

The Cure – 4:13 Dream (2008)

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1 *Underneath The Stars* 6:18 2 *The Only One* 3:57 3 *The Reasons Why* 4:35 4
Freakshow 2:30 5 *Sirensong* 2:23 6 *The Real Snow White* 4:43 7 *The Hungry Ghost* 4:30
8 *Switch* 3:45 9 *The Perfect Boy* 3:21 10 *This. Here And Now. With You* 4:07 11 *Sleep*
When I'm Dead 3:52 12 *The Scream* 4:37 13 *It's Over* 4:17 Bass – Simon Gallup
Drums, Percussion, Loops – Jason Cooper Guitar – Porl Thompson Handclaps – The
Catsfield Sub Rhythm Trio Percussion [Extra], Drum Programming – 'SMUD' Vocals, Guitar,
6-String Bass, Keyboards – Robert Smith

A hefty four years and several release date shuffles after the last album finally The Cure's 4: 13 Dream arrives.

Despite a propensity for Smith looking like a slightly more portly cross-dressing Edward Scissorhands and sounding like he's on the verge of tears while singing, it's always been a mystery why The Cure ever got labelled as g*ths. In truth, their earliest work may have existed in the same grey navel-gazing post industrial space as say, Joy Division (cf: Seventeen Seconds), but since the mid 80s Smith has mostly been dealing in the kind of upbeat Cocteau Twins-meets-The 13 Floor Elevators material that was always more baroque and flowery than black and floury. So it is with 4:13 dream. The album's been preceded by a single released on the 13th of each month; beginning with *The Only One* in May. This is a feisty return to the place where Robert sounds like he's about to burst from whatever it is that's got him in its grip - in this case good old fashioned love. It's a good antidote to the more monumental post rock of the opening *Underneath The Stars*.

Smith's always worked best in small numbers and the return of Porl Thompson on guitar after 14 years seems to have reinvigorated Smith no end. If there's a period of the Cure that this album most closely resembles it's *Wish* - their most commercial effort.

In fact most of the album is upbeat - celebrating mental health and bounding with energy. This renewed joi de vivre is expressed best on Sleep When I'm Dead, a song that dates back to the Head On The Door period. Smith claims that he's deliberately edited out the dourer numbers slimming down what was originally pencilled in as a double album, and you can't help feeling that he did the right thing. Freakshow may have a coruscating wah wah solo at its heart - but you could also see Girls Aloud doing a version. Really.

It's not all joyous love songs and latino rave-ups though. The Scream builds from an electro flamenco nightmare to a wailing crescendo, while Switch resurrects those old rock miserabilist stand-bys, isolation and paranoia, as its subject. "I'm tired of being alone with myself" yelps Bob.

Release delays may often signal dissatisfaction, but judging by reports of a wealth (33 songs) of material it seems to indicate that it was just a crisis of self editing that held up proceedings. Luckily it was worth the wait. This is classic Cure, weird, wired and wiggy when it needs to be, but never overly glum, harrowing or serious. Time to get the lipstick out again. ---Chris Jones, BBC Review

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