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NINE INCH NAILS

- MINISTRY
- IAN MC CULLOCH
- STONE ROSES
- SOUNDGARDEN
- ALL ABOUT EVE
- WARREN ZEVON
- TOKEN ENTRY
- TRANSVISION VAMP

LIVE: THE CREATURES,
RYUICHI SAKAMOTO,
JESUS & MARY CHAIN,
SONIC YOUTH & MORE!



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Photo by Andrea Brien

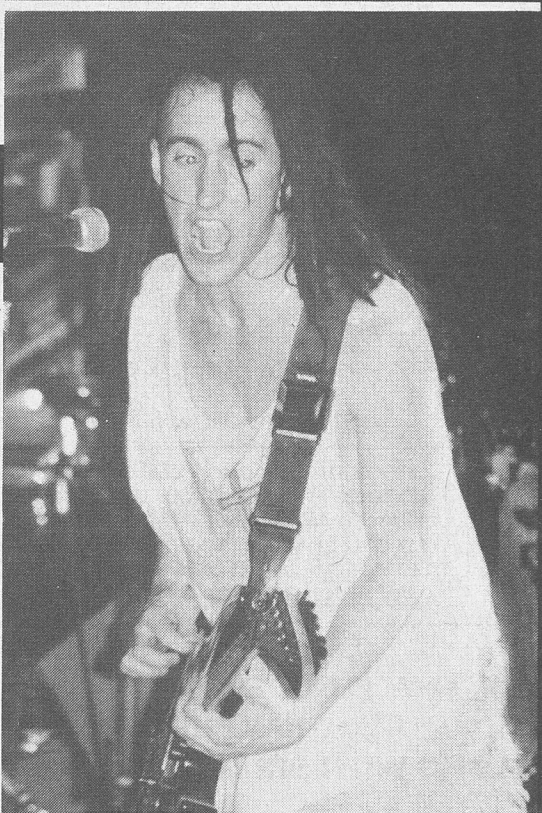
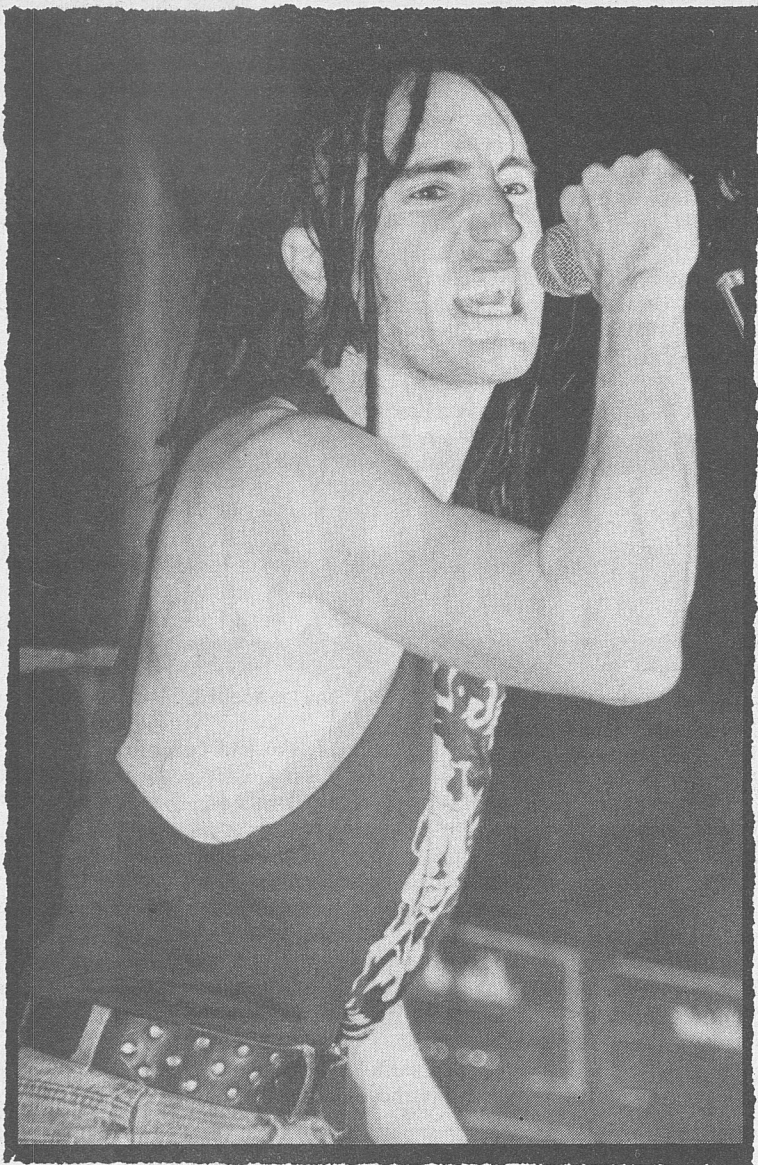


Photo by Sandra C. Davis

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-By Sandra A. Garcia

Portrait of the oh-so-tortured artist as a ...computer engineer? "I came from Mercer, Pa, like in the middle of the state; I was equidistant between Pittsburgh and Cleveland. And something came up where I could get a job in a studio in Cleveland. I was just dropping out of college, majoring in computer engineering."

Don't totally disregard this angle as *Pretty Hate Machine* was largely composed on the Mackintosh, using more samples per millimeter than a box of Whitman's Chocolate.

What about the sensitive young artist as a trained pianist? Ah, not quite... Trent Reznor feels he originally got coerced into that. "It was ok but... I just got bored. I realized that I wanted to be in bands. And it took a while for me to get my shit together, start writing. I fucked around with a bunch of bands, you know, the 'oh come play keyboards in my band and waste a year of your life.' I did a few of those then it was time to get serious."

So there goes that angle. But something severe was boiling around in Trent Reznor's psyche, something angry enough to produce Nine Inch Nails' premier ode to self-catharsis, *Pretty Hate Machine*.

Trent agrees while mocking his initial hesitation. "Yeah, but it was just lacking discipline, the willingness to sit down and say 'ok, I am not going out tonight.' Once you get into that mode, it's ok, I can get it cranked out. But now I don't have any friends..."

And he's forced to be stuck on the road for

months on end in a van with six other guys. A sarcastic "Right" is accompanied with a sardonic laugh.

Sometimes you just have to wonder about certain rewards of discipline. Then go bend a few angles.

Initially Nine Inch Nails was a worrisome notion, this stemming from a tame performance viewed many months ago. When the first single, 'Down In It' reared its 12 inch head, I avoided it. But one night while driving bored stiff listening to some snotty college DJ, a brash new disc came on. And I nearly took myself to creation when I heard it's that synth-pop band from Cleveland that opened for Skinny Puppy. The DJ sniffed, 'Well, they said it was like Ministry but I played it anyway. Sorry,' and went back to his jangly tunes. But he's still there being terminally affected while Nine Inch Nails is touring the country for months. 'Down In It' is

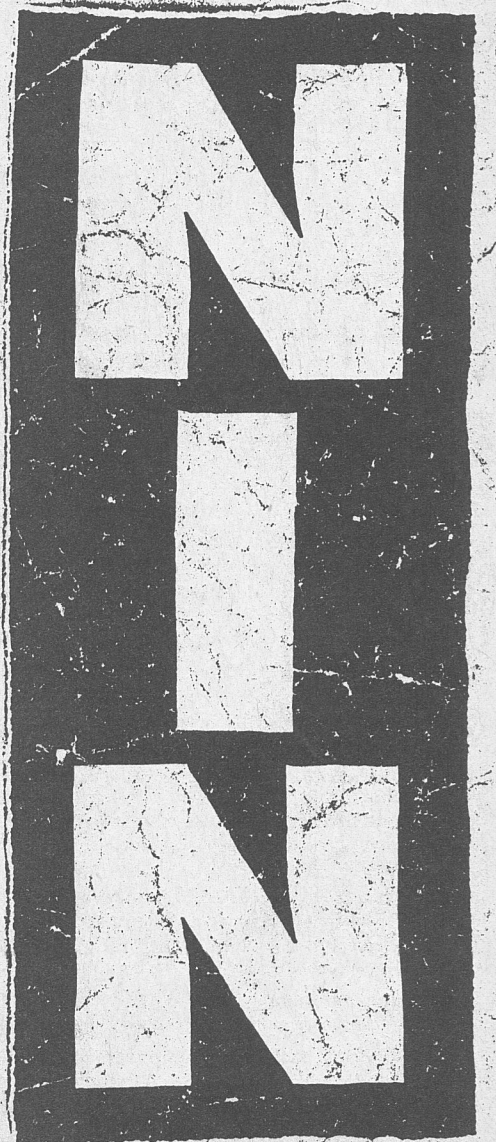
from no synth-pop band. It was the first real recorded effort from Trent Reznor's sample-fest of sounds, hammering a menagerie of styles into one unique pattern. Trent tends to unwisely dismiss the single due to the production overhaul done by Adrian Sherwood. But I went back and listened well. Now I'm listening to *Pretty Hate Machine*, the personal hardline according to this tough Trent of the Nineties. And now I can look, as Trent (who is Nine Inch Nails... get that aligned in your mind now) and his band of hired guns take audiences hostage during opening stints for both Jesus and Mary Chain and Peter Murphy. Onstage Nine Inch Nails is a the bastard sound of the '80's industrial scene twisted up with aggro-pop then riddled with frustration-ridden, howlingly questioning love/ hate lyrics for the Nineties. Trent has his own soul mining to do, and onstage the boys stomp the music, each other and proceed to gain converts from coast to coast, thus laying the groundwork for the follow-up assault this summer. They take an aggressive "industrial pop" (Mr. Reznor's term) album, drag it onstage and proceed to easily corrode the performances of both headlining bands by translating Trent's personal vision into a vicious, sardonically pointed wall of noise laced with a bizarre sense of black humor edging into tongue in cheek melodrama that works! Sometimes discipline does have its rewards.

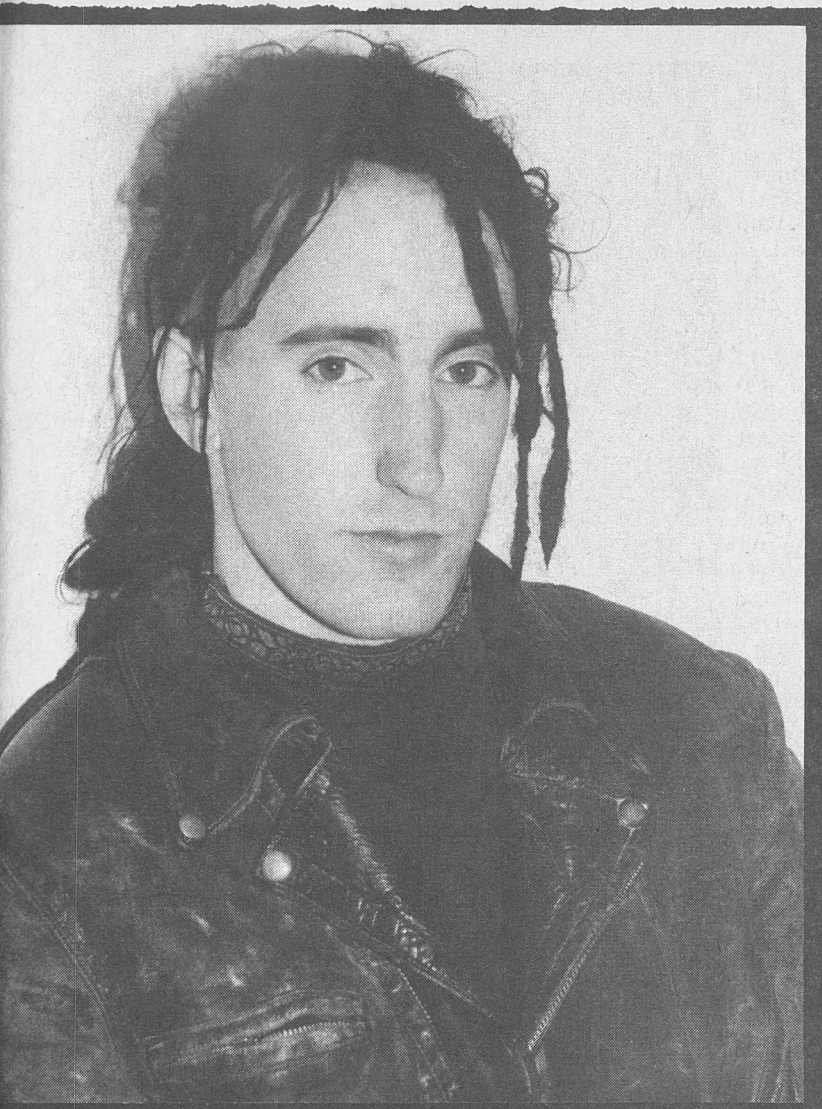
But what the hell happened to Trent between the days of that ah, well, lame opening slot for Puppy and this holocaust onstage?

What's the deal, Trent?

Trent gives a cynical grin, mockingly retorting, "The deal at that time was we didn't have one. We had friends at Nettwerk, and they asked us if we wanted to hang out with Skinny Puppy on part of their tour, which we originally didn't want to do, cause it wasn't the best match-up, and up to that point I had been just messing around and it wasn't completely focused. And I'd send stuff out to labels, and some of it was way more pop, some of it was harder, it was just a weird thing. And I knew I didn't have my shit together at that time, but Puppy's road manager goes 'Come out with us, cause the band we have we don't like. You can do the last ten dates of the tour.' And they were

INTO THE NINETIES WITH





cool dates."

A frown then haunts his thin lips as his pale hands put effort into destroying a defenseless wooden coffee stirrer. "Until that time the band was me in the studio messing around, so he's like 'Man, you have three days to get ready.' So it was 48 hours of solid rehearsal then right to the road. We were not ready to do it. And it wasn't until after a few shows that we realized this. It was so high pressured!"

But out of this pressure came.. the real NIN. "It was incredibly intimidating, going out in front of Puppy's audience with this half-pussy show. But what that did do was create a great effect on what later became the album, because

until that point I had never thought about playing live. But when we played live I realized that a lot of the arrangements were restricting. So things took a harder edge, and solidified better after that. After that too I got rid of those guys, went by myself.

"Then the deal came through which was TVT's, and the first three months of '89 I wrote the bulk of the album, fixed up the old stuff, recorded in the summer, then got this band together. I got guys I knew in Cleveland, cause I still couldn't attract people of merit cause I didn't have any money to offer, no record out yet..." as he gives a short laugh, "it was like 'hey, listen to this tape, I think it's cool so come join my band,'" he mocks. At this point the coffee stirrer is loosing multiple splinters. "I wanted to get a band together that was non-electronic. These tours came up, and we've been doing them," he concludes.

A master of understatement and not too shabby at summarizing a few years of his life in minutes. The band onstage isn't exactly the wimpy Depeche Mode dance band it threatened to be a year ago. Trent's taken his electronics and made them into power and added hard guitar... more splinters are made when the band lay into blistering songs like 'Head Like a Hole' and 'Down in It' but then they shift into the brooding 'Sanctified' or 'That's What I Get'... aggressive pop? Now I'm fielding a lame one. Industrial pop? That's Trent's. What's the angle? Journalists dive for the adjectives but no medals are given when they hit bare concrete instead of welcoming water. This is tough for them to figure out. And Trent loves every inch of it.

Dateline: November 2, 1989: "Nine Inch Nails were invited by Skinny Puppy to open... the songs that meshed guitar, synth and syndrums were the stronger... The others just sounded similar due to the limitations of the instrumentation. There are plenty of three piece synth units running around and you really have to prove what you can do. I'll be curious to hear the trio's debut LP... as they will probably benefit from studio mixing for manipulation." (B-Side Jan/Feb 1989.)

"We read your review, by the way, and we said, 'you know, she's right about 'that,'" laughs Trent. "But I was in the situation where I was sick of being in the studio, 'we'll play out, yeah...' and after I say yeah I think 'now what the fuck have I done!' It would have been better if I had used a different band name. I'm surprised how many people go 'Yeah, I saw you with Skinny Puppy' and I go 'Oh fuck, it wasn't me!'" he laughs in dismay.

But that will stay be in the past if people like me stop bringing it up so it's now a dead issue. Nail it shut, right? The past is



Photos by Sandra C. Davis

NINE INCH NAILS

dead. Long live the Nineties and Nine Inch Nails is signed to TVT records, yes, home of TeeVee Tunes and a whole lot more. Trent points out, "One thing that was very thought out was the thing about being a Wax Trax band or a Nettwerk band, is *that* is what you are. You're very legitimate, but rarely does something break out of that..." a thoughtful pause, "I mean I'd like to have some degree of success beyond just top 40 radio, but, TVT was a kind of a chance as at that point they didn't have anything like us. So it could work out cause they were going to promote us and pay special attention to us that we might not get on Wax Trax or it could be a total fuck-up and they'd not know how to handle us at all. But so far it's been good. We'll see what happens in the future. Tackhead's out now [on TVT] so..." as he shrugs.

But now Nine Inch Nails is a live entity, instead of one man hibernating in the studio. People are seeing a powerful experience and responding...rabidly. The word is out that NIN is in... and Trent as a musician has to be getting a personal sense of satisfaction out of this after what came before.

"Yeah, but it's easy to start whining," he laughs. "I realize, 'great, a record deal, I'll do anything, no problem...' now it's like 'we're in a van and I want a fucking tour bus! We're going to be touring around for months and months...' you can see yourself slipping into that," he frowns.

But at least Trent can recognize when he's starting to act like an asshole. It's when prima donnas loose touch with this instinct

that they're beyond help. Besides, it's only the first of hopefully many tours.

Also, NIN is getting exposure to people under 21 who don't have to deal with the hassles of the fake ID in order to scam their way in to see a favorite band. Most fans miss bands like Front Line Assembly, Skinny Puppy and Ministry due to lack of all ages shows. "Well, you take the typical band that's like us, without saying those two words," as he elaborately mouths "Wax Trax." But he didn't say that, mind you. "There's certain areas where they take themselves too seriously. They won't do certain things. Like, as a joke, the label will go 'any TV shows you want to be on?' and we'll go 'hey, Roller Games or Dance Party USA.' So we did *Dance Party USA* and did 'Down In It' and terrified these fluff-giant-haired chicks. It was so funny to do! And I get people coming up and going 'Why did you do that show,' and I'm like 'hey, if you don't get the joke...' he shrugs in exasperation.

Trent's directed some comments towards industrial bands he finds lacking in focus or sensibilities. But surely he isn't fighting against the old industrial tag that musical society has bestowed upon the savory brew he's fermenting?

"Hey, I like that kind of music, and it's cool since we're tagged as that there's an immediately built-in audience in every city. There's a surprising core of support."

Another shrug takes his shoulders as he settles further down in his stiff chair. "We knew we'd be opening for audiences who didn't know our stuff. I thought of opting for the more traditional electronics, more dance-oriented but that wouldn't fly in this situation. And it was interesting to have different people play the music, it's more fun then..." as he imitates a click backing track. The trapped coffee stirrer has fewer minutes left to live as his hands speed up with his imitation.

Back to the problem of taking an epic studio effort from one man and translating it to the stage. "When I did the album I wasn't thinking about it. So I got done and said how can I do this live, this big clump of sound! I had to break it down into instruments." Confession time. "I didn't get those guys cause they were the greatest musicians in town, but because they could and would do what I told them to do, and they had..." he halts abruptly, not wanting to



sound like a dictator. "The hardest thing was to explain what I was doing, what the music was all about. The drummer (Chris Vrenna) is actually the keyboard player from the last band, he's a friend...but the keyboard player (David Haymes) I just got for this."

Just so you remember, we'll remind you again that Nine Inch Nails is a one man operation. Trent certainly knows that. But is there still the chance that when he goes back into the studio situation he might decide to take the road warriors in as a band?

"I've not worked with any of these guys as in 'let's create a song, let's do this or try that', so, I may, to some extent, include them but it *won't* be like a band in the studio. Flood and I worked the best in the studio, and he wants to produce the next record. And the difference will be this time..." another pause, "[this record] I went in finished, with 'here is this finished song, boom, hear anything in it?' It was kind of like 'well, maybe we'll change that a little bit', and if it was 'oh, I don't like that part' I would be 'well, I spent a lot of time on that, I think it's right!'" he laughs. "But next time it's gonna be about 60 percent lyrics, song structure, then ok, let's arrange it. That will add a difference to it."

No small part about NIN's initial buzz was that some heavy hitters of production showed up in the credits. But people didn't seem to want to realize that Trent was totally involved in the production on *Pretty Hate Machine* with the exception of one song. He never even came face to face with Sherwood in a studio, doing that one mix via the mail. Critics were dazed by seeing Sherwood (responsible for more mixes than a Waring), Fryer, Flood, LeBlanc, and forgot the small detail that it was written, arranged, programmed and performed by Reznor.

"A lot of people are on my shit now. Like I



Photos by Sandra C. Davis

had Adrian Sherwood and John Fryer all sitting around like 'ok, let's do a new track!' It wasn't that way at all, so..." as a steely emphasis creeps into his relaxed manner. "Without sounding like Mr. Ego, I mean, I did the album: but the task was, when it was done, I had 50 versions of each song in five different studios, all kind of intermixes, and now make it an album. And I wanted to make an *album* rather than just ten songs," he stresses. "So I spent a *fuckload* of time editing, putting shit in between songs to make it flow like an album. And Flood said 'I can't believe it sounds like an album' and I went 'Thanks-I can't believe I got it to sound like an album!' Cause the original thing wasn't to do a who's who of alternative production. I was going to have Flood do the album and Sherwood do the remixes."

Adrian Sherwood definitely brings his strong musical personality with him: that's a common thought (in some cases complaint) from bands who work with him. He certainly gets mentioned enough in my interviews; I should charge him for publicity!

"He's the Todd Rundgren of dance music," Trent laughs. "But rather than let it be Tack-

Trent considers, "Yes, now that it's time to start working on the new album, yes: a bit... a *lot!*" he amends. "But the thing is, and I realized I did it as I was doing the album..." Trent wisely pauses to gather those mental fragments, while working at fragmenting that stirrer with more passion. "Take a band like Nitzer Ebb, and even Ministry's new album... both are very identifiable. Like Nitzer Ebb has a certain thing they do really well, so they do an album of that one thing. Which leads to where you can hear a band and go 'That sounds just like Nitzer Ebb', or say with Ministry, it was like 'let's take a track off of *Rape and Honey* and do a whole album like that. Very identifiable. But Nine Inch Nails, I couldn't tell you—

what does it sound like? But,"

as he finally steps back from his discourse, "I didn't want to box myself in a corner so far that the next album has to be like that or harder, or everyone is gonna think I'm a *pussy* cause I didn't match it," he grins in way of sarcastic explanation.

There's that wild spectrum from the fury of 'Hole In a Head' to the quiet suffering of 'Something I Can Never Have' (Trent, unlike Sinead O'Connor, isn't content with what he hasn't got). No one will accuse Trent of producing "pussy" music if he backs off. Well, maybe no one!

"Right. So I tried to throw a bunch of different potential directions cause I was like in a Swanish kind of kick for a while." He changes conversational direction again. "That was some of the coolest: not that it was all great, but there was a certain thing about it that I hadn't heard." Back to his own work: "But the next album, the challenge is not so much writing the songs but coming up with the *direction* of the records. So I could put out another one that's a little of this and a little of that or take it all in one direction. I don't know," he concludes.

Therein lies the strength of *Pretty Hate Machine* and its appeal to people who can't take Ministry's wonderful punch in the face and are tired of Depeche Mode's vacantly pretty wanderings. You can sing along to NIN songs if you like (people may think you're full of negative ions, too): you can hear the lyrics like a clear pop song on the radio. But the brutal lyrics certainly aren't sweet pop radio lyrics: instead they nastily take the piss out of subjects like religion, love and a few cruel females. A smart, subtle mind at work here. Step aside, here's NIN with a sensibility that appeals to the broad scope in-between the two aforementioned



bands along with fans of those bands.

"Yeah. Also after I had written the songs I'm looking at them and if they were all the same I went fuck no. I didn't realize that till I was looking at then so that's when I played with the mixes," he notes.

That's very dangerous, cuddling up too close to your work. Trent already mentioned he got insulted when people suggested changing it. There had to be a point when he distanced himself from it cause the album doesn't sound like a self-indulgent masturbatory mess.

"Yeah, I finished all the stuff in London, and it was just me there. Then I came back home and gave it to my manager and said 'you tell me-I can't hear it anymore.' So I had a month off, before I did more mixes and I had to back away from it. Cause I'd hear it and go 'awww, the kick drum should be a little louder' and then I'm like fuck, no one *cares* about that, they care what the song is like. So finally I got my shit together and I could hear it again."

Trent deadstops, staring at his hands which have finally managed to shred the coffee stirrer into a neat little pile of trash. "Fuck, what am I *doing?*" he laughs, looking further to observe there is mold growing on the wooden table. Damn, there is and it's all over my elbow. Nothing like backstage glamor! Once the mold alert is past, Trent mentions he plans to try and get more of "his shit" together to start the new album, but the combined factors of the new tour of the US and the fact that *Pretty Hate Machine* hasn't been released worldwide yet make this improbable in the future. "We'll probably tour this fucker for another few months. And if that happens, you won't see new NIN stuff for a while," is his dry outlook.

But a project you will be seeing before that is Pigface. Trent is excited about this, looking forward to the chance to work with one of his musical heroes, Alain Jourgensen, and a cast of others. "Pigface is a new project of Martin Atkins and Bill Reiflin and it's basically just them fucking around with other people, and they're putting an album out.

(Continued on page 33)



head with me seeping through a little bit I thought if he does the remix cool, the original will be on the album. (That wasn't the case. Sherwood's mix ended up on the album...politics, say no more.) Originally Flood was to do the whole album, but Depeche Mode screwed up the schedule cause they were working on their album for two and a half years," he dismisses mockingly. "So Flood couldn't do it, so I called Fryer, and I went to London with him."

But Nine Inch Nails couldn't be like most bands and sneak in with the first album and then wait until the second or third to smack them hard. NIN had to charge in there and draw first blood. This could be a tough act to for even this ambitious mind to follow.

NINE INCH NAILS

(Continued from page 29)

I'm on it, Ogre's on it, Paul Barker, Michael Balch [Front Line Assembly], most of Ministry except Al."

That is absolute bullshit. There is no way Al won't sneak in and create some mayhem. And from reports he did, and Trent got a week of wonder in Chicago. "Hey, it may suck but it's interesting and Steve Albini is producing it." Trent contributed a track called 'Suck': word has it as the best song of the raucous, hardcorish bunch.

In case you're wondering, like me, why Nine Inch Nails didn't initially head out on their own tour after the strong buzz on them began, Trent has the practical answer. "When we started out we couldn't get much money, we thought we'd be playing the 930 clubs of the country, nothing against the 930 club," he hastily adds, "but it's like you get 100 people and that's a big crowd. This way we'd play to a lot and win over new people."

And those new people will be heading to the shows this summer that now NIN will be able rule the stage and not have to worry about sensitive headliners objecting to NIN's onstage expression, a little problem encountered opening for Peter Murphy. Murmurs regarding "stifled creativity" were heard, and judging from the toned-down aura of the performances from when NIN opened for the Jesus and Mary Chain it showed. But that's past, Trent and the boys now playing to their own audiences.

NIN has gotten write-ups and interviews in everything from *The New York Times* (Mr. Reznor's mope rock to them) to *Spin* to *Keyboard* to *Rolling Stone* and in all the local papers from Boston to Hell. It's surprising



Photo by Sandra C. Davis

Trent doesn't have a sore jaw. The point is most everyone (do we care about the *New York Times*?) is reacting the same way... even when they don't know what note one about the kind of music they're babbling about, the

drool is overwhelming positive. Trent?

"I can't explain it," shrugs Trent with a small grimace. "I don't know what it is either. And another thing is, this [album] is on an independent label, it's not big. And how do people get records into the charts if they don't have a machine behind them like a band like the Chain do... but *Pretty Hate Machine* is ahead of them on *Billboard*. So is it the music doing it itself? Or has God pointed his finger at me? What is it?" he laughs. "Another trouble is we have to think of something new to do [next tour] if it is the same people."

Maybe this time out Trent can completely scalp guitarist Richard Patrick, instead of merely knocking him down and dragging him across the stage by his roots. Forgive my bluntness, but how spontaneous is that? I can't see Richard taking that kind of abuse, especially for a paycheck.

Trent isn't put off by the query. "Well, the first time it was totally spontaneous, and he was so scared he was gonna quit!" he laughs. "Then we realized 'hey, that was sorta funny,' so I act like I'm gonna do it but don't do it. So he still doesn't know what's happening. So every night... it's getting to the point where we won't do that stuff again. But *when* and the *degree* of abuse is the factor that keeps it interesting. And then... will he knock his amp over? Will I knock him into the audience?" he grins with evil playfulness. "It gets them up. That lasts a few songs then we have to do something else ridiculous," he self-mockingly sighs.

Just bring out the "hit" 'Down In It' that got airplay on MTV until it got slapped with questionable death status. There's even a

(Continued on page 39)

SPRING 1990 ALIAS RECORDS

X-TAL • debut LP

Reason is 6/7 of Treason

"X-Tal's backbone is that frantic acoustic rhythm guitar, rolling downhill like a runaway boulder..."

— *Bucketfull of Brains*

HARM FARM • debut LP

Spawn

"I don't like much but I really like you."

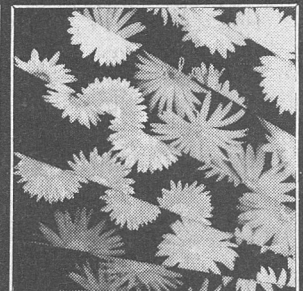
— *Henry Kaiser*

THE SNEETCHES • new LP

Slow

"This is the business."

— *Sounds UK*



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NINE INCH NAILS

(Continued from page 33)

squealing female brigade out there: "Oh Trent, you're beautiful," is common. What more could a young man with a future ask for?

Trent shakes his head in mock distress, finally smiling in amusement. Just think, this sort of nonsense will only get worse, judging from the leather ladies who crowd the stage for NIN on the Peter Murphy openers. Last show I saw girls were even fighting over who could get the cup that Trent drank out of onstage. That's very scary.

But Trent is quick to point out that their tour profile is still not breaking any recognition records. "We're still weird when you go to places like Athens fucking Georgia and you walk out and you know it's going to be bad when we start our intro tapes and you hear like clapping and cheering that suddenly begins to die off [when they hear the tapes]," he groans. "Oh shit! You walk out and oh fuck, no one knows this sort of music here. But then you will see a couple of people singing the words and that's the coolest feeling when you see that," he grins.

Nine Inch Nails is going to be seeing more than a couple of people singing along this time out. With the new video for 'Head Like A Hole' (taped in Chicago by H-Gun, who work with the Ministry- Revolting Cocks axis) hitting the airways in time to correspond with the new tour, who knows where Nine Inch Nails' popularity will end up. Pretty fast work from a man who was going to college for computer engineering so he could, as he claimed in *Keyboard*, "design synthesizers." Right.

First, examine all the angles. Then bend the shit out of them. And remember what the first three letters of the NINeties are! **B**

LIVE

RED TEMPLE SPIRITS

*The Khyber Pass
Philadelphia, PA*

A friend who frequents the Khyber Pass with faithful regularity claimed this was the best show she's ever seen in this intimate room that hosts a parade of varied acts from across the country. Another friend of mine in Boston who hosted a concert series at a club called to rave about the band after they played, to the point where she was coming down to both their New York City and Philly show.

Hold off, I heard Red Temple Spirit's debut double record set *Dancing to Restore an Eclipsed Moon* and quite liked what I heard. A unique combination of raw energy, trembling atmosphere, and love-child psychedelia with a kiss of gothic caught my notice and I was planning to see them, even before the hysteria from the North over this band out of California.

Once at the club we ran into a few people who had taken to following the band on this short tour. This was interesting. And once the band arrived onstage I discovered why people were following them, why people were raving about them, and why you should pay attention to this band. They were absolutely hypnotic. Calling on the reserves of their own spirituality, the band in a sense practice what they preach, creating a joyful, spiritual, intensely patterned music that just filled the room and everyone in it, making everyone move and watch with fascination.

The biggest surprise onstage was vocalist Billy Faircolth, he one bundle of non-stop motion, occasionally behaving as if the synapses in his brain were connecting faster than his body could react, this trance-like behavior of movement halting abruptly when he would look around and smile as if he just discovered people were out there having a good time along with him. His fellow band members wisely kept out of his way and their musicianship was brilliant, the entire band reacting as if they were connected on their own level, playing for the small crowd as if they were before thousands. Someday!

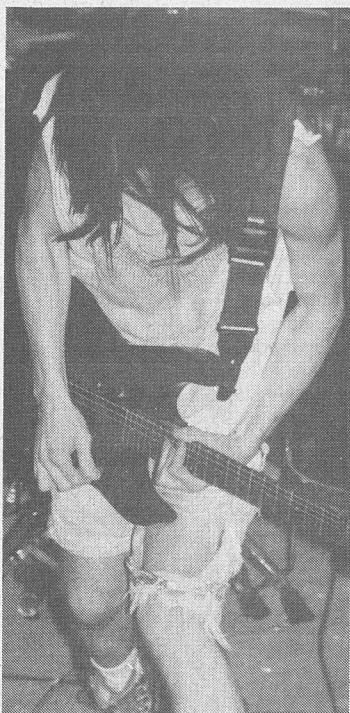
They performed numbers from their debut and also from their new album entitled (here goes) *If Tomorrow I were Leaving For Lhasa, I Wouldn't Stay A Minute Longer*. If I am giving you the impression that we're dealing with a group of serious, intense musicians infused with a strong sense of spirituality you're right, but they also happened to be damned sincere, lovely people offstage, open, honest and very dedicated to their beliefs.

And what a pleasant introduction, a band out of the land of plastic who were real and unaffected.

We need more bands like them.

(For more information on the Spirits, check out next issue for an interview.)

-by Sandra Garcia



Trent Reznor, Nine Inch Nails



Dino Paredes, Red Temple Spirits

Billy Faircolth, Red Temple Spirits



JESUS AND MARY CHAIN NINE INCH NAILS

The Trocadero Philadelphia, PA

Performance beyond my wildest expectations. I thought I'd be able to write the review without entering the Trocadero. "Nine Inch Nails were pretty good, better than Jesus and Mary Chain who played a short, boring set." I had to throw away prejudices and preconceived notions. As fine a debut as *Pretty Hate Machine* is, I couldn't imagine how utterly explosive Trent Reznor and Company would be onstage. Five studios, five producers and only one permanent band member on an album isn't the standard formula for a burning live act, but Nine Inch Nails burned the formulas. Meanwhile, Jesus and Mary Chain ruined their contender status in their "Worst Band Ever to Stand Before an Audience" campaign.

As astute sculpture professor of mine once explained that there's a tremendous difference between thinking that painting, writing, writing music or sculpting is a nice thing to do and needing to paint, write, or sculpt. Trent Reznor obviously views performance as more than a pleasant way to pass the time. If he didn't have the creative outlet of Nine Inch Nails, I'd hate to think how'd he'd deal with the destructive forces of life. He raged with obsession and aggression counterbalanced against and punctuated by subduement that attenuated the contrast.

Starting with 'Terrible Lie', NIN bombarded the senses through an eight-song, forty-minute set. Richard Patrick and Trent careened off one another. They spit and threw beer at each other and the audience. 'Santified' blinded like pure white light with its minimalism. Trent vaguely rapped into 'Down In It'; after a funky keyboard jam, he drained it to a whisper only to recharge it and elevate it to new heights.

Numbers like 'That's What I Get' had all the angst of the Smiths without Morrissey's self-absorbed whine. As if to prove that he's human and that a sense of humor underlies the tension, Trent made some visual masturbation jokes with a beer bottle, eliminating any temptation to call out, "Lighten up, will ya!"

If Gary Numan aspired to be Johnny Rotten instead of David Bowie, he would have become keyboardist Nick Rushe. Even with a danceable beat, the music obliterated any memories of early '80's techno-pop synthesizers as cold or wimpy. 'Ringfinger' evolved from sweet and Depeche Modal to grating and grinding through the help of a wallop of drums and a shearing, searing guitar solo.

It doesn't get much better than this. With the guitar situation for the Godfathers up in the air following Kris Dollimore's departure, NINM could become my favorite new band.

Between sets we joke about Jesus and Mary Chain's less than stellar live reputation. "Don't blink; you'll miss their entire show." It was a false bad omen when the lights dimmed and taped music played as a soundtrack to a film of spliced pop culture images. Maybe they wouldn't bother to come out on stage. Why did they put the roadies to the trouble of setting up instruments just to have the drums collect dust?

The Mary Chain rapidly remedied the situation. The Reid Brothers may have had obscenities written on the backs of their shirts, but I couldn't tell. The band faced the audience. Jim Reid showed signs of charisma, playing around with the mike stand and such, but he did blow the lyrics to 'Blues From a Gun.'

Overall, their performance embodied drugs, sex and delirium. It was so completely intoxicating that it didn't feel like a no-alcohol show (The \$1.50 charge for a glass of water was an ugly reminder, though.). Parts of 'Head On' accurately depicted the scene they created: "The way I feel tonight, I couldn't die and I wouldn't mind... I can't stand up / I can't cool down/ I can't get my head on the ground." They turned the crowd into a throbbing, heaving mass. I was drenched in sweat. But I'm not sure whose sweat it was. To paraphrase a line from *This Is Spinal Tap*, you can't dust for sweat. The all-ages crowd was young enough to display enthusiasm, but no ankle-biters got under foot like they did at the New Order / PIL / Sugarbush show. No one squealed.

In the great R.E.M. tradition of ignoring the break-through single, they omitted 'Just Like Honey.' Both bands deserved credit for not mindlessly pandering to concert convention. The drone, stretching across their career from 'The Hardest Walk' to numerous selections from *Automatic*, was unified but not monotonous. 'Head On' hinted at the Beach Boys breaking into a cover of New Order's 'Age of Consent.' 'Kill Surf City' revealed stronger blonde, tanned, Southern Californian tendencies from the pale, brunette Scots. They slowed Bo Diddley's 'Who Do You Love' to a sensual, gripping speed. George Throughgood should take their lessons in reclaiming, rather than imitating, rock standards.

The reports of the *Psychocandy* tour were fifteen boring minutes of boring feedback with their backs to the crowd, and up to a half hour for *Darklands*. When the palsied Christie Brown first scrawled "Mother" on the floor in the film *My Left Foot*, no one complained that the lettering was uneven. Similarly, any live accomplishment by Jesus and Mary Chain is laudable compared to their starting point, even something as minor as remaining on stage for over an hour. The responsive audience at this show further mineralized the impact of the Mary Chain's flaws. Christie Brown became a great writer and painter, not just a great *handicapped* writer and painter. Likewise, the Jesus and Mary Chain are beginning to show signs of greatness in concert. At their current rate of improvement, the tours for the next album should approach Nirvana.

Photos by Sandra C. Davis

-by Marci Cohen

Well, Trent Reznor does it again with the new **NINE INCH NAILS 12"** entitled 'Head Like a Hole'. This new variation from *Pretty Hate Machine* depicts another escape in this surreal vision of Reznor's talent. The 12" has four versions of 'Head like a Hole', each varying to some degree. Many eclectic rhythm patterns from which many different styles of hard edged industrial concepts are used. This follow up from the previous 'Down In It' is no let down, which is a good indication that there is more in store for the potential listeners. Another added bonus is the remix of 'Terrible lie' which also has two versions which are appropriately entitled the 'Sympathetic mix' and the 'Empathetic mix'. The cd single version contains extra tracks with an interesting version of 'Down In It'. If you have never ventured into the Industrial paradox zone, believe me, this is no terrible lie: take a chance to listen and get down in it. (TVT)