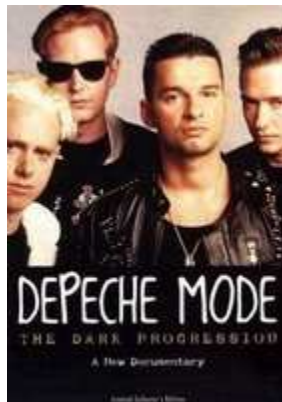


ModeWays

Depeche Mode: The Dark Progression

Author: DavMad / Labels: biography, dark progression, depeche mode, documentary



There's nothing scarier than seeing "This film is not authorized..." on a DVD biography or documentary. It's usually a sign that you're about to sit through an hour and a half of boring interviews and a fuzzy paparazzi footage, little of which features the person or people the DVD supposedly about. In simpler terms: a bio DVD is usually just some no-name company's way of making a few quick bucks. But that really isn't the case with Depeche Mode - The Dark Progression

As the viewer settles down to watch this "unauthorized documentary," it quickly becomes apparent that the filmmakers actually have a sense of adoration for the group. Love 'em, hate 'em, Depeche Mode is still going strong after all these years. I myself am a huge fan of the group. Have been ever since my older brother turned me onto them in the early '80s. At the time I was still in grade school, and still rather oblivious to the world around me. I could understand the lyrics, but the meaning of the lyrics sometimes eluded me (I'm still kind of that way, to be honest). But, no matter what their songs were about, Depeche Mode's minor chord-structured tunes always seemed to inhabit the darker side of my tender psyche -- and, as a kid who was pretty much in the dark from day one (in every sense), they always appealed to me more than The Smiths or The Cure did (two of my other faves back in the day).

As anyone who has ever compared the group's initial 1981 album *Speak & Spell* to the recent 2009 release of *Sounds Of A Strange Universe* will know, Depeche Mode's sound has changed considerably over the years. What started out as just another

synthpop band from the fabulous era of New Romanticism became one of the world's most influential and iconic groups. But, how did these things come to pass? Well, good news, there's a whole 97-minute documentary to let you know! *Depeche Mode - The Dark Progression* is a compilation of newly recorded interviews with former DM producers/collaborators (including Gareth Jones and Dave Bascombe), other favorite '80s musicians (such as Gary Numan, Thomas Dolby, and Andy McCluskey from OMD), along with critics and experts alike. Together, the interviews have been assembled with vintage footage, photographs, and music video/performance clips to tell us all how Depeche Mode came to find their niche in the music world.

Although the presence of Dave Gahan, Martin Gore, and Andy Fletcher, Alan Wilder and/or Vince Clarke is sorely missed here (a trace amount of bits "borrowed" from the 2006-2007 CD+DVD re-issues of DM's older albums), the makers behind *Depeche Mode - The Dark Progression* ultimately succeeded in making something entertaining. The film is presented in a full frame 1.33:1 ratio with an English 2.0 stereo sound mix. Since most of the footage has been taken from several sources, the quality varies overall, but the newer stuff (which there is a lot of) is specifically for this documentary is definitely the best looking. The stereo sound comes through fine and suffices admirably. There are no subtitles or captions included.

You don't normally expect to find any special features on the biography/documentary DVDs, so the addition of anything extra is much appreciated. The main extra here is "Playing For The Masses" (10:53), which is actually an unused portion of an interview with Andy McCluskey and Thomas Dolby in which they reminisce about playing with Depeche Mode at the sold-out Rose Bowl Stadium during the Music For The Masses tour. The only other extras here (aside from a plug for a website) are short bios for the individuals who were kind enough to lend filmmakers their time for interviews.

While most DM fanatics probably already know most of the information divulged in this documentary, *Depeche Mode - The Dark Progression* is a nice way to kill some time and explore the history of one of the world's greatest music groups in the process. Go on, give it a go.

<http://blogcritics.org/video/article/dvd-review-depeche-mode->

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B001YXXRYS/page>

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