



HOW HAS THE CURE'S SOUND EVOLVED SINCE THEIR DEBUT ALBUM IN 1979?

For almost the past 30 years, masses of discontented, angst-y teenagers have found solace in the often haunting melodies of The

Cure. Considerably one of the best bands of the 80's, The Cure surpasses categorical boundaries, spanning from New Wave to Pop to Alternative Rock. Founded by lead-singer Robert Smith in 1978, he is the only original member remaining in the band today. And, after 13 studio albums, countless live DVDs, and several greatest hits compilations, The Cure is still a prevalent force in the music industry today.

Three Imaginary Boys was The Cure's first full-length album released. Smith was only 18 for much of the recording, and his youthful voice and exuberance is evident on most of the tracks (track 7 was sung by the bassist). Other members of the band at this time include Michael Dempsey on bass/back-up vocals and Lol Tollhurst on drums. The trio had very little experience dealing with making an album, and so many of the decisions were made by the producers. As a result, it

doesn't have a very clear direction or distinct sound. Some tunes are clearly punk-inspired, while others come across as pop, and others still don't sound like much at all. In later years, Smith was quoted saying "A lot of it was very superficial – I didn't even like it at the time. There were criticisms made that it was very lightweight, and I thought they were justified. Even when we'd made it, I wanted to do something that I thought had more substance to it." Regardless, the album was fairly popular and was an excellent beginning to what was to be an exceptionally great career.

The next three records The Cure released had a much darker feel to them, and effectively categorized the band as being "Goth Rock". Smith has repeatedly rejected this label, saying "I just play Cure music, whatever that is." Several line changes, and a switch to poppier melodies led to greater commercial success; from 1983-1988 they had several hits, such as "Just Like Heaven", "Lovesong", and "Friday I'm in Love". The release of *Disintegration* in 1989 was the highlight of their career. With impeccable song writing, catchy guitar riffs, and powerful drum beats, it is quintessential Cure music. It marked a return to their dark and melancholic roots. Consequently, the albums that have been produced post-*Disintegration* have been lacking. 2000's *Bloodflowers* was received well, but the following self-titled record in 2004 was a huge failure. While the album boasted classic Cure tunes, the production was so muddy that all one can hear is distorted guitar, droning bass, and Smith's vocals, as opposed to the orchestration and synths that make their songs so... Cure-esque.

In October of this year, The Cure released their latest album, *4:13 Dream*. Smith's aging vocals are crudely apparent, but his creative ability is still up to par. Porl Thompson on guitar, Simon Gallup on bass, and Jason Cooper on drums makes for an excellent combination. Much critique has been made in regards to the mixing and production of the music, saying the vocals are too loud and the percussion and bass lines are being drowned out. Nevertheless, *4:13 Dream* debuted at #16 on the Billboard 200 and sold 24,000 copies in the first week.

Since 1979, The Cure's sound (and line-up) has gone through many transformations. From punk rockers to gothic kings to pop phenomenon, The Cure has been "...the most successful alternative band that ever shuffled disconsolately about the earth," as NME, a British music magazine, put it. Their influence on modern music has been great, and one can hope that we haven't heard the last of them.