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The Fall - 'Re-Mit' (Cherry Red Records)

People speak of "difficult" second albums. So how difficult, or easy, is it to your 30th album? Most acts will never reach that moment. But as we see, The Fall isn't really like most acts. However, in a move away from much of their more rigorously difficult, obtuse output over the band's 36+ year career, their new album **Re-Mit** is surprisingly accessible.

Mark E Smith is certainly still very much in abstract territory here – delighting in a discourse of non-verbal sounds, yelps and mumbblings, there's an underpinning of structure, melody and even fun to the proceedings. It's not that other Fall offerings haven't had their poppy sides, as any fool who's popped their head into an indie disco to trip over their feet and tongues to *Totally Wired* will testify, but the difference with *Re-Mit* is that the melodies seem to come from a more playful place this time round.

Although, it isn't quite up to the perfect pop peculiarity of 2010's *Your Future Our Clutter*, as more recent Fall goes, it's still got that hard edged, defiant but curiously melodic nous that the band does best.

The driving boogie beat of 'Kinder of Spine', with its nursery rhyme cries of "Spider, help me!" is primitive, yet somehow focussed; the stuttering percussion of 'Jetplane' precedes a peculiar little tale about queuing in an Italian airport.

"The Italians certainly like their Sundays", Smith tells us. "Some sort of rock group was holding up things also." At moments like this, *Re-Mit* is genuinely funny. Funny haha, not funny with an ironic stance, or a nervous giggle.

In a similar wry moment of self-reflexion, 'The Jam Song', with its primitive synth tinkering's, lead through lunatic vocal gymnastics and hotchpotch guitar nonsense to form a track that goes precisely nowhere.

On *Re-Mit*, Smith is still cantankerous, still most definitely a lunatic, still Northern and still, arguably, still one of the greatest poets of the last few

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decades. The album isn't breaking new ground, but when you're The Fall, you've really done a fair bit of that already. Carry on then, Mark. Business as usual. See you at album 31.

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