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## DVD Review: Metal Machine Music: Nine Inch Nails and the Industrial Uprising

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**Rating:** UNRATED

**Country:** USA

**Release Date:** April 7, 2009

**Distributor:** Sexy Intellectual Productions

**Director:**

• NA

**Cast:**

- Genesis P-Orridge
- Chris Vrenna
- Richard Patrick
- Trent Reznor (archived footage)

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**Grade:** C+



Last year I saw [Nine Inch Nails](#) for the first time. I went in knowing a handful of radio hits: "Head Like A Hole," "Terrible Lie," "Hand That Feeds," "Closer." I was astounded that a show with such a heavy sound could still be so accessible. The songs were catchy. There were pop hooks here (even if fans of Nine Inch Nails or the Industrial scene would rather not admit to it). The visual effects were well-planned and impeccably executed, particularly with the excerpts from "Ghosts I-IV" and "Only," which is my new favorite Nine Inch Nails song. I was intrigued by Trent Reznor, well into his career but not as well known to me -- the casual fan -- as perhaps [Ozzy Osbourne](#), [Metallica](#) or, tragically, [Britney Spears](#) (my tragedy, not necessarily hers).

"Metal Machine Music: Nine Inch Nails and the Industrial Uprising" is a documentary film very similar in scope and feel to the tried-and-true VH1 documentaries, such as *Behind the Music* or *Classic Albums*. I was pleased with the depth of the film, tracing the Industrial music scene back to the likes of London's Throbbing Gristle. While a substantial amount of time is spent watching talking heads, the heads are quite knowledgeable. One of the more interesting interview subjects is Throbbing Gristle's bassist/vocalist Genesis P-Orridge, who was literally there as her band and a handful of others, including Cabaret Voltaire, first began exploring what could be considered "music" or a "musical instrument" and not just noise. The focus shifts through the years to [Ministry](#) and [Depeche Mode](#), which made me pause. I like all sorts of music, from orchestral marches to "gangsta" rap, and from classic country to classic rock. But I absolutely love 80s New Wave, and some of my favorite bands from that decade were [The Human League](#) and Depeche Mode. I was pretty shocked to hear both of those bands named as bands that bridge from the raw energy of Throbbing Gristle to the modern master in Nine Inch Nails. The Human League is better known for up-tempo pop like "Don't You Want Me" and ballads like "Human," while Depeche Mode was similarly poppy with songs like "People Are People" (I was too young then to recognize the social message). How could these synthesizer-driven bands become the raucous rock of Nine Inch Nails?

With the help of a host of music industry experts, including *Revolver Magazine's* Jon Wiederhorn, Nine Inch Nails biographer Tommy Udo, and former Nine Inch Nails musicians Chris Vrenna and Richard Patrick, the dots are connected. The rise of Trent Reznor from the ranks of 80s pop obscurity to the decibels and drug-induced decadence of Nine Inch Nails' late 90s zenith is clearly delineated. Though to be honest, it might be unfair to proclaim Nine Inch Nails as having already reached their zenith. Trent Reznor has proven time and again that he can reinvent his sound and himself. While the diehard Industrial aficionados may see Nine Inch Nails as having become too commercial, there is a huge, hungry audience -- myself included -- that may not have become fans had the band stayed compartmentalized in its safe little pocket of musical genre. If we learn anything in this DVD, it's that music changes

with the people who make it. Reznor's cleaned up his life but continues to be experimental, now exploring digital distribution and internet viral marketing.

Keep in mind, however, that this DVD is not authorized by Trent Reznor. There are canned interview clips from sources such as MTV, but there are no direct interviews with the leader of the band, and while there are performance excerpts there are no complete performances. If you're a fan of the Behind The Music documentary style, and a fan of Nine Inch Nails, you'll likely find this film to be informative if not quite entertaining. There are only a couple of special features consisting of an extended interview with Genesis P-Orridge and bios on the many industry experts who contributed to the feature. It would have been nice to have some extended clips of Trent Reznor and the band either discussing or performing their music.

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