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*Nine Inch Nails and the Industrial Uprising, Metal Machine
Music (review)*

Alexander Carpenter

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although never more than about fifteen seconds at a time, presumably because of copyright issues. Some spoken interludes from various performances (a 2005 VH1 concert for example) are included, providing some welcome insight into Springsteen's compositional motivation. The 1980s interview with Springsteen is again used, with large parts recycled from the first disc. In fact, much of the information in the second DVD is just an amplification of what is in the first, with some more detail

presented as well as music and some short segments of concert videos (including some apparent bootlegs). The concert material seems to span several decades of Springsteen's career and is used to illustrate the points the documentary is attempting to make regarding his artistic development, but they are unfortunately not dated or located.

JOHN CLARK
Connecticut College

Nine Inch Nails and the Industrial Uprising, Metal Machine Music. DVD. Surrey, UK: Sexy Intellectual, 2009. SIDVD546. \$19.95.

This bio-documentary film examines the emergence and popularization of the genre of "industrial" music, focusing on the band Nine Inch Nails (NIN) and its founder and principle musician/composer, Trent Reznor. Commentary and context are provided by two former members of NIN, a handful of other musicians (most notably Genesis P-Orridge, founding member of seminal industrial band Throbbing Gristle), and a selection of rock journalists and biographers. The film includes many musical examples, historical photos, and concert footage of a wide range of industrial and proto-industrial bands.

Metal Machine Music argues that industrial music evolved out of a fusion of punk and electronic music in Britain in the 1970s, grew in influence in the United States through the late 1980s and early 1990s, and effectively culminated with Reznor and NIN, who commercialized it in the 1990s. NIN is credited with tempering the genre's aggression and harsh, dehumanized sounds with more accessible timbres, danceable beats and more emotional and poetic lyrics. The film begins in the 1970s, seeking the origins of industrial music in both punk rock—citing the Sex Pistols and punk's DIY ethos—and in experimental European bands like Cabaret Voltaire, Kraftwerk, and Throbbing Gristle, who included electronic sounds, often reminiscent of factory noises, in their music. The film's historical narrative jumps from the U.K. to the U.S., examining a small collection of groups that shaped the American industrial music scene, including the industrial-metal band Ministry and its offshoots, and NIN. The latter part of the DVD focuses on Reznor's life and music,

placing him among the key creative figures in the development of a contemporary industrial music aesthetic and offering criticism and interpretation of individual albums and songs.

While *Metal Machine Music* offers a much-needed portrait of an often-overlooked musical genre, it falls short on several counts. The historical context provided is deceptively narrow, and either entirely omits or gives only cursory mention to a number of bands—for example, Killing Joke, Joy Division, Bauhaus, Kraftwerk, and Skinny Puppy—that were essential to the development of industrial rock and that directly influenced NIN. The socio-cultural analysis offered in the film—suggesting that industrial music arose as a response to "pop," is driven by "rage," and reflects the ennui and hopelessness felt by young musicians living in America's "rust belt" in the 1990s—is rather shallow and facile. *Metal Machine Music's* gravest oversight is that it focuses on pop biography and so never really gets to the most interesting aspect of its subject, namely industrial music itself: how it is made, and how its evolution is symbiotically linked to the evolution of the drum machine, synthesizer, sequencer, sampler and other the other digital technologies so central to the compositional ethos and aesthetic of bands like NIN.

This DVD will likely be of use as a resource for introductory popular music courses, but lacks the depth and analysis that might attract musicologists and cultural historians/theorists interested in popular music.

ALEXANDER CARPENTER
University of Alberta, Augustana