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## Depeche Mode

### ***The Dark Progression* DVD (MVD Visual/Sexy Intellectual)**

By [Selena Fragassi](#)

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As *Depeche Mode: The Dark Progression* begins to unfold, an ominous score is met by a depressing baritone voiceover, who musters up his best *Behind the Music* impression to narrate the topic of this “unauthorized biography”: the dark themes underlying Depeche Mode’s height of success in 1994. Or, as the DVD hypothesizes, “the dark progression” from relatively “happy” recordings like *Speak & Spell* and *The Broken Frame* in the early ‘80s to the gothic undertones of the band’s most successful quartet of releases: *Black Celebration*, *Music For the Masses*, *Violator*, and *Songs Of Faith and Devotion* as the Brits tried to keep up with the ever-evolving landscape of electronic music.

One of the only benefits of an unauthorized biography is that it allows for complete freedom from record label interference and artist conflicts, but unfortunately nothing about *The Dark Progression* is groundbreaking. Although the producers manage to sign an all-star roster of contributors — from Gary

Numan to musical pioneer Thomas Dolby, OMD's Andy McCluskey, and music expert Mark Prendergast — all any of them seems to focus on is the contrite technical aspects of the synthesizer's history, with McCluskey commenting that once they became affordable, he was even able to purchase a synthesizer from his mom's mail order catalog.

One of the major problems with *The Dark Progression* is a clear lack of direction and distance from the prime subject matter — if it's truly about Depeche Mode, why is it 15 minutes into the hour-and-a-half documentary when we finally hear commentary about the band itself? And although the fancy collector's edition jacket entices with band interviews, don't be fooled: the only ones to be found are short snippets from 2006 where Alan Wilder and Martin Gore merely offer their opinions on switching producers.

The saving grace of *The Dark Progression* is the archive of photos, live performance footage, and videos that remind viewers of just how corny the '80s could be (see the "Everything Counts" video for a prime example), but even this library is incomplete and abbreviated. Depeche Mode fans would be wise to spend their time and money on the band's upcoming tour than on this DVD.

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Depeche Mode [official site](#)

Depeche Mode [MySpace](#)