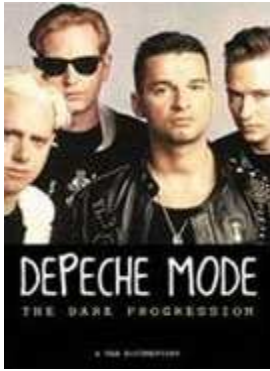



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Case Number 16628: Small Claims Court



Depeche Mode: The Dark Progression Unauthorized

[MVD Visual](#) // 2009 // 97 Minutes // Not Rated
Reviewed by Judge Brett Cullum // June 17th, 2009

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Judge Brett Cullum is in the middle of a black celebration of music for the masses.

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Scales of Justice

Judgment: 85

Perp Profile

Studio: [MVD Visual](#)

Video Formats:

- Full Frame

Audio Formats:

- Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo (English)

Subtitles:

- None

Running Time: 97 Minutes

Release Year: 2009

MPAA Rating: Not Rated

Genres:

- [Concerts and Musicals](#)
- [Documentary](#)

Distinguishing Marks

- Extended Interviews
- Biographies

Accomplices

- [DepecheMode.com](#)

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The Charge

I'm your own personal Jesus because I just can't get enough of some great reward. So let's play master and servant, because our strange love will spread blasphemous rumors. Oh yeah, and people are people...

The Case

Depeche Mode formed during 1980 in England, and named themselves after a French phrase meaning "Fashion Delivery." They were a band interested in embracing electronics and new romantic stylings to map out their moody music which was in alternate turns dance pop or depressing wail. Arguably they have become the most successful electronic act out there, mainly because they are still going strong almost thirty years after their debut. They lost their main song writer Vince Clark early on even before their first album hit stores, but the band hardly missed a beat. Martin Gore stepped in and 100 million albums later there is proof nothing can stop them. It is not surprising they are now the subject of an hour and a half long look at their career.

MVD is a DVD distributor who seems to have produced a whole line of these music documentaries which traces significant bands. They get great

panelists, really explore the whole scene around Depeche Mode, but this is still an unauthorized release. The vital members of Depeche Mode are not interviewed directly, but rather are featured only in archival footage. We get to hear from collaborators and peers, but never Dave Gahan or Martin Gore which means there is little that feels vital or from the source.

In the first part of **Depeche Mode: The Dark Progression Unauthorized** we get a nice history of the genre complete from the starts of Tangerine Dream and Kraftwerk. Interview subjects include electronic music pioneer Gary Numan ("Cars"), Thomas Dolby ("She Blinded Me With Science"), member of OMD Andrew McCluskey, music journalists, critics, and we're even shown clips from influential figures including their music videos. But then the documentary shifts to focus solely on Depeche Mode from the start up to today. We're given looks at the first singles, and get the sense there was never much struggle for these guys. Each album is analyzed, and we move up through the history of the band project by project. About the time we get up to "Music for the Masses" there are glimpses of the band talking in interviews conducted in 2006 which is a nice touch, so we do get some glimpses of them.

The technical part of the DVD presentation is an expected fullscreen accompanied by simple stereo. Current interview footage looks good, and then we have archival footage that depends on quality of the source material. Extras include simply offering an extended presentation of Thomas Dolby and Andrew McCluskey talking about playing with Depeche Mode during the Music for the Masses tour. We also get some text biographies of the contributors.

Depeche Mode makes a great subject for a feature length documentary, and this one has many things going for it. **Depeche Mode: The Dark Progression Unauthorized** shows us the history swirling around the most successful electronic band in the history of the genre. It's fascinating to hear Gary Numan, Thomas Dolby, and Andrew McCluskey discuss the music scene of the '80s that made them and Depeche Mode possible. We get a serviceable history of the era and a strong narrative about the band from album to album. The only thing missing are the actual members of the rock group talking about the songs and what they mean to them. It's a story we get through hearsay mostly, and that hurts a bit to sell the entire thing. In the end it feels a touch academic, but fans will be glad to at least get this. Surprisingly there are snippets of concerts and music videos enough to make us feel like perhaps we have heard from Depeche Mode. It certainly made me want to load up the CD player with all my favorite tracks.



The Verdict

Guilty of not exactly getting the balance right, but still enough to please fans...free to go down Route 66 with the violator behind the wheel.

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