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The Big Midweek: Life Inside The Fall



Synopsis

A Guardian Book of the Year
A Rough Trade Book of the Year
Reader's Digest Editor's Choice
A Dagsavisen Book of the Year
The first insider's account of life inside The Fall, Steve Hanley's story unfolds like a novel; from 1979 when he joined his schoolmates Marc Riley and Craig Scanlon in The Fall, he puts us right in the heart of the action: on stage, on the tour bus, in the recording studio, and up close and personal with an eccentric cast of band mates. These vividly drawn scenes give unprecedented insight into the intense, highly-charged creative atmosphere within The Fall and their relentless work ethic which has won them a dedicated cult following, high-art respectability and a unique place in popular music history.

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Customer Reviews

I've always maintained that bass players and drummers write the best music bios. They don't have the distorting egos to maintain, keeping slightly out of the spotlight, workmanlike, but gaining more perspective than the blokes at the front of the stage. Steve Hanley has seen it all: the creative bloom and critical respect as well as the descent into oblivion under the initially benign but eventually mad (and maddening) dictatorship the godlike (and devilish) genius of Mark Smith. Not a

band bio in the conventional sense, Hanley gives a direct personal account of his 20 years in one of the UK's most lauded bands. In a manner both direct and subtly dry and witty he draws you into a first-hand tale which is so finely crafted one can't help but feel that this might be a novel or a work of exceptionally literate self-analysis: a tale so well told that it reads like fiction. While other Fall writings (and I've read them all) are largely crafted for the faithful, Hanley has fashioned something for anyone who can appreciate the extremes of joy and bitter pain of reaching for the brass ring and falling short (and increasingly with with a longer drop). I can't thank Steve enough for writing a book which ultimately transcends the band and its history and simultaneously adds to its depth: no mean feat considering the extent of Fall's output. So, thank you Steve for writing the story of the Fall which the master wordsmith Mark Smith could never have written.

a well written account from the fall's longest serving instrumentalist. the story goes down smooth and appears to be honest while trying to avoid revealing too much that doesn't belong. there are a few gaps maybe but for the most part it is an interesting story from the fall's engine room over nearly 20 years. for fall fans, this is a must read. i couldn't put it down.

What a distinct pleasure it is to hear the voice of the man hunched in front of the SVT, locking down the thundering anthems that have so influenced my generation. The book poignantly conveys life in the cult of MES, in all its dysfunctional glory. Most highly recommended reading for all fellow sufferers and lifetime fans of this totally unique and seminal group.

Steve Hanley's bass playing with the Fall always was incredible. He likewise is an amazing storyteller. I could not put this book down and found myself reading as slowly as possible because I did not want to end. Hanley comes off as self-deprecating and deeply humorous. He paints great portraits of Marc Riley, Craig Scanlon, and Karl Burns as real and fascinating people. Not to mention Mark E Smith. He is honest throughout and rarely did a page go by when I did not chuckle to myself or out loud. This book is especially fascinating to long-time Fall fans, the Manchester scene, or modern music in general. Phenomenal read - I'm sad it's over.

Having listened to the Fall since 1978 and having bought all the books written about the band-this one is a cracker. Steve Hanley has written a book that is both a great history of the band and their various albums and lineups. But it is also about the disintegration of the lead singer as the ravages of alcohol and quite possible amphetamine use take their toll culminating in the infamous Waterloo

at Brownies which saw the collapse of the best line-up of the fall in a hail of fists and broken amps. Well recommended.

How this man endured that many years backing the frontline of the Fall. But out of that comes an insiders guide and warning to the lows and near High's of indie rock. So well written and much to tell its a delight and a nightmare.

The Big Midweek by Steve Hanley and Olivia Piekarski is one of the best musician memoirs I have ever read. I am grateful that he has shared his memories and insight. How in the world he managed to stay in the band so long while being subjected to such extreme abuse from his ex-bandleader I cannot comprehend. Mr Hanley must have amazing patience and inner strength. I bought his book because I became a fan of the band 10 years ago, and wanted to know more about his musical journey. Not sure if I can listen to the band again as I feel disturbed by his ex-boss's lashing out at him and his ex-bandmates both physically and emotionally. Anyhow, I most highly recommend Mr Hanley's book. Many thanks to him for sharing his stories.

Small gripes. Missing an account of their best album. Otherwise tremendous. Hanley is a hero. Backbone of one of the best bands ever.

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