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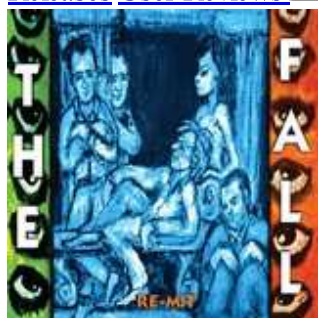
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# [The Fall](#)

## [Re-Mit](#)

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by [J.R. Moores](#) [\[Edit this content\]](#) ▼ [0 comments](#) 08:34 May 16th, 2013

One of the pleasures of hearing a new Leonard Cohen album is discovering how much deeper his voice has gotten since the last one. You can't quite imagine how it can get any lower but you know it will be. And sure enough, every time, there it is, wallowing out of the speakers like a comforting baritone hippo, one step closer to its logical conclusion as the oral equivalent of Sunn O)))'s guitar tones.

Similarly, one of the pleasures of hearing a new **Fall** album is discovering just how incoherently frazzled Mark E. Smith's voice has become. Their last set, 2011's *Ersatz GB*, reached new levels of slurring phlegminess and now Mark E. Smith returns to assure us that his enunciation is only moving in one direction. Remember *My Fair Lady*? If Mark E. Smith was asked to recite "*the rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain*", he'd burble something along the lines of "*(cough, cough) thhh rgggggghn-ah in Salfrrrd fcccckin sttttairs-aaaah (cough)*" before smacking Rex Harrison in the face.

*Re-Mit* might not be the record on which Smith finally relinquishes language altogether in favour of communicating in only a dry-mouthed hangover gargle, but it's close. At times, not only is it impossible to determine what Smith is saying, it's impossible to determine whether he is even attempting to pronounce any recognisable human words with his reptilian chops. The title of 'Sir William Wray' seems to have been chosen less as a tribute to the seventeenth-century MP baronet than because a) it offers the opportunity to make repeated, consecutive use of 'w' and 'r' sounds and b) because it rhymes with 'hey':

"W-w-w-w-w-w-w-werrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr! / WRAY! / HEY!"

The outro of 'Hittite Man' involves Smith coughing and wheezing assuredly into the microphone as if fronting a celebrity campaign on behalf Asthmatic Pride. When his pronunciation grows more comprehensible, his meaning does not. Who knows if the song 'Irish' is pro-Irish, anti-Irish, ambivalent towards the Irish, or not about the Irish at all? Whoever it's about, "*James Murphy is their chief*," apparently.

On 'Pre-MDNA', its lyrics reprised two tracks later for 'Victrola Time', Smith enjoys nonsensically reciting various letters and affixes: "*The pre-non-MDM and jet years / The post... the post M and also DMA years / The MDMN years...*" He seems to be enjoying himself throughout, in fact. Whereas he sounded pretty gruff and grumpy on *Ersatz* (and at times fatigued), there is a light-hearted, sozzled glee to the silly, wizened falsetto he attempts at the start of 'Victrola Time' and the cries of "*aaaaaaaaaah*", "*ssssssssssh*" and the final manic "*A-HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA*" that conclude 'No Respects Rev.'

Double-tracked, the duo of Smith voices on 'Jetplane' don't make the surreal airport-based narrative much easier to follow. "*The Italians certainly like their Sundays*," he says. "*And to make matters worse some sort of rock group was holding up things also. They were bringing elbows and Euros into Heathrow.*" Well, quite.

Accompanying Smith's relatively gay and playful mood, among the intelligible lyrics that jut out from the mucosal murk

are those which suggest Smith is growing more relaxed and less confrontational, which might be supported by the fact that *Re-Mit* marks the first time Smith has managed to record four consecutive albums with the same line-up. There is something strangely moving about the range of emotions that mark the bizarre opening ramble of 'Kinder of Spine':

*"Spider! / Why have I got spiders?! / Dear spider / Hello spider / Help me spider!"*

Meanwhile, 'Noise' contains the disarmingly tolerant and apparently sincere exposition, *"Kiddies, as we get older, we have to try to understand people who are different from us. Peter [pronounced a bit like 'Pizza'] is one of these people. In his hands is a guitar..."*

Which brings us to the music. On the whole, it matches Smith's cheerier mood. A couple of abstract jam splodges aside, the album is punchier and less dirgy than last time. A quick tempo is maintained with few tracks exceeding the four-minute-mark. Smith's arachnid encounter is backed by a strutting Sixties organ stomp. The guitar work on 'Hittite Man' and 'No Respects Rev' is suave, cool and assured, as if played by a man in a suit with one groomed eyebrow raised over his chic shades... who just happens to be collaborating with a dishevelled poet who lives in a skip. The fairly intricate surf guitar pattern on the latter approaches the band's late-Eighties smoothness. With its heavy krautrocking bass and wobbly kosmische keyboard effects, 'Victrola Time' is the little brother of recent triumphs such as 'Blindness' and 'Reformation'.

The album closes with 'Loadstones': an instant-classic Fall anthem. Its lairy chorus of *"LOCAL! / LOADSTONES!"* is perfectly designed for Fall fans to devotedly chant in the direction of their hero as he valiantly stumbles around the stage, behind the stage, off stage, and eventually, regrettably into the distance.

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