

= Hex Enduction Hour =

Hex Enduction Hour is the fourth studio album by the English post @-@ punk band the Fall . Released on 8 March 1982 , it builds on the low @-@ fidelity production values and caustic lyrical content of their earlier recordings . Fall frontman Mark E. Smith establishes an abrasive Northern aesthetic built in part from the 20th century literary traditions of kitchen sink and magic realism . Smith described it as an often satirical , but deliberate reaction to the contemporary music scene ; a stand against " bland bastards like Elvis Costello and Spandau Ballet ... [ and ] all that shit . "

Recording began during a 1981 three concert visit of Iceland , when Smith was inspired both by the otherworldliness of the landscape , its history and the enthusiasm of an audience unused to visiting rock groups . The Fall recorded " Hip Priest " , " Iceland " and non @-@ album single " Look , Know " at the Hljóðriti studio in Reykjavík , and the remaining tracks in a disused cinema in Hitchin , Hertfordshire on their return to England . The album was widely praised on release as fully capturing their aggressive live sound . The UK recordings and later promotion were funded by the independent record label Kamera following a bitter and protracted dispute between Smith and former label Rough Trade Records . Hex Enduction Hour was well received by critics , and sold well relative to its release on a small label , and earned The Fall their first UK Albums Chart placing at No. 71 . Today it is considered a hallmark of the post @-@ punk era .

= = Background and recording = =

By 1981 the Fall had released three critically acclaimed albums , but band leader Mark E Smith felt they were undervalued and poorly supported by their label Rough Trade Records , whom he regarded as " a bunch of well meaning but inept hippies " . He felt constrained by the label 's ethos and worried that the Fall were in danger of becoming " just another Rough Trade band " . Frustrated and believing his career was nearing its end , Smith made overtures to other labels , and found kindred adventurous spirits at heavy metal specialists Kamera records . He proposed that Kamera record the band 's final album , which he wanted to last exactly one hour . They had already recorded several songs at the Hljóðriti studio in Reykjavík during their 1981 visit . Hljóðriti had lava walls , which according to Smith have a sound as if they had played in an igloo , which critics agree was a large factor in giving the songs their otherworldly ambience .

Smith wanted to record the remaining album tracks in a relatively open space , eventually using a disused cinema in Hitchin . He had hoped that the ambience of such a space would begin to resemble their live sound . Kamera agreed to pay costs for the post Iceland recordings , which were mostly songs that appeared in their October 1981 UK tour . Smith was impressed by their openness and signed , relieved to be free of Rough Trade . The uncertainty around a label change , and Smith 's doubts over The Fall 's longevity , seep into and contribute to the album 's edgy and unsettled sound . Music critic John Doran described " Hex " as the work of a band with a gun pressed to their heads .

Hex Enduction Hour takes influence from the Velvet Underground 's " Sister Ray " , Captain Beefheart and the early 1970s Krautrock band Can . Smith has said that the title was intended to invoke witchcraft , but that the word Enduction was made up , a word he just liked the sound of . His vocals are higher in the mix than on previous Fall releases and were described in 1982 by Sounds as " emerg [ ing ] like a loudhailer from a fog of guitar scratch " . The songs were deliberately produced in a raw and low @-@ fi approach by Smith , Grant Showbiz and Richard Mazda in a sound described at the time as a " well produced noise " that was acceptable by Fall standards . Critic Mark Storace claimed that he " could have done a better job on a 4 @-@ track if I was pissed out of my head " . Smith responded by saying that " nowadays people just can 't just shut up if they don 't know what they 're talking about . " Elaborating on the purposely amateurish production values , Smith remarked that " it was all recorded in deliberately bad places ... deliberately simple sort of thing . Three songs were written at rehearsal and done the next time . "

= = Music and lyrics = =

The album was their first to include Karl Burns and Paul Hanley in the band's classic two @-@ drummer lineup . Smith intended the album's lyrics " to be like reading a really good book . You have a couple of beers , sit down and immerse yourself . None of those fuckers Elvis Costello or Spandau Ballet did that " . Hex Enduction Hour was written during an unusually prolific period in his career . Many of the tracks had already been dropped from their live set by the time they visited Australia and New Zealand in the autumn of 1982 . The earlier single , " Look , Know " was recorded during the Icelandic sessions but not included on the album . This was characteristic of Smith's " never look back " approach .

The opening track " The Classical " acts as a statement of intent similar to " Crap Rap 2 / Like to Blow " on their debut album Live at the Witch Trials . Whereas on that song Smith described himself as " Northern white crap that talks back " , on the opening lines of Hex Enduction Hour he complains that the fact that contemporary music lacks culture is his " brag " , observing that a " taste for bullshit reveals a lust for a home of office " and references " obligatory niggers " , before accusingly shouting " Hey there , fuckface , hey there , fuckface " . Pavement released a less offensive , sanitised cover of the track in the early 1990s , and Smith dismissed them later as mere Fall copyists . " Jawbone and the Air Rifle " depicts a nightmare folklorish tale of a poacher ( described as a " Rabbit Killer " ) bored by a decades @-@ old marriage who escapes by roaming the local countryside at night hunting prey . One night the protagonist " lets out a misplaced shot " which draws the Hex of the ' Broken Brothers Pentacle Church ' . The song's main focal point is towards the end when the lyrics detail a series of semi @-@ religious , semi @-@ pagan horrific and repeating hallucinations .

" Hip Priest " was recorded in Iceland in a single take , and is one of Smith's most personal songs , apparently written in bemusement following a recent rise in the band's popularity . The track has been compared to dub but in its Northern bleakness if " it had been invented in a drizzly motorway rather than in recording studios in Jamaica . " " Hip Priest " was re @-@ recorded in 1988 in a glam rock style as " Big New Prinz " for the album " I Am Kurious Oranj " . An excerpt of " Hip Priest " was used in 1991 in a closing scenes of Jonathan Demme's film The Silence of the Lambs .

" Fortress / Deer Park " starts with a Casio VL @-@ 1 rhythm preset , same as used by Trio on their 1982 hit single " Da Da Da " . Its lyrics form a broad and jaundiced look at English culture and subcultures in the early 1980s . It mentions [ fucking ] Jimmy Savile while the lines " I took a walk down W11 ; I had to walk through 500 European punks " are a dry put @-@ down of the fashion @-@ oriented .

" Winter " comprises two songs broken by a fade out and fade in ; " Winter ( Hostel @-@ Maxi ) " closes side one of the record , " Winter 2 " opens side two . The tracks were described by Smith in early press releases as " concerning an insane child who is taken over by a spirit from the mind of a cooped @-@ up alcoholic " . During the intro of " Winter ( Hostel @-@ Maxi ) " , the narrator describes waiting , hungover , in the early afternoon for the pubs to open . The remainder of the song consists of descriptions of and encounters with a dry out house , a cleaning lady , a feminist wearing anti @-@ nicotine and anti @-@ nuclear badges , and a " half @-@ wit " child . After this the lyrics move towards magic realism and ad @-@ libbed inscrutability : " The mad kid had four lights : the average is two point @-@ five @-@ lights ; the mediocre is two lights " .

" Who Makes the Nazis " mentions the philosopher Colin Wilson before concluding that Nazis are born of " intellectual halfwits " . The track contains a number of sounds played through a dictaphone , a device that was to feature heavily in later Fall albums , most notably This Nation's Saving Grace .

" Iceland " was improvised in a single take . Smith was taken by a country which he described in 2008 as still inaccessible and " totally unlike what it is now . Beer was against the law . You could only drink shit like pints of peach schnapps " . It consists of a two note piano figure and a banjo part , over which Smith played a tape recording he had made of the wind howling outside his bedroom window . According to guitarist Marc Riley , " He [ Smith ] just said he needed a tune , something Dylanish , and we knocked around on the piano in the studio and came up with that . But we hadn't heard the words until he suddenly did them . " The line " Fall down flat in the Cafe lol without a

glance from the clientele " describes an incident that had happened to Smith that morning . He had tripped in a nearby cafe and fallen across several tables . He was surprised by the lack of response from the other customers , who seemed to have dismissed him as just another drunk .

The closing track , " And This Day " originally lasted about 25 minutes ; but was edited down to ten minutes to fit the album 's length , it still remains one of the longest studio songs by The Fall .

= = Cover art = =

Hex Enduction Hour 's all @-@ white cover with scribbles was described by music critic Robertson as " meticulously shoddy " . It consists of a series of biro scribbles laid down by Smith . The markings are mostly random rhetorical phrases and sentence fragments such as " Lie @-@ Dream 80 % of 10 % OR 6 % over no less than 1 / 4 = ? ? ? ? ? ? " , " Hail Sainsbury 's ! " , " CHUMMY LIFESTYLE " , " HAVE A BLEEDIN GUESS " and " CIGS . SMOKED HERE " . In an interview with Sounds that summer , Smith mentioned that he liked art work to reflect the album content and that his graphic choices reflected his attitude to music . He mentioned how he was drawn to cheap and misspelt posters , amateur layouts of local papers and printed cash and carry signs with " inverted commas where you don 't need them " .

The album art was seen by many within the industry as coarse and lacking accepted layout or typographical qualities . HMV would only shelve the sleeve back to front on their racking shelves .

= = Reception = =

Hex Enduction Hour was the first Fall album to make the UK Albums Chart , where it spent three weeks , peaking at no . 71 . By mid @-@ 1983 it had sold twenty thousand copies , reflecting a surge in the band 's popularity , and five years into their career brought them to the attention of record labels . Critics were highly enthusiastic ; according to Simon Ford , they could " have hardly been more supportive " . Reviewing the album in the NME , Richard Cook described the band as tighter and more disciplined than in earlier recordings , " their master piece to date " , while still maintaining their impact . He praised their having utilised recording studio techniques and atmospherics without resorting to glamorisation . Melody Maker 's Colin Irwin said it was " incredibly exciting and utterly compelling " . A dissenter was Neil McCormick of Irish fortnightly Hot Press , who dismissed the album as second hand melodramatic punk , and wondered if the album was " meant to be minimalist or primitive then it fatally ignores the true primitivism of the strong melody and accessible lyrics found in folk music . "

Later , Record Collector described the album as a " taut , twitchy and ominous masterclass in DIY post @-@ punk " , and singled out Smith 's lyrics for praise . The Quietus , in 2009 , wrote of the album as " arguably ... The Fall 's mightiest hour " , while Stylus Magazine wrote that " Hex demonstrates the culmination of ' early ' Fall : a monolithic beast of ragged grooves piloted through the embittering miasma of English society by the verbose acidity / Joycean all @-@ inclusiveness of Mark E. Smith . " Pitchfork listed Hex Enduction Hour as the 33rd best album of the 1980s .

According to Smith , the album 's lyrics had a negative impact on their later career . In 1984 Motown Records expressed interest in signing the band to a new UK division , with a provisional offer of a £ 46 @,@ 000 upfront advance . The label executive asked to hear something from their back catalogue . Hex was the only album Smith had to hand , and remembered thinking , " when he hears that , we 've had it . " The rejection letter stated that the label saw " no commercial potential in this band whatsoever " . Smith believes this was due to the " obligatory niggers " line from the opening track " The Classical " .

= = Re @-@ issues = =

The album went out of print when the Kamera label folded in 1983 , but a German edition on the Line imprint remained available , with copies pressed on white vinyl . Line issued a CD edition , flat transferred from a later generation tape . In 2002 , a new edition titled Hex Enduction Hour + (

adding both sides of the " Look , Know " single ) was released via Smith 's Cog Sinister imprint .

The album was remastered and issued in 2005 by Sanctuary Records , along with a disc of bonus live material . Smith conceded that the remastering was an improvement , but when asked if he liked the bonus live tracks he admitted that he hadn 't listened " that far " .

= = Track listing = =

All lyrics written by Mark E. Smith .

= = Personnel = =

The Fall

Karl Burns ? drums , backing vocals , tape operation on " Fortress / Deer Park "

Kay Carroll ? percussion , backing vocals

Paul Hanley ? drums , guitar on " Winter "

Steve Hanley ? bass guitar , backing vocals , xylophone on " Hip Priest "

Marc Riley ? electronic organ , guitar , piano , backing vocals , banjo on " Iceland "

Craig Scanlon ? guitar , backing vocals , piano on " Iceland "

Mark E. Smith ? vocals , tape operation on " Fortress / Deer Park " and " Iceland " , guitar , production , cover design

Technical personnel

Richard Mazda ? production

Alan Skinner ? cover design

Tony J. Sutcliffe ? engineering