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Metal Machine Music: Nine Inch Nails and the Industrial Uprising Sexy Intellectual

When I interviewed Genesis P-Orridge last year, he told me about meeting some new neighbors who had moved in downstairs from him. One of the young men asked him what he did for a living, and when Genesis told him s/he was a musician, he then wanted to know what kind of music s/he made. Genesis replied that s/he used to make what had been called “industrial.” This answer caused the new neighbor to role up his sleeve to reveal a Nine Inch Nails tattoo. Needless to say, Genesis didn’t know how to explain that it wasn’t really the same thing.

Genesis also mentioned being interviewed for a documentary concerning industrial music and his new neighbor’s beloved Nine Inch Nails. That film, *Metal Machine Music: Nine Inch Nails and the Industrial Uprising* attempts to explain how the industrial music P-Orridge and his seminal band, Throbbing Gristle, created eventually propagated by Trent Reznor and his Nine Inch Nails. As there is a reason that the term that once was used to describe the music created by TG, and later, Einstürzende Neubauten would also be used by Ministry, Skinny Puppy, and eventually, Nine Inch Nails.

The film takes an intellectualized bent, which is emphasized by the sign of an intelligent, objective point of view). Interviewing a handful of people, the doc does a good job of showing how industrial music eventually made his mark. Citing the influence of electronic artists like Cal Vex as well as the rise of thrash metal, *Metal Machine’s* contributors place the music in context. They also dissect the differences between Reznor and his band, and how his pop sensibilities allowed him to surpass them in terms of pop

It’s an interesting history lesson, with some lesser seen footage of the band, however, becomes an exploration of the band’s later interviews with former members Chris Vrenna and Richard Patrick. The film’s workings of the band in its early stages, most of what is present in the film is placing far too much importance on Mr. Reznor and his songs. It’s an interesting viewing. Instead, it feels like one long multimedia record review presented directly from the horses’ mouths. While the film begins with a lot of interesting material, it seems like nothing more than just a prop for the pedestal on which Reznor is placed. Interesting, but hardly crucial viewing.

Stephen Slaybaugh

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One-Year
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Celebration

Saturday
June 13

with

Times
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Jefferson Slave
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The
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xi

Jesus de
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The Bell House
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