





## The Fall

STAFF

Ersatz GB (2011)

MVDAudio/ Cherry Red Records

Reviewer Rating:

Contributed by: JohnGentile

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*Ersatz GB*, the 20th album by the Fall, just drips. While Fall albums are always atmospheric, rarely has the band painted sound on top of sound on top of sound, with layers mixing and melting into each other, and created a distinct scene through so many amorphous movements.

On "Mask Search," the band builds the song around a jazzy bouncing bass, but adds in skittering instrumentation and weird sound effects, to create a scene that is distinctly New York, and distinctly dark. On top of it all, vocalist Mark E. Smith, as par for the course, snarls out a chain of words that sometimes link together to form a narration of a deadly scenario, and sometimes just seem to eb words abutting each other.

But while "Mask Search" is smooth and suggests New York City, "Greenway," with its building and collapsing power chord, is pulled straight from the mosh pit. In the song, a doppelganger of Fall collaborator Peter Greenway, through Smith's voice, rants and growls, spitting vitriol at what may be the group itself.

But, through all the chaotic (and sometimes serene) scenarios, Smith's fascination with sound remains in the front. As with the sludge-riffer "Monocard," Smith brings a buzzing siren up front and allows it to disintegrate into a Sabbath-influenced line, allowing the harsh sound space to stretch out, giving the listener a chance to savor the finer points of the sound itself, before the band comes and harnesses it for their own use.

The Fall is never an "easy" listen, but here the band keeps the music so tight, and blends together the piles of music and noise, that despite the inherent eccentricity of the music, it almost sounds popish. Mainstream listenability probably isn't on Smith's radar, but it seems that on *Ersatz GB* that the group is so unconcerned with making normal music, that all their sonic experiments and apocalyptic ranting might just accidentally collapse into something downright inviting.

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