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[Time of the New Order – Featuring Bad Lieutenant, Kites with Lights, Fear of Night and Ceremony: A Tribute to New Order](#)

Over the last several years, much love has been showered upon the groundbreaking post-punk creation of Manchester's **Joy Division**. Profoundly influential, their heritage can be found running through any number of modern hitmakers from the Killers to Interpol. I'm certainly someone who's affection could be carved into the **Joy Division** bedpost like a lover's conquest, having spent many a night lost in their intimate embrace. But my immersion in their intense moodiness didn't die with the passing of Ian Curtis. Like a lover on the rebound, I found just as much solace in the early, bass-heavy, doom laden strains of **New Order**. And even as the band evolved in tone, essentially creating techno pop in the process, I was still with them, sharing their sweaty sheets.

I'll never forget the first time I heard "Blue Monday" by **New Order**. That was techno even I, a confirmed rocker, could get into, with it's massively heavy bassline and darkly morose lyrics. Now it seems, the adulation that had been heaped onto **Joy Division** is flowing towards **New Order** as well, as a host of new releases dip into that familiar Manchester vibe.



Bad Lieutenant – Never Cry Another Tear

No story about the brave post-**New Order** world would satisfy if it didn't start with this gem of a debut by Bernard Sumner and his new band, **Bad Lieutenant**. Joined by Phil Cunningham and Jake Evans, Sumner let's loose for all the world to see that he has lost none of his pop genius over the years. I can say without a shadow of doubt that **Bad Lieutenant** is my favorite of all the former **New Order** band members' subsequent projects.

Harkening back to what made **New Order** so compelling in the first place, **Bad Lieutenant** bring an effortless flow of post-punk pop smarts to this album that it's stunning. I was drawn into this disc by the comfortable familiarity of the sound, quickly followed by the realization that every thing I was hearing was totally fresh to my ears. **Bad Lieutenant** bring the guitar sound of old **New Order** to the forefront, allowing the synths to drift into the back. Electric 12-string sings and dances though the disc like streaks of light splitting the sky. The bass and beat are endless, relentless in their drive, moving the songs forward in large looping curves. And then there's that voice, Sumner's breathy, understated purr that graced so many songs that became the soundtrack of my college years.

"Sink or Swim" gets the show off to an immediate start. Following on the tail of an airy 12 string guitar intro, Sumner jumps right into the fray. "What you doing/with that stupid little girl . . ." riding across an undeniable melody, before the song breaks down to a pensive mid-tempo beat. Soaring and descending, immediately I'm caught up in the slipstream of every great **New Order** melody ever written, but encased in a totally fresh crystalline package. Guitars sing and chime, a touch of psychedelia added to the Sumner melancholy. Suddenly, I find I'm spinning around the melody and grace of the song like a satellite caught in a planet's gravitational pull. I'm circling, I'm spinning. The song is orbiting . . . and everything just feels right.

Lest you think that Sumner and boys managed to pull one great song out of their pockets, "Twist of Fate," follows, sounding even more aggressive and direct. Guitars layer in with added malevolence, the bass pulsates with a direct purpose. Here Sumner's phrasing is more staccato, more intentional, adding an urgency to the song. All leading to the soaring of that chorus, and suddenly I'm orbiting **Bad Lieutenant's** gravitational field again. This is pure pop heaven, a cosmos of aural delight. "Summer Days," which follows next is perfect. Simply perfect.

With Bernard Sumner in the band, and his vocals so distinctive, it's only natural that he become the focus of the band, but it 's got to be said that **Bad Lieutenant** are first and foremost a band. Each member added to the songwriting and without their individual contributions, like the stratosphere-reaching radiance of the 12-string guitar, **Bad Lieutenant** just wouldn't be as compelling. As it is, this is one of my favorite pop records of the year so far. **New Order** fans should not miss this.

Buy here: [Never Cry Another Tear](#)



Kites With Lights – The Weight of Your Heart

While my personal taste tends towards the earlier **New Order** material, in no way will I ever deny the pop brilliance of their *Low Life* and later material. And that's the era that **Kites With Lights** explores in this infinitely listenable 5-song Ep. Synthesizers build in layer upon layer, sequencers trace across synthetic beats, vocals intimate out in hushed, monitored tones, while a brooding darkness lurks throughout. The overall result is stunningly familiar and warmly comfortable without ever seeming contrived or derivative.

Essentially a one-man act, **Kites With Lights**, brings out the best of the *Low Life*-era with it's definitive synth lines, and plodding bass runs. For an album so synth heavy, it still retains a subtle organic feeling, mostly coming from the evocative nature of the vocals and harmonies. The beats, clearly techno, avoid all the pitfalls of falling into trance territory with it's mind-numbing monotony. Here, like on the title track, the tone is more subdued, somber, but still hypnotic in effect. Each of the five tracks are mini-moments of synth pop delight. Any fan of "Bizarre Love Triangle" will find much to love here.

Buy here: [The Weight Of Your Heart](#)

FEAR OF NIGHT

Fear of Night – S/T

Coming to us from the newly discovered (my new discovery) UrbanTorque Label, **Fear of Night** infuse their post-**New Order** electro pop with the flavoring of many of the best

of the '80's techno bands. Hints of the melodic candy of **Duran Duran** courses through the sequencer/synth drive of "Optomistic," a song that makes it impossible not to move at least one part of your body in it's pulsating beat. "Fear of Night," captures the essence of early **Depeche Mode** in it's malevolent flavor. Brewing over a smoldering mid-tempo beat, the synths surround the melody in syncopated harmony.

"Lowest Common Denominator," is pure post *Low Life* **New Order** married to a vocal tone and melody taken from a long lost, never-before-heard, early **Tears For Fears** outtake. Absolutely, this is a moment of pure synth pop perfection, keeping its tone dark enough to avoid ever becoming dismissed as ear candy. And that's what **Fear of Night** does so well. Grabbing it's influences in synthesized bites and downloading them into their own processor of musical RAM, manufacturing an electropop cyborg of the familiar and the new. If you've ever longed for the days when synth pop seemed exotic and new, don't be afraid of the night.

Buy here: [Fear of Night](#)



Ceremony: A New Order Tribute

No mention of this post-**New Order** lovefest would be complete without bringing to your attention *Ceremony: A New Order Tribute*, a two-disc Deluxe package of **New Order** Cover songs all for the benefit of Factory Records Maestro, Tony Wilson. Wilson, who passed in 2007, would've turned 60 this year. A legendary figure in the Manchester music scene, Wilson's legacy continues to bring music into peoples lives, and a portion of the proceeds of this disc will go to The Salford Foundation Trust's Tony Wilson Awards, which benefits children and young people who demonstrate a special talent or ambition in the arts.

For this disc, some of the best of the new movement of post-**New Order** bands have been assembled to lend their touch to the band's vast catalog. If you read the **Kites with Lights** review above, you won't be surprised that they're here with a blistering version of "Dream Attack." **Rabbit in the Moon** take on an indy rock blitz through "Blue Monday." Ripple favorites, **Kingsbury**, make an appearance with their take on "This Time of the Night." **Detachments** tackle "The Perfect Kiss," while **The Dark Esquire** lend their sound to "Temptation." There's even a moving version of "Ceremony," performed by **Yes But No**, two sisters aged 10 and 13, who benefited from Wilson's

legacy.

A worthy cause. Some of your favorite songs. What's not to like?

Buy here: [Ceremony - A New Order Tribute](#)

--Racer