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# P A I N T IT B L A C K

**A band that hates dance music is about to release an album of dance**

**S**OMEWHERE OUTSIDE OF LONDON, 1:30 A.M. About a half-dozen kids, mostly girls, are waiting in front of a seven-foot-high metal gate to catch a glimpse of—or even better, a word with—their favorite band. Meanwhile, the objects of their affection sit upstairs discussing murder. Robert Smith—singer, guitarist, and conceptualist for the Cure—is shaking his head in disbelief as bassist Simon Gallup tries to convince him that one of their acquaintances actually did her boyfriend in with a shovel.

“Wait a minute—you expect me to believe she hit him over the head, dragged him out, and buried him in a shallow grave? Who told you that?” Smith asks, while kicking back on the couch in a T-shirt and boxer shorts.

Perry Bamonte, the Cure’s new keyboardist, is called out from the dressing room to confirm the story. “It’s true,” he says, “she told us while we were in the pub.”

Somehow this explanation doesn’t carry a lot of impact coming out of the mouth of a guy who bears more than a slight resemblance to Eddie Munster, complete with wolfman makeup and velvet suit. Robert—who only moments before had black eyeliner and lipstick smeared on his pale face, his trademark black hair teased to perfection—doesn’t look convinced, but the debate is a good way to pass the time before he is forced to mutate into a Siamese twin. Not to worry, the Cure haven’t joined the circus. They’re just shooting a video (almost the same thing), and despite all the rumors they haven’t broken up.

In fact, there is quite a lot of Cure material waiting to be born: A live album from last year’s Prayer tour is in the can; a Robert Smith solo album, which has been an ongoing project for a while, is close to completion; and Rough Trade has just put out *Blue Sunshine* by the Glove, a duo consisting of Steve Severin and Robert that was made in 1983 when Robert did a brief stint with Siouxsie and the Banshees.

But the real band news is their latest album, *Mixed-Up*, a collection of Cure classics remixed by four of London’s hottest DJ/producers: Mark Saunders, Paul Oakenfold, Bryan “Chuck” New, and William Orbit. (Among them, they are responsible for such dance faves as Neneh Cherry, Happy

**remixes. Welcome to the wacky world**

**of the Cure. An exclusive**

**report from London by LAUREN SPENCER.**



**A partial Cure: from left, Porl Thompson, Boris Williams, Perry Bamonte, Simon Gallup.**

Mondays, Lisa Stansfield, and Nitzer Ebb.) *Mixed-Up* will definitely have clubs across the continent vibrating to ditties such as a six-minute-plus “In Between Days (Shiver Mix).” But the weird thing is, Robert hates to dance and thinks the whole Happy Mondays/Manchester rave craze is “a load of dross. I always hated disco. I like to watch other people dance—if they do it well—but I myself can’t.”

So how did this album come to be?

“Well, this didn’t start off to be a dance record,” Robert explains. “It started because people were trying to get a hold of old remixes and 12-inches and I saw this record collectors magazine that had the prices of singles and albums. I was having a look at what our singles were going for and I was stunned by how much they were on the market for. So, I thought, the [master] tapes are with us, why not put them out again. Then the idea started growing into more and more of a remix album. As it turned out there aren’t that many of the ones I originally wanted to do on here,” he laughs.

In the process of going through the tapes, it was discovered that the masters of *The Walk* EP and *Seventeen Seconds* had disappeared. “They actually used to keep them at our record company in the back hallway,” says Robert, “and people would just

walk in and see them sitting there. I never realized just how important those tapes are to us.” Rumor has it that a fan contacted the record company some time after the loss was discovered and offered some kind of deal in return for the tapes. When said person was informed that the authorities would look into it, the masters mysteriously reappeared. But in the interim, both “The Walk,” and “A Forest” (from *Seventeen Seconds*) had to be re-recorded.

The album also contains a new single written and recorded last summer, “Never Enough.” With a screaming Hendrix-like guitar sound that hits hard, it’s the most in-your-face rock’n’roll to come out of the Cure since their early days of “Killing an Arab.”

“Yeah,” says Perry. “It’s surprising really because people get used to a certain Cure sound, and with this song you hear a really loud guitar riff, and it’s not until Robert’s voice comes in that you realize it’s the Cure.”

Guitarist Porl Thompson adds, with a sidelong glance at Robert, “Hendrix was an influence on one member of this band.”

**T**HE VIDEO FOR “Never Enough” is what has brought them to Magic Eye Studio in London, where they are wrapping up the last of a two-day-and-into-the-night shoot for “Never Enough.” The idea for the video came from the 1932 cult-horror movie *Freaks*, and the set is replete with a fun house and all manner of visual illusions created for a full-on trompe l’oeil effect. The song title appears apt, given the amount of costume changes and apparent deterioration the band has gone through within this 48-hour period. “We decay through seven levels of freakishness,” says Robert. “We start off normal and then gradually get taken over by these characters. It works well because by the end you really feel like you’re falling apart.”

Tim Pope, who’s been the Cure’s only video director since 1982, still bears the black eye-makeup smudges from his role earlier as Turban Tim, the fortune teller. This is a family affair, and you can tell as you watch the band work with Pope that their relationship is based on mutual respect. Robert waits patiently while he is instructed to dangle from