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## Synths our fathers

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ostentatiously intellectual and scornful of rock and roll clichés like to get out of OMD and Heaven 17 set short-80s pop – and now they are back in favor. The original ideas men talk to Dorian Lynskey

‘It’s funny how things go, “says Orchestral maneuvers in the Dark Andy McCluskey, suggesting the reunited band of the last successful tour.” You are sitting in a hotel bar? Please be write me € Vision hit for Jedward ‘, reveling in the fact that you go even in the situation and make intellectual pop music, and Louis Walsh comes and says: “One of the McCluskey eyebrows shot north, he enjoys a good anecdote. “This is really happened to me yesterday.” had

In 1978, McCluskey and Paul Humphreys his bandmates a vision of the sound of tomorrow and they are not tone-deaf twins from a TV talent show. A touch of this vision is in the pointed title OMD excellent comeback album, given the history of modernism. “When we started we thought naively that one day all music would sound like, and rock ‘n’ roll clichés would be away,” Humphreys says wistfully McCluskey characteristic hyperbolic, explains: “.. The last modernist movement was English electronic pop music in the late 20th Century “

Next year marks the 30th anniversary of synthpop annus mirabilis, the release of Architecture & Morality OMD, Depeche Mode’s Speak & Spell, Soft Cell Non Stop Erotic Cabaret, Japan’s Tin Drum, The Human League’s and dare Heaven 17’s Penthouse and Pavement Hailing from different parts of the saw, the country put the bands so much a scene as a common sensibility. synthesizer guitars before, unusual ideas before rock’n’roll clichés glittered The future of pop with the possibility

But des in the second half. the 80’s, most of the first wave synthpop, Depeche Mode aside stopped, had. For the next decade or so, they either split or toiled in reduced circumstances, occasionally sipping from the poisoned chalice of the 80’s nostalgia circuit.

Now they are finally enjoying a major refurbishment. OMD have gained strength again, Heaven 17 are touring Penthouse and Pavement, and The Human League is, Credo, their first album in ten like years post

Mark Jones, who is on his credo Wall of Sound label release, the 6 Music show hosts to return to Phuture, the original synthpop icons with their spiritual offspring pair. La Roux with Heaven 17, Little Boots Gary Numan. “This generation of pop artists to say the former, it is not about the Stones and the Beatles, is about the Human League and Heaven 17,” says Jones. “It’s about eyes misty memories . It is about the importance of what these people have to do what artists now. “

Synthpop began to crackle into life in 1975, toured the year power plant in the United Kingdom (McCluskey says her show at the Liverpool Empire” changed my life “) and made a legendary appearance at teatime tomorrow’s world. At this stage Synthesizers were still exotic equipment, much too expensive for two Sheffield computer operators, such as Human League / Heaven 17 founder Martyn Ware built and Ian Craig Marsh. So Marsh. painted his own from a kit “It was a bit of plywood black and a number of switches , “Ware recalled,” It was an absolute nightmare -. She could not even newcomer. But we thought we would be like Eno. “ By chance was the advent of affordable basic synthesizer (Goods bought a Korg 700S for EUR 350) with punk-cultural change.” Suddenly, the means of production into the hands of the individual, “says Ware.” Not only will you have your own band;. You could create your own artistic environment, and “

Wed inspired, Marsh and Ware formed a band called the future. Wrote gloomy instrumentals with such titles as fabulously pretentious Dada Dada Duchamp Vortex recruiting their extravagant school friend Phil Oakey, Herself as a remake would-be pop the stars Human be League One early recording called Dance Like a Star

set out the stable. “This is a song for all you are stubborn, that disco music under the irrelevant musical gibberish and tired platitudes that you try to impress your parents think of themselves. We’re the Human League, we are much smarter than you. “

” We thought what we were doing was the new form of popular music, and we could not understand why everyone wasn’t you on board, “says Ware.” It was beyond arrogance. It was a kind of faith solipsistic, almost like a cult. It’s funny, looking to buy them. “ In the meantime, in the Wirral were the arising militant OMD similar.” Only Kraftwerk, Neu!, La Dusseldorf, Brian Eno, Roxy Music and David Bowie, “said Humphreys, what music was acceptable.” Everything else was shit. “. Before her first synthesizer (a Korg M500 Micro-Preset, on the never-never bought for £ 7.76 per week for 36 weeks) purchased, constructed Humphreys own” noise-machines “OMD had recognized McCluskey would never sing the word “love”, the drummer was not allowed to use pool, rock and roll was an abomination “We wanted to be in reverse,” said McCluskey, “. We knew what we do not want to do. “Unlike the Human League, it looked wrong on the Top 40” You did not start a group called the Orchestral maneuvers in the Dark will be playing songs that are even thinking your best friends shit, if you’re going to pop stars, “says McCluskey.” It was not a blueprint for world domination. “” Tony Wilson [Factory Records] was the first person to say this was the future of pop music, “says Humphreys.” We thought it was an insult. “ The scattered members of the electronic avant-garde have become aware of the existence of each other slowly, when seemingly out of nowhere, a former punk named Gary Numan top of the charts in June 1979 Are ‘Friends’ Electric?.” We were not chuffed, “admits McCluskey. Numan achievement irrevocably raised the stakes. OMD, to their surprise signed by Virgin imprint Dindisc were.” We thought they were Barking Mad, “says McCluskey.” If [1980 Single] messages actually sold, it’s like, wow, was how could this happen? “ The Human League, however, remained the pop breakthrough elusive.” I never was bothered with massively popular, “says Ware.” I thought it was more important, artistically rigorous, and I naively assumed that success would follow. But the record company and our manager, Bob Last, thought we might have missed the boat. “So last conspiring with Virgin and Oakey to Ware and Marsh, who promptly recruited her old friend Glenn Gregory to form Heaven 17 and they have tried to repress, Oakey hit the top 10. are ways of dividing the two bands co-owner of the same Sheffield studio, it would take Heaven 17 Penthouse and Pavement at night, while the revamped Human League worked at Dare during the day. Penthouse and Pavement, with live funk bass and a sleek, radio-friendly production, was a long way from the future. “The electronic thing like all got in this urban environment, singing about being detached from the world’s identified,” says Ware. ” And we were the exact opposite of it. If things are really grim, that’s when you want to be optimistic. “ The working class, Heaven 17 and socialists thought (they had songs about Ronald Reagan and nuclear weapons), but looked like yuppies (they put on the sleeve as City WhizzKids), and the album both celebrated and satirized success.” was It is an ironic debunking the myth of the artist as a light-hearted troubadour who will rise to nothing, with companies, “says Ware.” What we are not thinking about the time that it embodies a statement of intent zeitgeist “

OMD were Similarly, love of great ideas seemed to write songs about Hiroshima, power plants and in two consecutive top five singles -. Jeanne d’Arc and Maid of Orleans determined -. Joan of Arc “I had them both under the same name release and the label was like, yes, you know what, Andy? Some people may think they’ve already bought, “says McCluskey. He put a ring-binder folder for each album.” I researched these songs, as I did was a fucking thesis. We were so excited apt that wearing your brain was on the tongue. “

It seemed that one could say synthpop bands and what they do as long as they clean, simple, had memorable melodies like.” Our sound was much to the shortcomings of technology, “says McCluskey.” They were monophonic, so you could only play one note at a time. “Each year has seen some fantastic new game-changing device, such as Linn LM-1 drum machine (which is quite Penthouse and Pavement and Dar) or the Emulator sampler (the cornerstone of the 1983 album Dazzle Ships OMD). The Musicians Union (“Keep Music Live”) was so panicked by synthesizers that it tries to restrictions on their use to impose. “We used a plastic skull on the console, mixing said ‘Keep Music Dead’,” grins goods. “swept feel We started as we were the old”

With hits as big as Soft Cell’s Tainted Love and Ultravox Vienna the way, synthpop feel to their lovers as a plot revolt. says McCluskey. “The Ancien Regime has been eradicated! We have their heads chopped off “

But then, like many revolutionaries, found the synthpop groups to ask themselves: what now some (Soft Cell, Japan) clearly chose art, others (Spandau Ballet, Duran Duran?) Commercial .. OMD and Heaven 17 were stuck in the middle

“The record company said:”. “remembers Humphreys,” Look, just another album like Architecture & Morality and you will be the next Genesis, ‘Wrong to . say “Rather than the brilliant but economically dangerous Dazzle Ships.

“Everyone bought the other stuff, and the bloody was strange, we have assumed that they would buy this,” McCluskey says ruefully. After it flopped OMD. They had panicked mortgage to pay, so they tried to devise goals and concentrated to try in vain, to break America. “Without knowing it,” sighs McCluskey, “We would remove this radical band flies in the face of convention gone exactly the kind of band we hated.” Humphreys left the band in 1989:

After Heaven 17 of 1983, the album The Luxury Gap, and they began a decline, as record companies were more cautious and controlling “We had lost the plot”.. dropped off with cross-heads, the power plant and JG Ballard finds the synthesizer was the best standard-issue and at worst equivalent to pop at its most insipid. “What changed was the perception of flat efforts of bands like Spandau Ballet and Duran Duran,” says Ware. “She just wanted to be famous and buried more credible end.” He imitates the cheesy sounds irritated someone advertising a 80 night. Big shoulder pads! Funny T-Shirts dance! Funny “

Ware is still echoing through the rejection of Synthpop injured and missed the early 80’s concept of” perfect pop. Intelligent, engaging stuff that appeals to a huge amount of people, “McCluskey was added during Britpop. “It was the celebration of ignorance and rock and roll cliché, that was really annoying. We were out of fashion. From something that antiquated even when we were in was”

Now, electronic pop is again dominating the charts and the class of ’81 can be celebrated as pioneers rather than punch lines, making McCluskey, laughing bear the hostility during the backlash synthpop OMD. “It was not real, it was not rock and roll, it was not manly and sweaty and honest,” he says. “It was fey, gay, pseudo-intellectual nonsense Synth.”

Pop and rock      “That’s why we made it,” Humphreys says with a smile. “We knew we were right.” >  
Electronic Music

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