



Front 242 are one of the most well known and influential industrial bands of the 80's and 90's, and the originators of "EBM" (electronic body music). When formed in 1981 in Brussels, the band consisted of only two members, Patrick Codneys and Dirk Bergen, two programmers who produced their first single "Principals" which they released on New Dance Records. One year later, they were joined by yet another programmer Daniel Bressanutti (Daniel B. Prothese), and vocalist Jean-Luc De Meyer. They re-named themselves Front 242, and the newly formed band produced the debut single "U-Men" off the album "Geography" for Red Rhino Europe Records (RRE).



Later that year, Front 242 began to play live, after percussionist Geoff Bellingham joined then left the group, and they recruited Richard 23 (Richard Jonckheere). With the new line-up, the groups sound moved away from the synthesizer sound they had originated with, and became harder-edged and more aggressive. The 1984 EP "No Comment" shows this change, Jean-Luc's vocals becoming harsher and the rhythms becoming more insistent and driving. The new sound gained the attention of US label "Wax Trax!", who had begun gathering a group of artists pushing this new "industrial" synthesizer music. Wax Trax! Re-released the earlier work of the band, as well as releasing some other rarities on the album "Back Catalogue" (1987), a collection of the bands early 12" singles. The band then released a new album "Official Version" (1987). This album really showcased the new sound that Front 242 were developing. The music had become more intense, and 23 and Jean-Luc's vocals, shouted emotionlessly, mixed with powerful beats and an endless series of looped samples became the definition of the new industrial sound.

1988 brought the release of the band's third LP, "Font by Front", widely proclaimed as the band's best to date, and is still considered one of the seminal industrial albums. The arrangements were tighter, rhythms even more addictive, and

the production and vocals were a step up from previous releases. The album produced the club hits "Headhunter" and "Never Stop", as well as the anthemic "In Rhythmus Bleiben", but the entire album is a consistent sonic rampage of samples, vocals and beats.

"Front by Front" provided the impetus for the band to attract the attention of the major labels, and in the 1990's. Front 242 became the first Wax Trax! Artists to be signed by Epic Records. Epic proceeded to re-issue all the bands past albums with new art and bonus tracks. The bands first album release for Epic was "Tyranny (For You)", and although it brought mainstream notice to the band, it was considered by fans to be a fall from grace when compared with the brilliant "Front by Front". With the popularity of the single "Tyranny (For You)" on MTV, front became, with Ministry and Skinny Puppy, one of the most well-known industrial acts in the world.

The band toured America in 1993 with the Lollapalooza Festival, a melting pot of the finest "alternative" acts that the world had to offer. After 10 years with the band, though, Richard 23 decided to leave the band, and was replaced by Jean-Marc Pauly and his brother Pierre.

The now 5 piece produced two albums in 1993, "06:21:03:11 Up Evil" and "05:22:09:12 Off". The first was more guitar driven than previous efforts, albeit chopped and sampled, but the lack of 23's vocals is noticeable in many tracks. "Off", produced 6 months later, is by comparison an experimental piece, often delving into grinding noise and at other times flirting with techno-style rhythms.



In 1995, Jean-Luc left the band (other projects include Cobalt 60 and Bio-Tek), though the band did continue to record and experiment, releasing the 1995 "Live Code", an album taken from a radio

broadcast of a Dutch concert, and featuring a lot of content from "Up Evil" as well as some old favourites. They also released the remix album Mut@ge.Mix@ge in late 1996. In 1997 the band again toured, and released the album Re:Boot, another live album, and while no new songs were on offer, the band members stated that they wanted to try new techno-inspired arrangements and presentations of many old songs. In 2000 the 4 CD "Headhunter 2000" was released featuring remixes of Front tracks by artists such as Haujobb, Front Line Assembly and Apoptygma Berzerk, among others. As of 2002, the band was still touring.

Check out their very cool website at www.front242.com

www.circadian-rhythms.org