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WOODSTOCK: *RIP'S REPORT FROM THE TRENCHES*

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**NINE INCH NAILS
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TRENTSPEAK**

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TRENT

It's a mere two hours before Trent Reznor is due on stage for another show supporting The Downward Spiral when he phones in from Cleveland. I'm just pleased as a pig-in-shit to have the vocalist on the line. We were fortunate to be at Woodstock '94 and experience what millions of fans the world over have finally discovered in Nine Inch Nails: The awesome, in-your-face, tremendously emotional roller coaster ride that he and his comrades put an audience through. He is brilliant. Brilliant in the recording sense. Brilliant live. No one can bring out the darker side of each of us better than Trent and we love it. Every once in a while a sincere artist emerges in rock 'n' roll, rising above the bullshit we're force-fed everyday, and believe me or not, this is it. And don't any of you dare to call him a sellout, a rock star, nuthin'! He's more legit than anyone else in our time. Enough accolades. Let's cut the shit and get to Trent.

RIP: What possessed you to get into the mud at Woodstock?

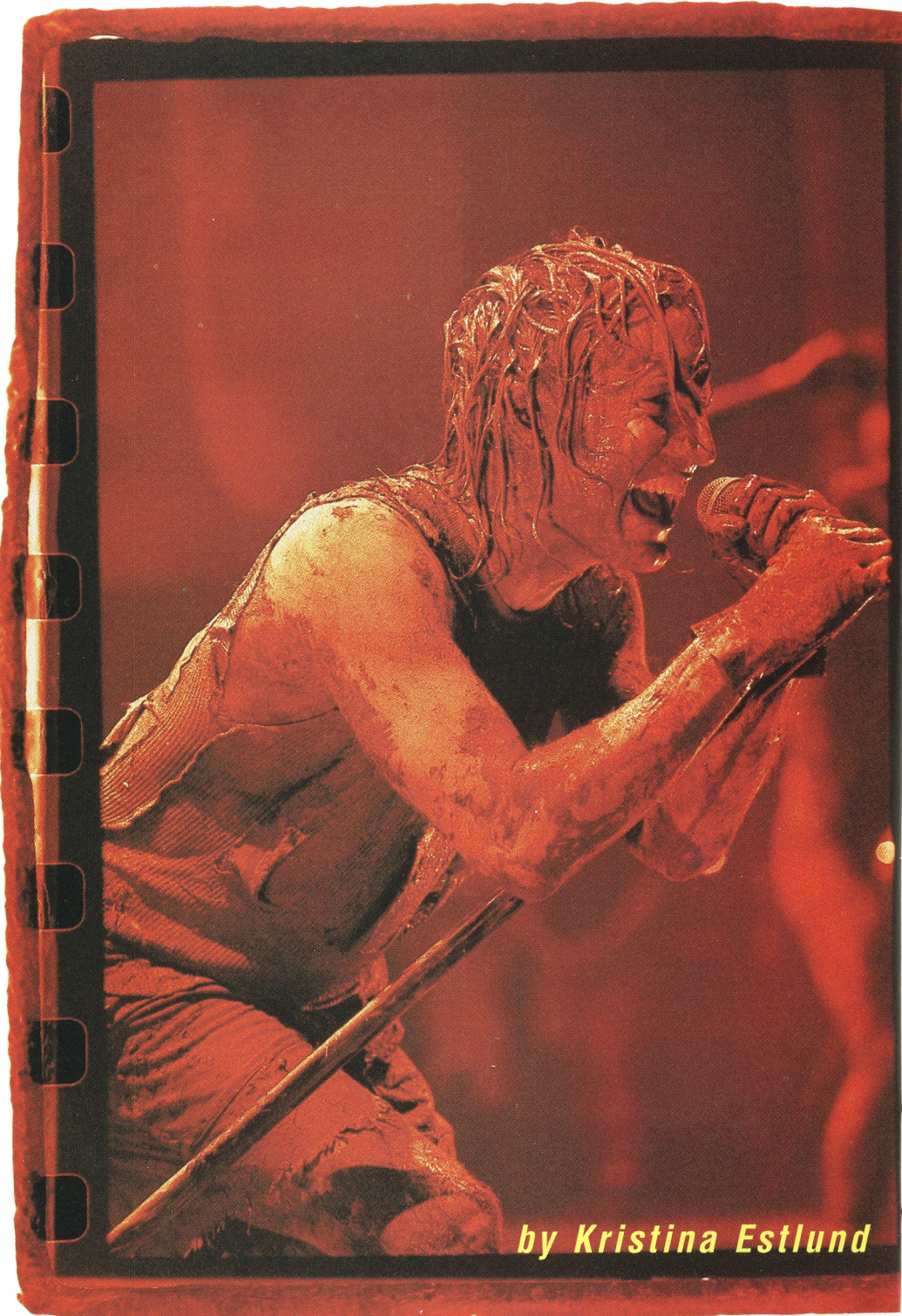
TR: We were right out by the big mud pit and watchin' everybody, I thought, *well, this looks like a lot fun*. At that time there wasn't that many people that were muddy, but the people that *were* in the mud looked like they were having a great time and we thought *f?k y'know, we kinda can't actually do that*. But we didn't have showers backstage at that time either, so we went back and hung out backstage, and it was just a real nervous day. Then on the way to stage I pushed Danny [Lohner], our guitar player, and he just fell face-first into the mud. Then he tackled me and it turned into a kind of all-male mud wrestling thing. It was actually really funny. After we did that, all nervousness kind of subsided.

RIP: And now you've become the talk of Woodstock.

TR: Yeah, I can't tell you why that is. I guess we're lucky.

RIP: And you're selling more records now. Does that alleviate the some of the pressures from the record company?

TR: Well, we've never really had any pressure from the record company [Interscope]. I mean, with *Downward Spiral*, when I delivered that record, it was the record I wanted to make and I felt it was artistically where I was at the time and still pretty much am right now. I did have a bit of reservation, just because I thought it was commercially limited and I thought there wasn't many singles on there, if any. I obviously didn't care,



by Kristina Estlund

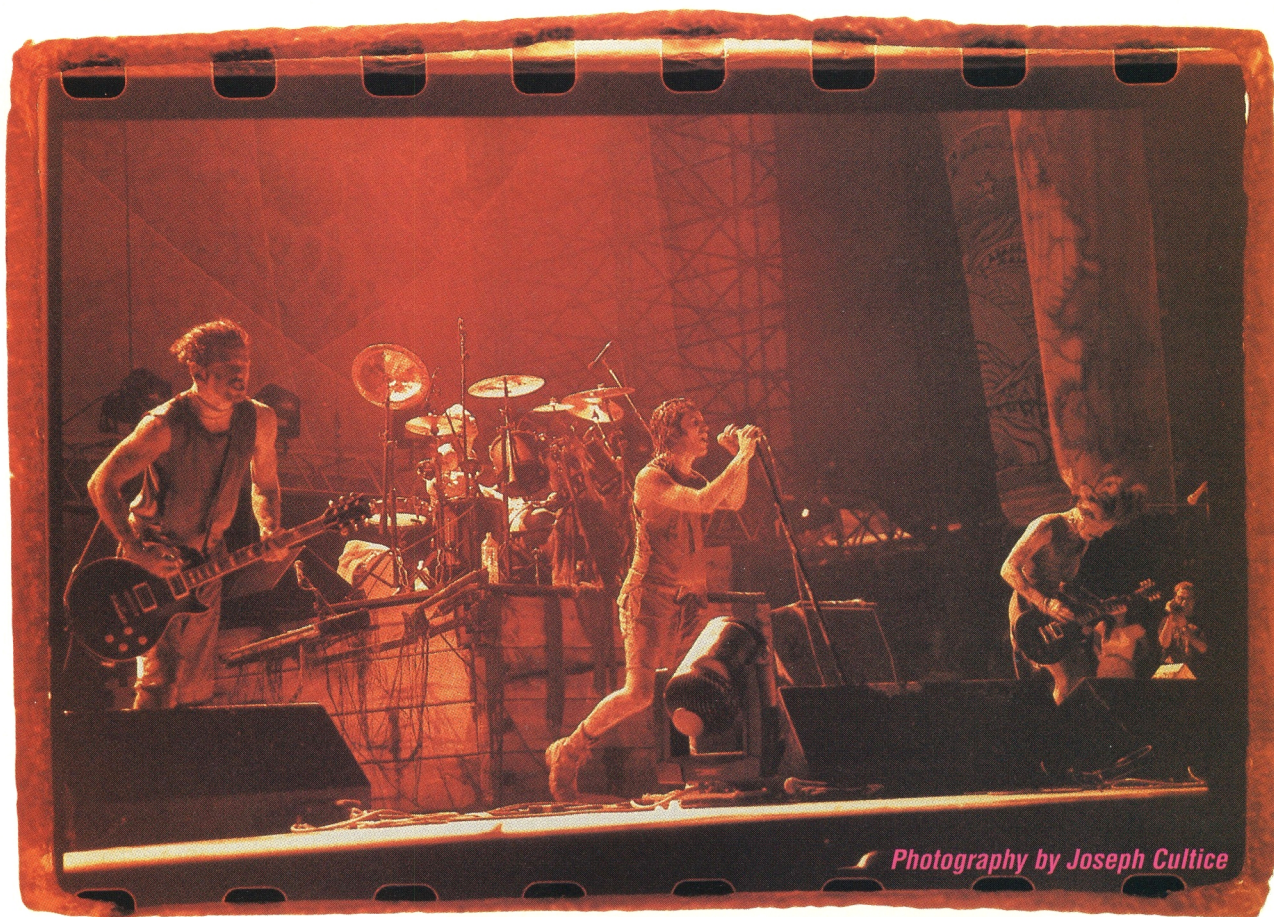
S P E A K

'cause I released it anyway. But at the end of the day I'll put the marketing-guy hat on and say 'okay, now if I was going to try to sell this to people, what would I pick as a single? Or what would I make a video for?' I realize in the marketplace now, it's dominated with bands like Soundgarden and with ready-made singles and Pearl Jams and.... The nature of the music business is com-

just succumbing to the public's desires?

TR: I don't think there's much of a danger in playing a NIN video right now. I think that we've been branded safe and acceptable and I don't think any programmer's gonna get fired for playing a NIN song—especially after the Woodstock thing. So, I mean, when we did Woodstock, I thought we would be, y'know, number 25 in the list of 50

gas bill at the end of the day, I'm not complaining about that. But that's not my reason for being in it. With the label, it's not looked at at all from a monetary game-point, as much as it is...I feel that NIN is in a pretty fortunate position with Interscope. They have enough faith in me as an artist, that if I say 'Hey, I wanna do this video, and I wanna do this, and I wanna make a record, go



Photography by Joseph Cultice

petitive. You're trying to make your product succeed in ways that other's people's don't. In some ways, I found myself getting caught up in that and then I thought *what the f?lk, this is the record that I like and I wanted to make. I've made it, here it is.* And it debuted that high on the charts and took everybody by surprise. And then you find yourself getting sucked back into that game of 'okay, what's the next single going to be? Is MTV going to play the video for this?'

RIP: But MTV's finally playing the video (for 'Closer'). Do you think they're catching on or

bands that were playing there. When it kinda worked out that we've been getting a lot of attention from it, I never expected that. I don't exactly know why, 'cause I thought our performance there was shitty.

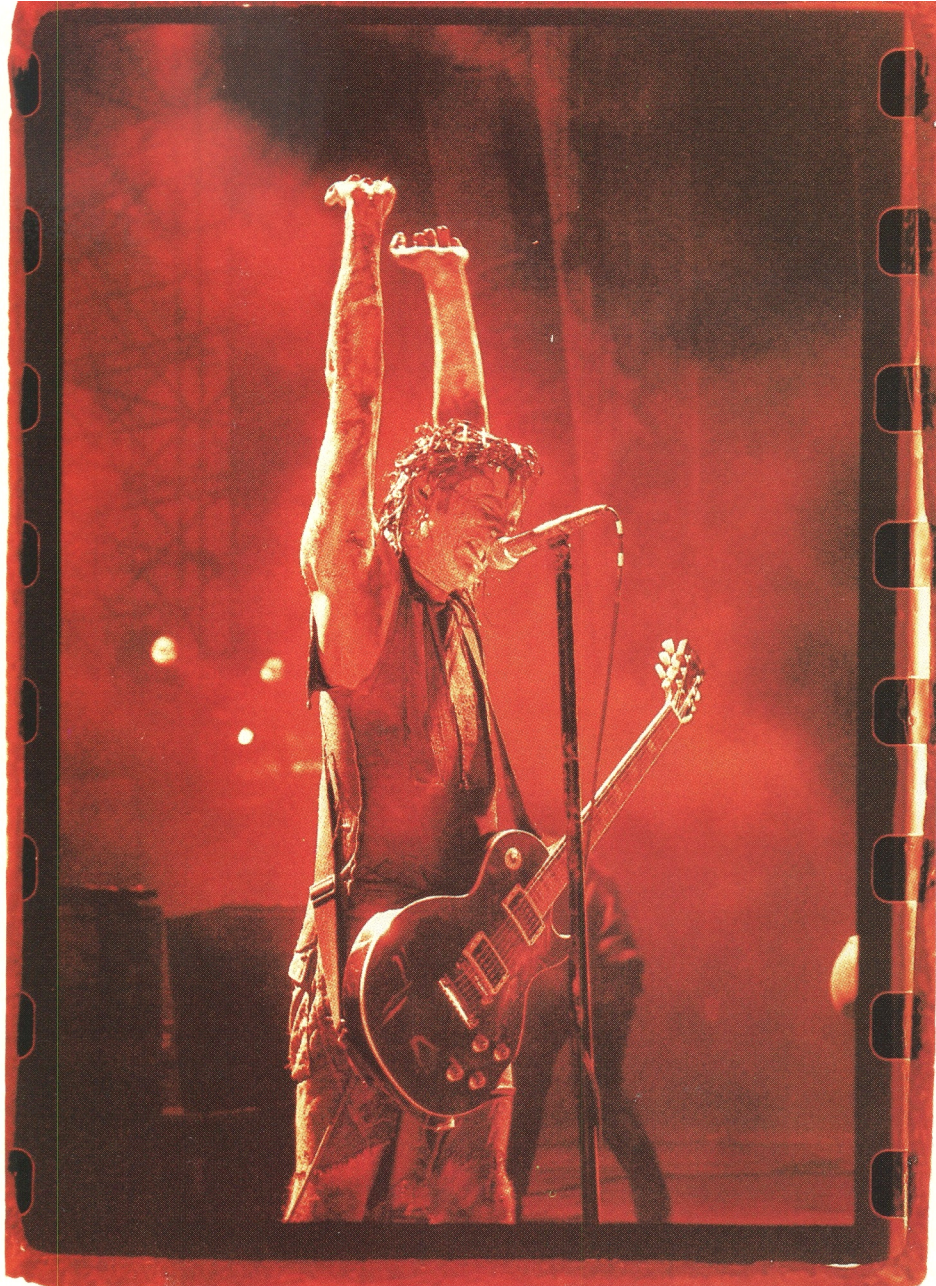
RIP: Do you take the same philosophy as you do with your music for your label [nothing/TVT/Interscope], who recently released the Marilyn Manson album] and your acts?

TR: I play music, I'm in the music business because I like music and I love music, it's my life. And yeah, it is nice to not worry about paying a

on tour and lose money'.... They think *there must be some reason to this, okay, we don't understand it, but we'll let you do it.* And they do, and then I think at the end of the day they realize what the master-plan was. I like working that way because if I get an idea, I can execute it. I don't have it approved by 15 people whose opinions I don't respect anyway. To be able to offer a version of that type of situation to other bands, that makes me feel good.

RIP: Are you the A&R guy for your own label?

TR: Yeah. Well, it's John Malm, my manager, and



myself. We work close to the scene together. And we haven't gone out actively pursuing, trying to sign up everything in the world. When this idea of a label came around, honestly, I had been wanting to help out Marilyn Manson in some way—who I always thought was a good band. Maybe they could be a band on my label, so I talked to them about it—a couple of major labels had been dragging their feet with them—and I thought of them as a perfect example of a band that I thought really had a good vision. They had a unique stance—something to say, good songs to back it up with, and they were good musicians. In the wrong hands, that could be shaped into something that was very mediocre. In the wrong hands with the wrong pressure, it could shape into something that's not true to what it should be, and what it is. If they smooth off a rough edge here, take that lyric out of here and don't do that onstage there, pretty soon it's not the true thing anymore. I just wanted to provide them with an avenue to just do what you wanna do. Then that even ran into trouble above me, when Interscope said 'well, I don't think we can release this 'cause it's offensive to us. Would you consider...' 'No. I

will not change a f#!king thing on that record. If you don't wanna put it out, then we'll shop it for someone else.' Then they realized it was kinda silly. I personally don't find it offensive at all. I don't think rock should be safe anyway. If there's something offensive about it, then good, there's not enough of that today, in my opinion.

RIP: At the end of this tour, are you going to into your own self-imposed hiatus—seclusion—or are you too much of a workaholic?

TR: I've become a workaholic just because I have nothing else to do, really. As long as I keep working I don't have to deal with every other aspect of my life. Besides that I just feel, like, a burst of creativity that I wanna make a record that's going to be opposite of *Downward Spiral*. That's not as isolating a process and perhaps a lot more collaborative.

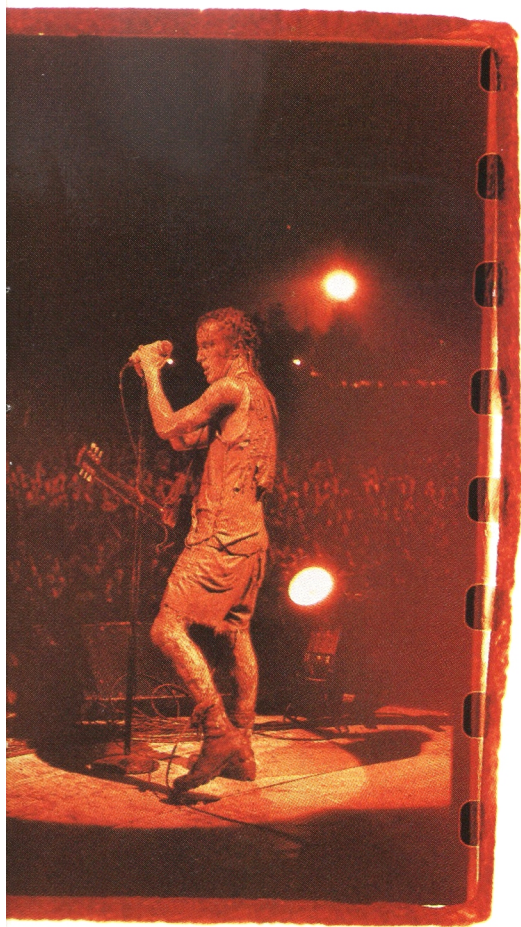
RIP: Have you already started writing for the next record?

TR: No. What I have done is I've started coming up with sets of rules to work with it. I've got about four different little game plans, I'm gonna try to find out which one makes the most sense. I need to do that. And then I write within those

guidelines. Which might sound silly, but.... For example, with *Downward Spiral*, I constructed a big theme through the whole thing and kind of an, ah, almost storyline. Then wrote out a list of things I wanted to address thematically. Then I tried to write songs which fit the guidelines and in a roundabout way, kinda succeeded, although I didn't think I could do that. This time, I'm in the process of formulating how I want to approach this. Whether it might be a complete collaborative thing with three other people, or it might be getting rhythm ideas from different people and then constructing them into something and then farming it out to somebody else, while I'm not involved, see what comes back. Right now, if you ask me this second, I'm more into the idea of collaborating—you never know, I'm a moody guy.

RIP: The mainstream media is finally showing their support for Nine Inch Nails, but something's still holding you back from blowing completely open like a Pearl Jam or someone.

TR: It's simple as this. NIN doesn't have the mechanical structure, or isn't the kind of band that can ever be a Pearl Jam. It's appealing to a limited cross-section of people. Pearl Jam, to me, are a good band at what they are and they're also all things to all people. They've managed to be labeled alternative, their songs are already on classic rock stations, there's not one element of anything that they've ever done that would offend your grandmother, there's a cute guy in the band, it's teen-throb, it's alternative rock in theory, it's corporate rock. They're on every chart. They're everything to all people. And they're politically-f?!kin' correct. They're standing up for the rights of the concertgoer—fighting some silly fight about ticket prices—which I don't think that many people give a shit about. And NIN is not that and never will be that, and it was never meant to be that. It's bigger now than I ever dreamed it would be and I went through a phase of really hating that fact. It is easier to go on tour in a van and play clubs opening for some band with no expectations and if you do good, then people go 'why, man, these guys are really great. You blew the headliner off stage.' It's cool to be in *Alternative Press*, and it's cool to be in *B-Sides*, and *Option* magazine—they think you're cool 'cause nobody's ever heard of you. It's comfortable, it's nice to have that kind of support from the truly alternative fans who I think do have a bit more integrity than the people who are spoon-fed MTV videos all day. However, if it happens that you do start to sell more records, whether you've done anything consciously to sell out, or people just started to listen to you, there's nothing you can do to stop that. I could say 'I'm never gonna make another video again, and I'm never gonna make an album, I'm gonna make an album of sheer noise, just to burn everybody out.' But that's not being anymore true than if I sat down and said 'I'm gonna write 15 'Head Like A Hole's' so that I can be Eddie Vedder. I'm not saying Eddie Vedder does that either.



RIP: No, but you've got it straight at least, most artists don't. You've got it right. You're just right now—and this is no offense to you—but for the moment you're flavor of the month, and next record you may not be.

TR: Well I don't think this record was [flavor], and then through a series of whatever it is—'Closer' gets added on MTV and somehow people at Woodstock think we did good, somehow the timing of *Rolling Stone* finally offering us a cover—seeming like it was all perfect-planned, which it's not. It's seems like 'hey, flavor-of-the-moment,' and then there's a danger in that where you also become yesterday's news the next moment. I've been aware of that and I've never had any desire to be 'heavy-rotation-MTV-boy' or anything else. I know when I go to sleep at night, I've made the record I wanna make, without any compromise. If that is a sellout, then I'm a hundred-percent sellout! 'Cause it also means I made the record I wanted to make, and a lot of people like it. Then great. I'm not going to go up to somebody and say, 'You live in Ohio, you shop in a mall, hey f?k you, you're not cool enough to listen to my music.' That's f?kin' fascism. That's more f?cked up than anything else. I was one of those kids. If people like it great, if you don't like it, it's my fault too.

RIP: At what point does demystifying yourself become detrimental? I didn't like the MTV interview, it made you seem so simple and it broke down the 'wall.'

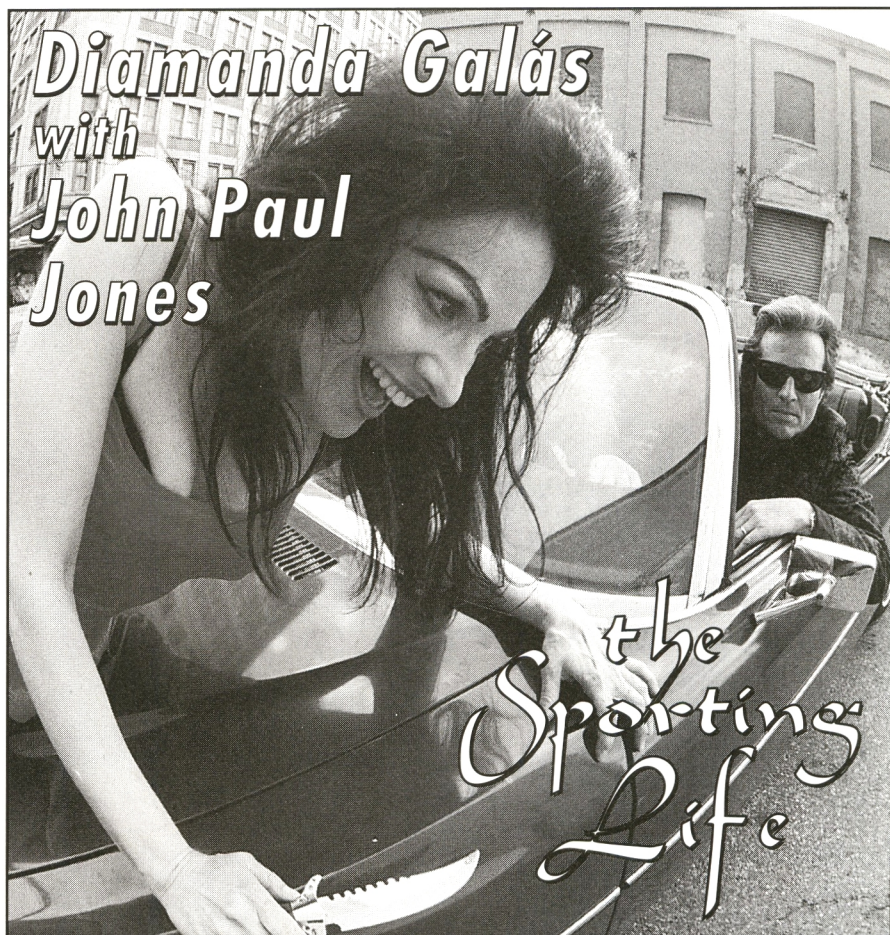
TR: I don't...I'm uncomfortable enough reading anything that comes out of my mouth—other than my own lyrics—as in doing interviews—that, I feel like enough has been said now, time to go away for a while. At the same time, there's a

side of me that...I'm into confusing people and I'm into right when you think you've got it figured out.... 'Cause I've read so many interviews where I'm about to kill myself. Where I'm this f?king thing. That sometimes if I'm caught in the wrong mood or if I'm just in a different mood...We talked to Woodstock live right after we got offstage—I almost fell asleep. Because I finally felt like all this weight and pressure had been removed. They were talking and we ended up joking around a little bit and...I know what you're saying...I don't have any kind of cohesive answer for that. I agree with you to a certain point. It's just a matter of being truthful, where do I wanna allow people to know what I'm like?

RIP: But everybody's going to misinterpret anyhow, it's better for me to read you in print even

though a lot of times it's misleading, because there's still a wall, 'cause you don't know the real Trent. It's much funner watching you in a video and trying to figure you out.

TR: You're making good sense and I think I've always opted to have that there because I don't want people to know...your point about videos is good, because it does remove a layer of interpretation from the journalists point of view. But anytime I do do things in press, regardless of how I act, they're usually looking for something and they find it whether it was there or not. If it was to portray me as X, Y or Z, if it was to betray me as king of the vampires, or, in *Option's* case, 'king of the pretentious assholes' or whatever it might be, it doesn't really matter what I'm saying other than some facts. •



The Sporting Life - the new album featuring the single and video "Do You Take This Man?"

Fall Tour

New York City, NY	November 10	Irving Plaza	Toronto, Ontario	November 24	TBA
Philadelphia, PA	November 13	Irvine Auditorium	Washington DC	November 26	The Lincoln Theater
Ann Arbor, MI	November 15	The Michigan Theater	Austin, TX	November 30	The Paramount
Chicago, IL	November 17	The Vic	Tempe, AZ	December 2	Grady Gammage Auditorium
Madison, WI	November 18	The Barrymore Theater	Los Angeles, CA	December 4	Wadsworth Theater
Lincoln, NE	November 20	The Lied Center	San Francisco, CA	December 6	The Warfield Theater
Columbus OH	November 22	Mershon Auditorium	Portland, OR	December 7	The Portland Art Museum
			Seattle, WA	December 10	The Moore

"The Sporting Life, the collaboration of diva nation's supreme queen and Led Zeppelin rock statesman, proves that a new peak has been reached on the rock extremity meter. ...one of the most engaging records released this decade" -Alternative Press

"John Paul Jones & Diamanda Galás, The Sporting Life, Mute: Wouldn't you know it? The year's wildest guitar solos emanate not from a guitar, but the extraordinary throat of avant-diva Galás. Over gargantuan bass and drum grooves, she emits scariying screams and roars (imagine Tina Turner subbing for Linda Blair in The Exorcist), sounding at times like a cross between Jimi Hendrix, Steve Vai, and Buckethead. The best record by any former Zep member, hands down." -Guitar Player

E-mail: mute@mute.com

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