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REZNOR**
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THE ICON OF GLOOM
PLOTS HIS NEXT MOVES

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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

NINE INCH NAILS: TRENT REZNOR

Plans His Next Move

BY GABRIELLA

In a recent video he stars in, 32-year-old Reznor portrays a psychopathic stalker who wildly pursues his co-star, David Bowie down the crowded streets of Manhattan. Because Bowie plays the character

who's escaping, it must have been refreshing for Reznor to be on the other side of the coin. Indeed, this pursuit must have depicted the frame-of-mind Reznor had prior to putting his platinum-selling group on hold for

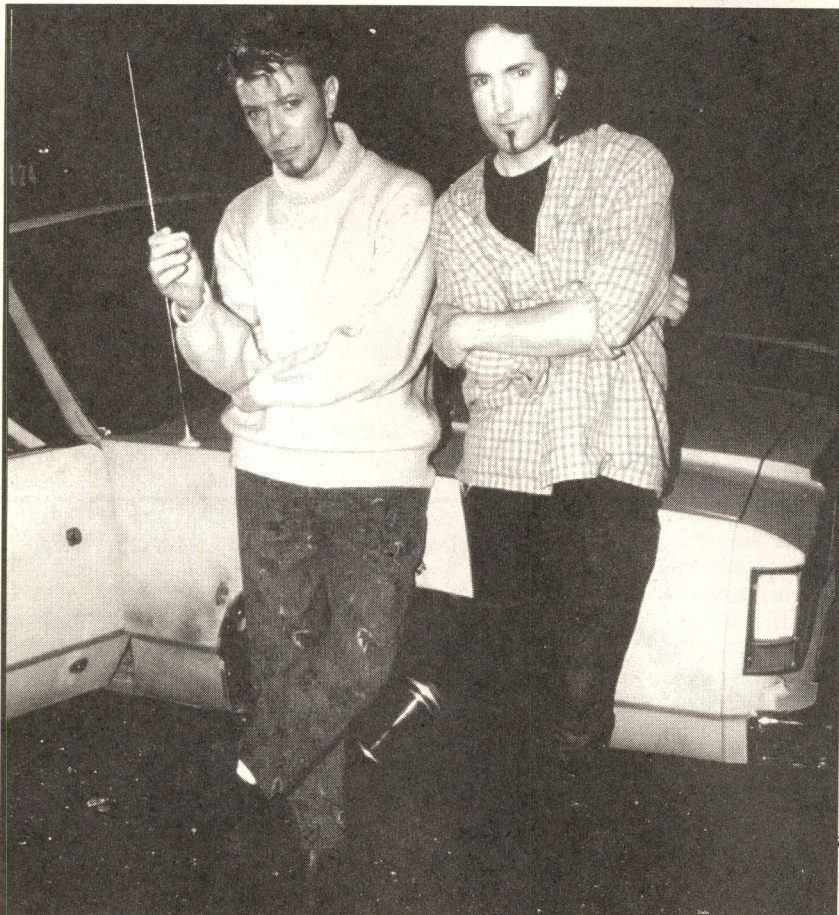
a few years.

"I just needed some time off," says Reznor, "I had too much of everything, touring does that to you, it just seems to give you too much input and that leads to a mental overload. It seems to turn me into some sort of retard. When you're on tour there are too many distractions, women, drugs, ideas, bad food..... You're getting exhausted and you don't have enough time to think about anything. Well, you do think about stuff but you don't have enough time or energy to think it through, bring it to an end."

With the February release of their innovative drum 'n bass experiment, "The Perfect Drug" originally written for "Lost Highway" soundtrack, Nine Inch Nails broke their two-year silence after releasing their '95 remix compilation, *Further Down The Spiral*. He was eager to work on the soundtrack because he admires the film's renowned director David Lynch. "I must have seen 'Blue Velvet' at least 50 times, you know. Or 'Twin Peaks,' sometimes I held up shows just to watch 'Twin Peaks'.

Working with David was overwhelm-

David Bowie (l) and Reznor during the video shoot for the NIN remix version of Bowie's "I'm Afraid Of Americans" from his Earthling disc





Born May 17, 1965 in Mercer, Pennsylvania, Reznor had a longtime relationship with music. When he was five years old, he took piano lessons and in high school, he played in the band, acted in plays and performed in a keyboards-oriented group, Option 30. Here he is pictured above at a show during the autumn of 1995.

ing, I always hoped that I could meet him and talk him into directing a video and then HE contacted me and asked me if I'd be interested in doing the soundtrack for 'Lost Highway'."

Reznor continued to live up to his name as a laborious workaholic very open to working with other acts, like former Judas Priest singer Rob Halford or composing music for the "Quake" CD-ROM. He worked on some remix projects, including the new single for David Bowie's "I'm Afraid Of Americans" (whose video Reznor performed a cameo in) and has started concentrating on his new album with the current working title "The Fragile" for which he's already started writing songs. A new side pro-

ject featuring himself along with two other current NIN members, Charlie Clouser and Danny Lohner, called Tapeworm is also said to be in the works.

A lot of fans thought this was the end of NIN, since Reznor's own musical contributions to "The Lost Highway," "Videodrones: Questions" and "Driver Down", were only credited to Reznor. But he denies it vehemently, explaining it was just because of NIN's ever-evolving line-up. But rumors of NIN slowly dying away don't seem to be too far fetched. "Deep inside of me I can feel a gap, I'm longing for something, I'm not satisfied and NIN couldn't really bridge that gap. Maybe that's why I'm

such a workaholic, but at least I still have tons of work in front of me."

The more NIN and Reznor became popular, the more criticism they had to face, but he doesn't seem to be all that bothered about it and has kept a pretty clear view.

"We went from being underground-elite darlings to the point where the same people started to hate us because now we sell records. When our records were sold in malls and kid started wearing Nine Inch Nails shirts, suddenly we weren't as cool as we were before, even though it was the same music. It's a simple fact, the underground has infiltrated, to some degree, into the mainstream. But I know that I didn't try to cater to the

mainstream. I did my own thing and what the people out there do with it is out of my control.

Critics often think you're not cool anymore because people like your record and buy it. That's snobbism and elitism, they try to be superior and have that independent band only they know, because they are so cool!"

The thought of being an idol and somebody who a lot of people worship doesn't make him feel completely comfortable. He resents being viewed as the spokesman of a generation, because he mainly wants to express himself through his music.

"It's OK if people can relate to my music, sure, that's great, but when I write a song I sit there on my own and write how I feel about things, why I'm upset about something, it's something very personal. Some people feel the same way I do and they seem to identify themselves with the song but I

don't sit down and write a song for the purpose that a lot of people can identify with it.

"It happens to me too, you know, that I'm depressed about something and then I hear a song that deals with the same kind of feeling and I'm like "Hey, something feels about it the same way I do" and it helps.

"Even a song that might appear to be completely negative can be a positive release. If I'm talking about suicide in a song, then it doesn't mean I'm suicidal, I just felt that way when I wrote the song and I think a lot of other people feel the same way, it doesn't mean you'll do it but you've thought about it and I'm just drawing the subject into the light. Or a lot of people go through phases of self-loathing, getting it out and bringing it into the open is a release and so something negative can be turned into something positive.

"Of course there are people out there who say "He doesn't mean it, he's just trying to cash in", you can't avoid it. The bigger you get, the more people want to f**k with you, to tear you down. It becomes cool and fashionable and criticize you."

Reznor is definitely a star, but at the same time he remains the mystery man of today's music scene. At the moment he's sitting in his house in New Orleans, close to where "Interview With The Vampire" author Anne Rice used to live, and is recovering from an upset stomach. "I've O'Ded on Pringles," he chuckles, while taking a break from remixing "I'm Afraid Of Americans" for former co-touring partner David Bowie, an artist for whom he has idolized since his teenage years.

"I respect Bowie the same as I respect U2, I don't have to be a fan of their music but I like that they change without fear of change. Not a lot of artists do that. Just watch MTV, I really think it sucks, most videos are just mindnumbing bulls**t. The only reason why I watch it is because I want to know what's going on. I don't want to repeat the mistakes of others and so I watch the videos and know why they suck. Maybe it's some sense of competition, sometimes I'm not even aware of it."

Reznor hardly has any reason to fear competition. *Time* rated him the most influential musician of the '90s, an honor others would give their eyeteeth for, but Trent being Trent doesn't seem to be overly impressed "Of course it's flattering but it really doesn't mean all that much. I can't sit back and say 'Oh wow, I'm the most influential musician of the '90s, ain't I just great?'"

"That wouldn't get me anywhere, I think I'd be bound to lose my track completely. I don't want NIN to become something like the Rolling Stones... I'm trying to imagine myself on stage with 60....Having grown fat and playing for a couple of old people who are trying to relive their youth through a NIN concert...At least I could announce it as "Featuring no original members", but I already have no original member in the line-up..."



PHOTO CREDITS: REZNOR BY GIL PANTOJA



AMERICA'S ROCK MAGAZINE
CIRCUS

TRENT
REZNOR

After all NIN was never really a band, but more or less a solo project of Trent Reznor who just hired musicians to play the tracks he wrote. The lineup of NIN seems to be forever changing; countless musicians came and went. Left over from the "Spiral" trek four years ago is only guitarist Danny Lohner and Reznor recruited two new keyboarders/programmers for the new album "The Fragile".

"It's not like we've ever been a band in the classical sense, the guys played the parts I had written, I worked with hired musicians and we were always a pretty good live act, but never a band who records together or works together on songs. I wrote every single part, every single note. All the ideas, outfits, basically everything that people identify with NIN was my idea, my work and I paid all the bills, so you can't consider NIN a real band like other bands are."

Trent Reznor and Nine Inch Nails always presented a rather dark and gloomy image. Reznor once lived in the house where Sharon Tate was killed by the Manson Family in 1969. It's also rumored that his current home, an old Greek revival mansion in the French Quarters of New Orleans, was a site of a ritual murder a couple of years ago.

"That's just a rumor, I researched a bit myself and I found no evidence for it. The house has pretty good vibes and I think they just invented that rumor for all the tourists, you know. They're doing guided tours and they come by my porch once or twice a day. I'm a tourist attraction now, just like Anne Rice's house. 'On the right hand side you see Anne Rice's house and the house on the left is where the satanic rock star Trent Reznor of the band Nine Inch Nails lives', I'm quite famous," he laughs.

"Sometimes I'm just sitting there in my comfortable armchair in nothing but my underwear and watch the people whispering and staring at the house. I'm glad that they can't see me from outside. Well at least I hope so, but sometimes I'm tempted to open the window and just shout 'Booo!' I wonder how they'd react."

In the past Reznor has often talked about how much he dislikes America's darlings Bush, but his view



The NIN of 1997 (from l. to r.): Charlie Clouser, Reznor, Danny Lohner photographed around the time of "The Perfect Drug" video shoot. Nine Inch Nails released a two home-video package on November 25 entitled "Closure" (Weathermen) documenting their 1994 "Self-Destruct" tour and other live performances, as well as unedited versions of all their videos.

seems to have mellowed somehow. "They do write some good songs but I can't respect them, they're not interesting. The songs are well written enough, they write good songs for what they do, but they're boring, soulless and commercial. They're playing it safe, they don't take any chances and they're so f***ing nice. They're definitely not very innovative."

His own views are definitely very different. "I like the element of danger and I don't want to play it safe. There are far too many politically correct and nice bands out there. There's a need for bands who dare to be different."

He explains that he's pretty fed up with rock music but likes the drum'n'bass and jungle scene and is very opinionated which current artists he likes. "Goldie or Aphex Twin are great, they have pretty experimental vibes and don't give a damn if it's compatible for MTV or the commercial radio stations. I think The Prodigy are a pretty decent band but I don't like the hype that surrounds them. The hype basically overshadows what is

good about them. They're an important band, no doubt about that, and I liked the album, but I don't think they are very stimulating or even shocking. I just think the hair of their frontman [Keith Flint] looks incredibly stupid!

"The whole British scene is just too much of a hype, I like the Chemical Brothers but if you listen to 'Block Rockin Beats', I always get the feeling that it really shouts at me, like the song's screaming out loud: 'We're British, we're white and we're trying to play funk'."

So will the new album be a drum'n'bass or jungle album? "The new album is going to have rhythm'n'blues and funk elements but not like the Chili Peppers, more like Prince and maybe I'll combine it with a great dose of something like Aphex Twin. Maybe the people will like it, even if it might sound just like your stereo's exploding and maybe I'm going to finish it off with a nice melodic pop song... Who knows? I don't think that it will be guitar orientated, even if I play a lot of guitar late-

Reznor's friendship with his long-time proteges Marilyn Manson, also signed to his label Nothing Records, has also cooled down a bit. "Marilyn will always be a good friend but things change in the business. I've [been] in the business a good deal longer than he [has], I've got a few years ahead and I've seen how my own personality changed and the personality of my band members and I've seen it happening with Marilyn. Fame changes you or you rather let fame change you... Another reason was that the recording of *Antichrist Superstar* took about five times as long as I thought it would.

"I tried to help them out with their songwriting and that changed the album a great deal. I also wanted to help Marilyn to get out of that tacky situation where people regarded him as a simple statement. To get out of that situation the band needed a great album...I'm not at outs with him or the band, I still like the shock-rock value they represent. I think it's necessary to shake people up a bit, there is too much boring safe stuff in the charts. To me rock stars have to have that bigger than life value, something like KISS used to be. If I go to a concert I don't want to see a boring mechanic on stage, I want to be entertained. Blood, detonations, fire, tits, just about everything."

Not even the recent happenings seem to dim Reznor's mood. An unknown musician from Los Angeles, Mark Nicholas Onofrio, claimed that he sent Reznor a tape in 1993 with his own songs and that five songs from *The Downward Spiral* are very identical. "That's so off the wall," responds Reznor. "I've never even heard his shitty tape or met that piece of human trash, I don't even want to be confronted with his mere existence. The courts will turn his idiotic claim down and that will be the last time we'll ever hear anything about him!"

His plans for the near future seem to be more than fulfilling and are made to suit the lifestyle of the workaholic Trent Reznor.

"I guess the next couple of months I'm going to spend 15 hours each day in the studio and then I'll be touring for 1 1/2 years and we'll see what's going to happen after that..."



EXPRESSION OF THE MONTH

Send poems, drawings and thoughts on your favorite musicians to:
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TRENT REZNOR AND
TORI AMOS
BY BRANDI LYONS
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