

CD Review: Nine Inch Nails

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One of the biggest groups to emerge out of the alternative angst-rock explosion of the 90's was undoubtedly Nine Inch Nails, and just as well one of the most over-rated.

The electronic meets rock studio efforts are for the most part wholly contributable to frontman/whiner Trent Reznor who far too often gets labeled a musical genius while his work only rarely hints at such a classification. The new album *Year Zero* continues with much of the less-than-genius work Reznor has done in the past.

One of my biggest complaints about Trent Reznor is that he is an absolutely terrible lyricist who reuses phrases over and over on his albums. Just like on previous albums he chants something to the effect of "can't stop us now", "on hands and knees", and using the word whore as in "Survivalism" where he says: "She gave us all she had but / we went and

took some more / Can't seem to shut her legs our / mother nature is a whore."

Another problem of mine is that for all of his supposed genius he sure tends to

Nine Inch Nails sounds more than a little bit trite today.

This said, I do think he hits a couple of really high points on this album, even amidst all of the business as usual. "My

Great Destroyer" which is downright pretty with its falsetto, and inspiration from The Cure seems obvious.

Reznor experiments a lot with noise on this album, as multiple tracks end with an industrial barrage that sounds like techno from hell. These sections are novel the first listen or two and become annoying later on.

Year Zero stands above much of what Reznor has done if simply because it is focused, unlike such lauded works as *The Downward Spiral*. The songs aren't really that bad, but there is nothing that really hits me and strikes a feeling beyond "hey, that's a neat sound." For my money he will never top 1999's *The Fragile* which is his one true mark of genius.

I guess it is worth mentioning that the album is supposed to be a concept album and the wild marketing strategies that went into the promotion of this album somehow corresponded with the story. The story doesn't make much difference in the music, and *The Wall* this is not.



address the same unhappy, self-loathing emotion with the majority of his output. Such tendencies are exactly why he thrived in the 90's and why

Violent Heart" is a wonderfully atmospheric tune that has a big, ugly, cacophonous blast of chorus, and it works really well. On the other end is "The

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