

Unveiling the Enigma: The Big Midweek Life Inside The Fall

The Fall, a post-punk band that emerged from the depths of Manchester, England in the late 1970s, has left an enduring legacy in the annals of music history. Led by the enigmatic and brilliant frontman Mark E. Smith, the band's uncompromising sound, abrasive lyrics, and distinctive aesthetic continue to captivate and polarize listeners to this day. In the midst of their tumultuous career, the period spanning the release of their third album, "Grotesque (After the Gramme)" in 1980 and their commercial breakthrough with "The Unutterable" in 1984, stands as a particularly intriguing and transformative era.





The Big Midweek: Life Inside The Fall by Steve Hanley

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
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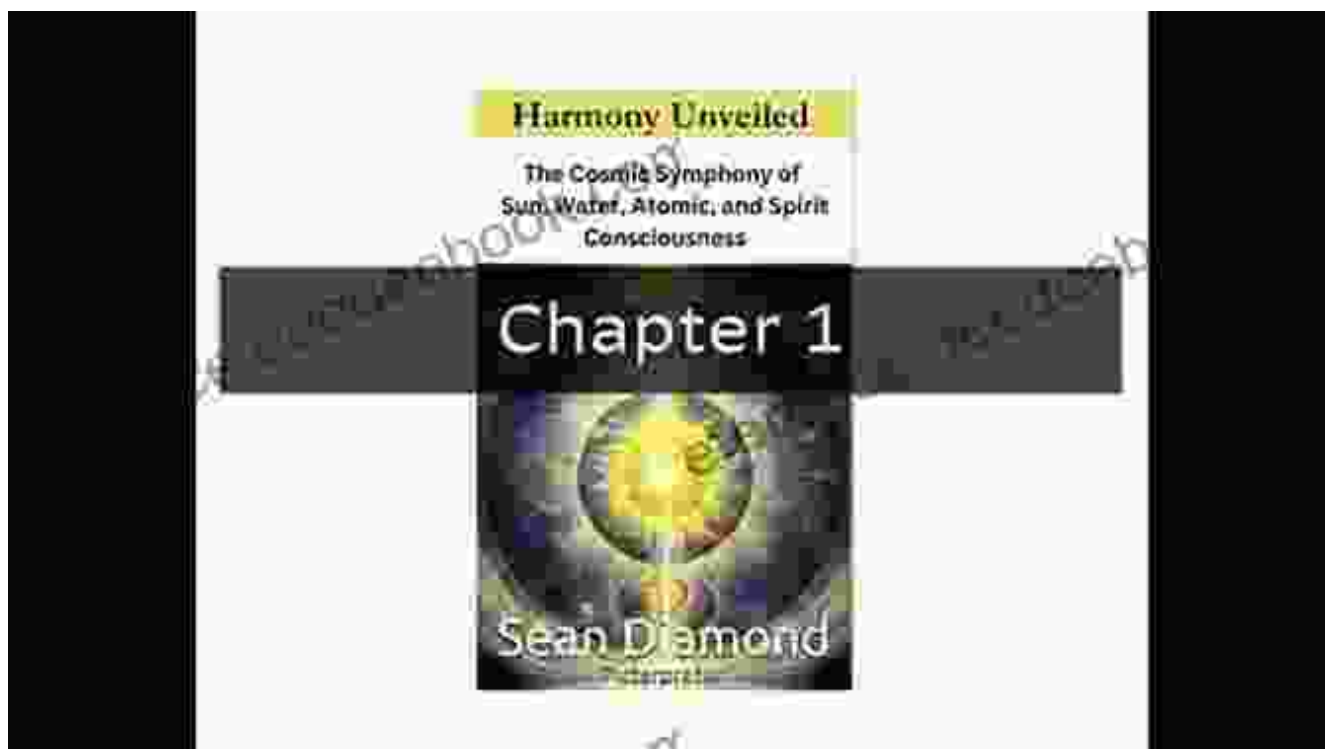
The Rise of the "Big Midweek"

The early 1980s marked a period of significant change for The Fall. The departure of founding member and guitarist Martin Bramah in 1980 left Smith as the sole creative force behind the band. With the addition of keyboardist Steve Hanley and bassist Steve Ormrod, the "Big Midweek" lineup was born. This moniker, inspired by a local Manchester soccer team, embodied the band's newfound sense of resilience and determination.

The "Big Midweek" era was characterized by a relentless touring schedule and a prolific output of recordings. Between 1980 and 1984, The Fall released a staggering five studio albums and numerous singles, establishing themselves as a formidable live act with a dedicated following. Their music during this period became increasingly experimental and eclectic, incorporating elements of dub, funk, and electronics into their signature post-punk sound.

The Lyrical Genius of Mark E. Smith

At the heart of The Fall's appeal lay the enigmatic and often impenetrable lyrics of Mark E. Smith. His verbose and stream-of-consciousness style of writing, influenced by the likes of William S. Burroughs and J.G. Ballard, explored themes of alienation, consumerism, and the absurdity of modern life. Smith's lyrics were both incisive and darkly humorous, often providing a twisted social commentary on the world around him.



Mark E. Smith, known for his enigmatic and stream-of-consciousness lyrics, reading from a notebook on stage.

Musical Innovation and Experimentation

The "Big Midweek" era was also a time of significant musical innovation for The Fall. The band's sound evolved beyond its post-punk roots, incorporating a wide range of influences into their music. Hanley's unconventional keyboard playing, inspired by Jamaican dub music, became an integral part of their sonic palette. Ormrod's basslines were

often complex and propulsive, providing a solid foundation for Smith's abrasive guitar work.

In addition to their studio albums, The Fall released a series of experimental recordings during the "Big Midweek" era. These included collaborations with avant-garde musicians such as John T. Waldron and Richard H. Kirk of Cabaret Voltaire. The band's willingness to experiment and push the boundaries of their sound further cemented their reputation as one of the most innovative and challenging bands of their time.

Commercial Breakthrough and Critical Acclaim

Despite their critical acclaim and cult following, The Fall struggled to achieve commercial success for much of their career. However, with the release of "The Unutterable" in 1984, the band finally broke through to a wider audience. The album's more accessible sound and catchy singles, such as "Couldn't Get Ahead" and "Cruiser's Creek," helped to establish The Fall as a force to be reckoned with in the mainstream music scene.

The commercial success of "The Unutterable" did not diminish The Fall's artistic integrity or their commitment to experimentation. In the years that followed, the band continued to release challenging and groundbreaking music, cementing their status as one of the most important and influential post-punk bands of all time.

The "Big Midweek" era of The Fall stands as a testament to the band's relentless creativity, uncompromising vision, and enduring influence. During this transformative period, the band honed their distinctive sound, expanded their musical horizons, and established themselves as a formidable live act. Led by the enigmatic Mark E. Smith, The Fall's "Big

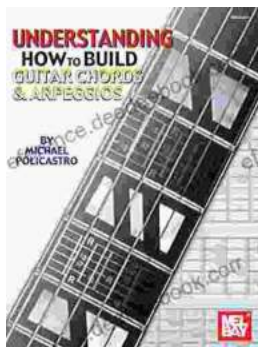
Midweek" was a time of both artistic and commercial success, leaving an indelible mark on the history of rock music.



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