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## ARTICLE

## DVD Review: Depeche Mode: The Dark Progression Unauthorized

by [Robert Bell](#)

Published: June 16, 2009

On the reverse sleeve of this Depeche Mode documentary, a caption states, "This Film is Not Authorised by Depeche Mode or Their Record Company." This typically means that a bashing is in store for the band by strangely selected interview subjects that are juxtaposed with grainy paparazzi footage, which alludes to the verbalized accusations. This isn't the case here, as the documentary seems genuinely respectful of the gothic synth-pop sensation and their apropos "dark progression." It's true that relevant interviews with the band, or say, footage of the band interacting might have given greater insights and context to the entire doc, but as a brief look at their sound progression and the general evolution of electronic music in the Eighties, this documentary isn't bad.

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**Rating:** NOT RATED

**Country:** UK

**Release Date:** June 16, 2009

**Distributor:** Video Music, Inc

**Grade:** B

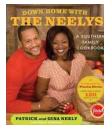
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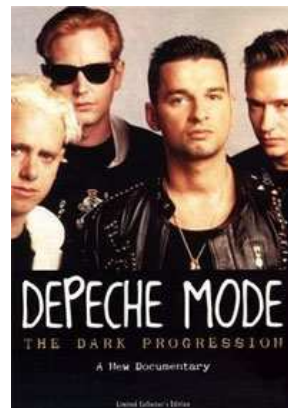
*Depeche Mode: The Dark Progression* starts things out by discussing the forming of the band in Basildon, Essex, England, and their desire to emulate bands like Kraftwerk and OMD who were making experimental music with synthesizers. Interviews with Andy McCluskey of [OMD](#), [Thomas Dolby](#) and [Gary Numan](#) provide context and insight on the inner-workings of this scene, while a [Depeche Mode](#) biographer fills in the blanks. It then moves through the release of [Speak & Spell](#) and the subsequent departure of Vince Clarke, which, of course, led to Alan Wilder's involvement with the group.

Early albums [A Broken Frame](#), [Construction Time Again](#) and [Some Great Reward](#) are briefly mentioned, as is the band's tendency to borrow from the underground German electronic scene and their increasing significance in the "Goth" scene, given their propensity for darker lyrics that explored subjects like sexual politics and arbitrary divinity. But deeper exploration is intentionally ignored, as the documentary is far more concerned with their next four releases and their influence on the music scene in both Europe and North America.

The unorthodox success of [Black Celebration](#) and [Music for the Masses](#) occupies much of the running time, as do lyrical analyses and instrumental decisions in the face of deceptively simple vocal hooks. Depeche Mode collaborators Gareth Jones and Dave Bascombe provide a glance into what the band was going for at the time of inception. Musical videos by Anton Corbijn are included, leading up to the [Violator](#) tour, which ended at the Rose Bowl stadium in Pasadena, California, demonstrating the bands stadium capabilities.

Some of the interpersonal problems leading up to the recording of [Songs of Faith and Devotion](#) are mentioned, but mostly the documentary talks about the music itself and what it meant contextually. Most Mode fans will be familiar with this information, which is inevitable, but the film progresses at a great pace, knowing just when to place music video footage and when to move on to a new topic of discussion. Think of it as an above-average VH1 special.

The DVD comes with special features to the tune of Andy McCluskey and Thomas Dolby discussing the Rose Bowl show, and some brief biographies.



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