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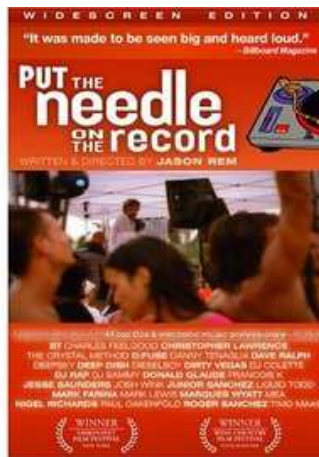
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Put The Needle On The Record (2006/MVD DVD)

Picture: C+ Sound: C+
Extras: B Documentary: B

A great overview of the rise of House/Electronica music in the U.S., Jason Rem's **Put The Needle On The Record** (2006) takes place mainly at the Winter Music Conference in Miami, Florida. However, the program is loaded with rare, key footage of the music and the movement. We learn of all the other locations the movement began to spring from and without a strict chronological line, the exceptional number and quality of interviews paint a rich picture of the music and why it became so big.



However, it also makes one question why DJ culture and this music is not necessarily the dominant genre. Sure, the labels gave a half-hearted effort to push the music a decade ago on the backs of a few acts, then gave up too soon. While this music thrives in Japan and Europe, it is still at least partly underground here and should not be. Have the major labels failed the public? Yes. Is this music smarter and more fun than the dreaded 'tween cycle and tired street Hip Hop that has been in decline since 2000? Yes. So what is the difference?

One, the popular music is either dull, negative, made by media stars who are both and are more about flash than quality. Though much of this music can be either repetitious or instrumental, it has yet to peak worldwide and that makes this program as relevant as it was when it first arrived.

The anamorphically enhanced 1.78 X 1 image is sourced from two low-def video sources: Mini-DV and analog Beta SP, but some footage is even older amateur VHS, so it can be varied in quality and has softness throughout, but editing is a plus. The Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo is just fine for a documentary that has plenty of stereo sound to show off, but older clips and interviews range from monophonic to simple stereo at best. Extras include audio commentary by slide show, Next Aid (anti-AIDS) public service announcement, the original opening, five additional clips and a really good feature-length audio commentary by Director Rem.

- Nicholas Sheffo

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