by the bollocks.

It was a moment that demanded my full attention. Nothing else mattered. I stood up and wandered into the crowd on my own for the first four songs and came back, sat by my friends and told them these guys where my highlight of the weekend, no question.

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Most of my friends laughed, they weren’t too fussed. But I was totally and utterly transfixed. But the best was yet to come. A few songs before the end of a mammoth set they launched into a song that, to this day, takes a spot in my top ten songs of all time.

The beautiful opening guitar harmonics of ‘Knocked Up’ did it for me. It suddenly became a moment where I wasn’t just creating a memory I would look back on fondly, I knew I was LIVING in that memory. No hindsight required. I knew this was going to be a moment that gets locked away in a very special place in the human mind. I looked around me, saw all my friends relaxed, drinking, smoking, laughing, enjoying life in such an immature fashion. It was, too all intents and purposes, a perfect moment.

Times change. And if you were to ask me if I wanted to live in that moment again I would say no. I’m older and I know that I would see it totally differently now. But in that one moment, for the duration of seven minutes, the impetuousness of youth and the harmony of good company came together in one perfect moment. All tied together by one damn good song.

So long as I have that song on my playlist, I’ll have that memory. So I would like to wrap it up by saying this:

The Followill family. Thanks. Thanks for that moment. I don’t know if that gig will go down in the history books as one of greatest of all time, but it will always own a special place in my heart.

Ends.