



DEPECHE MODE: THE DARK PROGRESSION

The Small Screen

By: [Red Vaughn](#)

Be warned . . . watching this new “unauthorized” documentary on Depeche Mode will make you spend money. You’ll want to immediately run out and buy (or download) all your old faves from the ‘80s era to wallow in the nostalgia dredged up by this film. Far from being a sordid, tell-all “behind the music” type of deal (which the unauthorized tag might suggest), it instead anoints DM the icons of a veritable *movement*, which included the likes of Tears for Fears, OMD, New Order, etc. and documents the outfit’s progression from—as *Wire* magazine’s David Stubbs calls them—“a nifty, shiny, smart poppy band” to rock ‘n’ roll superstars. With little actual contribution from band members themselves (only a few archival interviews with Alan Wilder and Martin Gore are included), *The Dark Progression* makes its point through testimony from engineers, producers, journalists and fellow musicians of the era who express a plaintive jealousy—kind of a “why them and not me?” head scratch—underlying their honest admiration. Stubbs further elaborates, referring to the band as they stood in 1980: “You really didn’t imagine that they were going to last the ages... they looked like they’d be blown away by the next change of fashion.” *The Dark Progression* breaks down the exact steps taken by DM during a four-album span (1986’s *Black Celebration* through *Songs of Faith & Devotion* in 1993) to catapult the band to stardom, and keep them there. Indie bands of today, take heed!

EXTRAS: Written bios of the various talking heads from the doc, plus extended interviews with Thomas Dolby (apparently broadcasting from an outpost on the surface of Mars) and OMD’s Andy McCluskey. McCluskey’s “one last thing” is worth waiting for.

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