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Music DVD Review: *Depeche Mode - The Dark Progression*



Author: [Tan The Man](#) — Published: Jun 10, 2009 at 6:15 am

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Few bands have enjoyed the kind of staying power that the English electronic band [Depeche Mode](#) has enjoyed for nearly thirty years.

It's amazing what the guys from Essex have achieved, having helped bring electronic music mainstream during the eighties and early nineties while cultivating innovation and inspiring countless contemporary and modern musicians.

The unauthorized documentary *The Dark Progression* tells the story of [Depeche Mode](#)'s rise to popular and critical acclaim as highlighted by the amazing eight-year period that saw the release of *Black Celebration* (1986), *Music For The Masses* (1987), the landmark *Violator* (1990), and *Songs Of Faith And Devotion* (1993).

Originally known as Composition of Sound, Depeche Mode formed in 1980 from the humble beginnings by neighbors Vince Clarke and Andrew Fletcher, their school friend Martin Gore, and area-native Dave Gahan. Here, *The Dark Progression* doesn't get bogged down in recounting details of the band and instead establishes the context of the music scene that Depeche Mode formed during, emphasizing the early stages of the electronic sound pioneered by the earlier Kraftwerk and contemporaries Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark and The Human League along with the growing affordability of synthesizers.

Interviews with musicians Gary Numan and Thomas Dolby; Depeche Mode producers Gareth Jones, Dave Bascombe, Phil Legg, and Steve Lyon; and music journalists Mark Pendergast and David Stubbs help guide the band's story from the potential devastation of Vince Clarke's departure after the release of their debut *Speak & Spell* (1981), the addition of keyboardist Alan Wilder, the purposeful efforts to experiment and push musical boundaries with each subsequent record, and the increasing amount of pressure on the band amid mounting expectations from just about everyone.

The documentary is excellently paced so that it doesn't depict the band's progression as instant or unquestionably predestined because the band did labor to develop their music with the assistance of many talented producers. The documentary also doesn't play tracks to simply bide time and instead utilizes them to both establish the Depeche Mode vibe and track the evolving the Depeche Mode sound (from the early pop "Just Can't Get Enough" to the more industrial "Stripped" to the massively successful "Personal Jesus" and "Enjoy The Silence" to the more bluesy "I Feel You").

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