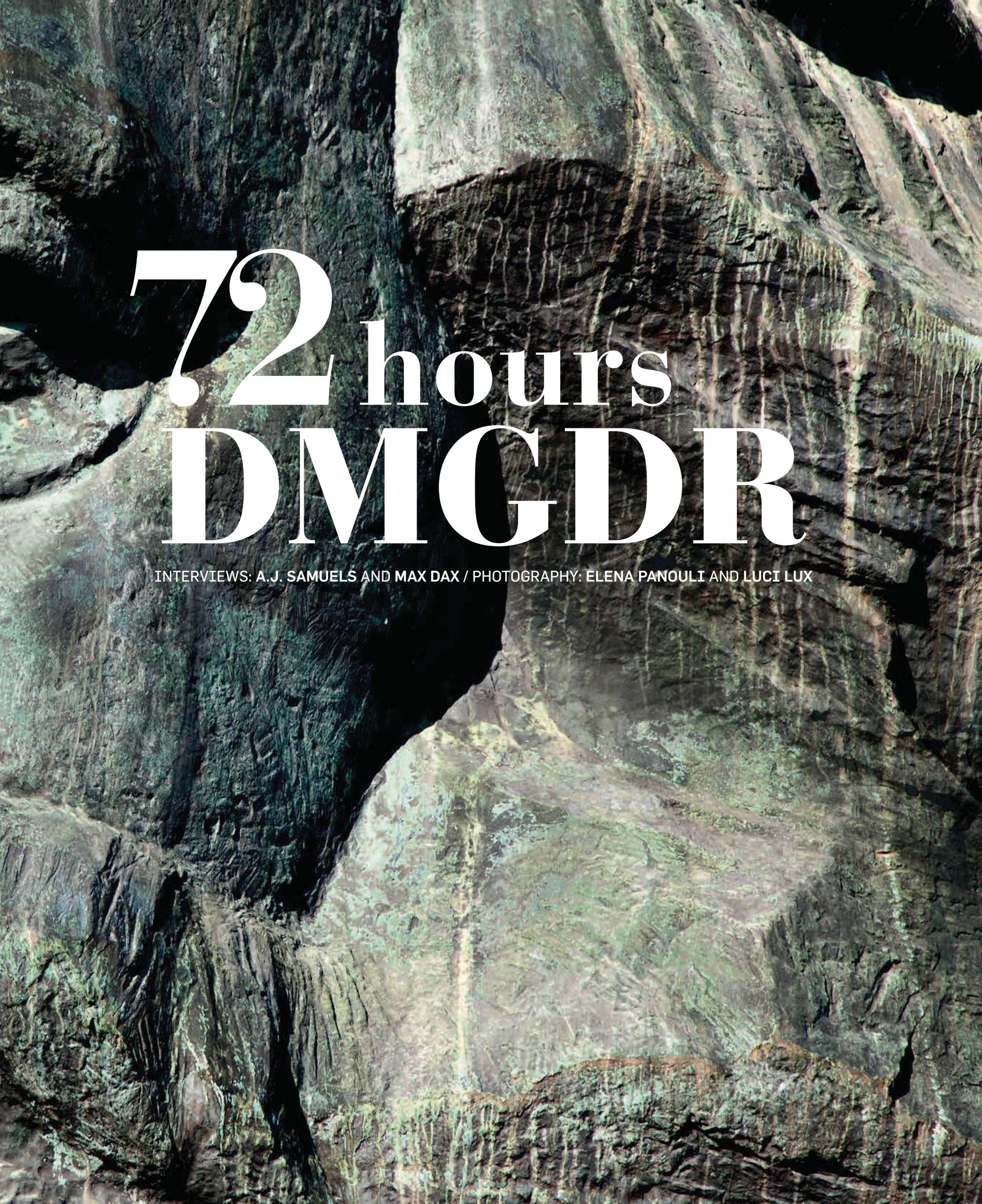


DEPECHE MODE IN EAST(ERN) GERMANY



Lev Kerbel's forty-ton bust of Karl Marx in Chemnitz



# 72 hours DMGDR

INTERVIEWS: A.J. SAMUELS AND MAX DAX / PHOTOGRAPHY: ELENA PANOULI AND LUCI LUX

Unfairly dismissed in their native England as new romantic fop-pop, Mute label stalwarts Depeche Mode have built up one of the most musically influential and obsessive fan bases almost everywhere else in the world. Particularly in Berlin and the former East Germany, the band has spawned a unique kind of faith and devotion, from DM-themed BDSM parties to the world's largest archive of band memorabilia. In a country where rock and roll was officially defined as a capitalist plot to corrupt working class youth, Depeche Mode's apolitical stance translated into real, subcultural capital. It's a reason why their alternative cultural hegemony continues today amongst the pale and Prussian. And we have the Stasi files to prove it.

**FRIDAY**  
**6:30 p.m.**  
**BERLIN**

**DJ Monty - BDSM & sex party organizer, Insomnia Club**

My roots are actually in the Berlin techno scene, which is where the entire active sex and BDSM scenes in Berlin originated. In fact, it's traceable to a very specific series of events: one night—or maybe it was one day; we had a terrible sense of time when partying back then—

Kirsten and Thaur of *KitKatClub* fame decided spontaneously to fuck in the middle of the dance floor downstairs in the legendary trance-oriented Bunker Club. Because of all the strobes and dry ice, you couldn't entirely make out what was going on, but people figured it out soon enough and started to follow suit, because it somehow fit so well to the music. Pretty soon, every weekend, you had gaggles of writhing bodies on the dancefloor and when it achieved a critical mass, Kirsten and Thaur realized their true calling and founded the original *KitKatClub* in Berlin-Kreuzberg—one of the first truly techno-based sex clubs







in the world. I ended up working there for a few years before moving on to manage a more exclusively BDSM club known as *Darkside*, also located in Kreuzberg.

*Darkside* was less about sex per se and more about pure bondage. Most people who only spend time in the vanilla world don't really know there's a difference. But indeed, the difference is immense. I worked as a manager at *Darkside* for around four years and eventually felt compelled to try something new musically, because I was getting sick of incessantly hearing Gregorian chants and mystical new-age crap. So we hatched a plan to incorporate a fat chunk of Depeche Mode songs into a DJ set one night . . . and that's when everything changed. Almost immediately, the guests stopped playing their little bondage games and made their way to the dancefloor. After a while, they continued with the bondage, the whips, the chains, the rubber, the dominance, the submission to the music—which was extremely exciting. This truly felt like something new; it felt like it a perfect match. That's when we had the idea to put an entire BDSM-play party together surrounding Depeche Mode's music here in Berlin's youngest and most active fetish club, *Insomnia*. The fact that the band never released a maxi without multiple remixes helps to diversify what gets played at our parties, although in the scene, there's a real split between those who only enjoy the band in its purest form and those who also dig techno versions of the originals.

This is our sixth year anniversary at this location and the audience just gets bigger and bigger. That said, within the Depeche Mode fan scene and within the sex/fetish scene, we've had some resistance to combining the two. For example, on the fetish website JOYClub, Mode purists accused us of having "raped" the band . . . for profit! Obviously that's utter nonsense, as the connection between Depeche Mode and BDSM is pretty straight forward, in my opinion. If you look at the outfits that Martin Gore wore in the eighties, it was all SM

gear. The song texts and titles—"Freelove", "Strangelove", "Master And Servant"—they're all about an unmistakable mix of sex, pain and love, while instrumentally, it's a perfect mix of quiet and ponderous on the one hand and loud and pounding on the other. I also think this is the reason why women and men listen to Depeche Mode in roughly equal numbers, which is also reflected in our parties.

When it comes to fucking to Depeche Mode, there are lots of different songs that fit to lots of different kinds of sex, and some not at all. Again, an incredible variety. For S&M play, "A Pain That I'm Used To" is probably one of my favorites, while for straight up "girlfriend" sex, "Freelove" can be fantastic. Dave has as much sex in his voice as Martin has in his arrangements. At our parties, people usually end up wandering off to the club's darker corners or upstairs to the mattresses to fuck during the quieter tracks—"A Question of Lust", "Somebody" or "Blasphemous Rumours". Naturally, some people continue to dance, but the atmosphere changes. It all gets a bit hotter. For me, Depeche Mode gives "functional music" new meaning.

FRIDAY  
11:25 p.m.  
LEIPZIG

Sascha Lange - journalist and historian of East German youth culture

Growing up in East Germany in the early eighties, DIY was de rigueur—especially when it came to expressing yourself as a fan of Depeche Mode. It was all about making your own DM-style clothing, pins and accessories . . . and bugging family in the West to smuggle posters, pins, and *Bravo* magazines. Take for example the S&M leather harness, like the one that Martin Gore wore in the early years: the main problem

with owning something like that was that there wasn't a single sex shop in the entire GDR. So we improvised. A friend of mine owned a pair of leather suspenders from the East German riot police, which I ended up buying off him and simply wearing backwards. Purely in terms of looks, it came pretty damn close to the original. You have to understand: there was a lot of thought and planning involved in figuring out what to wear, and there was serious intention behind every purchase and object modification. If you somehow heard that Mode was coming out with a new album, you couldn't just walk over to the store and buy it. You had to think, "OK, now it's March. Grandma's coming for Christmas and mom might get permission for a visit to the West in September. OK, she could get it for me, but . . . in six months!?" Or if you really wanted it that bad, you had to spend, like, two hundred ostmarks to buy it on the black market . . . which is what I made during my carpentry apprenticeship in two months.

Depeche Mode fan culture in the GDR was a lot about a kind of reenactment and styling ourselves just like the band. This often manifested itself in "band" photos that we would pose for and take ourselves. And as a general matter, the DM visual and graphical style had an immense effect on us all. It wasn't like you just looked at a poster, liked it, and hung it on your wall. No—you studied it. You brought all of your clothes to the dry cleaner and had them bleached black. Instead of Doc Martens we wore industrial workman's boots and other classic workwear garments that were available in the GDR. However, in terms of the music, we weren't entirely starved of what was happening in the West. We were able to pick up West German radio and television in Leipzig, and that was an important source for us, and always the subject of conversation in school the next day.

My obsession began with "Blasphemous Rumours" in 1984. In the beginning, we only heard the singles in the radio, so somehow these morphed into the main



**Above: Sascha Lange is a journalist and expert on youth culture in the GDR. A former self-styled Dave-double, Lange recently wrote a book about his teenage years in the East, *DJ West Radio*, which focuses on the country's well-developed DIY culture. Without a relative on the other side of the Wall who could score them Western swag, GDR youth had to figure out on their own how to make bondage harnesses like the one Martin Gore wore in DM's early years.**

**Left: DJ Monty slingin' it in Berlin's *Insomnia Club*. Monty co-hosts *Master And Servant*—a monthly Depeche Mode themed BDSM and sex party, where visitors are encouraged to "go beyond mere dancing" and explore the true meaning of DM classics such as "Stripped", "Freelove", "Sea of Sin" and "A Pain that I'm Used To". The club's couchscape (previous double page) encourage just that.**





aspects of our fan identity—that is, until circa 1986 when the government set up the East German youth radio *Jugendradio DT64*. Specifically, the show *Duett—Musik für den Rekorder* [Music for the Tape Recorder] played albums from beginning to end so that we could record them at home onto tape. Each day in the newspaper you'd find the albums they scheduled to play that evening. We'd all be sure to get home early to adjust the radio antenna for optimal reception. For me it's clear that Depeche Mode always had a special attraction for East German youth. They had an image that was absolutely unmistakable, and the mid-eighties of course was the height of total identification with the music you listened to. Back then, you couldn't tell who was, say, a George Michael or Duran Duran fan. In contrast, with Depeche Mode, even if you owned all of the albums you wouldn't be taken seriously by any of the real fans if you dressed like a preppy and didn't have it be your entire identity. In my opinion, this obsessiveness developed out of what I call Depeche Mode's double-inaccessibility. First, the band was inaccessible because they were rock gods—but they were also inaccessible because they were on the other side of the Wall.

But not all of our parents were comfortable with their children “sticking out”, so to speak; or belonging to such a unique subculture. Well, at least until a very brief moment in history. Let me back up briefly. Since the 1960s, the country's ruling party had officially declared “Western” rock and roll to be a form of evil cultural capitalism. In fact, the official East German definition as it appeared in *Meyers Kleines Lexikon*, in Leipzig 1959 was, “Rock and Roll: A frenzied form of boogie originating in the USA; seduces the youth to excess; functions in West Germany as a form of ‘psychological warfare’ to distract the youth from thinking about political questions of the day.”

This was literally the party line until around 1987, when riots on the East side of the Brandenburg Gate broke out after hundreds of teenagers had tried to get as close as possible to the border to hear David Bowie, who was playing right on the other side to commemorate the 750th anniversary of the founding of Berlin. After the riots, the authorities decided that the best way to be able to control the youth was by occasionally inviting bigger bands to come to the GDR. It was also a good way to prove to the world that the country was “open”. You have to understand: the GDR *cared* about what the world thought of them—not like, for example, Iran today, who couldn't give a shit about their demonization in the West.

Anyhow, fast-forward nine months later to March 1988. One day in school, word started to spread that the forty-two-year anniversary of the state-run East German youth organization FDJ [Free German Youth] would be celebrated with a Depeche Mode concert in East Berlin. Needless to say, dozens of rumors like this had circulated in the past and none came to be true. But lo and behold, about a week before the concert was scheduled, friends of mine called to tell me that they had found a ticket available and the concert was definitely for real. We had suspected it might be more than a rumor when one of the moderators on *DT64* announced it by mistake. But somehow I still couldn't believe my ears. So it was with blind faith that I saved up 150 ostmarks for the ticket and took the train for the first time by myself to East Berlin when I was sixteen. At the main station in Leipzig, I immediately ran into various Dave Gahan and Martin Gore look-alikes also on their way to the show. We ran into plenty more when we got to the venue in Berlin-Prenzlauer Berg, and even after I made my way through the masses to get inside the Werner Seelenbinder arena, it still was just so unreal. The place was filled to far beyond capacity and

**Left to right: Sven Reinhold, Sandy Reinhold, Sebastian Oertel, Peggy Lede, and André Liebert make up the core of the Depeche Mode Fanclub in Chemnitz.**

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DEPECHE MODE



Martin L. Gore

»Counterfeit e.p.«  
© 1989 © Mute Records

Never Turn Your Back on Mother Earth

When She's on Her Best Behaviour  
Don't be Tempted by Her Favours  
Never Turn Your Back on Mother Earth

Towns are Hurl'd From A to B  
By Hands That Looked So Smooth to Me  
Never Turn Your Back on Mother Earth

Grasp at Straws That Don't Want Grasping  
Gaze at Clouds That Come Down Crashing  
Never Turn Your Back on Mother Earth

Three Days and Two Nights Away From My Friends  
Amen to Anything That Brings a Quick Return  
To My Friends  
To My Friends

Never Turn Your Back on Mother Earth

I'll Admit I Was Unfaithful  
But From Now on I'll be More Faithful  
Never Turn Your Back on Mother  
Never Turn Your Back on Mother  
Never Turn Your Back on Mother Earth

Words and Music by Ron Mael  
Lyrics Used by Kind Permission of and  
Administered Throughout the World by  
Avenue Louise Music/ASCAP © 1974

Gone  
So Tired So Soon  
What Happened to You  
What Happened to You  
You Got Lost  
Somewhere Between  
There and Here  
Somewhere Between  
So Far So Near  
You Got Lost  
Somewhere Between  
What Happened to You

Someone Has Been Removed  
What Happened to Her  
What Happened to Her  
She Got Lost

Somewhere Between  
There and Here  
Somewhere Between  
So Far So Near  
She Got Lost  
Somewhere Between  
What Happened to Her

You Used to be so Young  
Used to be so Young  
It Was Going to Take So Long  
It Had Almost Gone

What is His Name  
What is His Name  
What is His Name

Written by Gushier/Panke  
Fellows/Brown.  
Desert Songs Ltd.  
Lyrics Used by Kind Permission



Smile in The Crowd  
You Turned Me Away  
Away From Your Actions  
Forced by the Violence  
That Always Surrounds You  
I Want Your Special Smile  
A Smile in This Crowd

I Want Your Special Smile  
A Smile in This Crowd  
You Burnt Yourself Out  
In That Silence

I Have to Tell You  
I Ache for You Still  
The Sound of My Words  
Is Always so Shocking  
They Get Much Louder  
Each Time I Speak

I Want Your Special Smile  
A Smile in This Crowd  
I Want Your Special Smile  
A Smile in This Crowd

Signals of Progress  
We're Growing much older  
I'm Afraid that I'll Leave  
And My Ache Never Goes

I Want Your Special Smile  
A Smile in This Crowd  
I Want Your Special Smile  
A Smile in This Crowd

Written by Vinni Reilly  
Movement of the 24th January  
Publishing Ltd.  
Lyrics Used by Kind Permission



Schon gehört?



DEPECHE MODE

!!! new single !!!

INT 111.873  
Bong 17

» PERSONAL JESUS « 3:44

» Dangerous « 4:21



MAXI single

- » Personal Jesus « 5:49
- » Holier Than Thou Approach « 5:22
- » Dangerous « (Sensual Mix) 5:27
- » Personal Jesus « (Acoustic) 3:27



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news  
nineteen eighty nine



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Art & Design: O. Hüter

DEPECHE



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we couldn't really move individually, but rather only as a group.

After a dreadful East German opening act who you couldn't hear because everybody was screaming "De-Peche-Mode!" the whole time, the room grew quiet and the lights dimmed. Suddenly you could here the opening piano lines to "Pimpf" and I got goose bumps all over. The lights went up and four figures appeared behind a scrim, which then dropped, and there they were. It's almost impossible to describe the feeling I had at that moment and for the rest of concert. Surely it was the greatest ninety minutes of my life, and every time I listen to the live bootleg at home, I cry my eyes out. Growing up, I never had the chance to go on vacation to Italy or France, or do the things that normal kids in the West could do. But I did see Depeche Mode, and, honestly, I don't think I missed out on anything.

SATURDAY

10:10 a.m.

CHEMNITZ

**Sebastian Oertel**  
– Depeche Mode Fanclub,  
Chemnitz

Six years ago I was a cook in a family-run restaurant here in Chemnitz. This small place was actually where I did my apprenticeship; a place I had worked at for more than thirteen years since I was sixteen years old. In 2006, I suddenly found myself on the path towards a nervous breakdown, as I was under immense amounts of pressure to work increasingly longer hours, with more responsibility, and not enough co-workers. I'm too young to remember, but I don't think these same kinds of work conditions existed during the GDR, back when the city was still known as Karl-Marx-Stadt. Anyhow, the kitchen was destroying me, both mentally and physically, and I fell into a very serious depression. I was just a fading light. I had no self-confidence. I didn't even open

my mouth when something was wrong. This was when I withdrew from my friends and family and lived in my own world. I didn't want to live anymore. You see, it's not that I didn't like life, but rather just that I didn't have any future perspectives. I felt like I had no way out. This is when I started listening to Depeche Mode more intensely and spending my free time analyzing the lyrics. I found so many thoughts and feelings that reflected my own—passages that were so expressive with such remarkably accurate descriptions of my own personal dead end.

Songs like "Insight", and "When The Body Speaks" saved my life. Luckily, I've also had an extremely good relationship with my family, and my father is actually a pastor. He wasn't always one though. In the GDR he was a mechanic for construction equipment and couldn't have cared less about the church. Then he met my mother while vacationing at a Free German Trade Union Federation campsite and his life changed. Through acquaintances they both got involved in the church and found God. My father then decided to study theology at night school and very shortly after the Wall came down, he changed occupations completely. So when I got up the courage to tell him that I was teetering on the edge, he truly helped me see the light at the end of the tunnel. He accompanied me on my path towards regeneration. I spoke with him at length about the individual biographies of Martin Gore, Andrew Fletcher and Dave Gahan, looking into the band history and reading the books, finding out that the band members themselves were all suffering in one form or another—from depression, alcoholism, drug addiction, suicidal tendencies. I could identify with all of it, even if alcohol and drugs weren't my problem. I'm not sure the band biography was so fascinating for my father, but I think he was better able to understand me.

In my opinion, Depeche Mode makes some of the darkest music in the world and in certain situations it can really bring you down. But it's a dark place you go to by choice, and that's what gave me incredible strength. Listening to the

band today still gives me strength, while still somehow reminding me of a period in my life that was absolutely rock bottom. But it also reminds me of moving beyond that period, and discovering the like-minded souls here in the fan club in Chemnitz. This is a city that for the past few years was known for having the lowest birth rate in the world. In Germany it's now known for having one of the biggest and most active DM fan clubs. I'm not a crazy teenager anymore, but Depeche Mode is still something I think about every day. Here in Chemnitz, the fan club is integral to almost all of my close friendships. It's very, very deep and emotional.

SATURDAY

2:15 p.m.

DRESDEN

**Jeremy Deller – Artist,  
Filmmaker and Winner of  
Turner Prize, 2006**

I wouldn't argue that Depeche Mode fans are any more obsessive in Germany than in the former Eastern Bloc countries. As a general matter, there was a level and intensity to the fandom in the entire East that was different than in other places around the world, like with the Granzow family from Thuringia who dress up their kids, Dave and David, like Depeche Mode members and reenact videos and famous band photos. You see, we weren't interested in the people that already had massive collections of pins and obscure albums and whatnot, but rather those that put a lot of time and effort into representing their *unique* devotion to the band. And, perhaps most importantly, those that had absolutely nothing. It took us a little while to figure out the kind of people that were interesting for interviews and those that weren't. Actually, if we'd had the chance to do the film again, we'd probably focus exclusively on the East. Depeche Mode fandom under and immediately after

**Left: With scarce access to copy machines and band info, Depeche Mode fanzines were an extremely important source for band updates. Every last crumb of DM-related info, from album and photo copyrights to seemingly trivial small-print licensing permissions, was crammed with care onto a single page. This fanzine from East Berlin announces the release of the single "Personal Jesus" in August, 1989. Three months later the Wall was gone. Coincidence?**



**Above: Artist Jeremy Deller bearing himself. Together with filmmaker Nick Abrahams, Deller made *The Posters Came from the Walls*, documenting the more eccentric aspects of DM fanculture worldwide. While the band and some fans reportedly felt like they were being made fun of, Mute Records founder Daniel Miller (who also bankrolled the project) found the film touching.**

HA XX/AKG/KI 993 189

13. Feb. 1989

Abteilung M  
AKG

Berlin, 9. 2. 1989  
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Hauptabteilung XX/2  
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Operativer Hinweis

Durch gezielte Fahndungsmaßnahmen in der Abteilung M der Bezirksverwaltung für Staatssicherheit Dresden konnten mehrere Hinweise auf bestehende "Depeche Mode"-Fanggruppierungen im Raum Dresden, Leipzig und Karl-Marx-Stadt erarbeitet werden. So unterhält der

Depeche Mode FC "New Life" Dresden

nl über [redacted]  
8023 Dresden

nl bzw. [redacted]  
8030 Dresden

Kontakte zum

Depeche Mode FC "The Great Fans" Zwickau

he über [redacted]  
9580 Zwickau

sowie zum

Depeche Mode FC Leipzig

he über [redacted]  
7030 Leipzig

Weitere Kontakte zu Karl-Marx-Städter und Berliner "Depeche Mode"-Fanggruppierungen sind zu vermuten. Persönliche Kontakte zu dieser Band bzw. deren Anhängern in Großbritannien werden möglicherweise über [redacted] realisiert. Des weiteren gibt es einen Hinweis auf ein geplantes Treffen am 18./19. Februar 1989 in Berlin, an dem der Depeche Mode FC "New Life" teilnehmen will.

Communist rule is enough of a conceptual framework, I think.

The reaction to the film worldwide was almost entirely positive, and in Germany people seemed to be very into it. But let's be honest here: German fans take the band very seriously, and some weren't so happy about the inclusion of extreme cases like the Granzows, although these are the people who made for a good film. We wanted to show people who've done something crazy with the band and their image. Ultimately, the film doesn't have a specific time or place-based narrative. A lot of it bounces back and forth between America and Russia, which adds a kind-of Cold War tinge to it. Honestly, we didn't hear any negative reaction to the film, although I'd heard second hand of people complaining that the band weren't involved, but that was the whole point. If you want to watch the band, you can pick up any number of DVDs that they churn out. We also weren't allowed to get near them while we were making the film, even though Daniel Miller was our biggest fan, so to speak. Mute commissioned the whole thing. Apparently, the band didn't like the film at all, which is something I find curious. It's unclear why they don't like it—it only makes them look good, really.

In the past I've worked with the concept of reenactment and for me, a Depeche Mode concert comes across as a specific kind of ritual. And for adults in their forties, going to concerts can also be a way to "reenact" their youth. We encountered many different ways people made Depeche Mode their life. Some obviously made it their identity with how they dressed and styled themselves, and others hid their obsession by not dressing the part and only collecting ephemera. The former is the way to have a bit more fun with it, I suppose. Personally, I like the band. I've been to a number of concerts, although I don't listen to them so much anymore. They're pretty underrated in Britain because for some reason in the mid-late eighties they were just kind of written off as a pop band. It's not like Germany where there are Depeche Mode parties in every city in the country every week.

6:15 p.m.  
SUNDAY  
BASEDOW

### Dennis Burmeister – Graphic designer and Depeche Mode archivist

There are hardly any sounds that you hear today that you've never heard before. With synthesis and all of the innovative and explorative electronics that have become a part of pop music today, it's rare to listen to the radio and wonder, "What the hell is that?" With Depeche Mode, it's an entirely different story. When I heard them in the beginning, I honestly thought the radio was broken. This sounded like nothing we'd ever heard. For me, it was a world of science fiction. Something that very, very few people know about me is that my first memory of electronic music goes back to the East German stop motion puppet show *Sandmännchen*. It was a children's show about a little boy who traveled around and had these fantastic adventures. He actually had a little goatee, which supposedly made him look like the first president of the GDR, Walter Ulbricht. The show also prominently featured East German technology and the success of Soviet cosmonauts. In one episode, the main character took off in a rocket to space, and the whole thing was accompanied by these incredibly cosmic sounds—bleeps and blips and rocket ships. It blew me away. And when I heard it again in Depeche Mode, I knew I found something special.

I grew up as a Depeche Mode fan, but I've always listened to other music—The Beatles, The Kinks, The Rolling Stones, Deep Purple, The Cure, Slayer, Einstürzende Neubauten, Dead Can Dance, you name it. I am not the type of obsessive fan that lets the band completely take over my personality, let it dictate what I wear, or how I see the world. Honestly, I don't really understand people who only listen to Depeche

Mode, and believe me, I know dozens of them. It doesn't make any sense for the band either. I mean we're talking about a group that was covered by Johnny Cash and The Cure. It's insane. There are plenty of Depeche Mode parties—pretty much every week in Germany. But the whole thing is pure reenactment. I couldn't give less of a shit about dressing up like Dave or Martin or Andrew. I care about their place in music history and about the historical documentation of what they've achieved as musicians. The parties today aren't the same as the Depeche Mode parties we had in the GDR. We went to these parties to dance because you couldn't do that anywhere else. And you also went to somehow find all of the information that wasn't accessible. Even at "normal" discos, I had a friend who would always go to the DJ and request Depeche, even though he knew damn well that he would get his face smashed afterwards. He always said, "Fuck it!" and danced. He did it again and again and again, and got his face pummeled by the heavy metal crowd, because there were simply more of them than there were of us. But he has absolutely no regrets. Today, things like "Dave dancing" contests—people who actually compete to see who can do the more convincing Dave-twirl or Dave-kick—gives me goose bumps. The band and the music are trivialized and made to look "cute". It's a kind of fetishization I can't stand.

DM had their big breakthrough in Germany with "People Are People", and Martin Gore once said that the reason it caught in Germany so much is that people could understand the lyrics. For me though, it was never about the texts. It was about the sounds. In Germany, we had all sorts of electronic pioneers—Klaus Schulze and Kraftwerk—but introducing sampling in pop music, that was Depeche Mode. And long before the Wall came down, they had a very special place in East German music history. All of the things people put blood, sweat and tears into making themselves—that's the stuff that fans from the East will never



**Above: Dennis Burmeister owns the largest archive of DM memorabilia in the world.**

**Left: Like many groups with interests or ties to the West, DM fan clubs were followed by the Stasi. The document pictured here was pulled from Germany's state-run Stasi document archives for a documentary on the band's legendary concert in East Berlin in 1988: "Through concerted investigatory measures by Division M of the Dresden District Headquarters for State Security, numerous tips and evidence on Depeche Mode fan clubs in Dresden, Leipzig, and Karl-Marx-Stadt have been attained. Through [redacted] of 8023 Dresden and [redacted] of 8030 Dresden, contact between the 'New Life' Depeche Mode FC to 'The Great Fans' FC in Zwickau, over to [redacted] of 9580 Zwickau, has been established. This also goes for The Depeche Mode FC Leipzig, though [redacted] of 7030 Leipzig. It is to be assumed that further contacts exist to fan clubs in Berlin and Karl-Marx-Stadt. Personal contact to the band and fans in Great Britain could be established through [redacted]. There is also evidence of a planned meeting on Dec. 18/19 in Berlin involving the 'New Life' FC."**



**Above: Pictured here is the original demo tape Depeche Mode sent out to various labels before being snapped up by Mute's Daniel Miller. Aside from Vince Clarke's handwriting and old phone number, the cassette also features versions of "Radio News" (unreleased), "Ice Machine" and "Photographic". In an eBay auction, it was advertised as "THE HOLY GRAIL OF ALL DEPECHE MODE ITEMS". Dennis Burmeister is the proud owner.**

**Right: Daniel Miller has a special connection to Berlin, having recorded and produced various Mute acts here throughout the eighties and nineties. An early champion of krautrock, NDW, and the electronic avant-garde, Miller sees the German capital as a second home.**

give up. And I think it at least partially explains how I became such an obsessive collector. And I have most likely the biggest and most complete collection in the world. Multiples of all albums and singles; releases from every country; AMIGA label dub plates of the only Depeche Mode album released in East Germany; the band's very first demo tape, which has Vince Clarke's handwriting on it. I've always been an information junkie. I suppose the GDR did that to a lot of us, but for me it's a flame that still burns.

You'd think this more historical aspect would be interesting for, say, documentarians. But Nick Abrahams, co-director with Jeremy Deller of the DM fan film *The Posters Came From the Walls*, came to my house to interview me, checked out my records and my collection of memorabilia and told me how cool he thought it was. But in the end never used my interview. In hindsight, I can only say thank God, because *Posters* focused almost exclusively on weirdos and disturbed obsessives—not the type of people that made me proud to be a fan. In a sense, those aren't even proper fans. Deller and Abrahams simply went looking for the most fucked up people—and they found them. Look: I'm a Depeche Mode fan. I'm a bit heavier than Dave Gahan, but this is my band too.

**SUNDAY  
11:25 p.m.  
BERLIN**

## Daniel Miller – Music producer and founder of Mute Records

Depeche Mode was incredibly excited to explore their popularity behind the Iron Curtain, because they knew about the hunger for songs and facts and information about them. I didn't go with them to East Berlin, but I went to the Hungary and Czechoslovakia shows. The reaction was unbelievable, completely different than in the UK. Of course, there were very few Western groups who actually made the journey into the East, so the rarity value of the band added immense enthusiasm. The level of Eastern European obsession is hard to describe really. In Hungary, there was almost a Depeche Mode gang culture. These were real *cults*. The Hungarians were one of the first to have parties based entirely around the band, with Dave and Martin and Fletch impersonators doing their thing.

Most bands thought it simply wasn't worth doing promotion behind the Iron Curtain, because in the East they essentially had no consumer culture and practically no albums in the market. For us, it was always just a short trip away because between 1983 and 1986, we spent a lot of time in West Berlin making albums. Martin was also dating a German girl at the time and they had moved in together. The city's atmosphere was very different to England and the whole Berlin lifestyle had an influence on the music. In England, there was nothing to do after 11 p.m. You couldn't go out. Things were dead. In Berlin you could do whatever you wanted at whatever time you wanted. I had a number of artist friends in Berlin—the Neubauten, Nick Cave, Thomas Fehlmann, Gudrun [Gut]—so I always enjoyed

hanging out. But my time in the city was more work-oriented, to be honest. I was co-producing the band in the studio. We did get into sampling very early with *Construction Time Again* in 1983—of course, not from records but rather found sounds and various Indian or African instruments or other stuff they'd collected. We'd end up pitching them up or down and fucking around with them quite a bit. It was part of a constant search for new sounds. There's the myth that the band had used a sample from the Einstürzende Neubauten because there was supposedly two or three seconds of Neubauten samples that had been left in Gareth Jones' sampler, but that's total nonsense. Of course, you can't deny the Neubauten's influence at the time.

For me, Depeche Mode is unique, as are their fans, which some people know from Jeremy Deller and Nick Abrahams' film *The Posters Came From The Walls*. Personally, I really liked the film, but I know the band weren't too sure. I don't think they liked being confronted with the reality they had created. But I think the film shows how much power the band had in the East especially. Depeche Mode gave people an outlet away from people's daily routine. They've always been an outsider band. There were lots of outsiders and kids who were bullied that got strength from Depeche Mode. And that's a really moving thing. The band is extremely down to earth and they appreciate normalcy, even if they don't always have it.

I remember an interview in the very beginning when a journalist asked them, "If you could be any other band, which would you be?" And one of them, I don't remember which, said: "Pink Floyd! They're incredibly famous, but nobody knows what they look like. They can just walk around and have normal lives!" These days, the group tries to lead normal lives, even if it's not always possible. In Berlin, things were pretty relaxed, even if fans did wait outside the studio and rename the street "Depeche Mode Straße" when we were in town. ~

