

A Life with Bruce on My Shoulder

I was 15 years old when, after a Wakey Friday night of underage pub drinks, I found myself invited back to my mate's older sister's flat in town, where a group of "older teenagers" were smoking and drinking.

Leaning against the wall was the album *Born to Run*. I was instantly captivated by Bruce's charismatic sideways smile on the cover, and as the record played, I just listened and listened.

I'd never heard an album where every single track made me want to keep going. I'd found my music—and someone I wished I could be like.

When *The River* came out, my school friend Max rushed over to me, handed me the album and said, "There's a track called *Hungry Heart*—just play it."

I did. Over and over.

By the time Bruce hit the UK with *Born in the U.S.A.*, I was fully "Bruced up."

I took my future wife to Roundhay Park, and since then we've seen Bruce in Manchester (twice), Leeds, Hyde Park, and finally Sunderland.

Many of his songs are woven into my life and still bring me reflection and joy.

In no particular order...

- Turning up *Glory Days* with my late friend Bully.
- Singing an out-of-tune *Thunder Road* with my late brother-in-law, Jez.
- Seeing my children's faces when Bruce opened Hyde Park (I cashed in a chunk of my pension so we could all go for my 60th).
- Watching Bruce and the E Street Band open a rainy Sunderland show with *Waiting on a Sunny Day*—the same day my dad would fall and ultimately pass away.
- Finding comfort years later in Nebraska, especially *My Father's House*.
- Hearing *Hello Sunshine* bring exactly that to my wife and daughter.
- Watching the *Western Stars* album become the perfect backdrop for reflection for my mate Dave.
- Regretting that I never asked my mum—a brilliant pianist—to play the opening of *Jungleland*.
- Driving around France in my twenties with three siblings and my soon-to-be wife, blasting *The River* and rewriting "Out on the Street" as "Out on the Beach."
- Playing *Independence Day* as we drove over the Tyne Bridge to drop our son off.
- And the joy of discovering the ultimate live version of *Racing in the Street*.
- Alongside his breathtaking music, I love Bruce's humanity, power, and compassion.

I would just love to say, "just can't believe Bruce is coming to Wakey"!!!

My wife keeps telling me Bruce isn't the answer to everything.
We agree on most things, though.

Dom from Wakefield

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