

= Disintegration ( The Cure album ) =

Disintegration is the eighth studio album by British alternative rock band The Cure , released on 2 May 1989 by Fiction Records . The record marks a return to the introspective and gloomy gothic rock style the band had established in the early 1980s . As he neared the age of thirty , vocalist and guitarist Robert Smith had felt an increased pressure to follow up on the group 's pop successes with a more enduring work . This , coupled with a distaste for the group 's newfound popularity , caused Smith to lapse back into the use of hallucinogenic drugs , the effects of which had a strong influence on the production of the album . The Cure recorded Disintegration at Hookend Recording Studios in Checkendon , Oxfordshire , with co @-@ producer David M. Allen from late 1988 to early 1989 . During production , founding member Lol Tolhurst was fired from the band .

Disintegration became the band 's commercial peak , charting at number three in the United Kingdom and at number twelve in the United States , and producing several hit singles including " Lovesong " , which peaked at number two on the Billboard Hot 100 . It remains The Cure 's highest selling record to date , with more than three million copies sold worldwide . It was greeted with a warm critical reception before later being acclaimed , eventually being placed at number 326 on Rolling Stone magazine 's list of the " 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " . Stephen Thomas Erlewine of AllMusic called it the " culmination of all the musical directions The Cure were pursuing over the course of the ' 80s " .

= = Background = =

The Cure 's second album Seventeen Seconds ( 1980 ) established the group as a prominent gothic rock band characterised by what Stephen Thomas Erlewine of AllMusic described as " slow , gloomy dirges and Smith 's ghoulish appearance " . Three singles were released during 1982 and 1983 that were a significant divergence in style for The Cure ; essentially , pop hits . " The Love Cats " became The Cure 's first single to infiltrate the top ten in the United Kingdom , peaking at number seven . This shift is attributed to Smith 's frustration over the band 's labeling as a predictable gothic rock band : " My reaction to all those people ... was to make a demented and calculated song like ' Let 's Go to Bed ' . " Following the return of guitarist Porl Thompson and bassist Simon Gallup in 1984 and the addition of drummer Boris Williams in 1985 , Smith and keyboardist Lol Tolhurst continued to integrate more pop @-@ oriented themes with the release of the group 's sixth studio album The Head on the Door ( 1985 ) . With the singles " In @-@ Between Days " and " Close to Me " , The Cure became a viable commercial force in the United States for the first time .

The band 's 1987 double album Kiss Me , Kiss Me , Kiss Me resulted in further commercial success , with a sold @-@ out world tour booked in its wake . Despite the success , internal friction became prevalent . Tolhurst began to consume heavy amounts of alcohol , rendering him useless . Roger O 'Donnell was hired as a second keyboardist to pick up the slack . O 'Donnell quickly realised that Tolhurst was essentially dead weight : " I couldn 't see why [ Tolhurst ] was in the band . He could have afforded to hire a tutor and have daily lessons , but he wasn 't interested in practicing . He just liked being in the group . " The rest of the band was equally unimpressed . As Tolhurst 's alcohol consumption increased , Smith recalled that his behaviour was similar to that of " some kind of handicapped child being constantly poked with a stick " . At the end of the Kissing Tour in support of Kiss Me , Kiss Me , Kiss Me , Smith became uncomfortable with the side effects of being a pop star and moved to Maida Vale ( in West London ) with fiancée Mary Poole . Regularly taking LSD to cope with his depression , Smith once again felt The Cure was being misunderstood and sought to return to the band 's dark side with their next record .

= = Recording and production = =

Robert Smith 's depression prior to the recording of Disintegration gave way to the realisation on his twenty @-@ ninth birthday that he would turn thirty in one year . This realisation was frightening to

him , as he felt all the masterpieces in rock and roll had been completed well before the band members reached such an age . Smith consequently began to write music without the rest of the band . The material he had written instantly took a dismal , depressing form , which he credited to " the fact that I was gonna be thirty " . The Cure convened at Boris Williams ' home in the summer of 1988 where Smith played his bandmates the demos he had recorded . If they had not liked the material , he was prepared to record them as a solo album : " I would have been quite happy to have made these songs on my own . If the group hadn 't thought it was right , that would have been fine . " His bandmates liked the demos and began playing along . The group recorded thirty two songs at Williams ' house with a 16 @-@ track recorder by the end of the summer .

When the band entered Hook End Manor Studios in Oxfordshire , their attitude had turned sour towards Tolhurst 's escalating alcohol abuse , although Smith insisted that his displeasure was caused by a meltdown in the face of recording The Cure 's career @-@ defining album and reaching thirty . Displeased with the swollen egos he believed his bandmates possessed , Smith entered what he considered to be " one of my non @-@ talking modes " deciding " I would be monk @-@ like and not talk to anyone . It was a bit pretentious really , looking back , but I actually wanted an environment that was slightly unpleasant " . He sought to abandon the mood present on Kiss Me , Kiss Me , Kiss Me and the pop singles they had released , and rather recreate the atmosphere of the band 's fourth album Pornography ( 1982 ) .

Tolhurst , meanwhile , was becoming a nuisance . The band found him impossible to work with , and he spent most of the recording process drunk and watching MTV . The members of the band , except for Smith , would taunt and physically abuse Tolhurst simply to get a reaction . Smith recalls that Tolhurst turned into someone he did not recognise : " I didn 't know who he was any more and he didn 't know who he was either . I used to despair and scream at the others because it was fucking insane the way we were treating him . " At that point , Smith was allowing Tolhurst to remain in The Cure simply because he felt an obligation as an old friend . The other band members , finally , threatened to quit if Tolhurst was not fired before the end of the recording session . When Tolhurst arrived to the mixing of the album excessively drunk , a shouting match ensued and he left the building furious ; this effectively terminated his tenure with The Cure . Smith and the rest of the group confirm he contributed nothing to the record . Thereafter , O 'Donnell became an integral member of The Cure , instead of simply a touring musician . Despite Tolhurst 's ejection from the group , Smith told NME in April 1989 , " He 'll probably be back by Christmas . He 's getting married , maybe that 's his comeback . " Tolhurst only returned briefly around 2011 .

= = Music = =

Disintegration was Robert Smith 's thematic return to a dark and gloomy aesthetic that The Cure had explored in the early 1980s . Smith deliberately sought to record an album that was depressing , as it was a reflection of the despondency he felt at the time . The sound of the album was a shock to the band 's American label Elektra Records ; the label requested Smith shift the release date back several months . Smith recalled " they thought I was being ' wilfully obscure ' , which was an actual quote from the letter [ Smith received from Elektra ] . Ever since then I realised that record companies don 't have a fucking clue what The Cure does and what The Cure means . " Despite rumours that Smith was one of the only contributors to the record , he confirmed that more than half of the dozen tracks on Disintegration had substantial musical input from the rest of the band .

Disintegration is characterized by a significant usage of synthesizers and keyboards , slow , " droning " guitar progressions and Smith 's introspective vocals . " Plainsong " , the album 's opener , " set the mood for Disintegration perfectly " , according to journalist Jeff Apter , by " unravelling ever so slowly in a shower of synths and guitars , before Smith steps up to the mic , uttering snatches of lyrics ( ' I 'm so cold ' ) as if he were reading from something as sacred as the Dead Sea Scroll . " Smith felt the song was a perfect opener for the record , describing it as " very lush , very orchestral " . The album 's third track , " Closedown " , contains layers of keyboard texture complemented with a slow , gloomy guitar line . The track was written by Smith as a means to list his physical and artistic shortcomings . Despite the dark mood present throughout Disintegration , " Lovesong " was

an upbeat track that became a hit in the United States . Ned Raggett of AllMusic noted the difference from other songs : " the Simon Gallup / Boris Williams rhythm section create a tight , serviceable dance groove , while Smith and Porl Thompson add further guitar fills and filigrees as well , adding just enough extra bite to the song . Smith himself delivers the lyric softly , with gentle passion . "

Much of the album made use of a considerable amount of guitar effects . " Prayers for Rain " , a depressing track ( Raggett noted : " the phrase ' savage torpor ' probably couldn 't better be applied anywhere else than to this song " ) sees Thompson and Smith " treating their work to heavy duty flanging , delay , backwards @-@ run tapes and more to set the slow , moody crawl of the track . " Others , like the title track , are notable for " Smith 's commanding lead guitar lines [ that are ] scaled to epic heights while at the same time buried in the mix , almost as if they 're trying to burst from behind the upfront rhythm assault . Roger O 'Donnell 's keyboards add both extra shade and melody , while Smith 's singing is intentionally delivered in a combination of cutting clarity and low resignation , at times further distorted with extra vocal treatments . "

While Disintegration mainly consists of sombre tracks , " Lovesong " , " Pictures of You " and " Lullaby " were equally popular for their accessibility . Smith wanted to create a balance on the album by including songs that would act as an equilibrium with those that were unpleasant . Smith wrote " Lovesong " as a wedding present for Mary Poole . The lyrics had a noticeably different mood than the rest of the record , but Smith felt it was an integral component of Disintegration : " It 's an open show of emotion . It 's not trying to be clever . It 's taken me ten years to reach the point where I feel comfortable singing a very straightforward love song . " The lyrics were a notable shift in his ability to reveal affection . In the past , Smith felt it necessary to disguise or mask such a statement . He noted that without " Lovesong " , Disintegration would have been radically different : " That one song , I think , makes many people think twice . If that song wasn 't on the record , it would be very easy to dismiss the album as having a certain mood . But throwing that one in sort of upsets people a bit because they think , ' That doesn 't fit ' . " " Pictures of You " , while upbeat , contained poignant lyrics ( " Screamed at the make @-@ believe / Screamed at the sky / You finally found all your courage to let it all go " ) with a " two @-@ chord cascade of synthesizer slabs , interweaving guitar and bass lines , passionate singing and romantic lyrics . " " Lullaby " is composed of what Apter calls " sharp stabs " of rhythmic guitar chords with Smith whispering the words . The premise for the song came to Smith after remembering lullabies his father would sing him when he could not sleep : " [ My father ] would always make them up . There was always a horrible ending . They would be something like ' sleep now , pretty baby or you won 't wake up at all . ' "

= = Release and reception = =

Disintegration was released in May 1989 and peaked at number three on the UK Albums Chart , the highest position the band had placed on the chart at that point . In the UK , the lead single " Lullaby " became The Cure 's highest charting hit in their home country when it reached number five . In the US , due to its appearance in the film *Lost Angels* , the band 's American label Elektra Records released " Fascination Street " as the first single . The international follow @-@ up single to " Lullaby " , " Lovesong " , became The Cure 's highest charting hit in the United States , when it reached number two on the Billboard charts . The success of Disintegration was such that the March 1990 final single " Pictures of You " reached number 24 on the British charts , despite the fact that the album had been released a year earlier . Disintegration was certified silver ( 60 @,@ 000 copies shipped ) in the United Kingdom , and by 1992 had sold more than three million copies worldwide .

In a contemporary review for *Rolling Stone* , music critic Michael Azerrad gave the album three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half out of five stars and felt that , " while Disintegration doesn 't break new ground for the band , it successfully refines what the Cure does best " . He concluded , " Despite the title , Disintegration hangs together beautifully , creating and sustaining a mood of thoroughly self @-@ absorbed gloom . If , as Smith has hinted , the Cure itself is about to disintegrate , this is a worthy summation . " *Melody Maker* reviewer Chris Roberts dismissed the claims that Disintegration was not a miserable record and , noting the tone of the album and its lack of melody ( " You 'll be

lucky to find a tune on here . Or a gag " ) , he commented that " The Cure have almost invisibly stopped making pop records " . Roberts summarised the album as " challenging and claustrophobic , often poignant , often tedious . It 's nearly surprising . " NME praised Disintegration for its tunes , " from the first track ' Plainsong ' , a swaying , slow narrative , paralysing the listener with sex @-@ poison , to Disintegration 's last ' Untitled ' Smith 's lyrical agony of indecision is remorseless " . Reviewer Barbara Ellen noted the large range of emotions in Smith 's lyrics , " from deep , loving pink to an ugly , violent maroon and almost back again " . Although she found the two extra @-@ tracks superfluous , Ellen hailed Disintegration as " a mindblowing and stunningly complete album " . Q gave the album a three @-@ star rating out of five , mainly comparing it to Joy Division 's work . Writer Mat Snow observed : " The Cure have studied well the art of the tragic bass line , the hesitant and melancholy guitar lick , the funereal keyboard coloration " . He concluded : " Disintegration is thus well @-@ crafted [ ... ] , just don 't tell me it 's original " . Robert Christgau of The Village Voice gave the album a " C + " grade and felt that Smith attempts to appease a larger audience by broadening " gothic clichés " and " pumping his bad faith and bad relationship into depressing moderato play @-@ loud keyb anthems far more tedious than his endless vamps " .

In a retrospective review for AllMusic , Stephen Thomas Erlewine gave Disintegration four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half out of five stars , and applauded the band by saying , " The Cure 's gloomy soundscapes have rarely sounded so alluring [ and ] the songs ? from the pulsating , ominous ' Fascination Street ' to the eerie , string @-@ laced ' Lullaby ' ? have rarely been so well @-@ constructed and memorable . " Erlewine went on to praise Disintegration for being " darkly seductive " , and " a hypnotic , mesmerizing record " . Pitchfork praised the record , admitting " Disintegration stands unquestionably as Robert Smith 's magnum opus . " Writer Chris Ott noted that " scant few albums released in the 1980s can boast an opener as grand as ' Plainsong ' , the most breathtaking , shimmering anthem the band ever recorded . "

Disintegration has been included in numerous " Best Of " lists . Rolling Stone placed the record at number 326 on its 2003 compilation of the " 500 Greatest Albums of All Time " . The magazine 's German counterpart placed Disintegration at number 184 on the same list . The album was considered to be the best album of 1989 by Melody Maker , 17th on Q magazine 's " 40 Best Albums of the 80s " , and 38th on Pitchfork 's " Best Albums of the 80s " . The album placed at number 14 in Entertainment Weekly 's " New Classics : The 100 Best Albums from 1983 to 2008 . " In 2012 , Slant Magazine listed the album at number 15 on its list of " Best Albums of the 1980s " . In a 2001 article in Rolling Stone , readers selected Disintegration as number 9 in of " the 10 Best Albums of the Eighties " . The album was also included in the book 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die .

= = The Prayer Tour and aftermath = =

Following completion of Disintegration , Smith noted that The Cure had " despite my best efforts , actually become everything that I didn 't want us to become : a stadium rock band . " Furthermore , Smith claimed the album 's title was the most appropriate one he could think of : " Most of the relationship with the band outside of the band fell apart . Calling it Disintegration was kind of tempting fate , and fate retaliated . The family idea of the group really fell apart too after Disintegration . It was the end of a golden period . "

The Prayer Tour began in Europe shortly after the release of the album . The band performed numerous high @-@ profile concerts , including shows in front of more than 40 @, @ 000 fans over two nights in Paris and their first performances in Eastern Europe . Following the European leg , the band elected to travel to North America for their upcoming US leg by boat , instead of plane . Smith and Gallup shared a fear of flight , and ultimately lamented the upcoming dates , wishing to reduce the number of concerts they booked . The record label and tour promoters strongly disagreed , and even proposed to add several new shows to the itinerary because of the success of Disintegration in the US . The first concert in the United States was at New Jersey 's Giants Stadium , where 44 @, @ 000 people attended ; 30 @, @ 000 tickets were purchased on the first day alone . The opening acts at Giant Stadium were : Pixies , Shelleyan Orphan and Love and Rockets along with a special

appearance by The Bubblemen . The band were extremely displeased with the massive turnout ; according to Roger O 'Donnell : " We had been at sea for five days . The stadium was too big for us to take it all in . We 've decided that we don 't like playing stadiums that large . " Smith recalls that " it was never our intention to become as big as this " .

The band 's show at Dodger Stadium attracted roughly 50 @, @ 000 attendees , grossing over US \$ 1 @. @ 5 million . The band 's notably greater popularity in the United States ? virtually every concert in the leg was sold out ? caused Smith to break down , and threatened the band 's future : " It 's reached a stage where I personally can 't cope with it , " he said , " so I 've decided this is the last time we 're gonna tour . " Backstage , there were ongoing feuds between band members owing to the strife onset by Smith . He recalled that towards the end of the tour " I was tearing my hair out ... It was just a difficult tour . " Cocaine use was prevalent , and only ended up distancing Smith from his fellow band members .

Upon returning to the United Kingdom in early October , Smith wanted nothing more to do with recording , promoting and touring for an album . In 1990 " Lullaby " won " Best Music Video of 1989 " at the BRIT Awards . The Cure also released a live album titled Entreat ( 1991 ) , which compiled songs entirely off Disintegration from their performance at Wembley Arena , and despite claims that The Cure would never tour again , Smith accepted an invitation to headline the Glastonbury Festival . O 'Donnell , after two years with the group , left to pursue a solo career , and was replaced by the band 's guitar technician Perry Bamonte . Smith , who was influenced by the acid house movement that had exploded in London that summer , released a predominantly electronic remix album , Mixed Up , in 1990 .

= = Track listing = =

All lyrics written by Robert Smith , all music composed by Smith , Simon Gallup , Roger O 'Donnell , Porl Thompson , Boris Williams , and ( officially , in credits ) Lol Tolhurst .

Original cd and cassette copies of Disintegration listed " Last Dance " and " Homesick " as bonus tracks , as they were not included on the original vinyl issue of the album .

= = = 2010 deluxe edition disc two : Rarities 1988 ? 1989 = = =

" Prayers for Rain " ? Robert Smith home demo ( Instrumental ) ? 4 / 88  
" Pictures of You " ? Robert Smith home demo ( Instrumental ) ? 4 / 88  
" Fascination Street " ? Robert Smith home demo ( Instrumental ) ? 4 / 88  
" Homesick " ? Band rehearsal ( Instrumental ) ? 6 / 88  
" Fear of Ghosts " ? Band rehearsal ( Instrumental ) ? 6 / 88  
" Noheart " ? Band rehearsal ( Instrumental ) ? 6 / 88  
" Esten " ? Band demo ( Instrumental ) ? 9 / 88  
" Closedown " ? Band demo ( Instrumental ) ? 9 / 88  
" Lovesong " ? Band demo ( Instrumental ) ? 9 / 88  
" 2Late " ( alternate version ) ? Band demo ( Instrumental ) ? 9 / 88  
" The Same Deep Water as You " ? Band demo ( Instrumental ) ? 9 / 88  
" Disintegration " ? Band demo ( Instrumental ) ? 9 / 88  
" Untitled " ( alternate version ) ? Studio rough ( Instrumental ) ? 11 / 88  
" Babble " ( alternate version ) ? Studio rough ( Instrumental ) ? 11 / 88  
" Plainsong " ? Studio rough ( Guide vocal ) ? 11 / 88  
" Last Dance " ? Studio rough ( Guide vocal ) ? 11 / 88  
" Lullaby " ? Studio rough ( Guide vocal ) ? 11 / 88  
" Out of Mind " ? Studio rough ( Guide vocal ) ? 11 / 88  
" Delirious Night " ? Rough mix ( vocal ) ? 12 / 88  
" Pirate Ships " ( Robert Smith solo ) ? Rough mix ( vocal ) ? 12 / 89

= = = Disc three : Entreat Plus : Live at Wembley 1989 = = =

" Plainsong "  
" Pictures of You "  
" Closedown "  
" Lovesong "  
" Last Dance "  
" Lullaby "  
" Fascination Street "  
" Prayers for Rain "  
" The Same Deep Water as You "  
" Disintegration "  
" Homesick "  
" Untitled "

= = = Online only : Alternative Rarities : 1988 ? 1989 = = =

" Closedown " ( RS Home Instrumental Demo 5 / 88 ) ? 1 : 24  
" Last Dance " ( RS Home Instrumental Demo 5 / 88 ) ? 3 : 11  
" Lullaby " ( RS Home Instrumental Demo 5 / 88 ) ? 2 : 10  
" Tuned Out on RTV5 " ( Instrumental Rehearsal 6 / 88 ) ? 2 : 20  
" Fuknnotfunk " ( Instrumental Rehearsal 6 / 88 ) ? 2 : 08  
" Babble " ( Instrumental Rehearsal 6 / 88 ) ? 2 : 08  
" Plainsong " ( Instrumental Demo 9 / 88 ) ? 2 : 24  
" Pictures of You " ( Instrumental Demo 9 / 88 ) ? 3 : 11  
" Fear of Ghosts " ( Instrumental Demo 9 / 88 ) ? 4 : 04  
" Fascination Street " ( Instrumental Demo 9 / 88 ) ? 3 : 45  
" Homesick " ( Instrumental Demo 9 / 88 ) ? 4 : 37  
" Delirious Night " ( Instrumental Demo 9 / 88 ) ? 3 : 26  
" Out of Mind " ( Studio Instrumental Jam 10 / 88 ) ? 2 : 40  
" 2 Late " ( Studio ' WIP ' Mix 11 / 88 ) ? 2 : 30  
" Lovesong " ( Studio ' WIP ' Mix 11 / 88 ) ? 3 : 19  
" Prayers for Rain " ( Studio ' WIP ' Mix 11 / 88 ) ?  
" The Same Deep Water as You " ( Live Dallas Starplex 9 / 15 / 89 ) ? 10 : 28  
" Disintegration " ( Live Dallas Starplex 9 / 15 / 89 ) ? 7 : 08  
" Untitled " ( Live Dallas Starplex 9 / 15 / 89 ) ? 7 : 07  
" Faith " ( Live Rome Palaeur 6 / 4 / 89 ? Crowd Bootleg ) ? 14 : 06  
These recordings were only found on [www.thecuredisintegration.com](http://www.thecuredisintegration.com) , now closed .

= = Personnel = =

Robert Smith ? vocals , guitars , keyboards , 6 @-@ string bass , production , engineering  
Simon Gallup ? bass guitar , keyboards  
Porky Thompson ? guitars  
Boris Williams ? drums , percussion  
Roger O 'Donnell ? keyboards , piano  
Lol Tolhurst ? credited with " other instrument " ; basis for the song " Homesick "  
Production  
David M. Allen ? production , engineering  
Richard Sullivan ? engineering  
Roy Spong ? engineering

= = Chart positions = =

=== Album ===

=== Singles ===